

READING HABITS OF FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS AT A UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY IN KWAZULU-NATAL

BY

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for the degree of the Master of Education in the School of
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I, SEBENZILE PAULETTE MBHELE, declare that:

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DEDICATION

TO MY CHILDREN, SANDA AND ZENOKUHLE, MY NEPHEWS AND NIECE... NEVER
STOP LEARNING.

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My last words go to my children, Sanda and Zenokuhle. Thank you for being patient with me during my long hours of absence. Sorry for every moment I was not there for you but I had to embark on this journey. I can now dedicate all my time and attention to you. I love you.

Abstract

Reading habits of first-year students at a university of technology in KwaZulu-Natal

Reading plays a very vital role in the academia and for individuals' personal growth and development. There appears to be a strong link between good reading habits and academic success. This study explored the reading habits of first-year students at a University of Technology in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. The objectives of the study were to identify the materials that students read and explore the purposes for reading. The study was underpinned by various theories on motivation. This was a qualitative case study research and data was collected using three data collection tools: an open-ended questionnaire, draw-and-write technique and focus group discussion. The sample for the study was a class of 83 first-year students from the Faculty of Engineering. The findings showed that while students valued reading, they read occasionally or once a week, implying that students are not in the habit of regular reading. The study found that the materials read and enjoyed by students were books (inspirational, religious, novels), internet (social media and websites), magazines and newspapers. Academic books were less popular. The main purposes for reading for many students were largely extrinsically motivated to pass tests and examinations and to improve their English language proficiencies. The study recommended that lecturers should design reading materials that are visually appealing and they should incorporate the use of technology in their teaching. The study also recommended early introduction and exposure to different reading materials to improve reading habits.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

It is every teacher's dream to have a classroom full of students who are motivated to learn and more especially, who love reading and are engaged readers. Research (Progress in International Reading Literacy, 2011; The Annual National Assessments, 2014) indicates that in South Africa and internationally, the literacy levels of students are below the expected literacy levels. This shows that students are not reading, as they should.

The situation is made worse by the abundant use of and easy accessibility to technology by students. Reading these days has to compete with social networks, television and a number of other gadgets that might prove to be more enticing and entertaining. Regarding the latter, Lewis and Dahbany (2008, p.9) point out that "teenagers are now fluent in the customs and values of the digital world."

In an academic setting, reading is like an engine that drives students' academic development. Reading is one of the most vital skills for both first language and second language speakers. There is a plethora of reasons as to why reading is important, especially in institutions of learning. Pretorius (2000, p.35) supports that reading is important in the learning context because it is a powerful learning tool, a means of constructing meaning and acquiring new knowledge, and reading also affords readers independent access to information in an increasingly information-driven society. Du Toit and Boucher (2009) state that from secondary school through to institutions of higher learning learners are expected to read to learn. They note that salient literacy practices are required for optimal learning in all subjects.

The textbook has been and is still largely used as the only source of teaching and learning in many schools and tertiary institutions. Students who lack good reading habits are at a disadvantage which affects their academic performance. Gee (1996, p. 191) points out that reading is now recognised as an important source of input for second language acquisition. Reading extensively for both academic and recreational purposes has been found to yield many benefits. Having good reading habits increases fluency, reading comprehension, vocabulary,

cognitive development, verbal skills, content knowledge, and much more (Shelfebine, 2000; Worthy, 2002).

Even though reading is important, research has shown that the enthusiasm and motivation that characterise children's early reading experiences decrease as they progress from primary school to secondary school (Du Toit and Bouwer, 2009). Students' participation in reading activities relies on their attitudes and motivation for reading. This will have an impact on their success in reading development. Low motivation could result in students doing less reading, using ineffective strategies and having poor reading ability. Consequently, these students encounter difficulties in comprehending the text (Boakye and Southey, 2008). Children and adolescents who engage more often in reading activities have better literacy skills. Because reading is an effortful activity that often involves choice, motivation is therefore crucial to reading engagement (Wigfield, Guthrie, Tonks and Perencevich, 2004). Even the reader with the strongest cognitive skills may not spend much time reading if he or she is not motivated to read.

It is vital that students at tertiary institutions have sound reading habits because academic success depends largely on their reading abilities. While cognitive processes like phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension allow students to be skilful and strategic readers, without the intrinsic motivation to read, students may never reach their potential as literacy learners (Gambrell, 1996).

Unfortunately, if students have not developed these skills by the time they finish high school, they face challenges with university level reading. Academic reading skills are seldom taught at university because the assumption by most academics is that students should already have sound reading habits. Sadly, Hermida (2009) states that most first-year students lack academic reading skills, which results in students taking a surface approach to reading. When students utilise a surface approach to reading, they do not interact or engage with the text but rather consider information as isolated and unrelated facts (Hermida, 2009).

The current study aims to find out the reading habits of first-year students at a University of Technology (UoT) in KwaZulu-Natal. The aim is to find out what materials students read and for what purposes they read. Research shows that there is a clear correlation between exposure to book reading and academic success (Ntuli and Pretorius, 2005).

The main objectives of this chapter are to identify the research problem, to provide information on what prompted this study, to describe the research context, to present the research problem, to outline the methodology of the research, and finally to indicate the structure of the rest of the dissertation.

1.2 Rationale/Motivation

I have been a language teacher for 20 years at a high school and now at a University of Technology (UoT). I often hear colleagues complaining that “These kids do not read.” There is a general stereotype or myth that Black people do not read hence the old expression “If you want to hide something from a Black person, put it in a book.” I have heard this so often that for most people it has become a fact that Blacks are a non-reading society. The interesting thing is that no one appears to want to take responsibility for improving the reading culture of Black students. Content subject teachers often believe that it is solely the role of language teachers to instil reading habits in students. Language teachers, on the other hand, believe this is too much of a task to put on their shoulders or they blame Foundation Phase teachers for not teaching reading properly.

I was involved in a reading project where some of my colleagues and I would spend an hour with learners from a school in Umlazi, a township in Durban, reading to them and educating them about the importance of being habitual readers. I found that most of the learners thought the reading of books was boring. Those who liked reading were often discouraged from reading by other peers who called them names like “snobs”.

In the UoT where I work, most academics have often voiced their concerns regarding how most first-year students at the university cannot read according to expected standards. There are many lecturers who are frustrated because they find themselves having to spend time teaching the basics which should have been taught in high school or even primary school. In some institutions of higher learning they have even introduced an additional year where they try to bridge the gap between high school education and academic literacy.

I teach a group of students who are in the extended curriculum programme (ECP). These are students whose matriculation marks do not qualify them to enter into the mainstream

programme. The aim of the ECP programme is to equip students with academic literacy skills. I have noticed that most students in this course avoid reading. When asked to read they cannot read with confidence. I also noticed that if I engage them on general knowledge questions or on current affairs most of the students appear not to know about what I am talking. They usually indicate their lack of interest in reading or lack of exposure to books as some of the reasons for their lack of general knowledge.

My experience from teaching indicates, on an anecdotal level, that students do not read extensively and therefore I am interested to find out the reading habits of students and the purposes for which they read. My study will look at a UoT where there is a dearth of information regarding reading habits. My participants will be students who will be able to share their own reading experiences and thus their reading habits. This knowledge could serve as a springboard for further research in this area.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to explore the reading habits of first-year students at a UoT. It aims to find out the reading materials that students read and the purposes for which they read. Little attention has been given to the reading habits of students at universities of technology as most of the research in South Africa focuses on the cognitive processes and reading strategies that are involved in reading (Pretorius, 2000; Alvermann, Phelps and Gillis, 2010). Even then, the focus is on learners in primary schools, in high schools and on students in ‘traditional’ universities.

The Progress in International Reading Literacy (PIRLS, 2011) report and the Annual National Assessments (ANA, 2014) results indicate that in South Africa the literacy levels of students are below the global literacy levels. In South Africa in 2004, The Department of Education (DoE) realised that reading literacy should be a priority. When they introduced the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) reading was allocated more time. Even with the current Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS, 2011 p.17), in the First Additional Language curriculum based on a 40-week academic year reading and viewing are allocated the most time (45%). Even with these efforts from the DoE, learners are still performing poorly in literacy.

This indicates that students' reading habits are possibly flawed. A number of studies have found that students are not reading at the level expected of them (Le Cordeur, 2010a; Pretorius and Ribbens, 2005). A study done by Pretorius on inferential processing of the texts by University of South Africa (UNISA) students, strongly suggests that "urgent attention needs to be given to improving the reading ability of students at tertiary level" (Pretorius, 2000, p. 35). She found that many students at UNISA were reading at "frustration level" (p. 44).

In 2007, a study on the reading habits of adult South Africans from age sixteen was conducted by the South African Book Development Council (SABDC) after being commissioned by the Department of Arts and Culture. This study revealed that more than half of South African households have no leisure books and that only one in seven South Africans regularly reads in his or her spare time (Mahala, 2010). Berg, Taylor, Gustafsson, Spaul and Armstrong (2011) found that South Africa has the third highest proportion of functionally illiterate learners (27%).

At the institution where I work, all first-year students write a test known as The Academic Literacy Levels test (TALL). Based on the results of the test, 45% of the students enter first year critically underprepared and in danger of not completing their studies in the minimum time due to weak academic literacy skills. Only 19% have enough preparation to complete their mainstream studies in minimum time.

The above statistics are very concerning for me since in institutions of higher learning students have to deal with more complex academic texts and most of the reading is done independent of the lecturers. This means that students have to read prescribed texts and other additional texts on their own without the lecturers 'reading' to them. Reading is therefore a crucial part of academic literacy and academic success. If students are not in the habit of reading, their chances of succeeding are minimised.

1.4 Background

The environment plays a vital role in the development of reading habits. Pretorius and Machel (2004, p. 47) attest that "the context within which literacy is taught and acquired will have an effect on the consequent levels of literacy accomplishment." I will therefore discuss the education context in South Africa with relation to literacy.

1.4.1 Literacy in South Africa

Education in South Africa is divided into the following components:

1. The General Education and Training band (GET) which caters for the foundation phase (Grades R to 3), the intermediate phase (Grades 4 to 6) and the senior phase (Grades 7 to 9).
2. The Further Training and Education band (FET) which caters for Grades 10 to 12.
3. The Higher Education and Training (HET) band which caters for tertiary institutions like universities, universities of technology, nursing colleges, etc.

Education is compulsory for children between six and 15 years of age. Reading skills are developed in the foundation phase using the home language and the emphasis is on teaching decoding skills (Zimmerman, 2014). This means that the Grade1 to 3 curricula focus on teaching learners “learning to read” skills. From Grade4 onwards the focus is on “reading to learn” which means that students are expected to use the reading skills to learn. Learners are introduced to English expository texts in the intermediate phase.

From the intermediate phase Zimmerman (2014) argues that reading as a language and information-processing skill is presumed to be developed as learners can already read or decode the text. In most classes, the teaching of reading is often “characterised by rote learning principles, verbatim recall and oral modes of information dissemination” (Pretorius, 2002, p.189) but not much emphasis is placed on promoting reading skills. This hinders learners’ development of “reading to learn” skills. This means that most students are not encouraged to read widely from a variety of materials that they have chosen so they can engage with texts at a deeper level.

During the transition from primary school to high school, learners undergo physical, emotional and social changes. Du Toit and Bouwer (2009) state that these changes impact negatively on the learners’ advanced reading development. Adolescent learners’ literacy practice and advanced reading development often suffers during these changes. They have a greater workload in high school and learners often have less time for leisure reading. Academic motivation and achievement were said to decline in secondary school because the nurturing relationship between teacher and learner is usually minimal in high school (Du Toit and Bouwer 2009, p. 97). Again,

most high school teachers assume that learners have already acquired proper reading skills therefore do not focus on reinforcing this.

There have been many changes in education in South Africa since 1994 with many policies being introduced to improve the quality of education. However, Wessels and Mnkeni-Saurombe (2012) reckon that poverty, apartheid inequalities, too many curriculum changes, poor administration and school leadership are some of issues that have made transformation slow. Out of 28 000 public primary and high schools in South Africa, only 7,23% have functional school libraries (Wessels and Mnkeni-Saurombe, 2012).

Inequalities that were caused by apartheid education have not been levelled. There are numerous challenges that affect the quality of education in South Africa. Most schools, especially in the townships and rural areas, are under-resourced, the teacher/ learner ratio is very high, there is a lack of textbooks, among many other challenges. All these affect learners' reading development. Reading should be a continuous process where current learning builds on previous learning. Children who do not master basic concepts of reading in the first few years of primary schooling are put at a disadvantage because they will always lag behind their counterparts from other countries (Spaul, 2015).

1.4.2 What is a university of technology?

Universities of technology were formerly known as technikons. They fall under the HET phase in the education system in South Africa. A UoT is tertiary education that provides students with career-oriented skills through a combination of theoretical knowledge and practical experience in the workplace. According to the Education System Education South Africa (2015), these institutions are highly professionally oriented and offer study programmes with a more practical focus in a wide variety of fields, which include experiential or work integrated learning

At the UoT where this study is conducted students can enrol for a National Diploma in any of these faculties: Engineering, Natural Sciences and Management Sciences. A postgraduate qualification is offered in select courses. The institution caters for Black South Africans who mostly come from the townships surrounding Durban and the rural areas in KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape provinces.

1.5 Overview of key studies dealing with the topic

In this study, I draw on the work of other researchers in the field. While Huang, Capps, Blacklock and Garza (2014) found that students enjoyed using online reading material, McMane (2001; cited in Njeze, 2013) found that students enjoyed magazines, largely because they were the most affordable and easily accessible. Studies by Usher and Kober (2012) and Ismail, Ahmad and Ahmad (2013) highlighted the importance of reading texts in the vernacular. Similarly, Pandey (2010), Akanda, Hoq and Hasan (2013), and Kirmizi (2007), cited in Arkian(2008), found that students read newspapers in their spare time. Mlay, Sabi, Tsuma and Langmia (2015) and Hogson and Thomson (2000) highlighted that students preferred reading inspirational and religious books.

Studies by Kaberia (2012), Nalusiba (2010), Ansari (2015) and Owusu-Acheaw (2014) found that students did not engage in leisure reading. Findings by Akabuike and Asika (2012) and Akarsu and Dariyemez (2014) showed that students spend time on the internet reading for leisure or by chatting with friends on social media. Ryan and Deci (2000) highlighted the role of competence, autonomy and relatedness in determining behaviour. McLaughlin (2012) indicated that intrinsically motivated readers read widely and had a positive attitude towards reading. Furthermore, Wigfield and Eccles (2000) found that persistence and performance in activities could be determined by the value the individual attaches to the activity. A detailed Literature Review is found in Chapter 2.

1.6 Research objectives and questions

The aim of the study was to investigate the reading habits of first year students at a UoT in KwaZulu-Natal. In order to establish the reading habits my first objective was to find out what reading materials are read by students. The second objective was to establish for what purposes students read. My research objectives were then:

- a) To identify the reading materials of first-year students at a University of Technology in KwaZulu-Natal
- b) To identify the purposes for which first-year students at a University of Technology in KwaZulu-Natal read

My study aimed to answer two research questions:

1. What do first-year students at a University of Technology in KwaZulu-Natal read?
2. For what purposes do first-year students at a University of Technology in KwaZulu-Natal read?

1.7 Overview of the research process

This study used an interpretivist paradigm and qualitative approach in a case study research design. This case study focused on a class of 83 first-year students at one University of Technology. The participants were conveniently chosen because of being in close proximity to me as the researcher.

Data was collected using three instruments. All students in the class filled in an open-ended questionnaire (see Appendix A: Open-ended Questionnaire). The students were also requested to do a draw-and-write activity (see Appendix B: Draw-and-write Technique) about what they would have in their ideal reading room. Lastly, I collected data by conducting focus group discussions with twenty participants (see Appendix C: Focus Group).

Data was analysed from each instrument as I gathered them and as I proceeded through the study. A detailed discussion of methodology is found in Chapter 3.

1.8 Delimitation of the study

The study is delimited to one University of Technology focusing only on first-year students in one faculty. The study might not be generalisable to other students and/or institutions.

1.9 Organisation of the dissertation

This dissertation consists of five chapters. Chapter one is an introductory chapter. I have revealed my personal motivation for conducting this study based on my experiences and observations as a lecturer. I have given the research context, the literature on which the research is based, the research methodology and the research objectives and questions.

This is followed by the theoretical framework and literature review in Chapter Two. Different theories of motivation which form the theoretical framework that underpins this study are discussed in detail. Local and international studies are also reviewed.

Chapter Three describes the entire research process which includes the research paradigm, research design and data collection methods.

In Chapter Four, findings are discussed from all data collected. This is followed by an analysis of the data. Data is reflected thematically in terms of the two research questions in order to determine what materials students read and for what purposes they read.

Chapter Five concludes the dissertation by summarising the main findings, and discussing theoretical and methodological implications. The last chapter also discusses pedagogical implications and my personal reflections. Finally, the chapter outlines the limitations of the study and areas for future research.

CHAPTER 2

Theoretical framework and literature review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses literature that has underpinned and shaped my study and shed light on my thinking about reading habits of first-year students. The chapter has two sections, the first being the theoretical framework that explores some of the theories that underpin this study. This section starts off by defining the concept of motivation; key theories of reading motivation will then be discussed. These are the self-determination theory (SDT), the expectancy-value theory and the self-efficacy theory. A distinction between academic and leisure reading will also be discussed. The second section is the literature review which looks at previous studies that have been done on reading habits of students nationally and internationally.

2.2 Theoretical framework

If something is done consistently and frequently, it becomes a habit. Yilmaz (1993, as cited in Erdem, 2014) defines the habit of reading as the act of reading being carried out throughout life in a constant, regular and critical manner because of it being perceived by the individual as a need and source of pleasure. Reading is an integral part of education. Reading, as Khreisat and Kaur (2014) state, should be looked at beyond it being a mere decoding process. They state that the ultimate purpose of being literate is the application of the ability to read, which is reading to learn.

Studies (Anmarkrud and Braten, 2009; Guthrie, Coddington and Wigfield, 2009; Logan, Medford and Hughes, 2011) suggest that reading is an activity that requires focus, sustained interest and effort, and motivation has been found to be a predictor of reading performance that is far above cognitive abilities. Reading is an effortful activity that often involves choice (Wigfield, Guthrie, Tonks and Perencevich, 2004). Reading requires effort, and is an activity that students choose either to do or not. It therefore requires motivation, and motivation is crucial to reading engagement (Guthrie et al., 2009).

I want to underpin my study by using a theory of motivation which will help me understand what students read and why they read. I will discuss the following theories of motivation that relate to reading habits and the reasons for reading.

2.2.1. What is motivation?

Motivation is a construct that has roots in many fields of study like business management, psychology, education and many more. Motivation is a vital aspect of teaching and learning. Yet it is concerning to often hear teachers and parents complaining about how unmotivated most students are to read. Motivation can be defined as an inner ability, a stimulus that pushes a person to take action to achieve a goal (Ülper, 2011). Dörnyei and Otto (1998, cited in Deniz, 2010) define motivation as a state of arousal determining the priority of the wishes and desires of an individual and negatively or positively affecting his/her learning. It is an inner power or stimulating force that drives an individual towards achieving his/her wishes or desires (Deniz, 2010). Motivation serves as the initial driving force that generates, promotes and sustains reading and learning.

The socio-educational model by Gardner and Lambert (1972) brought the construct of motivation into the field of education. Their model, the socio-educational model, suggests that motivation has a direct link to second language acquisition. It states that people's acquisition of a language is determined by two things, namely, an integrative orientation (the desire to have contact with native speakers and to interact with their cultures) or an instrumental orientation (desire to master the subject for utilitarian purposes such as job enhancement and increased income). The integrative orientation and instrumental orientation can be associated with intrinsic and extrinsic motivation respectively.

Both intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation are important in learning. However, most studies advocate intrinsic motivation as yielding life-long benefits unlike extrinsic motivation which can have short-term benefits (Deci, Koestner and Ryan, 1999, 2001; Wang and Guthrie, 2004). Guthrie (2000) points out that students with high intrinsic motivation, a task orientation and high self-efficacy are relatively active readers and high achievers. In this study, it was

interesting to find out if first-year students' reading habits are motivated by intrinsic or extrinsic goals.

Many theories of motivation exist. I have chosen to use the self-determination theory (SDT), the expectancy-value theory and the self-efficacy theory all of which relate to reading habits.

2.2.2 Self-Determination Theory (SDT)

The self-determination theory (SDT) was developed by Deci and Ryan in 1985. The focal point of this theory is on the degree to which behaviour is self-determined. According to this theory, the decision to engage in an activity can be determined by whether the activity was imposed or if it was taken autonomously. How self-determined an individual is when doing an activity has an influence on his/her level of motivation to perform a task (Ryan and Deci, 2000). How self-determined behaviour is, is dependent on the satisfaction of the internal psychological needs of an individual (Deci and Ryan, 2000).

SDT suggests that there are three factors or psychological needs that are vitally important for a task to hold interest. These needs are common to all humanity and are innate. These needs are:

- a) **Competence:** This is the feeling that a person experiences when he/she has succeeded in carrying out challenging tasks. This gives the person the perception that he/she can achieve his/her goal (Skinner, 1995; White, 1959). People have a need to feel effective when performing any task. When people receive positive feedback or rewards for their behaviours, it can increase the person's perceived competence in that behaviour. Receiving negative feedback can decrease competence. In relation to this study, if a student feels that he/she is a competent reader it may have a positive effect on his or her reading motivation. Deci and Ryan (2002) state that the need for competence leads people to seek challenges that are optimal for their capacities and therefore to persistently attempt to maintain and enhance those skills or capabilities. They further suggest that competence is a felt sense of confidence.
- b) **Autonomy:** This occurs when an individual feels in control of his/her behaviour. Autonomy can be achieved by taking own decisions to engage in an activity or by willingly allowing other people's opinions to influence the decision (Ryan and Deci, 2000). People have a need to feel in control over their own choices and decide their own direction. Autonomy and

competence together let people view their behaviour as self-determined. Deci and Ryan (2002) state that autonomy concerns acting from interest and integrated values. This means that if a student feels in control (autonomy) of the task and is confident in his/her own abilities (competence), then he/she is highly likely to engage in that task which in this case will be reading.

- c) **Relatedness:** This is a feeling of attachment to others. It is a desire to interact with others and to be connected to others. It deals with how an individual relates with others. A person feels safe and secure when he/she has societal support and interpersonal relations with others (Deci and Ryan, 2000). Thus, according to Usher and Kober (2012), completing a task could bring to the student rewards, a sense that he/she belongs in a class or other chosen social group. Receiving approval from a person of social importance, like a lecturer, could also bring this sense of belonging. A student may, for example, engage in reading because he/she wants approval from his/her lecturer or wants to contribute during a lecture.

The more certain behaviour satisfies each of these needs, the more self-determined the behaviour is, the more a person will be motivated to show (and keep showing) the behaviour. A high quality of motivation (highly self-determined) will increase the chances on long-term motivation and durable success/behaviour change.

Deci and Ryan (2000) divided motivation into three categories: amotivation, extrinsic motivation and intrinsic motivation. These categories stem from the popular distinction that is often made in motivation theories between intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. Deci and Ryan expanded on the theories of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation which led to the SDT. They did not look at extrinsic and intrinsic motivation as separate entities but rather as a continuum moving from the extrinsic to the intrinsic.

According to Deci and Ryan (1985, p.245), intrinsic motivation is “in evidence whenever students’ natural curiosity and interest energise their learning.” It is motivation that is within a person. Extrinsic motivation, on the other hand, refers to a desire or wish to obtain a reward or to avoid punishment; therefore, the focus is on external stimuli, where motivation comes from external sources. Intrinsic motivation is often perceived as “good” motivation, whereas extrinsic motivation is regarded as a “pale and impoverished” counterpart (Ryan and Deci, 2000, p.55). Amotivation refers to the absence or lack of intention and motivation (Deci and Ryan, 2000,

2008, 2010). Amotivation is a result of not feeling competent to do an activity, not believing the activity will result in a desired outcome or may result from not valuing the activity.

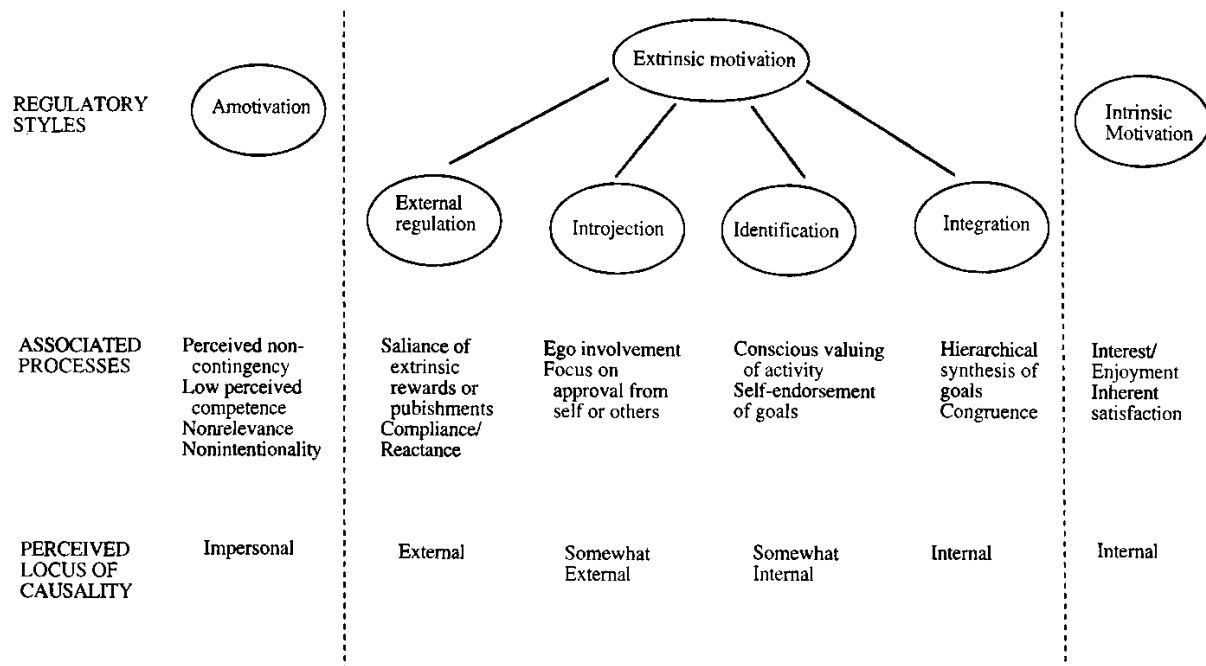


Figure 1.1 Ryan and Deci's taxonomy of human motivation (2000)

Figure 1.1 illustrates reasons for motivation to carry out a task which can range from amotivation to intrinsic motivation. Amotivation is no interest or lack of motivation whereas intrinsic motivation is genuine love for the task. In the middle is extrinsic motivation. According to Ryan and Deci (2000), human beings internalise regulation of behaviour that was initially extrinsic or external. They said that motivation may be due to external regulation, introjected regulation, identification regulation, or integrated regulation.

External regulation: A person engages in the task for a reward or to avoid punishment.

Introjected regulation: A person engages in a task because of his or her own ego, for example, a student reading so he can impress his lecturer.

Regulation through identification: A person engages in the task because he or she sees value in the task.

Integrated regulation: A person engages in a task volitionally but this differs from intrinsic motivation because integrated regulated behaviour is done to attain personally important outcomes rather than the love of a task as it happens in intrinsic motivation.

In summary, SDT alludes that humans have the psychological need to actively seek and engage challenges in their environments, attempting to actualise their potentials and capabilities. Their environments, however, can facilitate, hinder, or block this tendency to want to actualise their potentials. This means that people's motivation is enhanced when their social environments provide them with opportunities. I wish to understand students' reading habits by exploring if their reading habits indicate their movement from extrinsic to intrinsic motivation.

2.2.3 Self-efficacy theory

Self-efficacy is one of the aspects of motivation. The term was first defined by Bandura (1986, p.391) as, "people's judgements of their capabilities to organise and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances." Other researchers (McCabe and Margolis, 2001; Gambrel, Palmer, Codling and Mazzone, 1996) have expanded on Bandura's work on self-efficacy asserting that self-efficacy is the personal belief that people have about their ability to succeed at a particular task.

Studies therefore suggest that self-efficacy is the belief that we have about ourselves that causes us to make choices, put forth effort, and persist in the face of difficulty (Gambrell and Marinak, 2009). Daniels and Steres (2011) mention that when students believe that they have the skills required for the task, they expect they will succeed. Contrary to this, when students have lower levels of self-efficacy, they are more likely to avoid tasks that challenge them or are difficult to them. They will then have less commitment and effort to further their goals (Bedel, 2016).

Personal accomplishment, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion and physiological arousal are constructs that can influence self-efficacy positively or negatively (Corkett, Hatt and Benevides, 2011). This means that students gauge their own abilities and they compare themselves with others with similar abilities. Verbal persuasion from parents and others can influence self-efficacy and the physiological state that is experienced. For example, when reading, feelings of anxiety have an impact on self-efficacy.

2.2.4 Expectancy-value theory

Another theory of motivation that I will use to explain reading habits of first-year students is the expectancy-value theory (Eccles, Adler, Futterman, Goff, Kaczala, Meece and Midgley, 1983). Gambrell et al. (1996) state that according to this theory motivation is strongly influenced by one's expectation of success or failure at a task as well as the 'value' or relative attractiveness the individual places on the task. Expectancy-value theorists like Wigfield and Eccles (2000) argue that the individual's choice, persistence, and performance can be explained by their beliefs about how well they will do in the activity and the extent to which they value the activity. Simply put if students view reading as important and valuable they will engage in reading in a more planned and structured and perhaps effortless manner. On the contrary, if the task does not lead to valued or desired results the students may not devote effort to the task.

2.3 Literature review

2.3.1 Reading and motivation

Reading is one of the most vital skills for both first language and second language speakers. There is a plethora of reasons why reading is important especially in institutions of higher learning. Reading opens one's mind to endless possibilities. It is not only a source of information and recreation but also a means of building and expanding knowledge of the language (Rashidi and Khosravi, 2010). I concur with Bharuthram (2012) that students access information primarily through reading. Therefore, reading serves as a building block upon which all other learning takes place (Department of Education, 2008, p. 19, in Klapwijk and Du Toit, 2009). It is a powerful learning tool, a means of constructing meaning and acquiring new knowledge (Pretorius, 2000); reading is a core competency at all institutions of learning and all academic achievement depends to a lesser or greater extent on reading literacy (Pretorius and Machet, 2004).

According to Guthrie (2000), students who engage in reading enjoy learning from books. They are confident of their reading abilities and have self-efficacy. Furthermore, they are intrinsically motivated and they seek to understand what they read and are mastery-oriented. In relation to this study on reading habits, students with integrative/intrinsic goals for reading will display (Wood, Edwards, Hill-Miller and Vintinner, 2006):

- Curiosity: The inspiration to read about topics of interest
- Involvement: The joy and pleasure experienced from reading different kinds of texts and genre, for example, literary and informational texts
- Importance: The conviction that reading is a valuable activity

Extrinsic/instrumental goals are:

- Recognition: Engagement in an activity in order to receive recognition like a reward or certificate for success in reading
- Reading for grades: The need to be positively affirmed by the lecturer
- Competition: The desire to do better than others in reading

Gambrell (2011) points out that students who are highly motivated to read will choose to read and continue to read overtime. Gambrell (2009, 2011) defines motivation to read as the likelihood of engaging in reading or choosing to read. Gambrell (2011) states that engaged readers:

- Are intrinsically motivated to read for a variety of personal goals
- Are strategic in their reading behaviours and knowledgeable in their construction of new understandings from text
- Are socially interactive about the reading of texts

This is in contrast with “alliterate” students who are defined by Reed (2005, p.1) as those who can read but are either not able to read with comprehension or choose not to read. The choice not to read has been associated to a number of factors one of them being lack of motivation.

As students progress with their education, they have to deal with more complex academic texts. In institutions of higher learning, for example, most of the reading is done independent of the lecturers. This means that students have to read prescribed texts on their own without the lecturers ‘reading’ to them. Reading is therefore a crucial part of academic literacy and academic success. If a student is not motivated to read, his/her chances of succeeding are minimised. Researchers have found that even good readers fail to succeed if they lack the motivation to read. So as Daniels and Steres (2011, p.2) put it, “motivation matters.”

Cantrell, Correll, Clouse, Creech and Owens (2013) conducted a study on self-efficacy beliefs and sources of self-efficacy among first-year college students in a south-eastern American state public university. They found that students in developmental reading courses exhibited lower levels of self-efficacy with reading in academic contexts and reading in personal contexts. Students also showed that prior successes in reading tasks positively influenced self-efficacy. Reading poorly, failure with specific reading tasks, lack of interest in particular topics, experiences with challenging texts, boring reading tasks or material and external distractions such as cell phones and the internet had a negative effect on self-efficacy.

Gambrell et al. (1996) suggest that students who believe in their reading capabilities and are competent readers are more likely to outperform other students who do not hold such beliefs. Wood, Edwards, Hill-Miller and Vintinner (2006) concur that students whose self-efficacy for reading is low often resist reading. Gambrell and Marinak (2009) also suggest that social experiences play a powerful role in the development of self-efficacy. Feedback from family, school, and community, throughout the developmental years of a student, has been linked to the development of self-efficacy. Thus, if students' self-efficacy for reading is high, they will embrace reading, and their habits will reflect such.

Researchers have long established that there is a strong relationship between high levels of motivation and success in reading. Studies have shown that reading motivation has an important relation with students' reading amount and frequency (Guthrie et al., 1999; Wigfield and Guthrie, 1997). Highly motivated students spend more time reading, and frequent reading increases conceptual understanding of texts, which contributes to reading achievement (Guthrie et al., 2004; Grabe and Stoller, 2002). Motivation has also been found to have a positive effect on struggling readers, and "research shows that promoting students' motivation to read can enhance the reading competency of struggling readers" (Melekoglu, 2011, p.249).

However, there has been debate as to whether motivation leads to success or if success enhances motivation (Dickinson, 1995). Research conducted by Skehan (1989) found evidence in support of the view that motivation produces successful learning rather than the opposite. Guthrie and Wigfield (2000) state that motivation is the pre-eminent predictor of reading. Gambrell (2011) found that interest in reading predicted students' reading comprehension. Gambrell further argues that if students are not motivated to read, they will never reach their full literacy potential.

So even if one is a good reader if one is not motivated to read one may never reach full literacy potential. This implies that students who are motivated to read will read extensively for a variety of purposes and through reading many language skills are enhanced, for example, reading comprehension skills, extensive vocabulary knowledge, high self-efficacy in reading, among many others.

According to McLaughlin (2012), engaged learners achieve because they want to understand, they have an intrinsic motivation for engaging intensively with texts, they use cognitive skills to understand, and they share knowledge by talking with teachers and peers. They read widely for enjoyment and display a positive attitude towards reading. McLaughlin (2012) further states that engaged readers are able to overcome challenges that could hinder their progress in reading achievement. They are responsible their own growth and development in reading.

2.3.2 Leisure reading versus academic reading

Leisure reading is also known as reading for pleasure, extensive reading, recreational reading, sustained silent reading, extra-curricular reading and reading outside school, among others. It is reading which is associated with enjoyment and choice. Krashen (2004) defines leisure reading as reading because you want to. It is reading that is voluntary and that is engaged in for the purpose of entertainment or personal gratification (Rokusek and Enomoto, 2016). Karen (2011) suggests that this freedom of choice is thought to motivate students to read according to their interests. Kamhieh (2012) states that students who engage in leisure reading become better readers, and that results in them reading more. Leisure reading habit is where students spend time in and out of class reading texts that they choose on subjects in which they are interested for reasons of their own (Kamhieh, 2012).

In contrast, academic reading is associated with reading school-related material. Isakson, Isakson, Plummer and Chapman (2016) define it as reading to learn for an educational purpose. Students usually do not have a choice in the material they want to read because academic texts are often prescribed by the lecturers. After reading academic texts students are often expected to perform tasks related to the reading for example, writing a test or an assignment. Leisure reading on the other hand has no performance expectations and has minimal accountability (Isakson et al., 2016).

The differences between leisure reading and academic reading may therefore have an impact on the students' reading habits with reference to the materials they read and the purposes for reading.

2.3.3 Material students read and their reasons for reading them

This section looks at the reading habits of students at tertiary institutions focusing on what material students read and for what purposes they read.

The internet is generally used widely in institutions of higher learning for teaching and learning purposes. Unlike in the past where the textbook was the only source of information, the internet is now a significant information resource for students. Mlay, Sabi, Tsuma and Langmia (2015) found that students agreed that Information and Communications Technology (ICT) improves reading, and it is seen by students as an enabler of reading. In a study by Kiili, Laurinen and Marttunen (2007, p.159), students who were asked to search for information on the internet for an essay writing assignment spent most of the time (61.38%) reading texts. The weakest students spent most of the time searching or navigating on the links. The website that was read by most students (80%) was Wikipedia.

In Ghana, Owusu-Acheaw (2014) found that in Koforidua Polytechnic, 62% of the students use their leisure time to visit social media sites in preference to reading (13%). Likewise, students in Ethiopia (Akabuike and Asika, 2012) spend three to five hours on the internet chatting with friends on Facebook instead of reading. Akanda, Hoq and Hasan (2013) found that the majority of the students in Rajshahi spend one to two hours a day on the internet. It was interesting to note that doing research and reading online journals were the top reasons why students in Rajshahi used the internet. Akarsu and Dariyemez (2014) found that the content of online reading included online news, online magazines, e-books, stories and novels, emails, journal articles, sales information, movie reviews, horoscopes, weather reports, health information, comic strips, jokes, fashion, sports, job information, and food/nutrition.

On the contrary, a study by Vernon (2006, as cited in Podolsky and Soiferman, 2014) found that a majority of the students did not read texts online and preferred to print the text and read it in paper format. Similarly, Woody, Daniel and Baker (2010, as cited in Podolsky and Soiferman,

2014) found that undergraduate students in their study preferred textbooks over e-books. The reasons given by students for preferring print texts over e-books (82% of participants) were: print text is easier to write notes on; it is easier on the eyes; the students are in the habit of reading paper documents; they have a better spatial understanding of where they are in the text; there are less distractions when reading paper documents, unlike reading on the computer where they end up browsing other things. The few that preferred reading online texts stated that the documents could be more easily stored and carried, electronic texts were more environmentally friendly, and the search function made it easier to locate information (Podolsky and Soiferman, 2014).

Studies indicate that some students in tertiary institutions read to do well in tasks or to impress their professors. Hoeft (2012) conducted a study on first year university students at a small Midwestern Liberal Arts University. Students were given reading assignments to read prior to commencing with their courses. The students were enrolled in a course that emphasised active learning and emphasised student responsibility in the learning process. Fifty-six percent of students in the large group reported not having read the assignment. It was found that of those who had read it, concern over grades was the top factor for reading. For students in the small group, concern about what their professor thought of them was found to be the major reason for reading. Similarly, 62% of students at Koforidua Polytechnic in Ghana read to pass the examination (Owusu-Acheaw, 2014). Therefore, the students read mostly lecture notes when they visited the library. Even though these students acknowledged the importance of reading, the majority had read neither novel nor fiction during the academic year. They considered reading as a boring activity. Owusu-Acheaw (2014) found that the students had not developed the love for reading hence they found it boring. Akabuike and Asika (2012) also found that students in Nnamdi Azikjiwe University Awka and Anambra State University in Ethiopia read only to pass examinations and not for pleasure. The students also had a negative attitude towards reading.

In Uganda, Kaberia (2012) and Nalusiba (2010) found that students did not engage in leisure reading but they read academic materials when they had assignments to do. Similarly, a study of Sindhi and Urdu students at the University of Sindh suggested that there was a lack of leisure reading habit other than textbook reading and the students' reading frequency of academic articles was low (Ansari, 2015).

However, Mlay et al. (2015, p. 41) found results that were contrary when they did a study on students from three public universities and one degree awarding institution in Uganda. Their participants indicated that they engaged in leisure reading more often than prescribed textbooks after class hours. The material that the students read the most and that they owned were spiritual building books, self-building/motivational/inspirational books, newspapers and documentaries, politics/economics, culture, current affairs, novels/entertainment books and literature on social trends. On why they read, they indicated that they read for self-growth and inspiration, to gain information and knowledge, to keep up with trends for entertainment, for spiritual growth and for pleasure/relaxation.

In a study on an investigation into American students' reading habits and practices, Huang, Capps, Blacklock and Garza (2014) found that students enjoyed online reading materials; magazines and newspapers were the next popular, with graphic novels and comic books ranked third and the least popular reading materials were non-major academic books. On the contrary, Akarsu and Daryemez (2014) in their study of university students studying at Ataturk University in Turkey found that reading novels, textbooks and online information were popular. Reading magazines was rarely practised and the participants said they sometimes read newspapers.

Pandey (2010) found that newspapers were a popular medium because they provide current local, national and international news content to the readers. McMane (2001, cited in Njeze, 2013) states that newspapers can provide in-depth knowledge on a variety of issues or topics. Newspapers are also the most accessible and affordable written document. Njeze (2013) found that the main sources of information for students in Covenant University were magazines and newspapers. Njeze (2013) further found that students consulted newspapers and magazines more for general information such as current affairs, sports and politics and less for educational information.

In a study of reading habits of 250 students in a college in Peshawar, Ismail, Ahmad and Ahmad (2013) found that many of the students read newspapers regularly. They also found the majority of the students from the rural areas read Urdu newspapers and those from upper families and urban areas read English dailies. Urdu magazines were also more popular than English ones.

Akanda, Hoq and Hasan (2013) conducted a study with students in social sciences and arts at Rajshahi University in Bangladesh. They found that a large majority of students read newspapers

regularly, for one to two hours every day. The students read newspapers often because they require less time to read and it gives students news and information on current affairs. Books and other materials were read because students believe that reading gives them a way to develop their life and to keep abreast of the changing times. They read with a sense of purpose and not aimlessly or for fun.

Studies by Ozturk (2007) reveal that the top ten topics that students preferred to read about were cinema, the internet, sports, hobbies, love, music, computer games, money, computers and holidays. Kirmizi (2007, cited in Arkian, 2008) also found that students preferred to read about the following top ten topics: cinema, music, computers, holidays, sports, love, touristic places, entertainment, travel, and shopping. Students at Ankara University and Erciyes University read novels, newspapers and magazines the most in their spare time, and they enjoyed reading literary works, historic, romantic, entertaining-humorous, and psychological genres the most (Erdem, 2014). On why they read (purpose), the students at both Ankara and Erciyes Universities stated that they read for the purposes of being informed, personal development, and keeping up-to-date.

In a study conducted by Hogson and Thomson (2000), medical students in Newcastle-upon-Tyne stated that they read literature for a variety of positive and valued reasons. They showed preference for books that could increase awareness of life outside personal experience, stimulate inspiration or introspection, inspire students with respect to their course of study, invoke emotional responses and promote an interest in reading books. Their top ten books were the Bible, *Wild Swans*, *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance: An Inquiry into Values*, 1984, *The Man who Mistook his Wife for a Hat*, *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, *The Catcher in the Rye*, *Jonathan Livingston Seagull*, *The Wasp Factory*, and *Trainspotting*. However, the majority of the students in the study reported that they read more non-curricular books before they started their course and this (reading non-curricular books) had declined due to study or academic pressure. Erdem (2014) also found that even though students at Ankara and Erciyes Universities enjoyed reading, they could not spend much time reading books during the academic year because of other activities like spending time on the computer/internet, social life, their intensive academic schedule and preparing for tests and examinations.

2.4 Conclusion

Research from the literature identifies a number of factors that can influence the reading habits of students. These include motivation, self-efficacy, the value students attach to reading, leisure reading versus academic reading, choice, time spent reading and the incentives gained from reading. The theoretical framework and the literature review will serve as a guide for data analysis and interpretation.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

Research methodology, according to Leedy and Ormrod (2005, p.12), is the “general approach the researcher takes in carrying out the research project, to some extent, this approach dictates the particular tools the researcher selects.” Henning, van Rensburg and Smit (2005, p. 36) also define methodology as “the coherent group of methods that complement one another and that have the ‘goodness of fit’ to deliver data and findings that will reflect the research question and suit the research purpose.”

This chapter therefore discusses in detail the research design and methodology employed to generate data for this study. In addition, this chapter discusses the research methodologies and the design used in the study including the data collection strategies and instruments and the data analysis methods. All stages and processes involved in the study are explained to indicate how the study was conducted.

3.2 Research paradigm

A paradigm is defined by Kuhn (1962) as a worldview through which knowledge is filtered. Henning, van Rensburg and Smit (2005, p. 12) argues that research cannot be conducted in a theoretical vacuum, therefore, when a researcher sets out to investigate an issue he or she does so from a position of knowledge and this knowledge can frame his/her inquiry.

This study adopted an interpretivist paradigm. Check and Schutt (2012) define interpretivism as the belief that reality is socially constructed and that the goal of social scientists is to understand what meanings people give to that reality. The interpretive paradigm was appropriate for my study because I wanted to understand reading habits of first-year students at a university of technology (UoT) in KwaZulu-Natal.

Interpretive research is subjective, small-scale, non-statistical, interprets individual specificities, aims to understand actions and meanings rather than causes, and focuses on micro-concepts such as individual perspectives, personal constructs or negotiated meanings (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007). In this type of research, the researcher makes an effort to understand the human

experience from within to interpret the world from its actors. In my study, I wanted to find out from the students what materials they read and for what purposes they read. The participants were students who were able to give insight into their own personal experiences. The relationship between the researcher and the participants was subjective because the researcher was the participants' lecturer.

As Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) explain, "interpretive researchers begin with individuals and set out to understand their interpretations of the world around them" (p.18). Unstructured observation, open interviewing, idiographic descriptions and qualitative data analysis are all ways to capture insider knowledge (Henning, Van Rensburg and Smit, 2005). Qualitative, non-statistical data in the form of an open-ended questionnaire, drawings and focus group discussions were generated in this study. The open-ended questions and the students' drawings shed light on the participants' knowledge, experiences and views. Using the interpretive paradigm allowed me to construct and make meaning from the data obtained (Nieuwenhuis, 2007a, p. 99).

3.3 Research design

A research design has been defined differently by many researchers who have used different terms to discuss the same concept. Strategy is the term used by Creswell (2003) and Gay and Airasian (2000). Bryman, Bell, Hirschsohn, Dos Santos, Du Toit, Masenge, Van Aardt and Wagner (2014) define research designs as a variety of frameworks that are used to collect and analyse data. They note that a research design provides the structure that guides the use of a research method and the analysis of the subsequent data (2014, p. 100). Griffiee (2012, p.44) defines a research design as an operating model or a blueprint for a research project, which accounts for internal reasoning (causality) and external reasoning (generalisability). He further states that a research design stipulates the parts of a research project, how they are arranged, and how they function. I chose a case study design since it best served the purpose of the study and to answer the research questions.

3.3.1 Case study design

A case study design is a strategy for doing research which involves an empirical investigation of a particular contemporary phenomenon within its real life context using multiple sources of evidence (Robson, 1993, p.146). An in-depth investigation was conducted in this study using

three data generation instruments: an open-ended questionnaire, drawings and a focus group interview. I also considered Rule and John's (2011, p.4) definition of a case study: "A case study as a systematic and in-depth investigation of a particular instance in its context in order to generate knowledge." It is important to explain what a 'case' is. According to Rule and John (2011), a 'case' is the unit of analysis. The case indicates the object under investigation, or the unit of study. In this study the 'case' was the reading habits of students at a UoT in KwaZulu-Natal.

Although there is no uniform definition of a case study, and it has been defined differently by theorists (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1998; Cohen et al., 2007), Bassey (1999) provides a useful definition of a case study:

An educational case study is an empirical enquiry which is conducted within a localised boundary of space and time (i.e. a singularity); into interesting aspects of an educational activity, or programme, or institution, or system; mainly in its natural context and within an ethic of respect for persons in order to inform the judgements and decisions of practitioners or policy makers or of theoreticians who are working to these ends in such a way that sufficient data is collected (Bassey, 1999, p. 58)

My study related to Bassey's definition of a case study because the participants in the study (students) were in their natural context (a UoT), within a localised boundary of space (first-year students only). 'Reading habits' was the educational activity being investigated. Respect for the participants was ensured first by considering the following ethical issues:

- Participation in the study was voluntary and participants could withdraw from the study at any time.
- Permission to conduct this research was requested from the UoT whose students were being investigated and the University of KwaZulu-Natal where the researcher was studying.
- The institution and the participants would remain anonymous.
- Data collected would be kept confidential.

I chose a case study because it is intensive as a particular phenomenon (reading habits) is examined in a great deal of depth (Rule and John, 2011, p.7). In addition, case studies:

- a) Generate an understanding of and insight into a particular phenomenon (reading habits) by providing a thick, rich description of the case
- b) Can be used to explore a general issue within a limited and focused setting (first-year students at a UoT in KwaZulu-Natal)
- c) Might also shed light on other, similar cases, thus providing a level of generalisation or transferability

Yin (2003) states that case studies can be used for three purposes, exploratory, explanatory and descriptive purposes. My study was an exploratory case study as it sought to explore a phenomenon that had not been investigated before, and could lay the basis for further studies (Yin, 2003). Yin (2003) further states that exploratory questions are broad and open-ended, and, in this study, the aim was to understand what students read and why they read.

The researcher in case study research often spends an extended period of time on the site and interacts regularly with people who are being studied. As the participants' lecturer, I was able to be with the participants on a regular basis. The rationale for adopting a case study design was that as a lecturer at the research location, doing the case study would help me gain insight into my students' reading habits and allow me to adjust, and thus improve my teaching practices in tune with the findings.

3.4 Research approach

In designing this study, I was interested in "asking questions in real-world settings" (Patton, 1987, p. 21) and in "understanding the meaning people have constructed, that is, how they make sense of their world, and the experiences they have in the world" (Merriam, 1998, p.6). The qualitative approach fitted with the aims and purpose of this study which was to understand first-year students' reading habits.

Qualitative research is defined by Leavy (2014, p.2) as a way of learning about social reality. She further explains that qualitative research is used to explore, describe, or explain social phenomenon, unpack the meanings people ascribe to activities, situations, events, or artefacts, build a depth of understanding about some aspect of social life, or explore new or under-researched areas. Nieuwenhuis (2007a, p.51) posits that a qualitative approach typically studies

people, observing participants in their natural environment (in situ) and focuses on their meanings and interpretations. Table 3.1 below displays the qualities of a qualitative researcher as discussed by Creswell (2008, p.46) and how these fit with this study.

Table 3.1 Qualities of qualitative research in relation to this study

Qualitative research	Examples from the current study
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relies on the views of his/her participants. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First-year students’ own views and experiences on what they read and for what purposes.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asks broad general questions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The two research questions especially the second question which asked “Why?”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collects data consisting largely of words or texts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three open-ended data collection instruments were used: open-ended questionnaire, draw and write collages and focus groups.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describes and analyses these words for themes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualitative data was categorised thematically and then analysed using the two research questions and the theoretical framework.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducts the inquiry in a subjective manner. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The relationship between the researcher and the participants was subjective because I was their lecturer.

I used broad questions so that I could learn from the participants (Cohen et al., 2007), and those questions gave insight into the participants’ habits. Qualitative research involves data collection procedures that result primarily in open-ended, non-numerical data, which is then analysed primarily by non-statistical methods. Nieuwenhuis (2007a, p.51) argues that qualitative research

methodology places little importance on developing statistically-valid samples or on searching for statistical support for hypotheses or on measuring the size or scope of the phenomena. The phenomena are rather described and understood within their naturally-occurring context with the intention of developing an understanding of the meanings imparted by the participants. Therefore, qualitative research allows for in-depth analysis of data. I gathered data that would allow me to understand my participants' reading habits in detail hence I used three data generation instruments.

3.5. Research context

The study was conducted at a UoT in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. The UoT, located in a township in the south of Durban, opened in 1979. Its location in a black township was meant to empower South Africa's marginalised. This institution offers technology-based programmes in three faculties, namely Faculty of Management Sciences, Faculty of Engineering, and Faculty of Natural Sciences. According to the institution's mission statement, it serves students with a genuine historically disadvantaged background. The UoT enrolls approximately 10 000 students each year with the majority of the students coming from KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape, provinces with large rural areas.

The UoT's original role was to provide technical and vocational education to socially disadvantaged black residents mainly in the then KwaZulu homeland, and beyond that to the former province of Natal. It was conceived as a vehicle for training technicians for the region and for social upliftment. Its mandate remains the same. The UoT provides affordable, quality education to talented but socially disadvantaged individuals. Sixty percent of the students are enrolled in Science, Engineering and Technology (SET). Students who are accepted at this institution must have obtained a rating of 3 (Moderate Achievement, 40-49%) or more in six recognised 20-credit subjects in the National Senior Certificate. Those with a Senior Certificate must have passed at least five subjects including English and a minimum of one higher grade subject. There are Extended Curriculum Programmes (ECPs) which are aimed at assisting students who come to the institution under-prepared for academic activities. These students undergo a four-year programme instead of three years.

3.6 Sampling

Researchers (Dörnyei, 2007; Mackey and Gass, 2005; Nunan, 1992) make a distinction between two types of sampling procedures, which are probability sampling and non-probability sampling. Probability sampling could be simply defined as sampling where subjects are selected at random and each subject has the same chance of being selected as the others. Non-probability sampling is a sample that is not selected at random which means that not all members of the population have the same chance of being selected in the sample. McKay (2006) states that there are two important things crucial to the selection of participants:

- They need to be related to the purpose of the research,
- They need to be a representative sample of the population.

I used a type of non-probability sampling known as a purposeful sample. It is a common sampling strategy in qualitative, case study research. This is a sample where the researcher selects information-rich cases to accomplish a wide-ranging grasp of the socio-educational context (Patton, 2002). McMillan and Schumacher (2006) assert that the sample size is directly correlated to the nature and purpose of the research problem as well as the data collection strategies and the access to an information-rich case. Patton (2002) concurs that in purposeful sampling the researcher identifies and locates participants who match the characteristics of the targeted population. Shank and Brown (2007) also state that in purposeful sampling the researcher targets unique participants who will give the researcher the answers or insights they are seeking, as a result, the purposive sampling size is very small.

A class of 83 first-year electrical engineering students was used for this study. This is the only class with first-year students to whom I have access. All students were black Africans who were second language speakers of English. The language of teaching and learning at the institution is English. The class has more males than females mainly due to the nature of the course, however, on the questionnaire some participants did not indicate the gender therefore more females indicated their gender than males on the questionnaire. They ranged in age from 18 years to 28 years. They were in the three-year programme which meant that their senior certificate results allowed them to enrol in the mainstream programme.

I received consent to conduct the study in the institution through the Research Ethics Committee. I lectured to the participants and had built a strong relationship with them. I therefore recruited them by asking them to participate in the study. First, the purpose and rationale of the study were explained to the students by the researcher. I explained to them that they could choose not to participate in the study and could withdraw at any time. Since I lectured to the participants I assured them that the study was not related to their course hence the questionnaire and the draw and write activity were anonymous. Pseudonyms were used for the focus group discussions. I asked the participants to indicate on the questionnaire should they wish to participate in the discussions. I took the contact details and phoned them later to follow up on the request. On Mondays, my class is the last period of the day and the students had agreed to meet after this lesson when they were free from all academic activity.

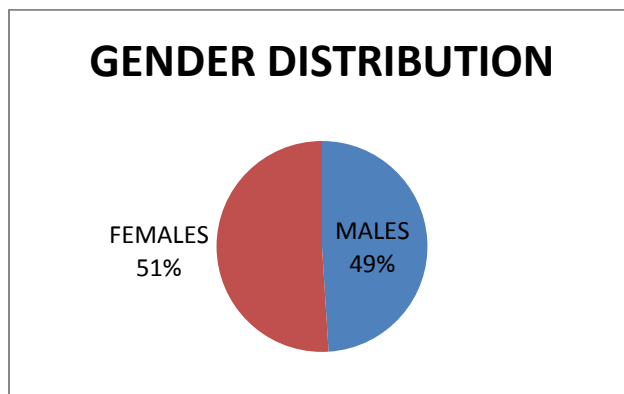


Figure 3.1 Gender distribution of participants

3.7 Data generation

The data for the study was generated using three data generation instruments. Research instruments are tools that help find answers to the research questions designed for a study.

3.7.1 Open-ended questionnaire

Questionnaires are sets of field questions to which participants respond on their own or in the presence of a researcher. The questionnaire had questions on student characteristics, including age, gender and students' activities when at school, and asked students to answer the two research questions. McKay (2006) mentions two types of open-ended questions, namely, filling-

in questions and short-answer questions. Both these types of questions were used. Open-ended questionnaires are beneficial because:

- a) They can be collected in a relatively short time.
- b) They encourage the participants to add elaborate comments because participants have more opportunities to fill in what they want to say rather than fit their responses into predetermined confines of closed-ended items (Allison, 2004).

Due to the drawback aligned with open-ended questionnaires that there is no opportunity to probe further to find out what the participants mean by particular responses (Cohen et al., 2011), two other research instruments were used.

The participants were given ten minutes to read the questionnaire and during this time they could ask for clarification if they did not understand what was required of them. I was present the entire duration so they could ask any time during responding to the questionnaire. There were 79 out of 83 students (95%) who returned the questionnaire.

3.7.2 Visual method

Data was also collected using a technique that is known as the draw-and-write technique. Mair and Kierans (2007, p. 122) describe this technique as one where first, the participants respond to a research prompt (a scenario in this study) with a drawing. Then, the participants are asked to elaborate on their drawing through written or oral explanations to further describe and clarify the content meaning of the picture. Drawing as a research method provides researchers with a window into the lived experiences of the participants and a means to understand how they make meaning of them (Mayaba and Wood, 2015). The drawings would help even those students who cannot express themselves very well in writing. Coad (2007) states that visual research is a beneficial method because it enables participants to have a say in the production of knowledge. The students become active participants. This method promotes participants' voices in research (James, 2007).

The participants were given drawing paper and were given the following instructions:

1. If you could plan a reading room, what reading material would you put in it that you enjoy?

2. For what purposes would these reading materials be used?

Using the paper given, draw a plan of your reading room using drawing as well as words that show all the reading materials that you like to read. You must also include reasons for reading each mentioned material.

For example: *Engineering textbooks*- School purposes/to pass tests and examinations.

Be specific, for example if you read the *newspaper*; provide the name of the newspaper and the sections that you read. Also, say why you would have newspapers in your reading room.

Even though I had stated that it was not a “who draws best” activity I found that most of the participants took a lot of time in trying to draw as best as they could. It took them between 30 and 45 minutes to finish the activity.

3.7.3 Focus group interview

The main aims of conducting the focus group discussions were:

- To develop an in-depth understanding of the students’ reading habits
- To find out about their purposes for reading

Watts and Ebbutt (1987, cited in Cohen et al., 2011) suggest that group interviews or focus groups are advantageous because they allow discussions to develop thus yielding a wide range of responses. They are likely to lead to varied opinions/ideas. Kitzinger (1995) states that focus groups are useful for exploring people’s knowledge and experiences and can be used to examine not only what people think but how they think and why they think that way. Another advantage of focus groups is that they are time-saving compared to individual interviews and therefore were less demanding of the research participants who are students.

Two groups of eight students per group were interviewed. The students volunteered to be part of the group discussion. Most of the participants had never taken part in focus group discussions therefore we did a mock discussion first on a different topic. This seemed to put the participants at ease. The participants indicated that they would be more comfortable talking to me than to a colleague because they were used to me as their lecturer. The discussions were tape-recorded. Each of the two sessions was 60 minutes.

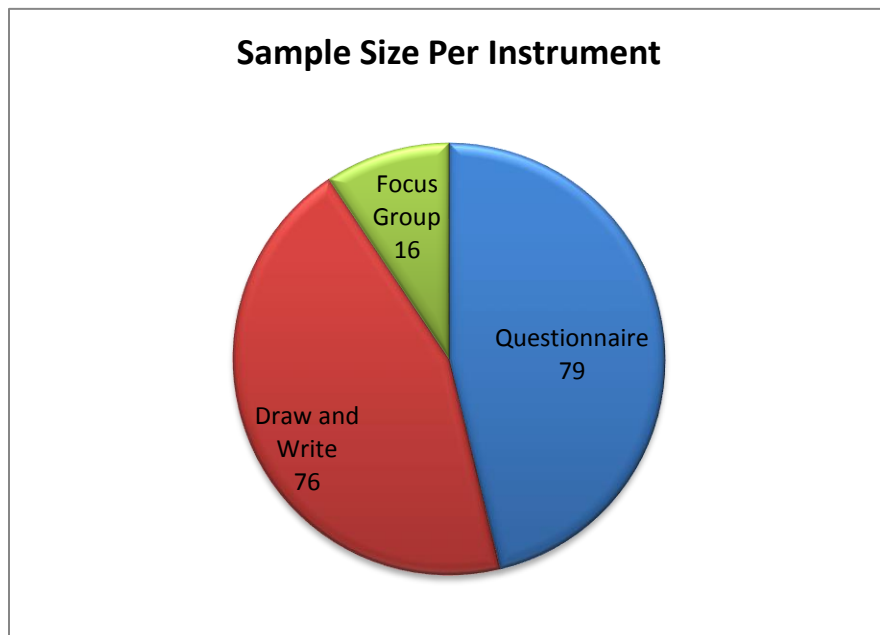


Figure 3.2 Number of participants per data collection instrument

3.8 Data analysis

Cohen et al. (2011, p. 537) states that qualitative data analysis involves organising, accounting for and explaining the data, making sense of data in terms of the participants' definitions of the situation, noting patterns, themes, categories and regularities. The purpose and outcome of data analysis is to reveal to others through fresh insights what we have observed and discovered about the human condition (Saldaña, 2011).

Data from my three research instruments were categorised into the two main themes of this study which were materials that students read and the purposes for which students read. Category construction is an attempt to cluster the most seemingly alike things into seemingly appropriate groups (Saldaña, 2011). Cohen et al. (2011, p.559) state that categories are usually derived from theoretical constructs or areas of interest devised in advance of the analysis rather than developed from the material itself, though these may be modified by reference to the empirical data. I analysed data from each instrument as I gathered them and as I was proceeding through the

study. I analysed the questionnaire first, then the drawings and lastly the focus group data. Data from the three research instruments was then collated to provide a collective answer to the two research questions.

I coded all data according to the themes. Coding is defined by Kerlinger (1970, cited in Cohen et al., 2011) as the translation of question responses and participant information to specific categories for the purpose of analysis. Descriptive coding was used, which is defined by Cohen et al. (2011, p.560) as a word or abbreviation close to that which it is describing. The descriptive codes I used were “materials” and “purpose.” Data was then interpreted based on the two main themes. Braun and Clarke (2006) argue that a theme can reveal essential information about the data in relation to the research question by revealing the patterns in the responses therefore revealing meaning contained in the data set. I used a deductive (also known as a theoretical or top down) approach where the themes and codes were pre-selected based on previous literature, previous theories or the specifics of the research question (Gale, Heath, Cameron, Rashid and Redwood, 2013).

The identified themes and the theoretical framework formed the basis for reasoning, interpretation, argumentation and formulation of the findings and conclusions of this research. A theoretical approach to data analysis requires intensive engagement and reviewing of the literature prior to analysing data (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Tuckett (2005) argues that literature engagement can add to the analysis by making the researcher aware of details of the data. Therefore, the results of my study were interpreted in light of:

- Results from similar, previous studies in the literature review
- The theoretical framework (the theories of motivation which underpin this study)

3.9 Storage of data and disposal of data

The data received was kept in a locked cabinet at all times during the research. After the stipulated five-year period, all questionnaires and responses will be shredded. Focus group recordings will be incinerated.

3.10 Rigour and trustworthiness

Merriam (1998) posits that reliability and validity are quantitative and positivist constructs that do not apply to qualitative research. Therefore, in this study objectivity, validity and reliability will not necessarily be adhered to as they are known to come from a positivist and quantitative tradition. However, in order to achieve rigour in this study several elements were taken into consideration. I used Guba's (1981) constructs of how qualitative studies can show rigour and trustworthiness. These constructs relate to concepts of:

- **Credibility:** Ensuring that the study explores what it actually intended
- **Transferability:** The extent to which the findings of one study can be applied to other situations
- **Dependability:** Showing that the findings are consistent and could be repeated
- **Confirmability:** A level of neutrality or the degree to which the findings of a study are determined by the participants and not by the researcher's own bias, motivation or interest

Rolfe (2004) compares these constructs to the concepts of quantitative research. Credibility corresponds with internal validity, dependability with reliability, transferability with external validity and confirmability with presentation. To ensure that I adhered to the four constructs so that my study would be trustworthy, I did the following:

- i. I used well-recognised research instruments (open-ended questionnaire, drawings and focus group) that have been used extensively in qualitative research.
- ii. I was in constant contact with the participants to form a good rapport with them. As their lecturer, I was able to form a relationship based on trust with them.
- iii. When I recruited participants, I explained the study and then handed out participant consent forms where they were encouraged to answer honestly. They were assured that their participation was voluntary and they could withdraw at any time.
- iv. Triangulation, which is the use of several methods to study one phenomenon, was done in this study (Houghton, Casey, Shaw and Murphy, 2013). A single method of data collection is never adequate. In order to have rich data that facilitates a deeper understanding of the research topic three data generation methods were used. Triangulation is a way of enhancing the validity of the research study because it involves utilising several measures of data

collection. Yin (1994) recommends the use of multiple sources as they provide a more convincing and accurate case study.

- v. To ensure that researcher bias was minimised I used overlapping methods of data generation.
- vi. The questionnaire was informally piloted on five student tutors and a colleague before it was administered in the main study.
- vii. I gave step-by-step details of the methodology to allow for the same study to be transferrable to a similar context.
- viii. After the focus group interview had been transcribed, the participants were asked to read the transcript to verify it and to eliminate researcher bias, as far as possible.

3.11 Ethical considerations

Ethics are vital to consider when conducting research. Ethics can be defined as the differentiation between what is right and wrong. According to Hammersley and Traianou (2012, p. 5), ethics is not just about how one deals with those specific people with whom one has direct contact but research can affect people more generally. They further state that a study could damage the public reputation of an organisation. It was therefore very important for me to ensure that I receive consent from the institution where the participants learn. It is important to consider the dignity and rights of the participants. Murray and Beglar (2009) also suggest that the researcher should ensure that no physical harm or emotional stress come to the participants. I therefore undertook the following ethical considerations before I conducted my study:

1. A copy of the research proposal was submitted to the Research Ethics Committee of the institution where the study was conducted and the institution where I was studying. Consent and approval to conduct the study were given by both institutions.
2. A participant consent letter was sent out to all the participants. The letter gave the details of the study which were: the identity and contact numbers of the researcher and that of the supervisors, the purpose of the study and how data was to be collected. The participants were assured of anonymity and confidentiality. The letter also explained that the students' participation in the study was voluntary and they could withdraw themselves at any time. They were assured that their opinions and all the information they gave in the study were not going to impact on their studies since the researcher was their lecturer.

3. The students were made aware that the focus group discussion would be recorded and transcribed.

3.12 Limitations to the study

This study was not without limitations. The major limitation was the small sample size which meant that the study could not be generalised to the larger population, but it was used for diagnostic purposes and the findings would be used as a springboard for further studies. The researcher being the participants' lecturer could result in researcher bias and also in students responding in a socially desirable manner. To minimise these aspects I used three data collection instruments to triangulate data. After I had transcribed the focus group discussions, I asked the participants to review the transcripts to ensure there was no bias. The questionnaire and the draw-and-write activity were anonymous and the participants were encouraged to answer honestly.

3.13 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the research design and methodology of this study. It started by outlining the research paradigm, approach and design used in the study. It further looked at the participants, data collection tools, processes followed in collecting data, data analysis and ethical considerations. The next chapter presents the findings, analysis and discussion of the results.

CHAPTER 4

Discussion of findings

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to table, analyse, interpret and discuss the findings of data obtained from the three data collection instruments used in this study, i.e. the open-ended questionnaire, the draw-and-write technique and the focus group discussions. The findings relate to the two research questions that guided the study. Data was analysed to identify material read by first-year students and to explore the purposes for reading. First, biographical data is discussed. This information gives background information about the participants, which assisted in the analysis of the findings. I then discuss the findings according to each research question by analysing the themes that emerged by referring to the literature and theoretical framework.

4.2 Biographical data

The questionnaire covered information about the participants' age, gender, the language in which they do most of their reading, affiliation to public libraries and the frequency of their reading. All participants were black Africans who are second language speakers of English. All participants, except one, have isiZulu as their mother tongue. The one participant was Swati. Although this information was not part of the purpose of the study, the biographic data helped in analysing and understanding the findings.

Table 4.1 indicates that 49% of the participants were males and 51% were females. However, some participants omitted writing their gender. It is possible that they preferred not to indicate gender because they did not see the relevance of it to the study. The percentage was calculated from those who indicated their gender. The actual class has more males than females, which could mean that some males did not write their gender. Ninety percent of the participants said that they did most of their reading in English. This could be largely due to English being the language of teaching and learning in most schools and at the UoT where the study was conducted. It is also possible that they read more in English due to a lack of reading material in the mother tongue.

The participants were asked to write their age and the responses ranged from 18 years to 28 years. Thirty percent of the participants were 20 years old, 16% were 19 years, 11% were 21 years, another 11% were 22 years and 8% were 23 years old. It was not surprising to see these figures as most of the students finish high school at 18 or 19 years old. It was also not alarming to have participants aged 28, 27, and 25 still doing their first year. There are many possibilities for this, one being the disadvantaged backgrounds most of the participants come from. Most have to find work after matric to save up for registration while others start school late.

When asked if they were members of public libraries, 57% said they were not members and 43% said they were members. From those participants who are members, 27 said they mostly borrowed academic books or books that relate to their course, 17 participants said they borrow books for leisure reading and only four participants said they borrowed both academic books and books for leisure. This implies that they are not reading for recreational purposes when they are in the library. They possibly view the library as a reference source for doing their academic work only. These findings may also suggest that students may not have access to public libraries in their areas. This could possibly be because the majority of the student population from this UoT come from the rural areas in KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape where there is a shortage of public libraries.

Regarding how frequently the participants read, 43% said they read occasionally, 35% read every day, 21% read once a week and only 1% said they never read. These findings suggest that the participants are in the habit of reading. The following findings will therefore discuss what materials they read and for what purposes they read.

Table 4.1 Biographical data of participants

	Choices	%
Gender	Male	49
	Female	51

Age	28	1.6
	27	5
	25	3
	24	3
	23	8
	22	11
	21	11
	20	30
	19	16
	18	10
Reading language preference	English	90
	IsiZulu	10
Member of a public library	Yes	43
	No	57
Reading frequency	Never	2
	Occasionally	43
	Everyday	35
	Once a week	21

4.3 Research question one: What materials do students read?

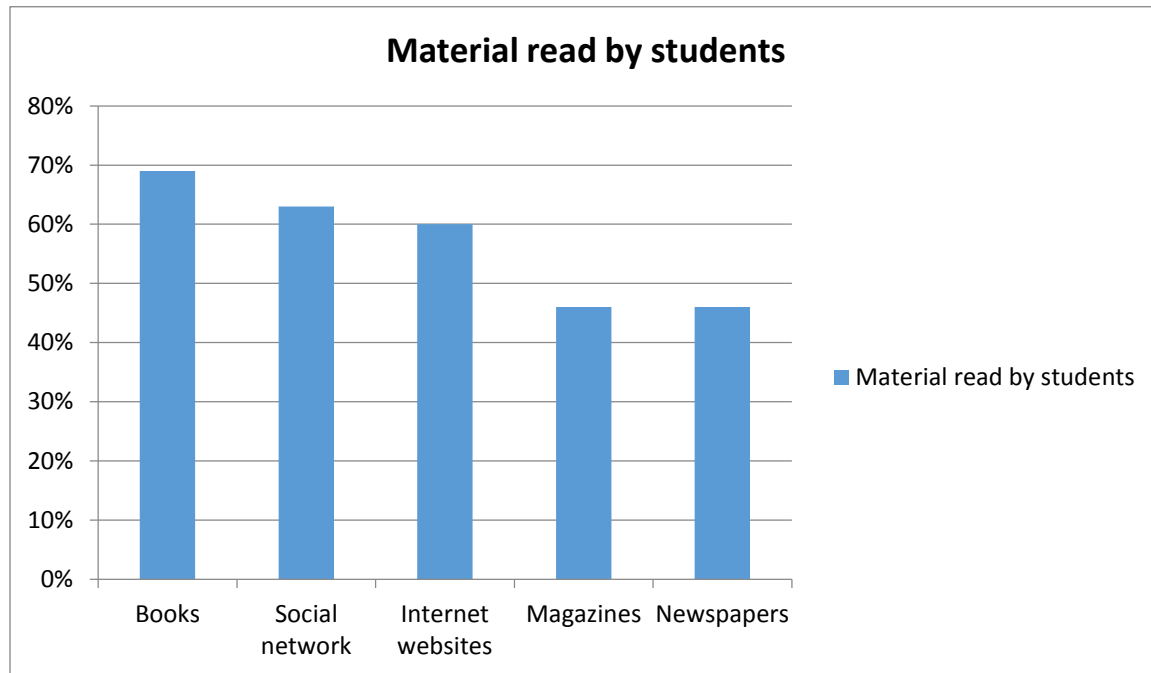


Figure 4.1 Materials read by students

When the participants were asked to indicate the materials they read the following results were indicated from the questionnaire: books (69%), social networks (63%), internet websites (60%), magazines (46%) and newspapers (44%). These findings were also reinforced by the participants' drawings and the focus group discussions. When participants were asked to draw their ideal reading room they all had books, computers (desktop computers, laptops or tablets), 29 participants included magazines and 33 included newspapers as can be seen in the drawings below.

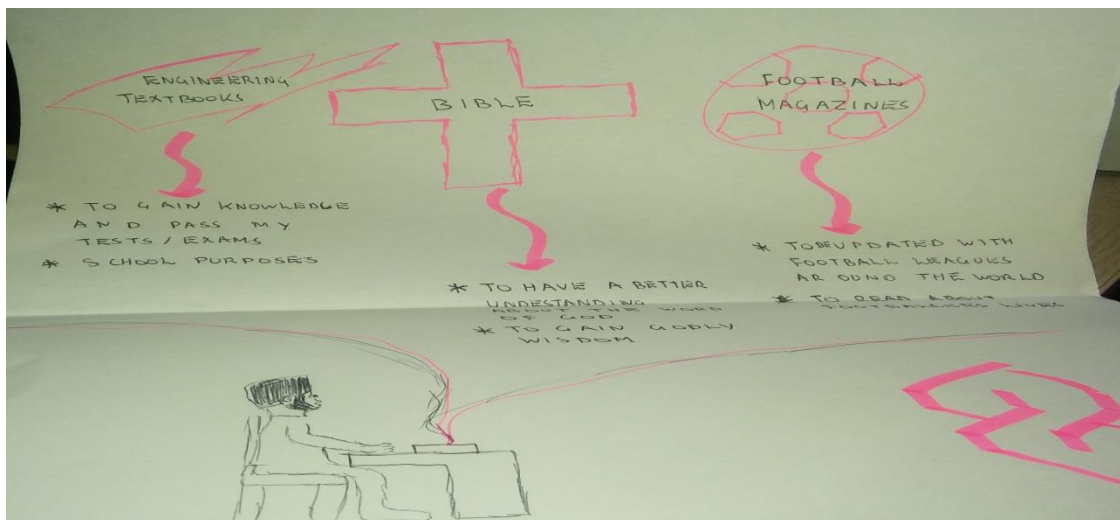
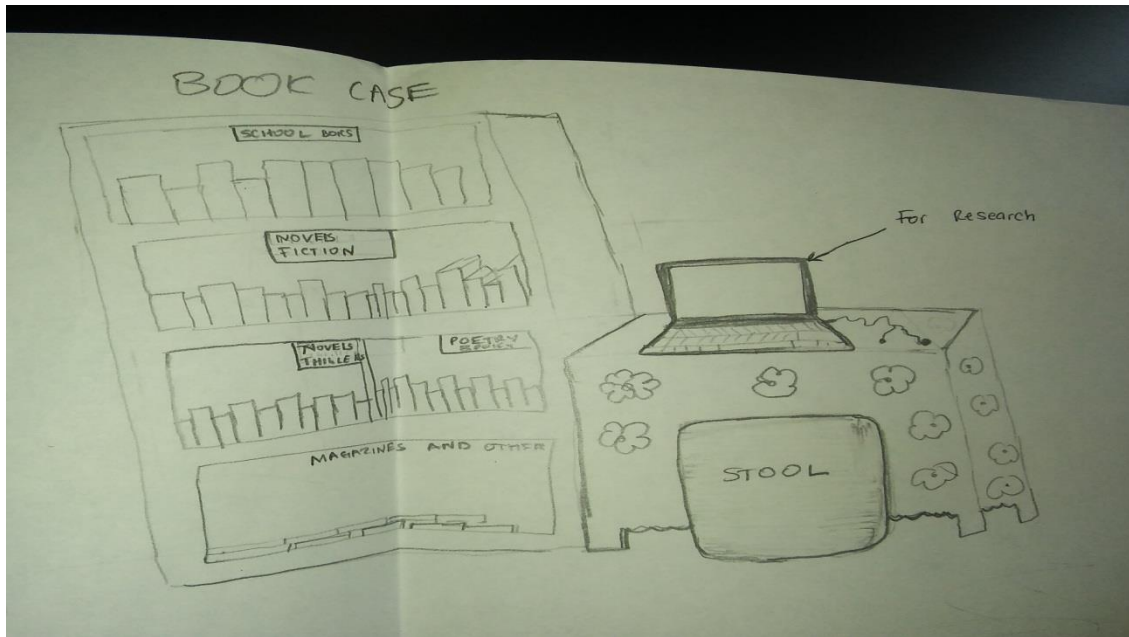


Figure 4.2 Examples of students’ drawings showing the materials read

These findings differed in the order of preference from those by Huang, Capps, Blacklock and Garza (2014) who found that students enjoyed using online reading material, followed by magazines and newspapers, graphic novels and comic books, and non-major academic books were the least popular. Even though the order of preference is not the same as in my study, the students seem to enjoy the same materials. I will be discussing in detail each of these categories of material read by students. Social networks will be discussed under ‘Internet’ as I found that it fell under the category of materials students read from the internet.

4.3.1 Magazines and newspapers

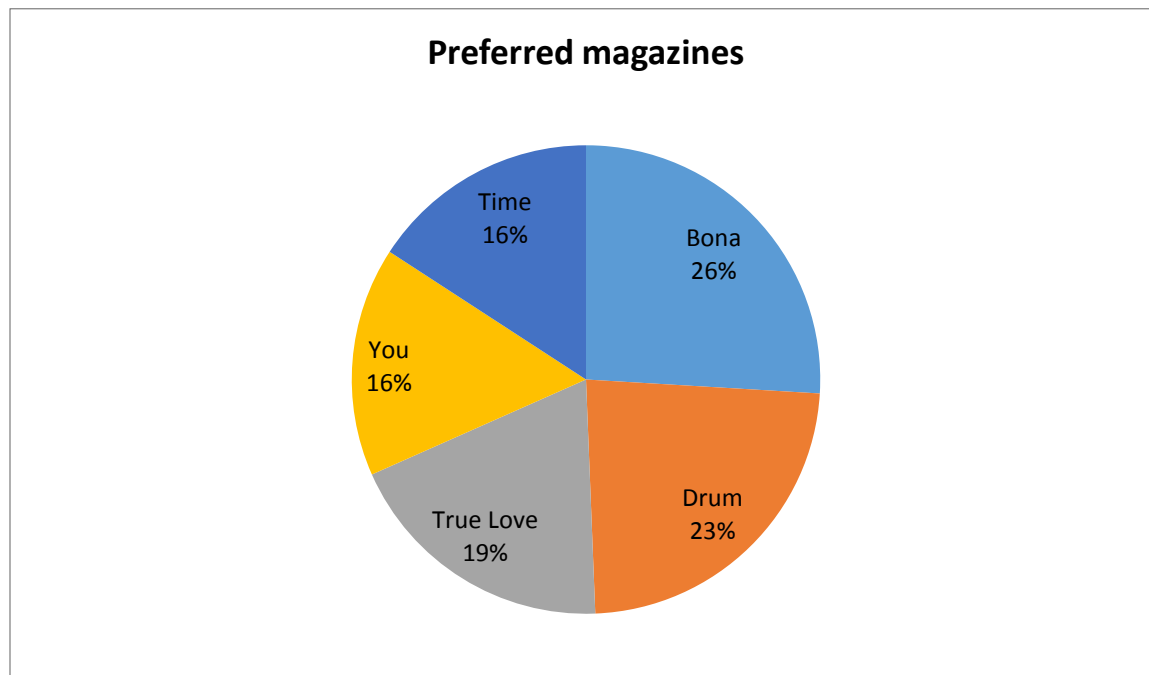


Figure 4.3 Magazines preferred by students

Bona (26%), *Drum* (23%), *True Love* (19%), *You* (16%) and *Time* (16%) were the magazines that the students preferred. Forty-six percent of the participants said that they liked them because they were easily accessible to them, because they buy them and they get them from friends and from family members. Most of the literature on reading habits of students shows findings from other African countries and international countries; I therefore could not find studies with similar magazines that are preferred by my participants because of the different contexts.

One participant in the focus group said, “*Drum is the most out there magazine.*” This statement seems to suggest both the trendiness and easy availability of *Drum* magazine to this student. It comes out weekly and is affordable to buy when compared to other magazines and these could be further reasons it is seen by the student as “*the most out there.*” This could mean that the content, availability and the ease of accessibility of these magazines expose students to them and may contribute to students’ magazine reading habits. This could imply that if reading resources are made easily available and accessible then students may read them. The findings by McMane

(2001, cited in Njeze, 2013) attest that magazines are the most accessible and affordable written document.

Bona and *Drum* also have IsiZulu editions and three students in the focus group identified the language as the reason for reading these magazines. IsiZulu is the participating students' mother tongue therefore, the students may be reading these magazines because they understand them easily and give them a sense of identity. It is also possible that they feel confident when they read these magazines because they are written in a language that the students identify with. This can be explained by the concepts of competence and relatedness that are found in the SDT.

Competence is a sense of confidence that an individual has when performing a task, which in this case would be reading magazines in the vernacular. Reading magazines in a language the students are competent in may increase their confidence in reading therefore making them want to read more magazines. Relatedness is a need of a person to feel attached to others around him/her (Deci and Ryan, 2000). Reading in the vernacular, in this case, may possibly give students a sense of belonging to a desired social group (Usher and Kober, 2012).

This may indicate that students would read material that they identify with and that gives them a sense of belonging. This was an interesting finding for me as a lecturer because it made me realise the value and the impact first language books could have on reading habits. Students may need to be exposed more to materials written in their mother tongue. In their study of college students in Peshawar Ismail, Ahmad and Ahmad's (2013) got results similar to these findings because they found that Urdu magazines were more popular than the English ones.

Two participants from the focus group indicated that they liked to browse through magazines when they found them and they read them because they could read about their favourite celebrities or they just looked at the pictures. This indicates that students like to read about favourite personalities. Zizile said, *"I am not really a fan of magazines but when there is one around I sometimes read it."* Another student, Bongiwe, said, *"Magazines sometimes have stories, like (about) Babes Wodumo, jah, then I read because I like her or I just look at the pictures."*

This is possibly due to students having easy access to the magazines as already discussed; if they get hold of a magazine then they will probably read it or show interest in it by browsing through

it. It could also indicate that if the content in the magazines is interesting and relates to their interests then they would read. Their choice to read or not to read is possibly dependent on the extent to which they value the activity. The expectancy-value theory (Wigfield and Eccles, 2000) suggests that if the task does not lead to valued or desired results then students may not devote effort to the task. Therefore, if they pick up a magazine and they see something of value to them (e.g. reading about a favourite celebrity) then they may read.

What I can infer from these findings is that if students find value in the text they are reading, if they identify or relate to the content in the text and if they feel confident about their reading abilities then they could be motivated to read. If the reading material is readily available and easily accessible, it may entice students to read.

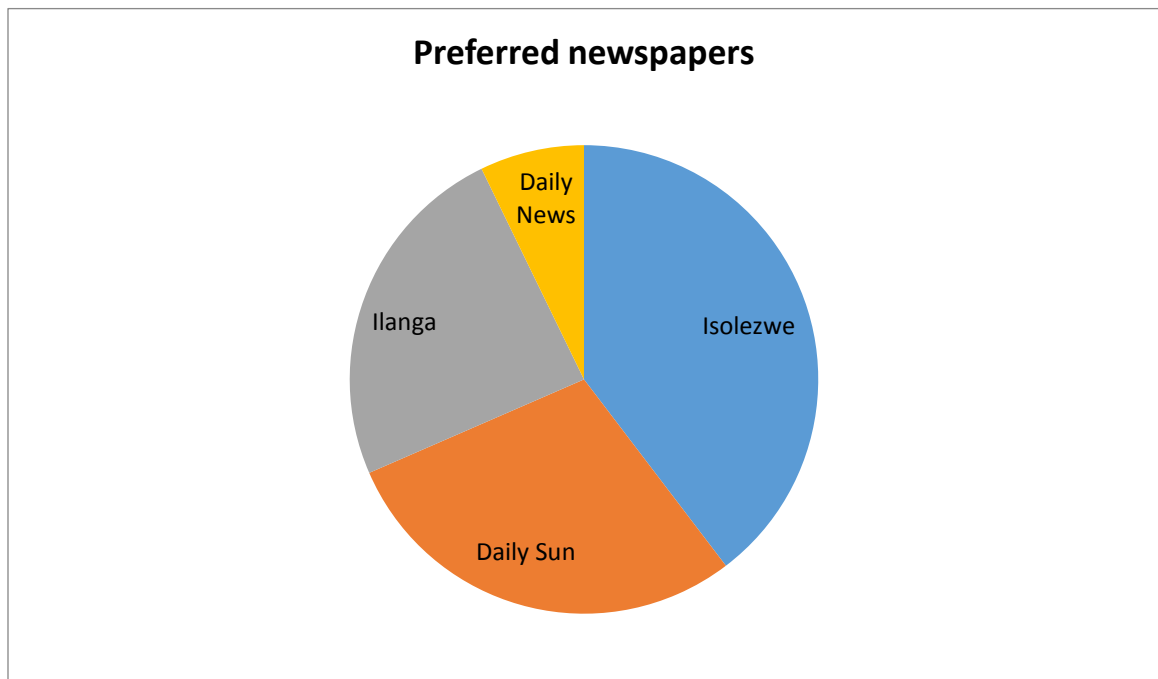


Figure 4.4 Newspapers that are preferred by students

From the questionnaire data, it was also interesting to note that *Isolezwe*, which is in the participants' mother tongue, was the most read newspaper. Forty-four percent of the students stated that they read *Isolezwe*. One participant in the focus group said he liked *Isolezwe* because it was based on "true stories." Hazel said this about *Isolezwe*, "I like to read top stories, if I see it will be an interesting story then I will read. It has real stories. But sometimes I just read the topic and I can guess the story, then I do not read." The implication of this is that students would like to read about real life issues and about real life people. It may indicate that they enjoy

local news. The statement that sometimes the student can predict the story by just reading the topic may suggest that because stories are about real people experiences therefore students are able to use their existing knowledge to figure out the stories. This means they are engaging with the text they read.

Azania in the focus group expressed a very strong preference for *Daily Sun* newspaper. She said they wrote mysterious and sometimes unbelievable stories which she loves. *“Daily Sun, Oh! I love that paper. I have to meet the editor. I read it all the time. The stories there are very interesting and they write about tokoloshes which, ay (laughing) I do not believe sometimes.”* Data from the questionnaire also showed that 32% of the participants read *Daily Sun*.

It was not surprising to see *Daily Sun* as one of the preferred newspapers because according to their website www.dailysun.co.za , it is the biggest daily newspaper in South Africa. Its readers are predominantly black South Africans. As the student suggested in the above statement, *Daily Sun* usually covers stories that are unique and mostly hard to believe. The perception from most students is that the stories are fictitious. These findings imply that students enjoy reading fiction and mystery stories.

Twenty-three male participants in the draw-and-write technique and five from the focus group indicated that they only read the sports section of the newspaper because they said they loved sports, especially soccer. Fezile announced, *“I only read the newspaper for soccer.”* Zobuzwe concurred, *“I only read Soccer Laduma I do not read other newspapers.”* Soccer is probably the most dominant sport among black people especially in the townships and in the rural areas. For most boys growing up in these areas soccer is the only form of entertainment so most develop the love for soccer from a very young age. When males are gathered together, the topic of soccer usually comes up. It is possible that the males read about soccer because it is a subject that they love and have an interest in. It is also possible that they read to keep updated so they can be able to share what they have read with others. This indicates an intrinsic motivation for reading because they read for their own personal gratification about something they love.

In contrast there was a participant who stated that he did not read newspapers because as he explained, *“The look is not that attractive, it is not fancy, Free 4 All [This is a South African schools’ newspaper which was established in 1996] which we had when we were at school was fun. I liked it because it had pictures and had a lot of school stuff which was interesting,”* Earl

stated. A few of the other participants in the group agreed, “*Oh, I remember that paper, I loved it too, it had a lot of things I identified with.*” Two other participants said they read a newspaper only when they saw an interesting picture in it. “*Most of the times I just look at the pictures, if it is a picture that is interesting I will read that whole story.*” This indicates that these students are not against reading newspapers but the look of the other newspapers deter them from reading. It is possible that if these students could find newspapers that have a similar look and content that is relevant to them like *Free 4 All*, then they would read these.

The above seem to suggest that the participants prefer to read magazines and newspapers that are in their mother tongue (IsiZulu). They also seem to enjoy material that is visually appealing to them. I learnt from these findings that students prefer to read material with pictures and illustrations that appeal to the eye. The significance of this to the academia and even to authors is that they could introduce more visually enticing printed reading material. This is an important finding especially since the majority of the students showed preference for online reading which provides materials with a lot of visuals. If students are still expected to read from printed materials then effort should be made to make it interesting to read. The SDT (Deci and Ryan, 2002) also suggests that people’s motivation to read is enhanced when their social environments provide them with opportunities. This theory further indicates that the students’ social environments could facilitate, hinder, or block this tendency to want to actualise their reading potentials.

The findings further show that students also like stories from the newspapers that they identify with and that are of interest to them. The implication from this finding is that students have intrinsic motivation for reading because when students are intrinsically motivated they will possess the curiosity and the desire to read about a particular topic of interest (Wood, Edwards, Hill-Miller and Vintinner, 2006). Motivation to read is the likelihood to engage in reading or to choose to read (Gambrell, 2009, 2011). A challenge for lecturers would be to find out what their students like to read and thereafter source reading material which students would find relevant. Reading about stories which would be of interest to the students may increase their interest in the reading materials.

These findings are similar to findings in Pandey’s (2010) study in India which indicated that newspapers were the most conventional and popular medium of conveying local, regional,

national and international news. Akarsu and Dariyemez (2014) found contrasting results in their study; magazines were the least read and the participants stated that they sometimes read newspapers. However, Akanda, Hoq and Hasan (2013) found that a large majority of students read newspapers regularly. Their students read newspapers often because newspapers require less time to read. Kirmizi (2007, cited in Arkian, 2008) also found that students read newspapers and magazines in their spare time.

4.3.2 The types of books that students enjoy

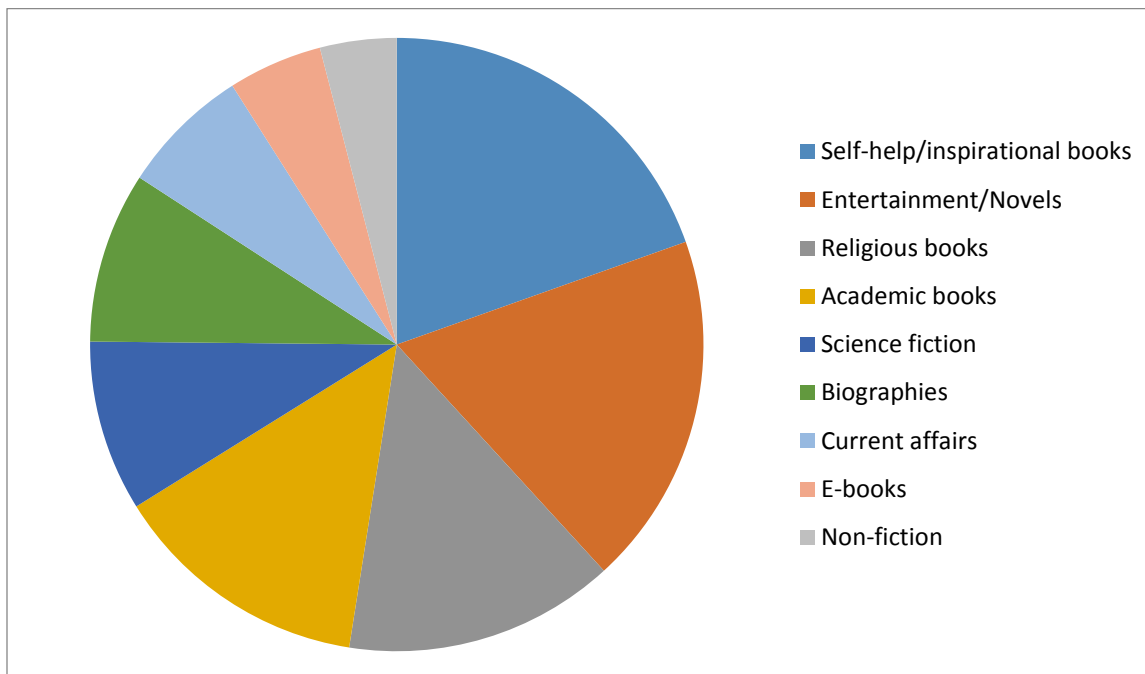


Figure 4.5 Types of books that are enjoyed by students

Figure 4.5 indicates that 63% of the participants enjoyed self-help or inspirational books, 60% enjoyed reading novels, 46% read religious books and only 44% of the participants enjoyed reading academic books. This was data from the questionnaire and the participants could choose more than one category from the categories that were given. Data from the drawings and the focus group discussions also support these findings. This was also evident when the participants were asked to give titles of books they enjoyed. The following were some of the titles of books that are inspirational to the participants: *Rich Dad, Poor Dad, Act Like a Lady and Think Like a Man, Long Walk to Freedom, When Hope Whispers* and *The Monk Who Sold His Ferrari*.

Mbali said, "I love Maya Angelou's I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings, it is the way she tells her stories, she inspires me."

"I only read something that is motivational or let me say inspiring. Right now I am reading a book called The Power of Purpose. It gives inspiration in things that I will face in life," explained Muzi.

Adam mentioned, "I like to read stories about inspirational people like Richard Branson. I want to be rich."

The following religious books were mentioned: *The Holy Bible, Jesus Wept, How to Hear From God, Good Morning Holy Spirit and War Room*. The *Holy Bible* was mentioned 11 times which made it the most read religious book.

The love for self-help/inspirational books and religious books seems to be a reflection of the general culture of most black Africans where Christianity plays a major role. It is possible that most of the participants have aspirations to improve their home background thus the focus on books on building wealth. There is also a steady rise of motivational speakers on national radio stations like Ukhozi FM and in churches and these may be influencing the participants' choices in reading. This was enlightening to me as I realised that students do not need to be stimulated educationally only, they also need guidance in life skills.

Similar findings by Mlay, Sabi, Tsuma and Langmia (2015) indicate that the material that the students read the most and that they owned were spiritual building books, self-building/ motivational / inspirational books, newspapers and documentaries, politics/ economics, culture, current affairs, novels/ entertainment books and literature on social trends. *The Bible* was one of the top books chosen by students in Hogson and Thomson's (2000) study.

Students were asked to list books that they had read recently which they found interesting. Although they were asked to mention at least two titles, most of the participants mentioned only one title or had no title. This was interesting, as 60% of the participants had indicated that they enjoyed reading novels yet they could not provide at least two titles of books they had read. A possible explanation for this could be that the students had only read one book or had not read recently. Another explanation could be that even though they may enjoy reading novels, they may not have had access to novels at their homes or on campus as the library stocks mostly

academic books. It could also be a possibility that some of the participants had simply forgotten the titles or that they have not had time to read novels lately as they are busy with their academic work. However, an overall implication could be that they have not read much.

Of the titles given by the participants I found a few books that have been made into movies, and it could be hard to determine if they had really read the book or they had just watched the movie version of it. However, most of the participants were able to give the author of the book which could be an indication that they had read the books.

One of the participants gave the title *Nothing to Lose* and wrote Steve Oedekerk as the author of the “book”. When I did research on this title, I found that *Nothing to Lose* is a 1997 action comedy film that was directed by Steve Oedekerk. Another participant wrote *Diary of a Mad Black Woman* which is a movie written by Tyler Perry and is not a book. This could indicate that these students prefer watching movies to reading. It is possible that they felt they had to write something even though they had not read any books recently.

Table 4.2 Books read by participants that are also movie titles, where the participants were able to name the author

Book/ Movie title	Author
Plain Truth	Jodi Picoult
Act Like a Lady, Think Like a Man	Steve Harvey
Pride and Prejudice	Jane Austen
War Room	Chris Fabry
The Gift of the Magi	O. Henry

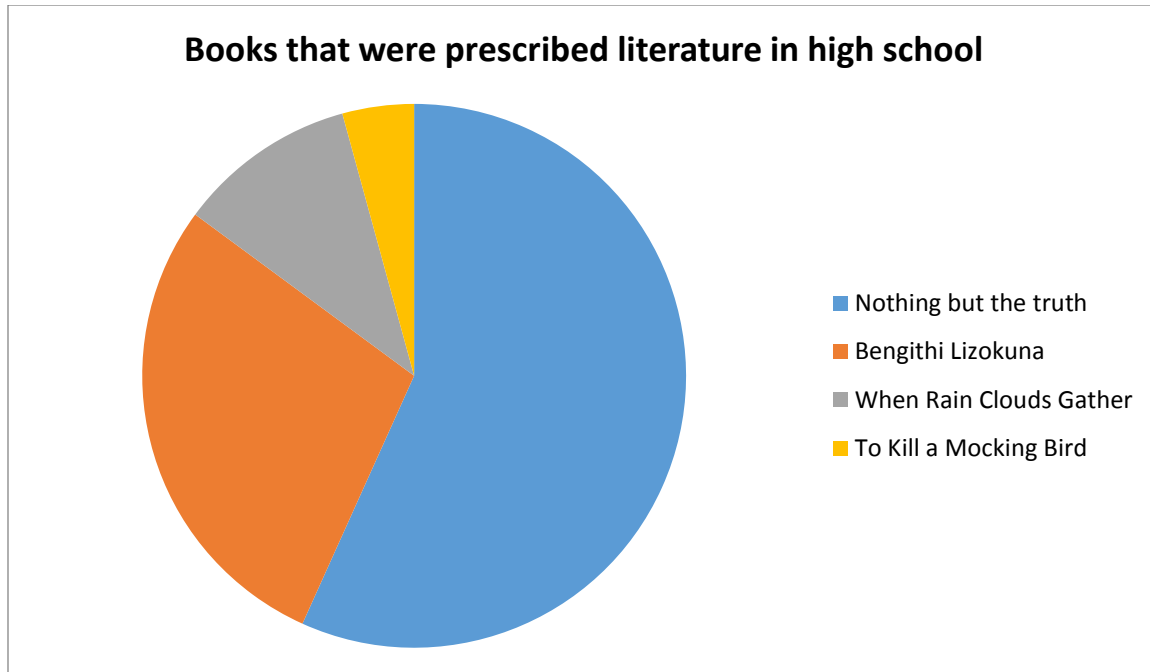


Figure 4.6 Books that were prescribed literature in high school

There were 43 titles of novels that were given by the participants as books that they enjoyed the most. I noticed that the following titles were mentioned repeatedly by the participants when all the other titles were mentioned only once: *Nothing but the truth* (16 times), *Bengithi Lizokuna* (8), *When Rain Clouds Gather* (3) and *To Kill a Mocking Bird* (2). I found out that these were prescribed literature books at high school. *Bengithi Lizokuna*, *To Kill a Mocking Bird* and *Nothing But the Truth* were prescribed in 2015 for isiZulu home language and English first additional language respectively. It is possible that the participants enjoyed these books because they had to engage with them on a regular basis as they were prescribed books during their high school time.

These findings suggest that students do read a variety of books. On the contrary, Kaberia (2012) and Nalusiba (2010) found that students in Africa only read classroom materials whenever there are assignments but do not engage in leisure reading. Similarly, a study of Sindhi and Urdu students at the University of Sindh suggested that there was a lack of leisure reading habit other than textbook reading (Ansari, 2015). Furthermore, Owusu-Acheaw (2014) found that even though the students acknowledged the importance of reading, the majority had read neither novel nor fiction during the academic year.

4.3.3 Reading from the internet

Responses from the questionnaire showed that only nine participants indicated that they do not do any reading on the internet. However what was interesting was that when the participants drew their reading room all the drawings had either a computer, a tablet or a desktop computer which they said was for internet access. The possible explanation for this may be that the nine participants currently do not have access to the internet but ideally they would like to be connected. Another possibility is that they prefer to do other activities on the computer (e.g. playing games, listening to music etc.) rather than reading.

The participants were asked to indicate what they read on the internet if they do read. The responses were then categorised into two themes that emerged: leisure reading and academic reading. From the responses of all three data collection methods it was evident that the participants used the internet mostly for leisure reading. The table below shows what the participants read for leisure and for academic purposes on the internet.

Table 4.3 Reading on the Internet

LEISURE READING	ACADEMIC READING
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • News (what’s going on around the world)/newspapers • Jokes • Blogs and articles on certain websites • Social network updates • How to keep healthy • Topics of interest • Information on companies like Eskom, Transnet and Unilever regarding what they deal with • Fictional diaries on Facebook • Celebrities • Football news 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic books • School work • E-books • Study material such as notes and past exam papers • Doing research for school • Blackboard • PowerPoint presentations on YouTube

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading about the Zulu Kingdom • Self-inspiration (how to get rich) • Religious books • Magazines • Biographies 	
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--

a) Leisure reading on the internet

I found that 63% of the students spent time on the internet reading on social networks. This is indicative of the broader society where there is a wide range of social media that is currently available. Students are therefore able to share information on Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Instagram and many other social media platforms. It is also possible that students have smartphones and tablets that allow them to access social media with ease. There are many wi-fi hotspots around campus which could also enable students to access the internet and social networks easily. From the questionnaire, I found that they read jokes, friends’ and other people’s updates and fictional diaries that people write on Facebook. Bukhosi in the focus group said, *“I do read on the internet but it is always for leisure. I read these fictional diaries on Facebook. Right now I am reading one which is called The Faces Behind The Mirror.”*

The statements from two students on the questionnaire also showed that they read from social networks to know what their friends are doing and to stay connected with other people. They said this on the questionnaire, *“I usually read stories that are posted by other students”* and *“I read to stay socially connected.”* These findings are reinforced by Akabuike and Asika’s (2012) findings where students spent time on the internet chatting with friends on Facebook. Another study by Akarsu and Dariyemez found that online news, online magazines, e-books, stories and novels, movie reviews, health information, jokes, job information, and sports were some of the content their students read online. There were many similarities in these topics with the current study as indicated in Table 4.3. This possibly relates to the relatedness concept where students would perform a task because it gives them a sense of belonging. It is also possible that the

motivation to read is regulated through identification where a person engages in a task because he sees value in the task.

I found that students read social networks just for entertainment and to keep themselves busy especially when they are bored: *“When I am by myself and do not know what to do I take my phone and read social networks,”* Fikile told me. These findings link with those on magazines and newspapers in this study which suggest that students seem to enjoy reading about other people they identify with and they may also enjoy interesting fictional stories. This may emanate from the story telling tradition of most African people where children are often told folklore.

The findings in Table 4.3 also show that students read the internet to get information on various topics of interest to them. They would read about current affairs (local and international), favourite celebrities, the history of the Zulu Kingdom, how to keep healthy, football news, blogs and articles on certain websites, biographies, religious books and career-oriented information. I found that as long it is on the subject they loved, then they read.

These were some of the responses from the focus group discussion on what students read on the internet:

“I also have BBC News on my phone but I only read about music articles,” Buyeye announced.

Clive also voiced his view, “I go to the internet rather than the library to find out what is going on in the world.”

“To tell the truth, I spend about 15 minutes on the internet trying to read or do research on my work but then I will see an interesting story and I will read on that,” confessed Thuli.

“New inventions in my field and biographies,” Zizo responded.

“Things that I google and find interesting and also things that I didn’t know and I found them on the internet.”

Dlamini said, “I normally read about animals on their types and history about Zulu kingdom and only interesting news around the world.”

“It contain everything that is happening in our country and in other countries. If you need answers you can get them on the internet,” Ncane said about the internet.

Findings from a study by Akarsu and Dariyemez (2014) indicated that online news, online magazines, e-books, stories and novels, movie reviews, health information, jokes, job information, and sports was some of the content their students read online. There were many similarities in these topics with the current study as indicated in Table 4.3.

These findings indicate that students choose to read content that is of interest to them or that has value to them. This is in line with Ryan and Deci's (2000) findings which indicated that if the behaviour is self-determined (decided by the individual) or is taken autonomously (is not imposed), the person is highly likely to be motivated to perform a task. The students read because they have a choice of what they read. This implies that if students are given the freedom to choose what they want to read, the possibilities are that they would read.

b) Academic reading on the internet

Responses from the questionnaire indicate that only 27% of the students use the internet to read academic books online (e-books). They go to Blackboard to find study material such as notes and past exam papers, do research relating to their academic work or assignments and to read PowerPoint presentations on YouTube on lessons they did not understand in class.

This is what some of the students said in the questionnaire:

"I read what I am required to read at school."

"Most of the time it is usually physics."

"I normally read on the internet when I am given research, so that I can earn information to complete it."

"I do read textbooks through the link called e-books."

This implies that the participants spend more time on the internet reading for leisure than doing academic work. This is possibly because leisure reading is self-determined, voluntary and is done because the person wants to do it which means reading is based on intrinsic goals. Academic reading on the other hand is externally regulated which means the goal for engaging in reading is extrinsic. The student, therefore, engages in the reading task for a reward like doing well on an assignment or a test. This type of reading is not sustainable because it is imposed.

These results are similar to those in the study by Mlay, Sabi, Tsuma and Langmia (2015) where the participants also showed an inclination to leisure reading on the internet. These findings are contrary to Akanda, Haq and Hasan's (2013) findings where the students in Rajshahi used the internet mainly for doing research and reading online journals.

However, data from 14 participants in the questionnaire indicated that for academic work they preferred to read from their textbooks rather than the internet. They seemed to agree that they get distracted when trying to do academic work on the internet.

"Sometimes when I watch the screen I fall asleep."

"I prefer a hardcopy because you can jot something down and highlight important information. You can reference better."

"A book is a source that won't go anywhere."

"When I read on my phone I find myself doing something else like chatting or WhatsApp. Then you do not know where you were on the page."

"I get backache when I sit and read on my computer for long so I prefer a book."

One of the participants, Zubenathi, said he preferred reading on his tablet because he could *"download e-books and this allows me to read anywhere."* Others said they read both from the internet and from books depending on the size of the book: *"If it is a heavy book then I would rather read an online version if there is one."* A study by Vernon (2006, as cited in Podolsky and Soiferman, 2014) found similar results. They found that students did not read texts online and preferred to print and read in paper format. Reasons given for this preference were identical to this study which are that print text is easier to write notes on, it is easier on the eye and students have better spatial understanding of where they are in the text.

The findings from the focus groups showed that six participants said they spent a lot of time on YouTube. This was contrary to the results by Kiili, Laurinen and Marttunen (2007) who found that 80% of their participants preferred Wikipedia.

The Andile, Yoliswa and Bryce had this to say:

“If I did not understand a lecturer in class I try to find that information on YouTube so I can understand better.”

“People should recognise that YouTube is the biggest source of information today.”

“I wanted to find something to do with my body. I saw the video and then read more about the different ways of doing push-ups.”

The findings show that the students saw YouTube as a great source of information. This could indicate they found gaps in their own lectures or lessons which they feel have to be complemented by information on YouTube. It is possible that the lecturers are not using visually stimulating material in their teaching. The students had indicated from reading magazines and newspapers that they prefer reading material with pictures. YouTube is possibly able to give students the visual stimulation they want.

Mlay et al. (2015) also found that downloading of information in video format seemed to take centre stage with their participants. They believed that video/audio formats may interest readers more because videos/audio are closer to what the African society is accustomed to, which is telling stories. I agree with this because Africans have a very strong oral culture and stories are told rather than written. Lecturers could incorporate the use of videos or PowerPoint when presenting their lessons.

4.4 Research question two: For what purposes do students read?

Three major themes emerged after data was coded and analysed. Evidence from all three data collection instruments indicated that students read for these purposes: recreation, information and education. Reading for recreational purposes and reading for educational purposes were further divided into smaller themes.

4.4.1 Reading for recreational purposes

I found that the participants read for a number of recreational purposes. Recreational reading is reading because you want to, it is voluntary and it is reading you engage in for the purpose of entertainment or personal gratification (Krashen, 2004; Rokusek and Enomoto, 2016). I found

that the participants in this study read for these recreational reasons: they found reading fun and interesting, they read for inspiration and religious purposes, and they read to get information.

a) Reading for fun

Four participants from the focus group showed a deep love for reading. They read because of the love they have for reading and because reading is a fun and interesting activity as is evident from what they said in the questionnaire and focus group.

“I read for enjoyment mostly, well I love reading. I gain knowledge from reading. It can be entertaining and interesting,” Andile stated.

“Oh, I love reading novels. I would rather read a boring book than study. Studying is boring and frustrating especially when you do not get the answers you are looking for,” Fikile explained.

The last statement made by the student above illustrates the concepts of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, competence and self-efficacy. The student seems to have an innate or intrinsic love for reading novels and this would motivate her to even read a boring book. On the other hand studying is viewed negatively by the student. The reason for studying seems to be externally regulated or extrinsic, i.e. the purpose is to find answers. It seems when the student does not get answers from what he/she reads, he/she loses confidence or competence in his/her reading ability. The student therefore seems to have low self-efficacy in finding answers from texts studied. Self-efficacy is the belief that a person has about his/her own abilities to succeed at a particular task. This then prevents him/her from reading for study purposes.

I found these statements by the Phelo and Zinhle to be very profound, it showed a strong love for reading: *“For me reading is a getaway, I am now in this world that this author is putting to me. I am there with the characters. There is something exciting about holding a book. When you are reading your mind is processing all the information and you start creating images unlike watching a TV where you just receive information.”*

Vuyolwethu excitedly said, *“Reading stimulates my mind and keeps it active, it increases my imagination.”*

These findings suggest that they view books as sources of mind stimulation and relaxation, and a means of de-stressing. Through books these students are able to delve deeper into the world of the characters which means they use their imagination to analyse and interpret the author’s words. Books are a source of entertainment for them which is more fulfilling than other activities. To these students a good book is no match to watching TV.

These statements from the participants suggest that they are engaged readers who are intrinsically motivated to read. Engaged readers possess intrinsic motivation for interacting with the text, they use their cognitive skills to understand and they read widely for enjoyment and have a positive attitude towards reading (McLaughlin, 2012). These findings are further reinforced by motivational theorists who state that students with intrinsic goals for reading have a desire to read about a particular topic of interest; they experience enjoyment from reading certain kinds of literary or informational texts and believe that reading is valuable (Wood, Edwards, Hill-Miller and Vintinner, 2006; Deci and Ryan, 2000).

However, I found six participants who did not get any pleasure from reading nor saw value in reading. One participant, Dlamini, stated, *“ Every time I am reading I get bored and I feel like most of my time is wasted on reading rather than doing the thing that I enjoy like watching TV.”*

“Reading is boring and irritating,” Bule pronounced.

“I do not read novels, I do not have too much concentration when I read, I get bored easily. It doesn’t interest me that much when I read,” Fikile echoed Bule’s sentiments.

This suggests that these participants do not enjoy reading and they do not see the value in reading. They believe that reading is a boring activity. This is possibly due to students preferring other activities to reading, like watching TV. It is undeniable that there are many activities that students find much more enticing than reading. The choice of reading material and the content in the material they read may not be to liking. They may possibly find it difficult to comprehend the language in the text or they may have poor reading skills.

The statements made by students could be explained by Deci and Ryan's (2000, 2008, 2010) concept of amotivation in the SDT. They state that amotivation is a result of not feeling competent to do an activity, not believing the activity will result in a desired outcome or may result from not valuing the activity. The expectancy-value theory also argues that the individual's choice, persistence and performance on a task can be explained by their beliefs about how well they will do on the activity and the extent to which they value the activity (Wigfield and Eccles, 2000). If they do not value the task they will rather not engage in it.

These findings reinforce those of Owusu-Acheaw (2014) who found that students had not developed the love for reading hence they found it boring. Akabuike and Asika (2012) also found students who had a negative attitude towards reading.

Zobuzwe had the most interesting and unexpected response which clearly demonstrated his negative attitude towards reading. He said: *"I do not read. To be honest, I have a brother who is gay and he used to read magazines a lot. So I think it is actually those magazines that made him gay."*

These views by the student reflect that the student has associated reading magazines with being gay. The student's prejudices against gay people have negative influence on his reading habits. This statement by the student also shows a lack of informed knowledge on gay issues which probably arises from his lack of extensive reading habits. However, the sentiments illustrate that reading is not merely a cognitive activity but that it involves attitudes and feelings that people attach to it. These personal attitudes may hinder or promote reading habits. As a lecturer, I have learnt that motivation to read should also include changing the students' attitude towards reading and opening their minds to thinking more broadly.

Andile also did not like to read , he said: *"It (reading) makes me think too much and causes me to be attacked by a headache."* Physiological incidents like anxiety, headache, and lack of concentration experienced during reading can influence self-efficacy (Corkett, Hatt and Benevides, 2011). This may result in a student associating reading with causing his/her illness which then causes the student not to read. Hence the students' low self-efficacy for reading.

Phindile said he did not read much because *"I went to a Black school, it did not have a library so it is in the blood that reading is not interesting because I was not introduced to it when I was*

little.” The student’s statement reflects the situation that is prevalent in most Black schools in South Africa. Most schools are under-resourced, and students have to share books, which is also a challenge because of the large number of learners in classes. Only a few schools enjoy the privilege of having a school library. In some schools the situation is so bad that only the teacher has the textbook. These students therefore do not develop the habit of reading because of no or minimal exposure to books. For reading to become a habit it should be instilled constantly with consistency. It points to the powerful role schools and teachers could have in promoting reading habits. However, it also points directly to schools needing to be resourced adequately by the State.

In contrast, Feziwe, who had an intrinsic love for reading stated that it was her background that instilled the love for reading: *“In Primary there was a time when we were forced to read; even my father would buy books and force us to read.”* This indicates the role that the school and the home environment have in promoting reading habits. When children have parents who read to them and who themselves read, the children may grow up valuing reading. Early exposure to reading material and reading could lead to life-long reading. As a AJ elaborated, *“I love reading newspapers, especially Sunday newspapers, because my father buys them and we read them.”*

These findings indicate that external stimuli (parental involvement and school involvement) can influence students to internalise the reading behaviour, also known as intergrated regulation (Ryan and Deci 2000, 2002). These two students now engage in reading volitionally because of their early childhood experiences with reading.

Early childhood experiences with books, exposure to reading material, personal beliefs in reading ability, parental involvement and school involvement could determine the reading behaviour of students. It appears that social context events, like positive feedback or rewards from parents, can increase the perceived competence of a person. Negative feedback can decrease it. Gambrell and Marinak (2009) also suggest that social experiences play a powerful role in the development of self-efficacy. Feedback from family, school and community throughout the developmental years of a student has been linked to the development of self-efficacy.

b) Reading for inspiration and religious purposes

The findings on the material that students read showed that 63% of the participants read self-building/inspirational books and 46% read religious books. Several participants also stated that they read inspirational articles on the internet as well. The purposes for reading these types of books was to get inspiration from people who have done well and for personal development. Religious books also seem to inspire the participants and spoke to their conscience. Three participants noted:

“I think it is wise to read motivational books, something that will guide you towards your goals. I read The Mail & Guardian because it has economic issues and I see myself owning a business one day not working for somebody, that is my mission,”AJ said.

Bonnie said, “I read about people who inspire me like Eminem who I read failed Grade 11 several times but look at him today, he is the best rapper.”

“I read about inspirational people like Richard Branson because I want to be rich,”Blue announced.

This inclination towards inspirational and religious books could be a reflection of our society where many young people aspire to be entrepreneurs since there is a perception among students that there is a rise among Black people who are making money through the tender system especially in the engineering field. It is possible that inspirational books give students hope for the future. One participant, Njabulo, expressed that *“I have a vision that one day I will work in a huge company and desire to be the owner so you cannot lead people without knowing how to read.”* I had not anticipated that they would read inspirational books; this was an eye-opener for me and I should nurture this need for personal growth by introducing content that inspires. I could choose comprehension passages that inspire because that is one of the reasons they read.

I had indicated that the Bible was the most mentioned religious book in this study. One student in the focus group had this to say about the Bible: *“I am used to reading the Bible. It helps me when I did something wrong.”* It is possible that this student comes from a religious background where the Bible is seen as a guide to a conscientious life. When the student has done wrong, he reads the Bible probably to clear his conscience.

These findings are similar to those in the study by Mlay et al. (2015) where students also read for self-growth and inspiration, to gain information and knowledge, for spiritual growth and for pleasure/relaxation. In Hogson and Thomson's (2000) study, students also read books that stimulated inspiration or introspection.

c) Reading for information

This study found that students read to get information. Most participants indicated that they read from books, magazines, newspapers and the internet to get information. Evidence from the questionnaire, the drawings and the focus groups highlight that the respondents read to stay informed about what was going on in the news (local and international), about their favourite celebrity personalities, to know what is going on in their field of study, and just to get information about anything that interests them.

"When reading you find information you were not aware of," Linda explained

For Lihle, "Reading makes me to know and to keep updated about what is happening around the world and about career related matters."

It was also evident from the data that if the information appeared to be interesting to the participants then they would read.

"If it is something interesting like books on trading I will read because I want to get more information on trading," Viwe said.

On the other hand, Zola said, "If I browse through a magazine or on the internet... if I see an interesting topic I will read on it."

"I was interested in the Darwin theory ... then I read to get more information on it," was Buli's response.

These findings suggest that the participants like to read about topics of interest. If something appeals to them, then they read. This implies that if the motivation to read is there, then they read. This is supported by the theoretical framework which states that motivation serves as the initial engine to generate learning and later functions as an ongoing driving force that helps to sustain the sometimes challenging journey of acquiring knowledge (Deniz, 2010).

In addition, the SDT suggests that one of the psychological needs that must be met for a task to hold interest is autonomy (Deci and Ryan, 2002). Autonomy involves control and choice. If an individual feels that he has a choice and control over what he reads then he is highly likely to engage in that task. The participants' responses indicate that they read what they choose, i.e. information that interests them. Karen's study (2011) also reinforces the idea that freedom of choice motivates students to read according to their interests.

4.4.2 Reading for academic purposes

a) Study purposes

Seventy-eight percent of the participants in the questionnaire stated that they read for study purposes. In their drawings of reading rooms they drew books relating to their course. Responses from the focus groups also showed that students read for study purposes.

"I do not read any novels or magazines. I only read to study. I study a lot," was Siphwe's response.

Dan confidently stated, "In order to pass in university you need to read and understand your work."

"It is something I must do in order to pass," Siziwe felt.

Hlengiwe said, "I read when it is necessary, like when I study for a test or to attend to comprehension test questions."

"If people aren't used to reading they mostly fail to even answer a question properly in an exam or during a test. They may also have issues when things are phrased differently," Viwe advised.

These findings were not surprising since the participants were students and one would expect them to study. However, these findings suggest that they read because they have to and it seems they have extrinsic motivation for reading.

The reasons for reading seem to be instrumental. Wood, Edwards, Hill-Miller and Vintinner (2006) state that extrinsic/instrumental goals are reading for grades, the desire to be favourably evaluated by the teacher, and the pleasure in receiving a tangible form of recognition for success in reading, which in this case would be passing. Sindisiwe said: *"I read when I have to prepare*

for a class like if Mr Khanyeza says you cannot come to my class if you have not read. Then I read.” Deci and Ryan’s theory (2000) also supports these findings because they state that extrinsic motivation refers to a desire to obtain a reward or avoid punishment. The focus for the purpose of reading is on the external stimuli. Owusu-Acheaw (2014) also found that 62% of students at Koforidua Polytechnic in Ghana read for the purpose of passing the examinations.

b) Reading to improve English

Another recurring theme that I found was that the participants read because they wanted to improve their English and also to increase their vocabulary. This is what the participants in the questionnaire and the focus groups said:

“I read to improve my English,” said Zodwa.

Nigel believed that reading improved his vocabulary, “Everytime I read my vocabulary improves. I add on my vocabulary and my English improves.”

Azile shared similar sentiments, “It helps me understand English better and be able to speak English.”

“It improves reading skills and helps one to boost confidence of speaking English,” Senzi said.

All the participants in the study are second language speakers of English and this is possibly the reason they felt reading would improve their English. This could also explain the preference for reading mostly in English as previously shown in the biographical information. English is also the language of teaching and learning at the UoT where the study was conducted, therefore being proficient in English would increase their chances of passing, which seems to be one of the purposes for which they read. These findings suggest that even though they see the value in reading, the purpose for reading is still extrinsic. It is extrinsic because they read because of the benefits they will gain from reading which are increased vocabulary, better comprehension skills, better understanding of English and improved reading skills. Findings from the socio-educational model confirm that intrinsic and extrinsic motivation have direct links to second language acquisition, although intrinsic motivation is advocated because it leads to sustained life-long

reading, unlike extrinsic motivation, the benefits of which are short-lived (Deci, Koestner and Ryan, 1999, 2000; Wang and Guthrie, 2004; Guthrie, 2000).

The SDT supports these findings because Ryan and Deci (2000) state that motivation for reading may be due to integrated regulation. They say in this type of extrinsic motivation a person engages in a task volitionally but this differs from intrinsic motivation because integrated behaviour is done to attain personally important outcomes rather than the love of the task. It seems, from the responses of the participants, that since they know English is important to them, and they have seen that reading increases their vocabulary, they therefore engage in reading.

I also found one participant who had a different perspective. The participant, Veli, said: *“If the article has more difficult words or words I have never seen before, it is when I do not enjoy reading.”* This finding is in contrast with those who read because they want to increase their vocabulary. This participant is deterred from reading by difficult words. This suggests that this participant does not believe in his/her own ability to understand difficult words in a text. According to the self-efficacy theory (Bandura, 1986), a person’s belief about his/her ability to succeed in a task may negatively or positively affect how the person executes that task. If the person has low self-efficacy like in the above response, then the person is likely to avoid a task that is challenging.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter presented and discussed the findings from the open-ended questionnaires, the draw-and-write technique and the focus group discussions. The results were organised according to the two research questions that were identified in Chapter One.

The results from the study led me to conclude that first-year students at this UoT read for both leisure and for academic purposes. The students read from books, the internet, magazines and newspapers. The internet is associated with leisure reading whereas for academic purposes, students preferred reading from textbooks. The results also showed that students valued reading with some having an innate or intrinsic motivation for reading and the majority being motivated by extrinsic or external goals.

CHAPTER 5

Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Introduction

I conducted a qualitative case study into the reading habits of first year students at a university of technology (UoT) in KwaZulu-Natal. At institutions of higher learning, knowledge and information are accessed mostly through reading. Reading is integral to students' successes in education. Frequent reading is known to be beneficial in terms of developing language structures, increasing the vocabulary, increasing levels of comprehension and increasing interest in reading, among many other factors. From the literature and my personal experience, reading and being motivated to keep reading are the keys to academic success. This study sought to find out what materials students read and for what purposes they read. These questions were addressed by collecting data from open-ended questionnaires, draw-and-write technique and focus group discussions.

This chapter summarises the major findings of this study in relation to the two research questions. I will then discuss the theoretical, methodological and pedagogical implications of the findings. Furthermore, recommendations for further research emanating from the study will be presented, as well as limitations of the study.

5.2 Summary of findings

Yilmaz (1993, as cited in Erdem, 2014) defines the habit of reading as the act of reading being carried out throughout life in a constant, regular and critical manner because of it being perceived by the individual as a need and source of pleasure. A habit is something that develops over time and for one to be in the habit of reading one must read frequently. The findings showed that even though the participants enjoyed reading and saw the value in reading, most of them have not developed the habit of reading. The majority of the students were reading occasionally or when necessary. Most were not affiliated to a library and the few who were affiliated went to the library in search of academic books to do readings when given assignments or projects to do in their academic course. Earlier experiences with reading, low self-efficacy in reading, the value they attached to reading, the purpose or motivation for reading were evident as the causes of the lack of habitual reading in most students. Due to the students' socio-economic

background, their schooling and home background, most of them were not exposed to reading. Consequently, most did not develop the love for reading. The participants showed a clear preference for reading in English rather than in their mother tongue. My study was guided by the following research questions.

5.2.1 What materials do first-year students read?

The findings suggest that students were reading from a variety of sources, namely books, the internet, magazines and newspapers. From the analysis, it became apparent from all data that when the students did read books they mostly read self-help/inspirational books, entertainment/novels, and religious books while academic books were less popular. The Bible was the most read religious book. It also became apparent that though most of the participants indicated that they liked reading novels, the findings showed that they had not read one in a while. What I found was that they could not write at least two titles of books they had read recently with some opting to write movie titles or titles of books they had read as prescribed literature while still in high school.

Reading from the internet was popular with the participants. It was evident from all data collection tools that the internet featured prominently in students' choice of reading material. These results were not surprising since technology-based teaching or blended learning is gaining popularity in higher education and in society in general. I found that the internet was used more for leisure reading than for academic reading. Students read from social networks like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. On these social network sites, they read social updates posted by friends, peers, relatives and other members of the public. Fictional diaries, jokes, and news on favourite personalities were other material students read about on social media.

Students also read from different websites to gain information. I found that they liked gathering more information on topics they enjoyed and liked. They read news to know what is going on in the world. A few students have downloaded newspaper programmes on their phones so they could read news often. If the students were interested in a particular story, topic or concept then they would read more about it on the internet.

Even though the participants used the internet for academic purposes, the findings showed that they preferred reading from a textbook when studying because they could engage with the book

by highlighting important sections; they always know which page they are on while some even like the smell of the pages. They would read on the internet when researching information for their assignments or projects and they read study material and question papers posted by their lecturers on Blackboard.

I found that the majority of the participants perceived reading on the internet as distracting when doing academic reading because they end up reading other things that are not related to their academic work. They cited many reasons for not using the internet for academic purposes including difficulty in engaging with the text. The internet was therefore used mostly for social networks, reading online newspapers and magazines, or just reading on topics of interest. It also became clear that the students preferred watching videos on YouTube about their course content rather than finding the information in textbooks.

Even though the findings had indicated that the participants read more in English than in their mother tongue, there was a tendency to read magazines and newspapers that are written in their mother tongue. The participants enjoyed browsing through magazines and looking at pictures, and would read only if they saw something interesting. Even though newspapers appeared to be easily accessible to the students, they generally found newspapers visually unappealing. Most males read the newspaper for sports news while females read on a variety of topics like celebrities, fashion and healthy living. I also found that there was a preference for newspapers with local news content with which the participants could identify. I found that they read both print and online newspapers.

5.2.2 For what purposes do students read?

Major findings revealed two major themes on why students read. I found that they read for both recreational purposes and for academic purposes.

A few participants revealed that they read because they found reading fun and interesting and they read because they loved reading. The findings suggested that these participants had intrinsic motivation for reading. I found that those who had a love for reading read extensively and more frequently. For these students, reading gave them the opportunity to engage with the characters in the story by using their imagination. Reading was a source of relaxation that they favoured over other activities like watching TV.

The majority of the participants, however, noted that they read because they are extrinsically motivated to read. I found that they read only when they were pushed by some external stimuli like reading to pass, to study, to impress a lecturer, or to do an assignment.

This could explain why students in this study were not in the habit of reading, as most were motivated by extrinsic goals. The findings also showed a handful of students who could read but did not read because they found reading boring and would rather do other activities. I found that some students did not read either because they did not see the value in reading or because they did not believe that they were competent readers.

The findings showed that those students who did not see themselves as competent readers, who believed less in their reading abilities and did not see much value in reading, read less. The findings also showed that early reading experiences like exposure to books and family background contributed to developing or not developing a habit for reading. I found that those students whose parents or whose primary schools inculcated the culture of reading, read more.

The findings reflect that the purposes of reading from books, the internet and from magazines and newspapers were to get inspiration, to get information and for the sheer joy and inner gratification they get from reading. I found that the majority of the participants sought inspiration from self-help books, religious books and books on inspirational celebrities or personalities. It also emerged that they read to stay informed on what is going on in the lives of their favourite celebrities, to get news (local, national and international) and career-based news. I found that as long as something was interesting to them they would read it. In this case, when students felt they were in control of what they read and could choose what they read then they do read.

It emerged that for academic purposes the participants read because they wanted to improve their knowledge of English and to increase their English vocabulary. English is the language of teaching and learning therefore, the students know that in order to succeed in their studies they have to be proficient in English. This still indicates that reading is not innate but is rather based on the rewards they gain from reading. I also found that they read to study so they can pass the course, or if a lecturer insists that they read before going to his/her class. Most of the students did not read regularly choosing instead to read when there was a test or examination coming up. Due

to their academic schedules, the students appeared not to have had the time to do recreational reading.

5.3. Theoretical implications

I initially presented theories of motivation to underpin my study, as discussed in chapter two. These theories were extrinsic and intrinsic motivation theory, self-determination theory (SDT), self-efficacy theory, and the expectancy-value theory. I found that my study builds more on the SDT of motivation because it seems to encompass most of the elements that are in other theories and speaks directly to the findings in my study.

I found that the expectancy-value theory and the self-efficacy theory were similar because they focus on expectancies for success in partaking in certain behaviour as the motivating factor. According to the self-efficacy theory, a person engages in a task because of his/her beliefs in his/her abilities to succeed in a task (Bandura, 1986). It is this belief that gives people expectations about how they will perform in the task. Studies (McCabe and Margolis, 2001; Gambrel, Palmer, Codling and Mazzoni, 1996) show that individuals with high self-efficacy are more likely to engage in an activity, they put in more effort and are able to persist in tasks. People with low self-efficacy are more likely to avoid engaging in an activity. According to the expectancy-value theory a person engages in behaviour because of the expected outcomes or because of the value he/she attaches to that behaviour (Wigfield and Eccles, 2000).

The findings from this study suggest that students who believed they were competent readers enjoyed reading and read extensively for a variety of reasons. On the other hand, I found students who did not read because they found it difficult to understand the words in the text therefore did not believe in their abilities to read. I found that these students had low self-efficacy and often avoided reading. This pattern is consistent with that presented by Bandura (1997), Gambrell and Marinak(2009), Daniels and Steres (2011) and Bedel(2016) who suggested people who doubt their capabilities shy away from difficult tasks which they view as personal threats. In contrast, people with a stronger sense of self-belief in their capabilities are able to self-motivate and they view difficult tasks as challenges rather than threats. These people are more likely to put in effort and to persist when doing a task.

In this study I also found students who had high self-efficacy and valued reading chose not to read. This contradicts findings by Wigfield and Eccles (2000) who argued that the individual's choice, persistence, and performance in an activity could be explained by his/her beliefs about how well he/she will do in the activity and the extent to which he/she values the activity. Their study showed that if students view reading as important and valuable they would engage in reading in a more planned and structured and perhaps effortless manner.

The shortcomings in the self-efficacy and the expectancy-value theories are that there are conditions where self-efficacy beliefs and value beliefs do not perform their influential and predictive roles (Bandura, 1986). I found that there were students who preferred other activities to reading. Although these students have high self-efficacy, high expectations on how well they perform in reading tasks and how they see the value in reading, were not enough to make them want to read. These students seemed to need some form of incentive to read like knowing that if they read they would pass the test or examination. This highlighted the importance of motivation.

Findings from my study revealed that developing reading habits requires more than self-belief. I found that students needed to be exposed to reading at a very young age. Students need to be given reading tasks to be able to realise their potential. Availability of resources such as libraries and good reading material promote good reading habits. I also found that students need a motivating factor that will push them to initiate engagement in reading activities. This extra push may not only come from within the self but may also be from external stimuli like getting a reward for performing a task.

The intrinsic and extrinsic motivation theory and the SDT were able to answer the question of why students read. Motivation is seen as the driving force that makes people put in effort to perform a task, which in this case was reading (Ülper, 2011; Dörnyei and Otto, 1998). In accordance with these theories, the motivation to engage in certain behaviour is determined by intrinsic and extrinsic goals. The SDT expanded on the distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation by arguing that extrinsic goals can be determined by a number of factors that regulate the behaviour. This theory defines behaviour where highly competent individuals choose not to read as amotivation. This is also a concept that the self-efficacy and the expectancy theories fell short on.

Intrinsically motivated people engage in activities because they are interested and they have innate love for the activity. Extrinsically motivated people engage in activities because they expect to gain something from doing the task like receiving an award. Deci and Ryan's (2000) theory showed that extrinsic motivation for behaviour can be regulated from outside to inside the individual. These regulations are external, introjected, identified and integrated. The SDT argues that if behaviour is self-determined, the person is highly likely to engage in an activity. If a person feels competent, has autonomy or control over the activity and feels a sense of relatedness towards the activity then the person will be determined to engage in the activity. When individuals are self-determined, their reasons for engaging in an activity are fully internalised or become intrinsic (Eccles and Wigfield, 2002).

A major finding in this study is that students read for both academic and recreational purposes. Students who read for leisure had intrinsic motivation to read, they found reading fun and interesting. They read because they gained inspiration from books and they could engage with books at a deeper level where they felt one with the characters in books. Reading extensively has made them competent in reading. These students liked to read material that they related to like reading material in their mother tongue, which gave them a sense of relatedness. They read from books, social media and various internet websites to find information on their favourite subjects. They also read magazines and newspapers to stay informed about what is going on in the world. They read widely for a variety of purposes.

I found that when students read for recreational purposes they have the choice and the autonomy to choose the materials they like to read. These are students who have the determination to read because they are confident in their reading abilities, they have autonomy over what they read and feel a sense of relatedness towards the materials they read. For these students reading is self-determined and intrinsic.

Findings showed that students read academic books for extrinsic goals. The source of regulation for behaviour differed from student to student. I found that students read to study in order to pass tests and examinations or to avoid punishment because some lecturers would not allow them in their class if they had not read. This behaviour comes from external regulation. Students with introjected regulation read to impress their lecturers. Regulation through identification was displayed by students who read because they see the value in reading. Most of the students read

because they have experienced the many benefits of having good reading habits. They mentioned that through reading their proficiency in English improves, vocabulary is increased and their comprehension skills improve. As a result, they read out of their own volition, which is known as integrated regulation.

These findings are in line with those of Ryan and Deci (2000, 2002, 2008) and Gagné and Deci (2005) who found that people with genuine motivation for reading have more interest, excitement and confidence for reading than those whose reasons for reading are externally controlled. Those who are intrinsically motivated and self-determined will show persistence in doing tasks.

However, the SDT and the intrinsic/extrinsic motivation theory do not explain the role that the individual's environments can play in improving or hindering reading habits. I found that even if you are intrinsically motivated to read, factors like having no access to a school or public library, no early exposure to reading material, attending schools with poor reading culture, among other factors, might hinder students' reading habits.

In hindsight, the SDT was the most relevant theory for this study because it illustrated how behaviour is regulated which was evident from the findings that even confident and competent readers need that extra stimuli to push them to put forth effort to engage in reading activities thus contributing to developing good reading habits.

5.4 Methodological implications

In accordance with interpretive, qualitative case study research, I embarked on a small-scale, non-statistical study to understand the reading habits of students. This is the type of study where I sought to understand the human experience from within to interpret the world from its actors (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007). Using the interpretive paradigm allowed me to construct and make meaning from the data obtained (Nieuwenhuis, 2007a). I used qualitative data to find out what materials students read and for what purposes they read. Qualitative data in the form of an open-ended questionnaire, draw-and-write technique and focus group discussion gave me detailed data and allowed me to gain insight into the reading habits of first-year students and to use the findings to better my teaching. The three data collection instruments were used for triangulation of data.

I found that the anonymous open-ended questionnaire gave me a lot of information on the reading habits of students. I was able to collect information on both research questions. Piloting the questionnaire on two student tutors and one colleague improved the quality of the content of the questionnaire. Since the questionnaire was anonymous, it allowed the students to be more responsive. The open-ended questions gave the students the opportunity to add elaborate comments to the questions. In future, if I were to conduct a similar study, I would add more information on biographical data because I found that even though they may not relate directly to the research questions, the information gained gave me a better perspective when I was doing data analysis.

With the draw-and-write technique, students responded well to the first question on what they read but with the second question, on why they read, there was limited information received. I understood this as a limitation of my data collection instrument and realised that the instruction should have been phrased differently. Some students spent more time on perfecting their drawings rather than explaining them. As a result, a few did not write the purpose of reading the materials they had in their drawings. However, since the drawings were very elaborate, I was able to deduce the themes that emerged. If I were to do a similar study, I would choose a strategy that would make the participants do either drawings or writing, such as journal entries.

The focus groups were very informative. I was able to find out more information that had not been dealt with properly in the questionnaire and drawings. At first I was apprehensive about conducting the group discussions as I thought the students would not open up to me as I am their lecturer. I soon learnt that they felt very much at ease to talk to me. I felt that the focus groups gave them a platform to talk about their interests. This implied that students want to be heard. I had explained to the students that I wanted to know about their reading habits and explained that the findings will help inform my teaching and that of my colleagues by sharing the findings with them (colleagues). They appreciated the chance to share their experiences.

I had not previously conducted focus group discussions but reading up on best practices helped me to be aware of what I could and could not do as a facilitator in the discussions. I also did a mock focus group discussion on a different topic with the students before their actual discussion. The mock discussion about their favourite ice cream, helped put the students at ease. After the first group discussion, I listened to the recordings and reflected on my facilitation technique and

on whether the objectives of the study were being met. I found that by the second and third discussion, I could extrapolate more information.

This was a case study and I used a small sample to gain insight into the reading habits of students, but the results cannot be generalised. The sample consisted of only engineering students who shared many common traits like socio-economic background, race and home language. I would like to do similar research on a broader scale with students from all faculties in this university of technology in future.

5.5 Pedagogical implications

The relationship between good reading habits and success in academia shows the importance of investigating students' reading habits. Understanding this phenomenon will assist lecturers to promote more successfully students' reading habits for both recreational and academic purposes. Promoting students' reading habits increases vocabulary knowledge, comprehension skills, high self-efficacy, general world knowledge and intellectual development. The voices of students in this study reveal vital information about what they read and for what purposes. This study also reveals how intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, expectancy-value, self-efficacy and self-determination play a role in promoting reading habits of students.

This study provided some important conclusions. Firstly, it appears that students would read if the material they read is visually appealing, contains topics that are interesting and relate to them, and if they see the value in the reading task. This is a challenge for lecturers in institutions of higher learning and for curriculum developers when designing study material to be more creative in the design and content of the material. Students also suggested that they read if the reading material is easily accessible to them. More books could be in electronic format so that students can access them from their phones, computers and tablets. Lecturers might need to find out what their students are interested in and relate information to students' interests. Lecturers might also need to be explicit about the value of the task and inspire students to read further on the topic.

Both the internet and textbooks can be utilised to complement each other since the students consider both as major sources of information. Lecturers could consider using different social networks like Facebook and other programmes which students love reading from to facilitate

further teaching and learning. Students suggested that they enjoyed reading inspirational/self-help books, religious books, novels, magazines and newspapers. The institution and the lecturers could provide these materials for students to read. The library could have a section dedicated to recreational reading where students could relax by reading novels, magazines and newspapers they love. Moreover, since students seem to be technologically advanced and they said they sometimes do not like books because they are heavy, the institution could provide e-readers in the library.

Students indicated that they read to impress their lecturers. This implies that lecturers have the power to influence students' reading habits. If students know that their lecturers do a follow-up on the reading tasks that were given in class, then students would possibly read. To improve the reading habits of students, lecturers could recommend extra reading and give tasks that require students to do extensive reading.

The culture of reading should be instilled in students from a very young age so that they can develop the habit of reading. Early reading experiences can hinder or promote reading. Schools could have clear reading programmes that are implemented to promote reading like the D.E.A.R (Drop everything and read) programme. Schools should work with parents by showing them the benefits of reading to their children. Older siblings who can read should be encouraged to read to their parents and younger siblings. This could not only help them improve their own reading skills but it could inculcate the culture of reading in the younger siblings. The compliments they may get from their parents for their reading will boost their self-efficacy in reading, making them want to read more.

The following factors have immense power in shaping reading habits: motivation, self-efficacy in reading, being in control of what you read (autonomy) and having the ability to choose what to read. Lecturers need to be aware of these and try to motivate their students to read on a regular basis. In their classes, lecturers need to talk more about the value and importance of reading and benefits thereof so they can influence their students to read.

When I embarked on this study, I had my own preconceived ideas about students' reading habits. The findings have however taught me much about my students' reading habits and have shown me how I may contribute positively towards inculcating, promoting and enhancing their reading habits. This study has taught me that students have a voice and they want to be heard, therefore I

will consider having more group discussions to engage with issues relating to teaching and learning instead of imposing on them what I think. I learnt that contrary to the belief that they do not read, they actually read, but the textbook is no longer the only material they read.

In my future practice of teaching, I will blend my teaching to incorporate technology. I will use platforms like social media to facilitate reading and learning. Reading material like the study guide and other lecture notes that I give to the students will be improved to include more visuals and illustrations because visually appealing material stimulates the motivation to read. I found that students like to engage with the text when reading by writing on it or highlighting certain sections. I will incorporate activities in their reading material that will allow them to engage more with the text. I have realised that when I give students reading tasks they should know the value and relevance of the task to what they are doing.

I realised that students value reading but most of them were not exposed to reading at a young age. I will be exposing my students to different types of texts and genres through reading activities we do in class. I will also consider choosing reading material that has content that is relevant to them. I also realised that students need to be given autonomy to choose their own texts. Even though this may not be feasible as texts are prescribed, I intend introducing book clubs to the students and see how they respond. These book clubs will allow me to meet the students during the forum period to share our favourite readings in a relaxed and stress free environment thus promoting reading habits. I will constantly recommend books that they could enjoy and encourage them to recommend new material to me and to their peers.

I will constantly engage with new students every year (through a questionnaire) to learn about what materials they are reading because as society is always dynamic, so their reading material will also be. Students showed that they valued what their lecturers thought of them and that they would read to impress their lecturers. I will use rewards and words of encouragement to recognise students who show effort in improving their reading habits.

As a researcher, I discovered that commitment, tenacity and most importantly discipline are key qualities to have. Before embarking on this journey, I used to procrastinate on tasks, but doing this research taught me to have a time plan and the discipline to stick to it as I was determined to finish my degree. I learnt to work on my dissertation everyday even if it was just reading a short

article or writing a few lines because it contributed to the final product. I learnt to keep a journal where I could jot down ideas as they came to me, because they came anytime and anywhere.

I learnt that I needed to find quality time with my family, and where, in the past, I tried to do everything for my children, I learnt, sometimes with difficulty, to delegate, ask for help, and empower my family to do things for themselves. I also learnt the value of having a supportive family, friends and colleagues. This is a journey I could not do on my own. Doing this study was very challenging and draining both physically and mentally. I learnt to work under pressure and I learnt to value time. I was able to keep myself motivated by visualising the end product and by being grateful and appreciative of this opportunity to further my studies. Finally, I also realised that for my mind to function I needed to take care of my body by taking some time to relax, sleep and eat healthily.

5.6 Limitations of the study

This study being a case study meant that it has limited generalisability. The study was limited to one classroom at one UoT with students from the same socio-economic background and same racial group. Therefore, the study might not have generalisability across other campuses or other countries. The study may have been able to provide the results as set out in the objectives of the study. However, in a different setting, the results could possibly differ.

Even though emphasis was given to the fact that there was no way the researcher would know the identity of the participants in the questionnaire as it was anonymous, a few may have given socially desirable responses. To counter this, two other data collection instruments were used to triangulate the data. In the draw-and-write technique, a few of the students did not explain their drawings which led to the researcher having to interpret these images, and this could be impacted by researcher's bias. If I were to conduct a similar study, I would add a journal entry as an instrument so I could get a more vivid picture of their reading habits.

5.7 Recommendations for future research

After carrying out this study, I see the need for more research on reading habits at this UoT and other universities. The results of this study indicate that more needs to be known about the reading habits of students.

5.7.1 A comparative study of students from all three faculties within the institution could be conducted to get a broader picture of the reading habits of students. These could be further compared with students from other UoTs in South Africa.

5.7.2 Research could be explored by exploring how other activities like watching TV, listening to music, and extra-curricula activities impact on reading habits.

5.7.3 A study into the use of motivation strategies to improve reading could be explored.

5.7.4 Action research could be carried out by introducing the teaching of literature to inculcate a culture of reading and thus improve reading habits.

5.7.5 A silent reading programme could be introduced and the impact of this on students' reading habits could be explored.

5.8 Conclusion

In this research, I embarked on a study to investigate the reading habits of first-year students at a UoT in KwaZulu-Natal. I gained invaluable knowledge on what material the students read and found out their purposes for reading. It was important for me to conduct this study so I could have a reading profile of my students. Contrary to the outcry by most lecturers and myself that students do not read, I found that they do read, although not habitually. This study has informed my thinking and opened my mind to the other material that students prefer to read other than only academic books. This realisation will help inform my teaching in future.

The study also informs lecturers and curriculum designers at institutions of higher learning on how motivation, self-efficacy and the value attached to reading may be influential in improving students' reading habits. Reading is an effortful activity that often involves choice, therefore students should be given the choice to engage with reading material that they enjoy and should be encouraged to read extensively for a variety of purposes. At institutions of higher learning, lecturers have the academic and other resources to inculcate various habits in students. Inculcating reading habits could prove very powerful and highly useful for students going forward in their lives, both personally and professionally.

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APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire is intended to find out about reading habits of first year students. Please note that I am only interested in finding out the reading habits of students. **There are no right or wrong answers** since the answers reflect your own opinion. I will appreciate your honesty in your responses. Your responses will remain anonymous. You will not be disadvantaged in any way for responding to this questionnaire as it is not part of your study. Your participation will however help in shedding some light into the students’ reading habits. Once again, I assure you that your response will remain anonymous. Your co-operation is highly appreciated.

- 1. Age _____
- 2. Gender _____
- 3. Is this your first year of study? _____

- 4. **In which language do you do MOST of your reading?**
African language (state language) _____
English

- 5. **Do you enjoy reading?** (Give a reason for your answer)

- . **Which of the following do you read?** (Tick as many as are relevant)
Newspapers Social networks
Magazines Books (e.g. novels)
Internet web sites I don’t read
Other (specify) _____

- 7. **Are you a member of a public library?** Yes No

- 8. **If you are a member, what kind of reading material do you borrow?**

- 9. **What kind of books do you enjoy reading? (Tick all that applies to you)**
Biographies Non-fiction (factual) books
Current affairs Science fiction

- | | | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Entertainment/ novels | <input type="checkbox"/> | Spy fiction/thrillers | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Documentaries | <input type="checkbox"/> | Plays | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Academic books | <input type="checkbox"/> | Religious books | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| E-books | <input type="checkbox"/> | Self-help books/ inspirational books | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other (specify) | <input type="checkbox"/> | _____ | |

10. What kind of books do you not enjoy to read? (Tick all that applies to you)

- | | | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Biographies | <input type="checkbox"/> | Non-fiction (factual) books | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Current affairs | <input type="checkbox"/> | Science fiction | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Entertainment/ novels | <input type="checkbox"/> | Spy fiction/thrillers | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Documentaries | <input type="checkbox"/> | Plays | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Academic books | <input type="checkbox"/> | Religious books | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| E-books | <input type="checkbox"/> | Self-help books/ inspirational books | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other (specify) | <input type="checkbox"/> | _____ | |

11. How often do you read?

- | | | | |
|-------------|--------------------------|--------------|--------------------------|
| Every day | <input type="checkbox"/> | Occasionally | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Once a week | <input type="checkbox"/> | Never | <input type="checkbox"/> |

12. List the newspapers that you usually read, if you do read a newspaper.

13. If you can, list the magazines/journals that you enjoy reading (e.g *You, Bona, Time, True Love, Reader's Digest, etc.*)

14. If you can, list two books (title and author) that you have recently read that you found interesting or enjoyable.

15. Briefly describe *when* you do most of your reading.

16. Indicate for what reasons you do your reading (tick all the options that are relevant to you).

- Purpose**
- reading for religious purposes
 - reading for study purposes
 - reading for work-related purposes
 - reading for enjoyment
 - other (please specify)
-

17. What is your attitude to reading in general?

18. Do you think reading is important in the university context? Yes No

19. Why is reading important or not important in the university context?

20. If you read in your mother-tongue, what kinds of books/material do you read?

21. Do you do any reading on the internet? _____

22. What do you normally read on the internet, if you do read?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION. NGIYABONGA.

APPENDIX B

VISUAL RESEARCH

DRAW-AND-WRITE

Visual Method: (Reading room)

Instructions:

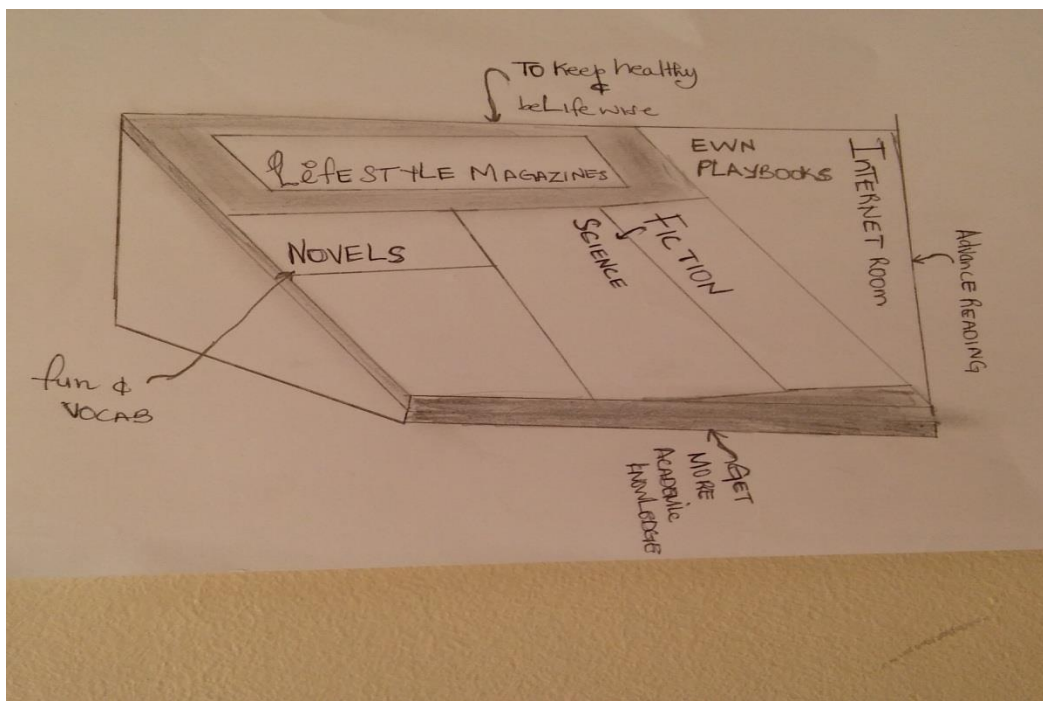
Scenario

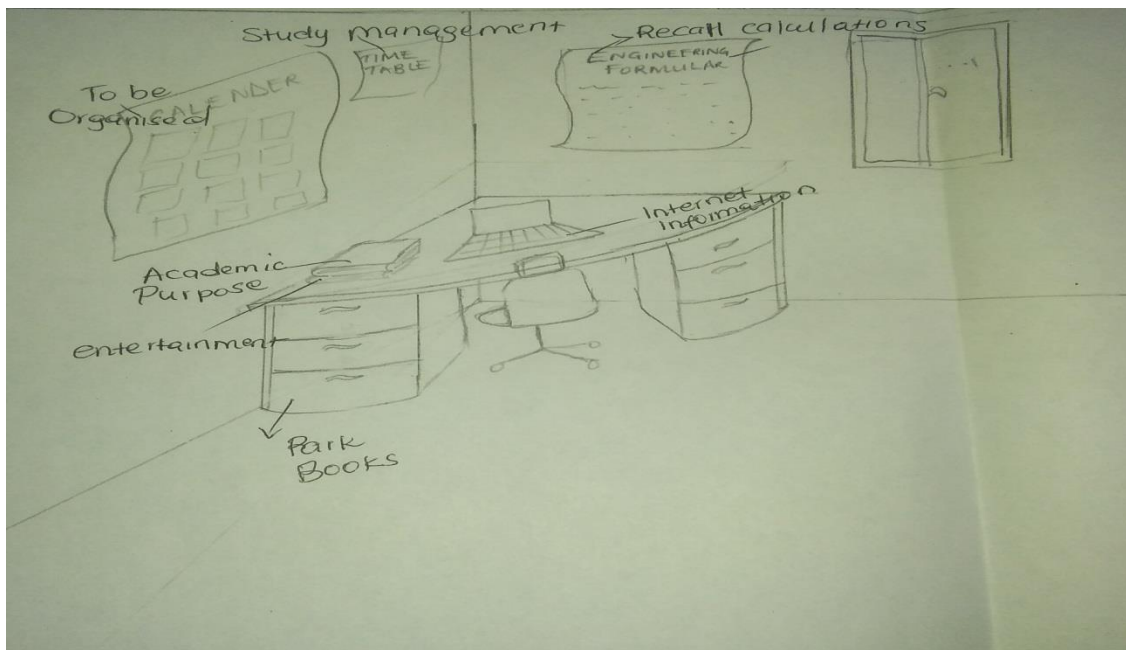
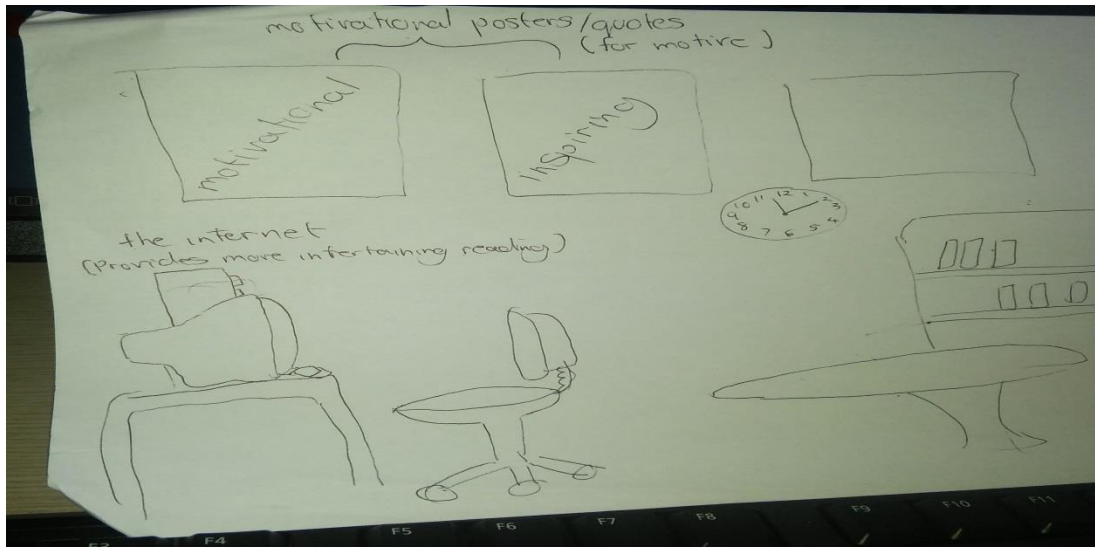
3. If you could plan a reading room, what reading material would you put in it that you enjoy?
4. For what purposes would these reading materials be used?

Using the paper given, draw a plan of your reading room using drawing as well as words that show all the reading that you like to read. You must also include reasons for reading each mentioned material.

For example: *Engineering textbooks*- School purposes/ to pass tests and examinations.

Be specific, for example if you read the *newspaper*; provide the name of the newspaper and the sections that you read. Also, say why you would have newspapers in your reading room.





APPENDIX C

Focus group interview

1. Do you read?
2. For what purposes do you read?
3. Looking at your drawings of reading rooms was very interesting. Please explain why you chose the reading material that would be in your reading room.
4. Is reading important to you? Explain why/ why not?
5. Do you ever read in your spare time, other than for your university assignments? If yes, what do you read? If no, why?
7. Do you read mostly for leisure or for academic purposes?
8. How much time do you spend reading on the internet?
9. What do you read on the internet?
10. Why do you read information on the internet?
11. Do you prefer reading online or from the textbook?

INFORMED CONSENT

I..... (full names of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research study, and I consent to participating in the research study.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the study at any time, should I so desire.

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

DATE

.....

If are willing to allow the interview to be tape-recorded.

YES	NO

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

DATE

.....



**Mangosuthu
University of Technology**

28 July, 2016

Ms S.P. Mbhele

Department of Communication

Dear Ms. Mbhele

It is my pleasure to inform you that permission to conduct survey titled: "*The Reading Habits of First-year Students at a University of Technology in Kwa-Zulu Natal.*" Amongst MUT students has been granted.

Permission to conduct the survey is granted on the condition that any changes to the project must be brought to the attention of the MUT Research Ethics Committee as soon as possible.

Good luck with your research.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anette Mienie', with a long, sweeping underline.

Dr. Anette Mienie

Director: Research

031 9077354/7450

anette@mut.ac.za



28 November 2016

Mrs SP Mbhele 971164383
School of Education
Edgewood Campus

Dear Mrs Mbhele

Protocol Reference Number: HSS/2013/016M

Project title: Reading habits of first year students at a University of Technology in KwaZulu-Natal

Full Approval – Expedited Application

In response to your application received 15 November 2016, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment /modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 3 years from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

Dr Shenika Singh (Chair)
Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

/pm

cc Supervisor: Dr Ansurle Pillay
cc Academic Leader Research: Dr SB Khoza
cc School Administrator: Ms Tzyce Khumalo

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

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To whom it may concern

This is to certify that I have proofread the paper by Sebenzile Mbhele entitled: "Reading habits of first-year students at a university of technology in KwaZulu-Natal."

I have made any corrections to grammar and spelling which I felt necessary.

Regards,

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