A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF ACADEMIC & RECREATIONAL READING
MOTIVATION AND ITS CORRELATION TO READING FCAT PERFORMANCE
FOR 6TH GRADE STUDENTS

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By
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The final copy of this dissertation has been examined by the signatories, and we find that both the content and the form meet acceptable presentation standards of scholarly work in the above-mentioned discipline.
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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to measure the motivation for academic and recreational reading of 6th grade students in a middle school located in southwest Florida using the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (ERAS). In this mixed methods study, motivation for both types of reading were measured, individual demographics of the population, such as gender, ethnicity, socio-economic status, were compiled, and the students’ performance data on the reading Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) was collected. The quantitative research questions were analyzed using descriptives and a factorial ANOVA, which aimed to discover what relationships existed between academic and recreational reading motivation, as measured by the ERAS, and diverse 6th grade student’s gender, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, and performance on the reading FCAT. The findings suggest that there was a statistically significant difference in gender and passing performance on the reading FCAT with recreational reading motivation and a statistically significant difference in socioeconomic status with academic reading motivation. For the qualitative section of this study, five individual interviews were conducted and aimed to answer in what ways familial and school literacy experiences influenced academic and recreational reading motivation. These findings supported the quantitative findings regarding socioeconomic status and academic reading motivation and a common theme emerged regarding the importance of early literacy experiences.

Keywords: reading motivation, academic, recreational, student achievement, Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT), reading FCAT Levels, and Title I
Dedication

I dedicate my work to all of my students who struggle to read and, unfortunately, lack the motivation to read. It is my sincere hope to make a difference in your life and, more importantly, turn you on to the love of a good book. Furthermore, I recognize that this project could not have been made possible without the never-ending support of many family members, whose words of encouragement and occasional shoulder to lean upon were invaluable and so, this is for you:

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Background

Since the 1980’s, when the National Commission on Excellence in Education deemed the United States “A Nation At Risk,” after an investigation on the quality of education in the U.S., there has been an increased focus on student achievement. In fact, the report articulated the following innate right of all students in the educational system in the U.S.:

All, regardless of race or class or economic status, are entitled to a fair chance and to the tools for developing their individual powers of mind and spirit to the utmost. This promise means that all children by virtue of their own efforts, competently guided, can hope to attain the mature and informed judgment needed to secure gainful employment, and to manage their own lives, thereby serving not only their own interests but also the progress of society itself (U.S. Department of Education, 1983).

This report stirred controversy and raised fear and doubt about the competency of the education system in the U.S. Nearly twenty years later; the U.S. was faced with continually declining student achievement and a call for accountability. This came in the form of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, U.S.C. § 6319, 2008). This act demanded that teachers be highly qualified to teach a specific subject area, increased mandatory testing requirements, and set standards by which states, districts, and schools would be measured to ensure adequate yearly progress (AYP). This act also set out to guarantee that all students, regardless of ethnicity, gender, and
socioeconomic status, would receive quality education, determined by measurable objectives.

Interestingly, Allington (2002) suggested that this federal “intrusion” on local curriculum and teacher autonomy not only impeded the improvement of reading instruction, but also hindered the entire public education system because educators felt restricted and void of flexibility and creativity. Furthermore, he suggested that legislation used the masked terms of “evidence-based” and “scientific”, but did little to add to relevance in the school systems because their suggestions appeared to be ineffective for purposeful classroom implementation and use.

Today, we continue to see a focus on the declining reading scores and literacy rates among students in the U.S. In fact, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP, 2009) reported that only one-third of all students entering high school are proficient in reading, or are reading at grade level, which suggests that two-thirds of students entering high school are reading below grade level. With the upcoming adoption of the Common Core Standards approaches, there is a focus towards students’ ability to read more complex texts, an increased exposure to informational texts, ability to cite evidence, collaborate, and present findings as well as become critical thinkers, who will demonstrate the ability to be college or career ready (CCSSI, 2010). It is this ongoing focus on literacy that repeatedly indicates that there is a disconnect between what we want and where we are in the educational system in this country. The decline in our literacy rate, as reported by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA, 2007), suggested that the American culture is at risk, which is detailed in the following section.
Statement of Problem

The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA, 2007) published Reading at Risk: A Survey of Literacy Reading in America, which suggested that nearly every demographic group was reading at remarkably lower rates than 10 or even 20 years ago. Furthermore, they noted that the largest declines existed among young adults. The report stated that most students in the U.S. are reading less and comprehending less, and that such a downturn will have serious ramifications nationwide. The decline in reading ability significantly impacts the social, cultural, and economic realm of our society. People with poor reading skills have fewer employment opportunities, volunteer less in civic and cultural life, and earn significantly less money than their counterparts, who enjoy and read habitually.

More alarming is that nearly one-third of teenagers in the U.S. drop out of high school, which accounts for nearly 1.2 million students per year (NEA, 2007). The Alliance for Excellent Education (2011) reported that the dropout rates are higher for Black and Hispanic students as compared to White students. More specifically, it was reported that 21 percent of Hispanic students dropout as compared to 8 percent of Black students and 5 percent of White students. In addition, it reported that these individuals are much more likely to spend time periodically unemployed, on government assistance, or rotating in and out of the prison system than their graduate counterparts. The NEA (2007) reported that the unemployment rate for Hispanics is 8 percent, as compared to 9 percent for Blacks and 4 percent for Whites. Furthermore, children living in poverty are more likely to come from minority families, in that 27 percent of Hispanic children live in poverty, 34 percent of Black children live in poverty, as compared to 10 percent of
White children live in poverty. The decline in reading, along with the unsettling dropout rates appear to be related, and it may now be time to take a more in-depth look at the importance of literacy and motivation to read in the U.S.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study was to determine if a relationship exists between academic and recreational reading motivation and performance on the reading Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT). Additionally, this study was undertaken to determine if a relationship exists between gender, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status with regard to academic and recreational reading motivation and student achievement on the reading FCAT.

Definitions of Terms and Variables

Academic Reading: This refers to the reading that a student does for school purposes, which does not provide for student choice. This often refers to a textbook or school district mandated curriculum.

Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT): The FCAT began in 1998 as part of Florida’s plan to improve student achievement by establishing higher standards through standardized performance testing. In 2010-2011, Florida transitioned to the FCAT 2.0, which measured student performance based upon the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards. Students enrolled in grades 3 to 10 participate annually in the FCAT 2.0 Reading.
**Reading FCAT Levels:** These are the levels of achievement that a student earns based on a rating of level 1 to 5. A level 3 or higher is considered to be a passing score and the level at which a student is considered to be at grade level proficiency. A level 1 or 2 is considered to be below grade level, are not passing scores, and requires state mandated intervention. State intervention at the middle school level requires that if a student scores a level 1 on the FCAT reading, the student be placed in an intensive reading course the following year. If a student scores a level 2, the student must be enrolled in either an intensive reading course or a content area course in which reading strategies are specifically taught (FL Department of Education, 2012).

**Reading Motivation:** This refers to a student’s enthusiasm for reading, which can include intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to read.

**Recreational Reading:** This refers to the reading that a student does for recreation, or by their choosing. While students may choose what to read at school, recreational reading, for the purpose of this study, refers to reading done outside the classroom.

**Student Achievement:** This refers to the academic success or performance level that a student scores on a state mandated standardized test.

**Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act: Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged:** This refers to a Federally funded educational grant, (Title I, Part D) which provides financial assistance for intervention programs to schools with high percentages of children who are neglected, delinquent, or at-risk (referred to as Title I).
Study Overview

The current literature supports the concept that students who are more motivated to read perform better on standardized tests than students who are less motivated (J. Guthrie et al., 2013, 2001, 2000; R. Allington 2006, 2002; K. Beers 2003, 1998). The current literature does not appear to uncover data regarding relationships among gender, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status, nor does there appear to be research that compares recreational and academic reading motivation. This study used a mixed methods design that included quantitative data collected using the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (ERAS), located in Appendix A, which measures a students’ attitude toward academic and recreational reading. Because reading declines are evident among 6th grade students in Florida (FL Department of Education, 2012), a convenience sample was used in a middle school in southwest Florida. The purpose was to determine whether correlations existed among several variables including academic and recreational reading motivation, gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and performance on the reading FCAT. The qualitative portion of this study involved individual interviews with a group of five students of mixed gender, ethnicity, and varying levels of responses to the quantitative survey regarding academic and recreational reading motivation. The students were interviewed in order to gain a greater understanding of the factors that affect reading motivation and their literacy experiences. The purpose of these case studies was to allow the researcher to discover common themes among 6th grade students’ literacy history as well as discover what motivates students to read.
Significance of the Study

Educators play a significant role in the motivation and engagement of their students. Burgess, Sargent, Smith, Hill, & Morrison (2011) asserted that evidence clearly demonstrates that the teaching of reading requires the application of specialized knowledge and that a teacher’s role includes encouraging voluntary reading among students. In fact, they proclaimed that a teacher of reading has two critical objectives in improving children’s literacy. First, a reading teacher should help develop the ability to read and, secondly, the reading teacher should develop a lifelong disposition to participate in leisure reading. Reading is recognized as the most important skill taught in school, because it affects all other curricula (Musti-Rao & Cartledge, 2007). With a greater focus on motivation, it is hopeful that students will become more effective readers with lifelong reading habits.

Today’s educators are faced with rising expectations amidst an ever-changing arena in the U.S. public education system. The demographics are rapidly changing, and it is becoming increasingly important for teachers to understand students’ diverse backgrounds and how such differences can affect their motivation and overall achievement.

This research will help inform teachers, school administrators, curriculum and staff development in that there will be a greater understanding of the relationship between academic and recreational reading motivation and performance on standardized reading assessments. Furthermore, this will provide additional information regarding students’ reading motivation and may be useful in making curricular decisions based on engaging reading pedagogy. If students perform better on standardized assessments based on
academic and/ or recreational reading motivation or, if reading motivation is based on other factors or attributes, more informed decisions could be made regarding curriculum. With the findings of this research, curriculum specialists and teachers may begin to focus on engagement and improving student motivation in reading as a key factor for increasing student achievement.
CHAPTER II
LITERATURE REVIEW

Reading is a key skill that affects all other academic contents. One must be able to read proficiently to achieve success more readily in all other areas of instruction. There is a continual rise in expectations for reading more complex texts, and while this is a substantial endeavor, it appears more difficult for the reluctant, unmotivated reader. While most agree that motivated readers typically perform better on standardized tests than unmotivated readers, there are varying degrees of motivation as well as a myriad of other factors that can affect reading motivation and achievement. Although student achievement has been heavily examined over the previous decades and is still debated today, as we are in the midst of a huge educational reform with the upcoming implementation of the Common Core Standards, reading motivation is an important component that is rarely investigated. Student performance on standardized tests and overall achievement levels continue to be reported as well as to remain in the spotlight of education; however, there seems to be little consideration to the importance of reading motivation, its multi-faceted influences, and its far-reaching influence on student achievement.

This chapter includes a review of current literature on reading motivation and its importance as well as the influence of reading motivation on student achievement. This chapter will discuss the following components of reading motivation:

1.) the importance of reading motivation,

2.) the reading behaviors and instructional strategies that affect reading motivation,
3.) the early literacy experiences of students that influence reading motivation, and
4.) the overall importance of reading motivation and student achievement.

Overview

As is evident in the last several decades, educational reforms have been targeting student achievement and equality. It has been the goal of both national and state education policy that all students achieve academic success and that we continue to narrow the achievement gap among diverse groups of students (NAEP, 2012). While these reforms have focused on curriculum and standards, teacher effectiveness and professional development, and access to funding for technology and other resources, they have not considered motivation.

Researchers and policymakers have clearly documented and focused on the troubling problems associated with reading achievement. This is, in part, due to the research that suggests that more than a quarter of middle and high school students in the United States lack the skills necessary to succeed, and unfortunately, this trend has been documented since the establishment of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) more than forty years ago (National Center for Education Statistics, 2009). While poor reading achievement and performance have remained in the forefront of academic reporting, it is important to examine the significant role that reading motivation plays in this domain.
Importance of Reading Motivation

Although reading motivation often does not receive the attention that is warranted in many national reports made to the general public and is rarely mentioned in the Common Core Standards, it is a topic that has been researched more recently. In fact, it is widely accepted in that reading motivation plays an important role in student achievement (Gambrell, 2011; Guthrie et al., 2001, 2013; Pressley et al., 2003), as well as affects performance in other content areas (Baker & Wigfield, 1999). Because reading motivation significantly impacts student performance, it is arguably a key component in today’s classroom. In fact, Gambrell (2011) asserted that if students are not motivated to read, they might never reach their full literacy potential. Recognizing the importance of reading motivation can help educators make informed decisions about instructional strategies as well as assist in curriculum decision-making.

Although reading motivation is important, it often presents challenges to educators. While most educators will agree that motivating students to read is one of the most critical and often difficult tasks of teaching, middle school teachers are continually searching for ways to motivate their students (Mucherah & Yoder, 2008). Consistent findings suggest that attitude towards reading decline over time, and, in fact, NAEP (2009) reported that, as students progress from fourth to eighth grade, their attitudes toward reading worsens significantly. It is this trend that sends a signal to educators, policymakers, and parents about the importance of reading motivation and the impact it has on student success.

Literacy development is one of the most accurate predictors of academic success, and motivation to read plays a significant role in that development (Neugebauer, 2013;
Marinack & Gambrell, 2008). Consequently, possessing an in-depth understanding of the importance and relevance of reading motivation and its role in the classroom as well as working to improve reading motivation can greatly affect students’ academic success as well as contributing to students becoming lifelong readers. Motivated readers are inclined to engage in reading activities more frequently, and with increased practice, they will experience improved comprehension (Guthrie & Humenick, 2004; Wang & Guthrie, 2004). Moreover, Mathis (2004) suggested that the importance of being truly literate is the act of reading independently, responsively, critically, and more importantly, because reading is one’s innate desire. Furthermore, if children are not engaged in thoughtful responses to reading, there is a great risk of producing students that fail to see a purpose for reading, and it is important to provide opportunities to engage in real literacy situations, which allows students to place value to their reading (Applegate & Applegate; Mata, 2011). Simply put, reading motivation is a pivotal piece of the academic puzzle.

Considering that reading motivation is a key factor in a student’s literacy development and a leading component of their overall academic success, educators must target reading motivation in today’s classrooms. Rader (2010) acknowledged the growing importance of the ability to read and process information in today’s informational society. In order to help accomplish this feat, there are numerous research-based instructional strategies that can be implemented in the classroom, which will significantly impact students’ motivation to read.
Reading Behaviors & Reading Strategies that Affect Motivation

Recognizing that motivation is important and relevant to student success allows educators to work toward fostering that motivation and cultivating lifelong reading habits for students through the employment of various research-based reading strategies which target improved reading comprehension. Reading is seen as a process, which is defined as a complex skill made up of several components that must be arranged in order to construe meaning (Denton & Al Otaiba, 2011). A reader must not only recognize or decode words, but also must understand these words and extract meaning from the text as a whole. It is important that skills and strategies are taught systematically and explicitly, which will engage and motivate students to read as well as learn to use these skills independently. There are several research-based reading behaviors and reading strategies that can affect motivation (Gambrell, 2011). Such behaviors and strategies include the following:

- reading activities and strategies that are relevant to their lives,
- access to a wide range of reading materials & opportunities to make choices about what they read,
- ample opportunities to engage in reading practice,
- opportunities to socially interact and collaborate with others about the text they are reading.

Gambrell suggested that not only do these reading behaviors and reading strategies help improve motivation, but also, more importantly, highly motivated readers who see
reading as a desirable activity will maintain their engagement and, thus, become better readers.

It is important that students find reading tasks and activities relevant and purposeful, because, if students do not find relevance in their reading, they will be less motivated to read. Purcell-Gates, Duke, & Martineau (2007) suggested that the use of authentic texts helps establish purpose and create meaning for students. Along with meaning and value of text, lies the importance of the overall experience that students have with such texts, and when students find value and meaning in classroom reading tasks and activities, not only are they better able to make connections to their reading, but, their motivation to read is also enhanced (Enriquez, 2013; Gambrell, 2011). This suggests that students will not only be more engaged in their reading, but also more motivated to read.

A reader who continually makes reading relevant to their lives is able to make connections to themselves, other texts, and the world is an active and engaged reader (Gambrell, 2011). Making connections to one’s reading is a critical component of reading and developing meaning of a text. In fact, whether a reader is questioning, inferring, analyzing, or synthesizing information, one’s background knowledge and thoughtful connections help to make meaning, and these connections are said to be at the center of learning and understanding (McKenna & Robinson, 2014; Harvey & Goodvis, 2007). According to Gambrell (2011), a reader that is reading not only for comprehension, but also for meaning within his or her world, is the habit of a reader who is committed to reading and devoted to lifelong literacy.
Not only is it important that students find reading to be relevant and purposeful for improving motivation, but also students must have access to a wide range of reading materials because motivation to read and reading achievement are higher when the classroom environment is rich in materials and includes a wide range of materials. In such an environment, students are able to see the value of reading (Gambrell, 2011). Teachers should provide students with easy access to high-interest materials, such as a classroom library, where students are more likely to pick them up because classroom libraries help promote positive reading attitudes and lead to improved reading performance (Duncan, 2010; Young & Moss, 2006). More importantly, students’ curiosity and interest are more likely to be raised when a wide range of materials is easily accessible to them in the classroom (Gambrell, 2011; Duncan, 2010).

Not only is it important that students have access to a wide range of materials, but it is also equally important that students are afforded choices in their reading. Allowing student to choose provides them with autonomy and a feeling of self-control (Gaskins, 2008). In addition, allowing freedom to choose provides students with opportunities to invest in their own learning. It is critical that teachers recognize the importance of student choice, because it is directly related to interest and control and it is suggested that a one-size-fits-all approach to reading is anti-scientific (Allington, 2006). Furthermore, Reis & Fogarty (2006) identified the need for schools to use alternative methods to teach reading, and more importantly, to promote the enjoyment of reading. From this, we can surmise that, not only is it important for students to take ownership and responsibility of their learning, but also it is important to recognize that such choice can empower them and significantly increase their motivation to read and enjoyment of reading.
Understanding the importance of access to and choice of materials leads to the equally important issue of time. Students must be allowed time to practice the skill of reading. Classrooms where students have sufficient time to read provides the framework that is necessary to support students in becoming motivated and proficient readers (Gambrell, 2011). The amount of time allocated to reading significantly explained gains demonstrated on posttest reading measures, and classrooms where teachers allowed time to read and built a context for engaged reading, also produced students who demonstrated increased achievement levels (Gambrell, 2011; Guthrie et al. 2001). Furthermore, Garan & DeVoogd (2008) found that, in order for students to be better readers, it was necessary to read, just as students must practice math skills or sports in order to improve. Conclusively, it is apparent that students must be allowed time to practice the skill of reading in an effort to show improvement and increased motivation.

While it is important that students find their reading relevant and purposeful, have wide access and choice of materials, as well as time to practice reading, it is equally important that students are afforded time to interact with others. Duncan (2010) found that collaboration in the classroom helps increase students’ motivation to read and learn. Students are more likely to be engaged in reading if they are allowed time to collaborate with others by sharing thoughts, ideas, and interpretations, which has been shown to improve comprehension (Gambrell, 2011). In fact, Strommen and Mates (2004) found that middle school students recognized the importance of being able to talk with others, friends and family, about books.

Positive interaction with others helps improve motivation, and this is especially true with teachers who share a love of reading (Burgess et al, 2011). It is commonly
accepted that teachers serve as critical models for students, and they can make a lasting impression and a strong impact on students’ reading attitudes and practices (Pitcher, Albright, & DeLaney, 2007). From this, it is apparent that appropriate skills and strategies, as well as the encouragement to interact with others is continuously modeled and applauded in the classroom.

Collaborating about book recommendations or sharing an enjoyable reading experience can help change the perceptions and beliefs of nonreaders. Because teachers can strongly influence student motivation, it is important that teachers encourage and model social interaction and share the love of reading for pleasure as a way to positively impact students’ reading motivation (Duncan, 2010). Morrison & Wlodarczyk (2009) asserted that motivation is a top predictor of the level of meaningful engagement that students will participate in with regards to reading texts. Furthermore, they found that peer interaction is important to cognitive development, and students learn more through collaboration with others. More specifically, a “thinking classroom” is one where literacy is an active process filled with dialogue, curiosity, expressers, listeners, and learners (Harvey & Goodvis, 2007). Likewise, Allington (2006) refers to this type of engagement as thoughtful literacy. Clearly, it is evident that collaboration and rich dialogue are necessary components in the classroom because they increase comprehension, encourage social interaction, and engage students in the reading process. More importantly, collaboration and social interaction contribute to students’ motivation to read.

It is evident that relevance, access, choice, and collaboration are important characteristics of reading behaviors and reading strategies that can improve reading
motivation, but it is also important to understand the significance of a student’s early literacy experiences and see how it provides the foundation for a student’s learning.

**Early Literacy Experiences & Reading Motivation**

While it is known that children are not born inherently motivated to read, nor are children transformed instantly into motivated and dedicated readers, it is agreed that reading is a process that occurs over time and with many influences. It is widely accepted that early childhood literacy experiences are significantly related to future academic achievement (Duncan, 2010; Sylva et al., 2010; Torppa et al., 2007). In fact, the home learning environment is an important predictor of reading achievement (Anders et al., 2012; Melhuish et al., 2008; Rodriguez & Tamis-LeMonda, 2011; Sylva et al., 2010). A child’s home provides the initial exposure and influence upon his or her literacy; more importantly, it provides the framework upon which literacy is built.

While it is agreed that a child’s home environment provides the foundation for his or her early literacy experiences, it also agreed that those experiences directly affect the students’ abilities and motivation to read. Schools continue to face the challenges that many students are not adequately prepared or ready to start school (Swick, 2009). In fact, more than one-third of children in the U.S. enter school with limited early literacy skills, and motivation to learn, which can place them at considerable risk for long-term reading difficulties (Carter, Chard, & Pool, 2009). The achievement gap that is often referenced begins from early literacy experiences in the home (Swick, 2009).

Children’s exposure to written and spoken language varies from home to home. In fact, their early language and literacy opportunities are woven throughout the social
and cultural contexts within their homes (Carter et al., 2009). Children who are naturally exposed to language and literacy activities within the home are more likely to develop skills, concepts, attitudes, and behaviors that positively impact their interest and beginning knowledge of literacy (Purcell-Gates, 2007, 2000; Weigel et al., 2006a). Conversely, in a home where exposure is limited, there is a negative impact on a child’s early literacy experiences (Gambrell, 2011). From this, we see that a child’s home environment plays a critical role in early literacy development.

While it is understood that significant differences occur in early literacy experiences within the home environment of children, there are many explanations offered that account for many of these differences. One such explanation for the variance is the socioeconomic status (SES) of the family. Heckman (2006) noted that SES-related variances in cognition and achievement are evident before children begin formal education. It is suggested that SES predicts disparities in early academic achievement due to the quality of the early environmental inputs, which is further demonstrated in that children growing up in lower SES home are inclined to receive fewer educational resources and to incur many other relative impoverishments (Tucker-Drob & Harden, 2012). Students from lower SES backgrounds have fewer background experiences and knowledge to bring to the classroom, which limits their connections to educational experiences; therefore, the achievement gap for many occurs prior to the start of their formal education.

In addition, SES can also affect one’s motivation. Tucker-Drob & Harden (2012) identified that, in order for a child’s motivation to be meaningful and have lasting effects on learning, the child would need to experience a long term pattern of motivating
approaches to learning and to reinforcing cognitive gains. Edelman & Engler (2012) assert that, on a national level, more than one in five children are poor, and many more risk falling below the poverty line. In fact, children under five are the poorest age group in the U.S., and one in four infants, toddlers, and preschoolers live in poverty during the most significant years of brain development. Furthermore, Elliott (2013) found that children living in poor families not only score lower on measures of academic achievement, but also have lower rates of high school graduations, college enrollment, and college graduation. As noted, there is substantial evidence that supports the theory that children from families of low SES may have limited background experiences and limited exposure to literacy, which significantly impacts their early literacy development.

Socioeconomic status is clearly one possible research-based explanation for the varying degrees of home literacy experiences of students that begin school with a deficit of reading knowledge, and another is related to the background experience of students from homes where the primary language is not English. Robinson (2008) reported that Hispanic students whose primary language is Spanish are entering kindergarten with the lowest levels of reading ability in English, even below monolingual English-speaking disadvantaged students. In fact, many are well below their peers in school readiness in reading. These students typically lack the background knowledge of the English alphabet and sounds and are not able to decode words, which hinders their reading comprehension in English. With solid literacy instruction, these students can significantly benefit and improve their reading abilities (Bialystok, 2001). Furthermore, if these students receive the needed literacy instruction, which might be in their first language and in English, they can have the cognitive benefits that come with being bilingual (Nunley, 2010).
While there is research-based evidence that supports the various reasons behind children’s readiness for school and early literacy experiences, it is clear that work is needed to help narrow the achievement gap that continues to exist. Fullan (2001) noted the importance of change and diversity when he stated that the global society is increasingly complex, requiring educated citizens who can continuously learn and who can work with diversity, locally and internationally. We know that our schools are and will continue to face an influx of diverse students, and this signals a need for a greater understanding of a child’s early literacy experiences in an effort to better serve individual needs. For example, Protacio (2012) suggested that, in order to motivate English Language Learners, as with all learners, it is imperative that we try to meet their interests in topics and genres. Finally, it is important to recognize that the acquisition of reading skills is often the result of the interaction among child, family, classroom, and school system. That being said, students of non-English speaking families cannot be overlooked because we know the importance of reading motivation as it is directly associated with achievement.

**Reading Motivation & Student Achievement**

The current literature supports the widely accepted concept that students who are more motivated to read perform better on standardized tests than students that are less motivated (Guthrie, 2012; Allington, 2012; Beers, 2003). In fact, Anderman (2013) found that motivation determines students’ willingness and promptness in engaging in tasks as well as the amount of effort they put into that task. He maintained that student motivation matters for academic achievement. This suggests that increasing and
improving student motivation may be key factors in raising the academic achievement level of students.

Middle school is a critical period by which to investigate reading achievement. The Rand Corporation’s Educational Research Group (2004) found that more than half of eighth graders fail to achieve expected levels of proficiency in reading on national tests. This is significant, because, as most states require standardized graduation exams, and considering the impending assessments regarding the Common Core Standards, students who read poorly in adolescence are not likely to pass these tests (Mucherah & Yoder, 2008). Additionally, Guthrie et al., (2001) stated that, as motivation increases, the amount of academic engagement expands, which increases achievement, particularly in the form of test scores. Therefore, it is fair to suggest that achievement is directly affected by motivation. Likewise, Wigfield & Cambria (2010) found that the relationship between motivation and achievement appears to be correlated. More specifically, they found that the value that students place on learning affects their motivation and their overall academic achievement. Furthermore, research indicates that such values, as determined by students, affects motivation and can actually predict student performance (Cole et al., 2008; Hulleman et al., 2008).

Ulper (2011) stated that not only does reading motivation improve student comprehension but also how much they will read. In fact, Guthrie et al., (2001) suggested that reading motivation is substantially related with important cognitive outcomes such as reading performance and the amount of reading in which one participates. It is evident that reading motivation and achievement are highly related and significantly influence one another.
Summary

It is evident that there is research that supports the finding that reading motivation significantly impacts student achievement (Gambrell, 2011; Guthrie et al., 2013, 2001). In addition, there is research that demonstrates the various components of reading motivation as far as early literacy experiences and reading skills and strategies that affect reading motivation (Gambrell, 2011; Duncan, 2010); however, there is little research that examines the role of academic and recreational reading motivation and their relationship to such variables as, gender, socioeconomic status, and ethnicity, which suggests that further studies may provide a greater insight to elicit a better understanding of the role that these variables have on students’ motivation to read. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to investigate if there was a relationship between these variables and students’ motivation to read.
CHAPTER III
RESEARCH METHOD

This chapter describes the methods that were used to conduct the research study on the critical analysis of academic and recreational reading motivation and its correlations to reading Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) performance for 6th grade students. This grade level was chosen, because it is often the year that reading motivation declines (McKenna et al., 2012; Mucherah & Yoder, 2008). It is currently one of the grades showing an overall declining performance on the reading FCAT in a south Florida school district. Research was conducted to determine the relationship between academic and recreational reading motivation, gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and student achievement on the reading FCAT.

Sample

For the purpose of this study, a purposive sample was taken from a Title I middle school in south Florida. A Title I designation is based on the percentage of economically disadvantaged students in the school. The purposive sample included 6th grade students who returned the parent consent form, which allowed them to be eligible to participate in the survey.

There are 865 students enrolled in the middle school, which serves grades 6 through 8. Of the 865 students, there are 448 males, (52%) and 417 females, (48%). The overall demographics of the school consist of the following characteristics: 81 percent of the students are entitled to receive free lunch, 8 percent receive a reduced lunch rate, and
11 percent of the students do not receive free or reduced lunch. The breakdown for the total school population by ethnicity and gender is shown in Table 1.

Table 1

*Total Population of School by Ethnicity and Gender*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White, non-Hispanic</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>26.6</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>20.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>26.1</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>29.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>41.1</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>43.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-Racial</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American Indian</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.40</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>448</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>417</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The 6th grade students represent the largest class in the school. There are 220 male students (53.4%) and 192 females (46.4%). Of this 6th grade class, 80 percent of the students receive free lunch, 10 percent receive reduced lunch, and 10 percent do not receive free or reduced lunch. Of this class, 156 (37.9%) returned the parental consent forms and participated in this research study. The ethnic and gender breakdown for the 6th grade students, or sample population, is shown in Table 2.
Table 2

*Total Population of 6th Grade Class by Ethnicity and Gender*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White, non-Hispanic</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>19.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>21.3</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>29.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>45.9</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>45.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-Racial</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American Indian</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>53.4</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>46.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Research Questions and Hypotheses**

**Quantitative Study**

The quantitative component of this study examined the following questions:

1.) What relationship exists between academic reading motivation, as measured by the ERAS, and diverse 6th grade student’s gender, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, and performance on the reading FCAT?

2.) What relationship exists between recreational reading motivation, as measured by the ERAS, and diverse 6th grade student’s gender, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, and performance on the reading FCAT?
Quantitative Hypotheses:

1.) There is a statistically significant high correlation between academic and recreational reading motivation and student performance on the reading FCAT.

2.) There will be a greater statistically significant difference between gender and academic and recreational reading motivation than will be found among socioeconomic status and ethnicity with regards to motivation.

Qualitative Study

The qualitative component of this study examined the following questions:

1.) In what ways do familial literacy experiences influence academic and recreational reading motivation?

2.) In what ways do school literacy experiences influence academic and recreational reading motivation?

Qualitative Hypotheses:

1.) There will be a strong relationship between significant early literacy experiences, as compared to insignificant early literacy experiences, with regards to reading motivation.

Research Design

This study used a mixed methods research design, whereby the researcher used both quantitative and qualitative methods in one study. A mixed methods research study can help discover relationships or correlations between variables using quantitative data as well as explore these relationships in depth by using qualitative data analysis. While a
mixed methods study can be time consuming, it can also allow the researcher to acquire a more profound understanding of the data (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009).

The quantitative data was utilized to explore whether relationships existed between the variables, whereas the qualitative data was used to investigate the influence a student’s literacy history, which provided a more acute understanding of the analyses. More specifically, in the quantitative section of the study, the researcher analyzed data from the surveys, which demonstrated the participants’ level of reading motivation for academic and recreational reading, as well as the reading FCAT scores from the 2012-2013 school year in an effort to explore correlations among variables, such as gender, socioeconomic status, and ethnicity.

In the qualitative section of the study, the researcher investigated students’ literacy history through individual interviews, which provided background information from the participants interviewed to generate a greater understanding of the factors that affect their motivation to read. Finally, in using a mixed methods research design, the researcher integrated findings from the quantitative and qualitative parts of the study to produce a more complete understanding of the importance that motivation plays in student achievement and how a student is motivated to read.

**Data Collection Procedures**

The data collected for the quantitative segment of this study was the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (ERAS) developed by McKenna and Kear (1990). (See Appendix A). This instrument was chosen because it was developed to measure students’ motivation for academic, recreational, and combined total motivation for reading. The
survey has been found to be highly reliable and valid (McKenna & Kear, 1990). This survey consists of twenty questions based on a Likert scale format but using student-friendly pictures. In developing the survey instrument, the designers used the following criteria to establish its framework, and in doing so, found that the survey must: 1) contain a large-scale normative frame of reference, 2) consist of a set of items based on desirable psychometric properties, 3) have empirically documented reliability and validity, 4) be applicable to grades 1 through 6, 5) possess a meaningful, student-friendly response format, and 6) be suitable for brief group administration (McKenna & Kear, 1990). The ERAS measures students’ attitudes toward academic and recreational reading motivation.

The administration of the survey lasted approximately 15 minutes and all participating 6th grade students, those who returned the consent forms, were able to complete the survey within 10-15 minutes. (See Appendix B.) The researcher worked at this school where the surveys were administered but did not teach any 6th grade students. The survey was distributed in the morning, prior to the start of the students’ first block of class, upon students’ arrival to school. The survey was administered in the school cafeteria, which provided each student with an ample workspace to complete the survey. Assistance was on-hand as needed, although none was necessary.

After administration of the survey instrument, the researcher scored the point value earned for each question, and each participant received a raw total score for academic and recreational reading motivation as well as a combined overall score for motivation to read. This quantitative data was used to compare scores among various
groups of students and to explore whether relationships existed among variables such as gender, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status.

In addition to the quantitative data, the researcher chose to further analyze the data by utilizing qualitative research. In the qualitative segment of this study, the researcher intended to gain a better understanding of student motivation by conducting individual case studies. A small group of five students was chosen based on responses to the reading motivation survey regarding academic, recreational, and total reading motivation. These students were purposefully chosen to represent varying degrees of motivation in an effort to investigate the impact that their literacy history may have had on their motivation to read. In order to participate in the case studies, the participants selected were required to return a signed consent form allowing them to engage in the interviews. (See Appendix C.)

The researcher individually conducted the interviews with a consistent protocol of questions. (See Appendix D.) The researcher met with each student and engaged in detailed note taking. Initial interviews lasted approximately 10-15 minutes, with a follow-up discussion to elicit member checking, which ensured correct note taking. In the initial interviews, participants were asked a variety of questions regarding the students’ literacy history and current motivation for academic and recreational reading. In an effort to be certain that all responses were written accurately and that the researcher fully comprehended the participants’ answers and comments, the researcher used member checking by meeting one additional time with the students to ensure accuracy. The researcher examined the data and looked for common themes among the responses.
regarding the participants’ early literacy experiences at home and at school, as well as their feelings about academic and recreational reading and motivation.

**Internal and External Validity Threats**

Although the ERAS has substantial evidence of reliability and validity (McKenna & Kear, 1990), self-reporting can cause threats to the internal validity of this research. The survey relies on 6th grade students to truthfully answer 20 questions about their academic and recreational reading motivation. Furthermore, during the interviews, the researcher also must depend on the students’ honest responses to the questions posed. To help ensure the reliability of responses, the researcher used member checking to review with each interview participant that the researcher’s understanding and summary of responses was correctly reported. Member checking was done as a follow-up to the initial interview.

Possible threats to external validity lie in the potential inability to make generalizations beyond the population sample. The sample size is relatively small, as one middle school class of 6th grade students served as the sample population. As a result, generalizability of the findings may have some limitations.

**Data Analysis Procedures**

A mixed methods research design is often used when quantitative and qualitative data are used simultaneously to better understand the research problem (Creswell, 2012). The purpose of this study was to explore relationships among variables and to assist in a greater understanding of how reading motivation and early literacy experiences affect student achievement.
In the quantitative section of the research study, a Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to determine what relationships exist among variables. SPSS is a commonly used program in the social sciences, because it is a tool used to run statistical analyses that also provides the user with flexible options and allows the user to customize the program to fit individual research needs (Field, 2009). The researcher used descriptive statistics to demonstrate how the variables are related by investigating the trends found in the analysis. Since the researcher is interested in how variables are interrelated, and because there are multiple independent variables, such as gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and performance on the Reading FCAT 2.0, it was most appropriate to run the statistical analysis through SPSS using a one-way ANOVA. Academic, recreational, and a combined total raw score for reading motivation were the dependent variables used in this analysis.

In the qualitative section of the study, the researcher interviewed students. During the interview process, the researcher took copious notes from the participants’ verbal responses and asked probing questions, as needed, based upon the responses of the participants. In qualitative research such as this, the researcher uses a case study, because it provides an in-depth exploration of a bounded system, such as individuals, as in this study (Creswell, 2012). More specifically, because the researcher interviewed several participants in hopes of describing and comparing multiple cases, the researcher engaged in a collective case study as defined by Creswell (2012). A collective case study allowed the researcher to look for common themes among the participants and to write vignettes to better understand and report findings regarding reading motivation.
From this mixed methods research design; the researcher used inferential statistics, which provided the researcher with an opportunity to make inferences from this sample to a greater population of similar students. These findings can influence future research regarding students’ motivation to read and academic achievement.

**Confidentiality**

Establishing confidentiality of data is a critical step in all research. Neither the name of the school nor the names of the students were used in this research; only the researcher knows this information. In fact, the researcher used numbers rather than student names to identify and report data. Written parental and student consent was given by all participants in order to engage in the surveys and interviews.

All written records, consent forms, and surveys were taken to the researcher’s home and locked in a secure office. Upon completion of the study, the data was stored on a USB flash drive and transferred to the researcher’s supervisor at Florida Gulf Coast University for a minimum of 3 years, as required by federal regulations.

**Limitations of the Study**

Creswell (2012) defines research as a process of steps used to collect and analyze data in an effort to acquire a greater understanding of the research problem. This is done by, first, posing a question and, second, by collecting and analyzing data and, third, by using the data to answer the question at hand. Although research is designed to provide effective answers to questions and improve practice, there are limitations found within each study, and this mixed methods research design study is no exception.

The following are possible limitations found in the study:
1. The sample was a purposive, non-random sample, which can limit the findings and the ability to generalize to a greater population.

2. Data was to be collected only from students who returned the parental consent form.

3. The quantitative data relies on self-reporting, which depends upon students’ honesty in reporting answers and can limit the interpretation of results.

4. The qualitative data also relies on self-reporting, which in turn, depends upon students’ honesty in reporting feelings and opinions and can limit the interpretation of the results.

5. Due to the nature of qualitative research, the themes discovered may be interpreted differently by others and can be considered subjective.

Assumptions and Delimitations

Assumptions

1. It is assumed that all participants answered the survey instrument used in the quantitative section of the study honestly and truthfully. The researcher provided confidentiality to help ensure trust among participants, which was detailed in the consent form.

2. It is assumed that all five participants in the case studies answered the interview questions used in the qualitative section of the study in an honest and truthful manner. The researcher assured the participants that all reporting would be confidential to ensure anonymity.
Delimitations

1. The results of this study may be generalizable only to a similar population of 6th grade students.

2. The survey instrument used a Likert scale to measure the quantitative data and did not include open-ended responses, which can provide greater accountability in reporting and analyses (Creswell, 2012).

3. The use of the mixed methods research design method is used to substantiate the findings and provide a more in-depth understanding.
The purpose of this mixed methods study was to determine if a relationship exists between academic and recreational reading and performance on the reading subtest of the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT). Additionally, this study was undertaken to determine if a relationship exists between gender, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status with regard to academic and recreational reading motivation and student achievement on the reading FCAT.

The sections that follow will present the quantitative and qualitative findings of the research study. The quantitative findings explored the mean differences between each of the following variables: gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and reading FCAT score as compared to academic, recreational, and total reading motivation. The qualitative findings will be introduced by each collective case study and common themes that emerged in the analysis of the interviews in regards to students’ early literacy experiences. Finally, an overview of the quantitative and qualitative findings will be provided.

**Quantitative Findings**

To compute the quantitative findings, SPSS was the statistical program used. More specifically, a descriptives analysis and one-way ANOVA were utilized. A one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was utilized to investigate the mean differences associated with each independent variable: gender, ethnicity, SES, and reading FCAT.
The quantitative findings will be discussed by each independent variable that was examined in the study.

**Gender**

The research study sought to determine if a relationship existed between gender and academic and recreational reading motivation. Of the 156 participants who completed the reading motivation survey, there were 70 (44.8%) boys and 86 (55.2%) girls. To analyze the relationship between gender and academic reading motivation, a descriptives analysis for subscale scores was examined and is represented in Table 3. The data indicates that girls scored a higher level of motivation for academic reading, with a mean scale score of 26.20 ($SD = 5.206$) as compared to boys’ mean scale score of 25.54 ($SD = 4.862$).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>$M$</th>
<th>$SD$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female ($n = 86$)</td>
<td>26.20</td>
<td>5.206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male ($n = 70$)</td>
<td>25.54</td>
<td>4.862</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>25.90</td>
<td>5.049</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although girls scored a higher level of motivation for academic reading motivation than boys, the results were not statistically significant. However, when gender was compared with recreational reading motivation, the results were statistically
significant. A one-way ANOVA was computed by examining the relationship between gender and recreational reading motivation as shown in Table 4. A statistically significant difference was discovered in that girls scored statistically significantly higher than boys in recreational reading motivation ($F(4.616), p=.033, p < .05$). The results indicated that the mean scale score for girls ($M = 26.36, SD = 5.464$) was significantly different than boys ($M = 24.59, SD = 4.689$).

Table 4

*One-Way ANOVA of Gender and Recreational Reading Motivation*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>$F$</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>121.548</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>121.548</td>
<td>4.616</td>
<td>.033</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>100160.189</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>100160.189</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>106126.000</td>
<td>156</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A final analysis was run regarding gender and the total reading motivation. Table 5 represents the difference between girls and boys in relation to total reading motivation. Results indicate that girls scored a higher level of total reading motivation with a mean scale score of 52.56 ($SD = 9.787$) as compared to boys with a mean scale score of 50.13 ($SD = 8.228$). Although the difference is not statistically significant ($F(2.738), p = .100 > .05$), the results indicate that girls scored a higher level of combined total reading motivation score. Therefore, the results demonstrate that girls reported a higher level of motivation to read academically, recreationally, as well as a combined total score of reading motivation with statistical significance in recreational reading motivation.
Table 5

*Gender and Total Reading Motivation Descriptives*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>$M$</th>
<th>$SD$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female (n = 86)</td>
<td>52.56</td>
<td>9.787</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male (n = 70)</td>
<td>50.13</td>
<td>8.228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>51.47</td>
<td>9.172</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Ethnicity**

The research study sought to discover a relationship between ethnicity and academic, recreational, and total reading motivation. Of the 156 participants, six ethnicities were represented, including White (non-Hispanic), Black, Hispanic, Multi-racial, Native American, and Asian. Since there were only 12 (8%) of participants representing Multi-racial, Native American, and Asian ethnicities, the data was re-run excluding those ethnicities to see if there was a significant difference between the largest ethnic groups: White (non-Hispanic), Black, and Hispanic, which represented 92% of the participants.

Although the difference between ethnicity and academic reading motivation was not statistically significant ($F (.961), p = .385 > .05$), results represented consistent findings. With regards to academic reading motivation, White (non-Hispanic), and Black students’ scores demonstrated a higher level of reading motivation than that of Hispanic students. Specifically, White (non-Hispanic) students scored a mean scale score of 26.07 ($SD = 5.504$), as compared to Black students, which showed a slightly higher mean scale
score of 26.85 ($SD = 5.540$); whereas Hispanic students’ mean scale score was considerably lower at 25.51 ($SD = 4.658$).

With regards to the difference between ethnicity and recreational reading motivation, the results were quite similar ($F (.752), p = .473$). White (non-Hispanic) students scored a slightly higher mean scale score of 26.61 ($SD = 5.138$) as compared to Black students’ mean scale score of 25.89 ($SD = 5.406$), while Hispanic students scored a lower mean scale score of 25.22 ($SD = 5.110$).

Finally, a consistent finding was discovered when total reading motivation was analyzed in that a higher mean scale score of White (non-Hispanic) students, 52.68 ($SD = 9.262$) and Black students, 52.74 ($SD = 10.199$) was found, as compared to Hispanic students, 50.72 ($SD = 8.551$) as represented in Table 6.

Table 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>143.161</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>71.580</td>
<td>.836</td>
<td>.436</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>341087.348</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>341087.348</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>39806.000</td>
<td>144</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although the results are not statistically significant ($F (.838), p=.436, p > .05$), they are compelling because they demonstrate consistent findings. Not only did Black and White (non-Hispanic) students demonstrate similar results in motivation for reading, but also, Hispanic students scored consistently lower regarding academic, recreational, and total reading motivation as compared to Black and White (non-Hispanic) students.
Socioeconomic Status

The research study sought to discover a relationship between socioeconomic status and academic, recreational, and total reading motivation. The results of a one-way ANOVA with socioeconomic status as the independent variable and academic, recreational, and total reading motivation as the dependent variables were analyzed. As previously discussed in an earlier chapter, there is substantial research that suggests that there is typically less motivation to read among lower SES groups as compared to higher SES groups (Heckman, 2006). Research suggests that this is due to limited access and limited early literacy experiences among lower SES groups (Tucker-Drob & Harden, 2012). For the purpose of this study, students receiving free or reduced lunch were combined as one group, which represents the lower SES group, whereas students who do not receive any financial assistance collectively accounted for the higher SES group. Interestingly, this analysis resulted in much different results regarding reading motivation.

A statistically significant difference was discovered through a one-way ANOVA, whereby, students receiving free or reduced lunch scored statistically significantly higher in academic reading motivation (F (5.072), p=.026, p < .05), than students not receiving free or reduced lunch as shown in Table 7. The data demonstrated statistically significant results in that the mean scale score for students receiving free or reduced lunch (M = 26.17, SD = 4.972) was significantly different than for students not receiving free or reduced lunch (M = 22.92, SD = 5.123).
Table 7

*One-way ANOVA of Academic Reading and SES*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>126.005</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>126.005</td>
<td>5.072</td>
<td>.026</td>
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<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>28726.364</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>28726.364</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>108629.000</td>
<td>156</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Similar results were found when analyzing recreational reading. Although these results were not statistically significant (F (1.047), p = .308 >.05), students receiving free or reduced lunch demonstrated a higher motivation for recreational reading with a mean scale score of 25.69 (SD = 5.154) as compared to students not receiving financial assistance, with a mean scale score of 24.15 (SD = 5.595).

Finally, consistent results were found with regards to total reading motivation. While these results were not statistically significant (F (3.298), p = .071 >.05), students receiving free or reduced lunch score a higher total reading motivation, with a mean scale score of 51.87 (SD = 9.160) as compared to those not receiving financial assistance, with a mean scale score of 47.08 (SD = 8.431).

These results are important because they serve to question existing research regarding socioeconomic status and reading motivation. This study found that students from families of low socioeconomic status do not exhibit lower reading motivation as previously accepted.
Reading FCAT

The final three one-way ANOVAs measured whether a relationship existed among reading FCAT scores as the independent variable and academic, recreational, and total reading motivation as the dependent variables. As discussed in an earlier chapter, there is considerable research that suggests that students who are more motivated to read perform better on standardized tests (Gambrell, 2011; Guthrie et al., 2013, 2001). The data from this study supports such evidence. Also previously discussed was the interpretation of the reading FCAT scores. A student that scores a level 3, 4, or 5 successfully passes the reading FCAT and does not require intervention in the form of intensive reading instruction, whereas a student that scores a 1 or 2 fails the reading FCAT and requires intensive reading instruction as designated by the Florida Department of Education. For the purpose of this study, participants’ reading FCAT scores were grouped into two categories: pass (scores of 3, 4 and 5) and fail (scores of 1 or 2).

While results were not statistically significant regarding academic reading and performance on the reading FCAT (F (1.694), p = .195 > .05), students who passed the FCAT had a higher mean scale score of 26.49 (SD = 5.277) as compared to students’ mean scale score of 25.43 (SD = 4.835) of who did not pass the reading FCAT.

Although the results for academic reading were not statistically significant, the data collected for recreational reading and reading FCAT scores were significant. Table 8 represents those results. A statistically significant difference was discovered through a one-way ANOVA, which demonstrated that students who passed the reading FCAT scored statistically significantly higher in recreational reading motivation (F (6.966), p=.009, p < .05) than students who did not pass the reading FCAT. The results indicated
that the mean scale score for students passing the reading FCAT (M = 26.76, SD = 4.692) was significantly different than for students that did not pass the reading FCAT (M = 24.59, SD = 5.398).

Table 8

One-way ANOVA for Recreational Reading and Reading FCAT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>180.732</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>180.732</td>
<td>6.966</td>
<td>.009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>101754.963</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>101754.963</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>106126.000</td>
<td>156</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Similar findings were discovered when total reading motivation was measured against reading FCAT scores (Table 9). In this analysis, students who passed the reading FCAT scored statistically significantly higher in total reading motivation (F (4.873), p=.029 < .05) as compared to students who did not pass the reading FCAT, which was strongly influenced by the score from recreational reading motivation. The results indicated that the mean scale score for students passing the reading FCAT (M = 53.24, SD = 8.579) was significantly different than for students that did not pass the reading FCAT (M = 50.02, SD = 9.432).
Table 9

*One-way ANOVA for Total Reading Motivation and Reading FCAT*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>400.015</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>400.015</td>
<td>4.873</td>
<td>.029</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>411516.784</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>411516.784</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>426277.000</td>
<td>156</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Summary of Quantitative Findings**

The goal of the quantitative analysis was to determine if there were relationships among gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and performance on the reading FCAT with academic, recreational, and total reading motivation. The results indicated that students of lower socioeconomic status demonstrated higher levels of academic reading motivation than students of higher socioeconomic status. These findings contradict much of the research that suggested students of lower SES have fewer experiences and access, which leads to lower motivation. These results challenge those beliefs and suggest that low reading motivation may not be associated with lower SES. Furthermore, the results from this study support the research, which indicates that reading motivation is highly correlated with performance on the reading FCAT, in that, students who passed the reading FCAT scored statistically significantly higher in recreational reading than students who failed the reading FCAT. Findings suggested that, although results were not
statistically significant, girls’ mean scale scores were consistently higher than boys’ mean scale scores in reading motivation, which is supported by research. Additionally, while there were not statistically significant results regarding ethnicity, there were interesting and consistent correlations in that Black and White (non-Hispanic) students’ mean scale scores were similar, whereas Hispanic students’ mean scale score was consistently lower. The next section will examine the qualitative findings, which investigated early literacy experiences in an attempt to gain a more in-depth understanding of student reading motivation.

**Qualitative Findings**

The purpose of the qualitative portion of this mixed methods study was to generate a deeper understanding of the impact that students’ early literacy experiences had on their reading motivation, overall attitude, and performance on the reading FCAT. As previously mentioned, a small group of five students was chosen based on academic, recreational, and total reading motivation scores from the survey. Each individual case study will be discussed and a collective case study discussion will follow, which discusses common themes. Table 10 represents the demographic information of the individual case studies and Table 11 represents the academic, recreational, and total reading motivation scores from the survey as well as participants’ sixth grade 2013 reading FCAT score.
Table 10

Demographic Information of Case Studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case Study</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>SES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student 1</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>Receive Free/Reduced Lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 2</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>Receive Free/Reduced Lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 3</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>Receive Free/Reduced Lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 4</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>Receive Free/Reduced Lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 5</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>Receive Free/Reduced Lunch</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 11

Reading Motivation Survey Scores and Reading FCAT Scores of Individual Case Studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case Study</th>
<th>Academic Reading Motivation (Max score 40)</th>
<th>Recreational Reading Motivation (Max score 40)</th>
<th>Total Reading Motivation (Max score 80)</th>
<th>2013 Reading FCAT Score (Grade 6)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student 1</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>Pass: Level 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 2</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>Pass: Level 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 3</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>Fail: Level 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 4</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>Pass: Level 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 5</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>Pass: Level 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Although the researcher sought to meet with a diverse group of students, the researcher was limited to students who returned the signed consent form allowing them to participate. The researcher solicited approximately 20 students for the interview process, but only 5 students returned the signed consent forms. In regards to gender and ethnicity, the distribution was quite similar to the overall sample. There were three female participants and two male participants, and, of the five participants; four of the students interviewed were black and one student was Hispanic. With regards to SES, 90 percent of the students in the 6th grade population of this school receive a free or reduced lunch, which leaves only 10 percent of this population that, does not receive free or reduced lunch; therefore, all students interviewed receive free or reduced lunch, which is representative of the overall sample as well. Furthermore, the researcher sought to meet with students who demonstrated high levels of reading motivation to help determine what possible causes led to their high levels of reading motivation in an effort to find common themes and draw conclusions.

Each of these case studies will be discussed individually based on their responses during the interview, which sought to investigate their early literacy experiences and feelings and attitudes toward reading and their overall motivation to read.

**Student 1**

Student 1 is a Black female born and raised in the U.S. This student scored very high on her motivation to read. She scored 34 (out of a possible 40) for academic reading motivation and scored 33 (out of 40) for recreational reading; therefore her raw total reading motivation score was 67. She remembers her mother reading to her when she
was very little. In fact, her favorite books were those written by Dr. Seuss, which her mom read to her in the afternoon and at night, just before bedtime. She stated that reading is very important to her because it is important to her mother. She stated that many kids today, including some of her friends, do not make time to read and she feels that this is a mistake. In fact, she described herself as “passionate about reading.”

She is happiest when she is able to choose what to read. To help her decide what book to read, she reads the summary on the back cover and decides if it “sparks her interest”. She loves the Harry Potter books and is proud to have read all of them. Interestingly, she also enjoys reading the newspaper. In fact, her favorite section is the classified section because she likes to read about the various jobs that are available in her town. She often reads the newspaper in the afternoon when she gets home from school.

Although she loves to choose the books that she reads independently, she stated that reading and math were her two favorite subjects. When preparing to read a textbook for school, she believes that there is an important method or process, which makes reading easier. She reads the title of the chapter, reads all of the subheadings throughout the chapter, looks for graphs or charts, and then goes back to the beginning and reads. She thinks this is an easier way to read and helps improve her comprehension. This student is clearly excited about reading, understands its importance, and has fond memories of reading with her mother.

Student 2

Student 2 is a Black female born and raised in the United States. This student scored very high on her motivation to read. She scored 34 (out of 40) for academic reading motivation and scored 32 (out of 40) for recreational reading; therefore her raw
total reading motivation score was 66. She remembers her parents reading to her when she was little and recalled her favorite book was the from the *Arthur* series. Although she remembers being read to at home, she recalled that it was her early elementary teachers who taught her how to pronounce sounds and read words. In fact, she stated that her teachers were a bigger influence on her than her parents because they insisted that reading was so important. Furthermore, she stated that, “reading is good for you and that you need it to do all things.”

One of her earliest memories of reading in elementary school was when she was able to read *The Boxcar Children Series*. She fondly recalled reading that series of books and being excited when she was able to read them on her own. While she admitted that elementary school was where she learned how to pronounce sounds and decode words, she claimed that middle school is more fun because there are so many more books to choose from in the school library. From this larger selection of books, she believes that, “it is easier to challenge yourself because there are so many levels of books.”

This student is highly motivated, understands the importance of reading, and is determined to be a pediatrician. It is her desire to be able to take care of sick children. She stated that science is the most important subject to her because “you really have to understand science to be a pediatrician.” In fact, she admitted that she often reads assignments twice so that she can better understand the material and know the right answers.

**Student 3**

Student 3 is a Black female born and raised in the U.S. This student scored very high on her motivation to read. She scored 34 (out of 40) for academic reading
motivation and scored 32 (out of 40) for recreational reading; therefore her raw total reading motivation score was 66. She recalled that sometimes her parents or grandparents would read to her and that her favorite book was *Green Eggs and Ham*, by Dr. Seuss. She admitted that she likes children’s books and often reads to her siblings, as she has two younger brothers and one younger sister.

This student prefers to choose the books that she will read, as opposed to being assigned books. In fact, her favorite book is *A Matter of Trust*, by Anne Schraff, because she stated that “it seemed real” and that she could easily relate to it. This book is part of The Bluford Series, which is a collection of young adult novels set in contemporary urban America and address issues that relate to the lives of students today. Typically, these books are relatively short (less than 200 pages) and are described as high-interest (Bluford Series, 2013). Additionally, these books are said to be written in a highly readable style and engaging for reluctant or struggling readers.

This student hesitated when asked about her favorite subject in school. Moments later, she stated that World History is her favorite subject because the textbook for this class is easier to read. She noted that the World History textbook features lots of maps, graphs, and pictures, which she admitted made the book much more interesting and easier to understand. She also stated that World History was interesting to her because it gave her an opportunity to read about people from places all over the world.

**Student 4**

Student 4 is a Hispanic male originally from Mexico. He was born in Mexico and went to kindergarten and 1st grade in Mexico before moving to Florida, where he has
attended school since 2\textsuperscript{nd} grade. This student’s response to the reading motivation survey produced interesting results. He scored considerably higher for his academic reading motivation, with a raw score of 29 (out of 40), as compared to his recreational motivation to read, in which his raw score was 19 (out of 40). His recollection of his early literacy experiences included his struggle with learning letters and sounds when he moved to the United States. For example, he remembers often mixing the letter /b/ with the letter /p/.

He does not recall being read to at home as much as he remembers his mother telling him stories. His mother would “tell him stories in Spanish all the time”, as Spanish is the primary language spoken in the home. His earliest memory of reading books in English included reading \textit{The Magic Tree House} series, and he proudly stated that those books are far below his current reading level. He reads to learn new things and likes to read about science, in particular. In fact, he says that if he finds the book interesting, he is able to not only read it much more quickly but also, can understand it much better.

He admitted to being curious and always wants to know what other people are doing, which motivates him to read in school. Finally, he is proud of his Spanish heritage but appreciates his education in the U.S., and his family believes that he will have many more opportunities here in the U.S. in comparison to Mexico.

\textbf{Student 5}

Student 5 is a Black male originally from Jamaica, who moved to the U.S. in his early elementary years but could not remember which grade specifically he started school in the U.S. This student scored very high on his motivation to read. He scored 36 (out of
40) for academic reading motivation and scored 33 (out of 40) for recreational reading; therefore his raw total reading motivation score was 69. He remembers his cousin reading to him often when he was little and has fond memories of those times. He stated that he likes graphic novels and he loves all of the Harry Potter books. In fact, he remembers reading Harry Potter well before many of his peers.

Not only does he enjoy and appreciate the freedom to be able to choose what books he will read for pleasure, but also particularly enjoys reading and studying World History, which is his favorite subject. He enjoys this class the most because he likes to learn about different cultures, as he is quite curious. He enjoys learning about how different cultures live.

He describes himself as highly motivated to read and recalls many teachers that continually encouraged him to read throughout his schooling. Not only did he have favorable memoirs of teachers encouraging him to read but also of his father and stepmother. He recalls that his father reads often at home. In fact, he said that his dad is always reading cookbooks and trying new recipes, because his father is a chef and is “always trying to improve and make new things.” Additionally, his stepmother encourages him to read a minimum of thirty minutes per day. School is important to this student’s family and “getting a good education” is important to him, as well.

Early Literacy Experiences: Common Theme Discovered

Interviewing these students allowed the researcher to better understand how their early literacy experiences may have impacted their motivation to read. One common fear
with qualitative studies exists with whether participants will be willing and feel comfortable enough to answer the questions posed to them. Each of these students seemed at ease and was able to provide responses with detail, in many cases, and with apparent ease. They were explicitly told that they did not have to answer any question that they did not wish to answer. Each student answered every question and often gave examples or details to support their answer.

Interestingly, all of these students demonstrated a high level of academic reading motivation and, while most exhibited a high level of recreational reading, it was consistently lower for each of them, as compared to academic reading. For each of them, they appeared to have a very clear understanding of the importance of school and that appeared to be a shared belief among their families albeit at varying degrees. Each of them communicated which subject was their favorite in school and was also able to give reasons for their choice(s). In addition, all of these students shared some recollection of early literacy experiences involving reading. While the level of parental involvement with reading varied, all of these students did recall teachers that read to them and encouraged them to read. Finally, each student communicated their desire to have a choice in what they read. They appreciate the power of choice and feel a greater level of autonomy when able to decide what they read.

**Summary of Qualitative and Quantitative Analysis**

Although the quantitative research resulted in differences in reading motivation and gender, there were not any significant differences among these students involved in the qualitative case studies. There were three females and two males and all of them
demonstrated a high level of academic reading motivation. While one of the males demonstrated a high level of motivation for recreational reading, the other demonstrated a very low level of recreational reading. The five students interviewed represented minority groups, Black and Hispanic, and their levels of motivation to read were quite similar. Since all of these students received free or reduced lunch, there was no significance regarding this variable. Interestingly, all of these students represent a low SES, and they all demonstrated motivation to read, which further supports the quantitative findings in this study.

The final component to consider was that of student performance on the reading FCAT and the influence those students’ early literacy experiences may have had on their reading motivation. The quantitative data demonstrated a statistically significant difference among recreational and total reading motivation in correlation with passing the reading FCAT. Interestingly, Student 5, who demonstrated the highest level of reading motivation and the most significant early parental reading experiences scored a level 5 on the reading FCAT, which is the highest level. Students 1 and 2 demonstrated high levels of reading motivation and shared significant early reading experiences with parents that valued reading both scored a passing score of level 3. Although Student 3 demonstrated a high level of reading motivation, her early literacy experiences were not as prevalent as compared to the other students and she hesitated with questions regarding her favorite subject. This student did not successfully pass the reading FCAT; she scored a level 2. Finally, Student 4 demonstrated a high level of academic reading motivation, but a much lower level of recreational reading. Although his early literacy experiences involved the
struggle to learn the language, his family shared stories with him and encouraged him to work hard. This student successfully passed the reading FCAT, with a level 3.

Conclusively, the quantitative data suggests that there is a correlation between gender and performance on the reading FCAT with regard to recreational reading motivation. Interestingly, the quantitative data contradicted much of the research that suggested students of lower SES have fewer experiences and access, which leads to lower motivation (Heckman, 2006). Quantitative results from this study challenged those beliefs and suggest that low reading motivation may not be associated with lower SES, which was further supported by the qualitative data in this study.
CHAPTER V
DISCUSSION

The importance of reading motivation is an apparent factor regarding overall student performance on a standardized reading test. Reading motivation is multi-faceted, and research suggests that variables such as gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, achievement, and early literacy experiences all play a pivotal role in students’ motivation to read.

The goal of this mixed methods study was to examine how the above-mentioned variables affect reading motivation. The findings presented in this research study both support and question previous research on the correlations between reading motivation and gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, performance on the reading FCAT, and early literacy experiences.

Overview of Research Results

This mixed methods research study investigated three research questions that focused upon students’ motivation to read. Two questions focused on the quantitative analysis of the participating students’ attitudes towards academic and recreational reading motivation and their gender, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status. Survey responses were analyzed using a statistical approach, which included a descriptives analysis, one-way ANOVA, and post hoc comparisons, as determined by statistically significant results. The dependent variables, academic and recreational reading motivation, were measured using the McKenna and Kear reading attitude survey (1990). The results from this survey were measured against the independent variables, gender, ethnicity,
socioeconomic status, and performance on the reading FCAT in order to gain a better understanding of how these independent variables were associated with the dependent variables, academic and recreational reading motivation.

The qualitative analysis focused on one research question, which analyzed the relationship between early literacy experiences and reading motivation. In these interviews, the researcher sought answers to students’ recollection of early literacy experiences regarding family and school, their current level of reading motivation, what they like to read, and how they feel about reading. The students’ responses were discussed, and common themes were established. Finally, this information served to support the belief that early literacy experiences strongly influence students’ reading motivation.

The following discussion will be structured by the variables that were analyzed throughout this research study. The discussion will be followed by a summary of the findings, an examination of the limitations, assumptions, and delimitations, and finally, the implications of this study and future studies will be examined and followed by closing remarks.

**Gender and Reading Motivation**

While it is agreed that reading motivation and achievement are interwoven and highly related, it is also widely accepted that inequities exist in reading motivation and gender. Research demonstrates that boys are often less motivated to read than girls (McGeown, Goodwin, Henderson, & Wright, 2011; Marinak & Gambrell, 2010; Baker & Wigfield, 1999; & Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997). In fact, it is reported that between 70%
and 80% of students who illustrate a lack of motivation are boys (Gurian & Henley, 2001). Furthermore, data suggest that boys around the world are struggling with literacy as compared with girls (Boltz, 2007). This phenomenon about the disparity of reading motivation among boys has been consistently cited through decades of research.

There are five primary reasons that boys require additional consideration in literacy motivation (Smith & Wilhelm, 2002). First of all, boys take longer to learn to read than girls. Secondly, boys typically underestimate their ability to read, which is contrary to girls. Thirdly, most boys read less than girls. In addition, they express less enthusiasm for reading than do their female counterparts and, finally, boys increasingly refer to themselves as nonreaders. Furthermore, Gurian and Henley (2001) suggested that boys in the preschool and kindergarten years express emotions more readily through actions, whereas girls often communicate their emotions verbally. In addition, boys often exhibit a shorter attention span than girls at this early developmental level. From first through third grade, girls are often reading sooner and with much greater skill than boys.

While girls demonstrate greater skills in grammar and vocabulary, boys often demonstrate greater skills in math. From fourth through sixth grade, boys generally pay greater attention to action and exploration, whereas girls pay greater attention to relationships and communication. Although boys typically show a greater skill and understanding in map and direction abilities, girls show a greater development and skill in fine motor skills. In fact, Meece, Bower-Glienke, & Burg (2006) indicated that while boys place more value in math, science, and sports, girls place more value in reading. Interestingly, but not surprising, it is during these years, that boys are often placed in remedial instruction for reading (Share & Silva, 2003). This evidence suggests that boys
feel less adequate and would describe themselves as nonreaders, because they are not confident in their ability to read, and therefore, are not motivated to do so. In conclusion, this body of research supports the results of this study in that boys are less motivated to read academically and recreationally than girls.

Socioeconomic Status, Ethnicity, and Reading Motivation

As has been established in previous chapters, there is substantial research that suggests that students from lower SES backgrounds are much less motivated to read as compared to students of higher SES backgrounds (Duncan, 2010; Sylva & Roberts, 2010; Torppa et al., 2007). It is suggested that students of lower SES backgrounds have less access to reading materials, which significantly diminishes their motivation to read. Taub and Szente (2012) acknowledged that nearly one in three students experience difficulty in acquiring reading skills, and approximately one in five students experiences significant difficulties; unfortunately, the greater proportion of those students are from lower SES backgrounds and are often educated in inner-city schools.

Although there is substantial research that suggests that students from lower economic backgrounds are less motivated, this study does not support this data. In fact, this study suggested that students of lower economic backgrounds demonstrated a statistically significantly higher level of academic reading motivation as compared to students of higher economic backgrounds. In addition, lower SES students in this study demonstrated a higher mean scale score for recreational reading motivation, although not statistically significant, than students of higher SES. These findings contradict much of
the current research available regarding reading motivation and socioeconomic status, which suggests that there is a need for further research to better understand these findings.

Included in discussions of research involving low-income students’ experiences, are, typically, minority students as well. Although the results from this study did not demonstrate statistically significant findings regarding ethnicity and reading motivation, the findings were consistent regarding ethnicity within the study. White students’ mean scale score was consistently higher, but relatively close to that of Black students’ mean scale score; however, Hispanic students consistently scored the lowest mean scale score for academic and recreational reading motivation. Since there is a steady increase of Hispanic students enrolling in classrooms around the U.S., this suggests that further research is needed regarding how to better engage these students and better collaborate with Hispanic families to improve reading motivation.

The qualitative data supported the quantitative data in this study in that all five students interviewed were of low SES and all five scored a high level of academic reading motivation. Although each of them recollected some positive early literacy experiences, the level of engagement and parental involvement varied, which suggests that early literacy experiences are significant and can greatly impact reading motivation and academic achievement. In fact, Bracken and Fischel (2013) suggested that, although most research claims that students of low SES are often at a disadvantage due to limited access to print materials within low-income families, there is a great variability of literacy experiences.

It is not enough to say that all students from low-income families will be less motivated and achieve lower levels of academic success. Furthermore, students from
low-income homes, where literacy was valued and experiences were authentic, fared better than students from higher-income homes where there were fewer literacy experiences (Bracken & Fischel, 2013). These findings along with this study may suggest that early literacy experiences outweigh socioeconomic status as a variable of reading motivation.

**Early Literacy Experiences and Reading Motivation**

A child in any classroom is a student of his or her home first (Hammack, Foote, Garretson, and Thompson 2012). As previously stated, it is apparent that a child’s early literacy experiences significantly impact a child’s academic achievement. There is substantial research that suggests that early literacy experiences are an indicator of reading motivation and academic achievement (Anders et al., 2012; Melhuish et al., 2008; Rodriguez & Tamis-LeMonda, 2011; Sylva et al., 2010).

The qualitative interviews conducted in this study attempted to discover the role that early literacy experiences had on students’ reading motivation and academic achievement. While all five students interviewed shared some recollection of early literacy experiences, their responses and level of family engagement varied. For example, Student 5, who shared the highest level of early parental engagement and authentic participation in literacy, scored the highest level of academic reading motivation, a high level of recreational reading motivation, and scored the highest level (5) on the reading FCAT. Conversely, Student 3, who recalled parents and grandparents that ‘sometimes’ read to her as a young child and hesitated to name her favorite subject in school and scored a level 2, which is not a passing score on the reading FCAT.
This study further substantiates current research that connects early literacy experiences with reading motivation and academic achievement. A potential for future research certainly lies within the realm of investigating the quality of early literacy experiences, as there are varying degrees of participation and engagement.

From this study, it is apparent that early literacy experiences play a significant role in students’ level of motivation to read. Students from families where reading is valued, engaged, and practiced demonstrate higher levels of reading motivation than students from families of limited value and practice. Similarly, these findings are also evident in not only their level of reading motivation, but also, in their academic performance.

**Reading FCAT Performance and Reading Motivation**

It has been clearly established from previously documented research that reading motivation and student performance are significantly correlated (Guthrie, 2012; Allington, 2012; Beers, 2003). This study found similar correlations. Students who demonstrated higher levels of reading motivation were more likely to pass the reading FCAT, as opposed to students who demonstrated lower levels of reading motivation. Interestingly, the findings for recreational reading motivation were statistically significantly correlated with passing FCAT scores, which supports the notion that students who read for pleasure typically outperform their peers who do not engage in independent reading for pleasure.

These collective findings suggest that there is a great need to instill habits of lifelong literacy among students today. It not only improves their motivation to read, but also is critical to their academic performance on standardized reading tests. Recognizing
how strongly these variables are related should provide teachers, parents, curriculum specialists, administrators, and policymakers with valuable information that can be used in curricular decision-making. This demonstrates that one clear way to not only close the achievement gap, but to also improve student performance is to increase students’ motivation to read. The end result is simply one that cannot be ignored. When students’ motivation to read is directly linked to academic performance, the target is clearly established and all curricular decisions and planning should encompass increasing student reading motivation.

**Summary**

It is apparent that reading motivation involves numerous variables that can have a significant affect on it. Gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and academic performance can considerably influence one’s level of motivation to read. While the manner in which these variables impact reading motivation may be multifaceted, we do know that they are inherently correlated.

From the results of this study, it is understood that students from homes where early literacy experiences are prevalent and where student participation is encouraged are more likely to be motivated to read. Additionally, it is important that families value literacy in the home and participate in literacy activities, as well. Results indicate that students from these homes are more likely to be more motivated to read and perform better academically.

In addition, it is accepted that boys are less likely to be motivated to read than girls and to participate less in independent reading than girls. Acknowledging this can
lead to a greater focus on improving boys’ literacy experiences, which may improve their motivation to read.

Finally, it is important to recognize the data and to begin to target those areas in need of improvement. Perhaps, a dedicated, concentrated effort among stakeholders to improve student reading motivation would elicit the desired performance achievements. More importantly, the gap may begin to close if stakeholders understand the importance of collaboration and turn the focus from national assessments to student engagement.

Limitations of Study

The purpose of this research study was to collect data to better understand the factors that surround reading motivation. This study engaged quantitative and qualitative research methods. The quantitative method sought to measure students’ academic and recreational reading motivation, while the researcher used qualitative research to better understand what factors may have influenced the students’ responses to their overall motivation to read. Although the research was designed to provide effective answers to the questions posed and to ultimately improve practice, there were limitations found within the study, which included the following:

1. The sample was a purposive, non-random sample, which can limit the findings and the ability to generalize to a greater population.

2. Data collected was only received from students who returned the parental consent form, allowing them to participate and can also limit the ability to generalize to a greater population.
3. The quantitative data relied on self-reporting, which was contingent upon the students’ honesty in reporting their responses and, thus, limited the interpretation of results.

4. The qualitative data also relied upon self-reporting, which in turn, depended upon students’ honesty in reporting feelings and opinions and limited the interpretation of the results.

5. Due to the nature of qualitative research, the themes discovered may have been interpreted differently by others and could be considered subjective.

Assumptions

1. It is assumed that all participants answered the survey instrument used in the quantitative section of the study honestly and truthfully. The researcher provided confidentiality to help ensure trust among participants, which was detailed in the consent form.

2. It is assumed that all five participants in the case studies answered the interview questions used in the qualitative section of the study in an honest and truthful manner. The researcher assured the participants that all reporting would be confidential to ensure anonymity.

Delimitations

1. The results of this study may only be generalizable to a similar population of 6th grade students.
2. The survey instrument used a Likert scale to measure the quantitative data and did not include open-ended responses, which can restrict responses.

3. The use of the mixed methods research design method was used to substantiate the findings and provided a more in-depth understanding.

Implications of Research

Students’ early learning experiences begin at home with familial interactions. In fact, many students’ first formal school experiences do not occur until they are five years old. By this time, many students had endured favorable or unfavorable experiences, which have significantly influenced their motivation to read. For many, this may be the beginning of the achievement gap that is so often referred to with regards to academic performance. For some students, their experiences may change upon entrance into school; they may encounter a teacher who positively influences their reading motivation, while others may not. It is apparent that early family literacy experiences do influence a child’s motivation to read; therefore, this suggests that more information is needed about the type of early literacy experiences that can enhance a child’s motivation to read. Parents need to have a better understanding of how they truly impact their child’s learning and motivation through early literacy experiences. Furthermore, it is important that this information is shared, so that parents, teachers, and all stakeholders can work together to achieve the optimal results. Positive learning experiences are multifaceted, and support needs to be collaborative and provided from all levels of interaction.
In addition to early family literacy experiences, it is recognized that there are gender differences in regards to reading motivation. Research suggests that girls are typically more motivated to read academically and recreationally than boys (Gambrell, 2011; Beers, 2003, 1998). These findings were substantiated in this study, as girls scored statistically significantly higher in recreational reading motivation than boys. Although not statistically significant, girls scored higher in academic reading motivation than boys as well. Research has also found that girls often learn to read and comprehend earlier than boys and their learning styles are often different (Gambrell, 2011). This suggests that more information is needed to support boys’ early reading habits and guide early reading instruction for boys and girls based on their needs. In fact, this research further suggests that additional information is needed to help improve reading motivation about boys and Hispanic students, as they consistently demonstrated low reading motivation scores.

Results indicated that home literacy experiences were significant for the students interviewed. We educators have little control over what happens at home, but there are some aspects we can control, which are those that occur in the classroom. It is apparent that teachers need to read aloud in the classroom as well as provide time for students to practice. Students need to be allowed time to read in the classroom, where assistance is available if needed. Additionally, it is important that teachers are well read and take the initiative to help encourage students to read and make applicable recommendations to students based on their individual reading preferences. Teacher knowledge of children’s literature and an understanding of their students is important so that they can serve as good models of reading as well as mentors. Another key point to help improve reading motivation is allowing students to actively participate in choosing the books that they will
read. Gambrell (2011) suggested that students are more motivated to read if they are allowed to make choices. This notion was supported during the interviews, where students stated that they liked to be allowed to choose what they read and more motivated to do so if the book is one of interest to them. Furthermore, students should be encouraged to talk about their books and be more engaged in book discussions with peers. Reading should be a transactional activity where students are actively engaged in the text and there is a relationship between the reader and text (Rosenblatt, 1978, 1994). Reading should not always include a formal assessment, in fact, when students are required to take an online assessment after each book read, their motivation to read often lessens. Students should be encouraged to interact with one another. Finally, it is important that classroom libraries be stocked with a diverse collection of books, magazines, comic books, and trade books, which cover a wide array of topics, so that students have access to a print-rich classroom. Conclusively, the learning environment should be one that encourages reading, supports reading through access to materials, teacher knowledge, and one that encourages student choice and allows students time to read in the classroom.

Interestingly, this study contradicted much of the research that suggests students from lower SES backgrounds are less motivated to read (Elliott, 2013; Heckman, 2006), as this study found students of lower SES backgrounds demonstrated a higher motivation to read academically and recreationally than students of higher SES backgrounds. This study demonstrates a need for further research, which may better be able to explain these findings. Furthermore, this study found that, while results regarding ethnicity and reading motivation were not statistically significant, there were consistent results, which suggested that Hispanic students scored the lowest in reading motivation for academic
and recreational reading, which also implies that there is a need for further research as to what may cause this and how to better serve the needs of these students.

When considering the results of this study, which contradict earlier studies, it is possible that the results of this study were affected by the culture of the Title I school where data was collected. This school was in its first year in a new building. The culture of the school was one in which the faculty and staff were enthusiastic about participating in the opening of a brand new school, which held fully equipped computer labs on each floor as well as a fully stocked library with all brand new books. At the open house, which was held the weekend prior to the start of school, parents and students were invited to tour the school, receive student schedules, and meet the teachers and administrative staff. Parents and students, alike, expressed genuine pleasure regarding the new school, which clearly was the nicest middle school in this particular zone of the school district. These factors could have positively influenced the students’ motivation to read because there was certainly access to an abundance of materials in a new, clean and attractive learning environment.

Finally, this research will help inform stakeholders; including teachers, school administrators, curriculum and staff development, parents, and policy-makers and help them to better understand the relationship between academic and recreational reading motivation and performance on standardized reading assessments. Furthermore, this will provide additional information regarding the importance of students’ reading motivation and may be useful in making curricular decisions based on engaging reading pedagogy, gender, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status. In fact, it is hoped that these findings will allow the stakeholders to better support the needs of all students.
Future Research

For a greater depth and breadth of these findings from this research study, future research needs to be supported. A larger and more widespread sample size would enable the data to be more expansive, diversified, and could be generalized to a wider population. With the increased focus and attention towards reading ability and performance, it is evident that further research is needed in order to improve literacy in this country.

Continued research is also needed to better understand students’ background, culture, and early literacy experiences. There has been a continual increase in the population of Hispanic students in this country, which also was the group that represented the lowest levels of reading motivation in this study. This demonstrates a need to further delve into early literacy experiences and reading instruction in order to improve Hispanic students’ experiences and improve their reading motivation, because it is widely accepted that motivation is directly linked to performance. Early literacy experiences play a pivotal role in students’ reading motivation and achievement, and further research into the variability within family literacy exposure and experiences and the effects of that variability on motivation to read needs further development.

The need to further develop a greater understanding of the gender differences in reading motivation is also an area of focus and need for future research. Research supports the findings that boys are less motivated to read than girls. Further research needs to be conducted, which could elicit ways to eliminate this gap. In addition, there is a need for causational and multivariate research to determine which of these variables, including motivation, contributes most to performance on the reading FCAT.
Because academic performance is tied to reading motivation, it is apparent that further research be conducted to help determine how to effectively plan instruction so that a focus on engagement and improving student motivation is a key consideration in the effort to improve student achievement. Although reading motivation is multifaceted, it is necessary to recognize the various contributing factors and understand how to deliver the most effective and differentiated instruction, which engages students and improves motivation to better enhance learning for all students.

Conclusion

Discovering ways to improve reading motivation among today’s students is a need that is evident within our educational system and society, as a whole. Because it is recognized that reading motivation is linked to student achievement, it is critical that the focus shifts to improving motivation. As the adoption of the Common Core Standards lies directly ahead of us, and increased attention is given to standards of teaching, it is increasingly important that raising the level of reading motivation be given priority. Improving reading motivation across genders, ethnicities, and income levels can positively impact student achievement; therefore, it simply cannot be ignored.

This study helped to better understand the relationship that exists between gender, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status with regard to academic and recreational reading motivation and student achievement on the reading FCAT. By understanding how these factors are intertwined, we may be better able to suit the needs of all students. In order for literacy rates to improve in this country, it is necessary to know what motivates students to read, which is tied to academic achievement, and how instruction must vary
depending upon background experiences, gender, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status to better meet the needs of individual students. It is well beyond the role of a reading teacher; this task will involve all stakeholders: students, parents, teachers, curriculum specialists, administrators, and policymakers to take a supportive stance to benefit our future leaders.
References


International Reading Association.


Measuring Attitude Toward Reading: A New Tool for Teachers

Michael C. McKenna and Dennis J. Kear

In 1962, the philosopher Rousseau speculated that any method of teaching reading would suffice given adequate motivation on the part of the learner. While present-day educators might resist such a sweeping pronouncement, the importance of attitude is nevertheless widely recognized. The Commission on Reading in its summary of research (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, & Wilkinson, 1985) concluded that “becoming a skilled reader requires...learning that written material can be interesting” (p. 18). Smith (1988) observed that “the emotional response to reading...is the primary reason most readers read, and probably the primary reason most nonreaders do not read” (p. 177). Wixson and Lipson (in press) acknowledge that the student’s attitude toward reading is a central factor affecting reading performance.” These conclusions are based on a long history of research in which attitude and achievement have been consistently linked (e.g., Purves & Beach, 1972; Walberg & Tsai, 1985).

The recent emphasis on enhanced reading proficiency has often ignored the important role played by children’s attitudes in the process of becoming literate. Athey (1985) suggested that one reason for this tendency is that the affective aspects of reading tend to be ill-defined and to involve “shadowy variables” (p. 527) difficult to conceptualize, measure, and address instructionally.

The focus of recent research and development in assessment has been comprehension rather than attitude. Some progress has been made in the development of individually administered, qualitative instruments, but quantitative group surveys, which form a natural complement to qualitative approaches, are often poorly documented in terms of desirable psychometric attributes, such as normative frames of reference and evidence of reliability and validity. Our purpose was to produce a public-domain instrument that would remedy these shortcomings and enable teachers to estimate attitude levels efficiently and reliably. This article presents that instrument along with a discussion of its development and suggestions for its use.

Development of the Scale

Several important criteria were established to guide the development of the instrument. The
authors agreed that the survey must (a) have a large-scale normative frame of reference; (b) comprise a set of items selected on the basis of desirable psychometric properties; (c) have empirically documented reliability and validity; (d) be applicable to all elementary students, Grades 1 through 6; (e) possess a meaningful, attention-getting, student-friendly response format; (f) be suitable for brief group administration; and (g) comprise separate subscales for recreational and academic reading. We knew of no instrument that possessed all of these characteristics.

A pictorial format was elected because of its natural appeal for children and because of its comprehensibility by the very young. An informal survey of more than 30 elementary teachers indicated that the comic strip character Garfield was more apt to be recognized by children in Grades 1 through 6 than any other. Jim Davis, who is the creator of Garfield, and United Features, his publisher, agreed to supply four black-line, camera-ready poses of Garfield, ranging from very happy to very upset, and to permit the resulting instrument to be copied and used by educators. (See the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey and scoring sheet prior to the Appendix at the end of this article.)

An even number of scale points avoids a neutral, central category which respondents often select in order to avoid committing themselves even when clear opinions exist (Nunnally, 1967). The use of four points was based on a substantial body of research suggesting that young children typically can discriminate among no more than five discrete bits of information simultaneously (e.g., Case & Khanna, 1981; Chi, 1978; Chi & Klahr, 1975; Nitko, 1983).

Several earlier surveys were used as models in the creation of an item pool from which the final set of items would be constructed (e.g., Estes, 1971; Heathington, 1979; Right to Read, 1976; Robinson & Good, 1987). A total of 39 items were developed, each related to one of two aspects of attitude: (a) attitude toward recreational reading (24 items) or (b) attitude toward academic reading (15 items). To establish a consistent, appropriate expectation on the part of the students, each item was worded with a uniform beginning: “How do you feel...?”

This prototype instrument was then administered to 499 elementary students in a middle-sized midwestern U.S. school district. For each of the two item sets (recreational and academic), final sets of 10 items each were selected on the basis of inter-item correlation coefficients. The revised instrument was then administered at midyear to a national sample of over 18,000 children in Grades 1–6. Estimates of reliability, as well as evidence of validity, were based on this national sample. A complete description of the technical aspects of the survey appears in the Appendix.

**Administering and Scoring the Survey**

The Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (ERAS) can be given to an entire class in a matter of minutes, but, as with any normed instrument, it is important that the administration reflect as closely as possible the procedure used with the norming group. The administration procedures are presented in the “Directions for Use” information that accompanies the instrument itself. This process involves first familiarizing students with the instrument and with the purposes for giving it. The teacher next reads the items aloud twice as the students mark their responses.

Each item is then assigned 1, 2, 3, or 4 points, a “4” indicating the happiest (leftmost) Garfield. The scoring sheet that follows the instrument can be used to organize this process and record recreational, academic, and total scores, along with the percentile rank of each. The results are then ready for use.

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Using the Survey

Collecting data about students is an empty exercise unless the information is used to plan instruction. Scores on the ERAS can be helpful in this process, but it is important to understand what they can and cannot do as well as how they relate to other sources of information.

Strengths and limitations. This survey provides quantitative estimates of two important aspects of children’s attitudes toward reading. Like global measures of achievement, however, they can do little in themselves to identify the causes of poor attitude or to suggest instructional techniques likely to improve it. On the other hand, the instrument can be used to (a) make possible initial conjecture about the attitudes of specific students, (b) provide a convenient group profile of a class (or a larger unit), or (c) serve as a means of monitoring the attitudinal impact of instructional programs.

A classroom plan. A teacher might begin by administering the ERAS during the first few weeks of the school year. Class averages for recreational and academic reading attitude will enable the teacher to characterize the class generally on these two dimensions. Scores for individual students may suggest the need to further explore the nature, strength, and origins of their values and beliefs. This goal could be pursued through the use of individually conducted strategies such as structured interviews, open-ended sentence instruments, or interest inventories.

Reed (1979) suggested using nonreactive measures as well, such as recorded teacher observations following reading instruction and reading-related activities. The combination of these techniques provides a variety of useful information that can be collected in portfolio fashion for individual students.

Survey results can be very useful in deciding what sorts of additional information to pursue. Four general response patterns are especially notable, and we will depict each of them with hypothetical students who are, in fact, composites of many with whom we have worked.

Two profiles involve sizable differences (5 points or more) between recreational and academic scores. Jimmy, a third grader, has a recreational score of 29 and an academic score of 21. The difference suggests a stronger attitude toward reading for fun than for academic purposes. To an extent, this pattern is typical of third graders (compare the means in Table 2 in the Appendix), but not to the degree exhibited in Jimmy’s case. Had both scores been higher, Jimmy’s teacher might have been justified in disregarding the difference, but a score of 21 is low both in the criterion sense (it is close to the slightly frowning Garfield) and in a normative one (18th percentile rank). Examining the last 10 items of the survey one-by-one might prove helpful in forming hypotheses about which aspects are troublesome. These can then be tested by carefully observing Jimmy during reading instruction.

For Katy, a fifth grader, assume that the two scores are reversed. By virtue of her stronger attitude toward academic reading, Katy is somewhat atypical. Her academic score of 29 is quite strong in both a criterion sense (it is near the slightly smiling Garfield) and a normative sense (71st percentile rank). Her score of 21 in recreational reading attitude is cause for concern (13th percentile rank), but the strong academic score suggests that her disdain is not total and may be traceable to causes subject to intervention. Because items 1–10 are somewhat global in nature, it is unlikely that scrutinizing her responses will be very helpful. A nonthreatening chat about reading habits may be much more productive in helping her teacher identify Katy’s areas of interest and even suggest a book or two. Katy may not have been exposed to a variety of interesting trade books.

Two other profiles involve differences between attitude and ability. These are very real possibilities that require careful attention.
(Roettger, 1980). Consider Patrick, a second grader whose academic attitude score is 28 and who has been placed in a low-ability group by his teacher. Patrick’s relatively positive score (near the smiling Garfield) may encourage his teacher, for it is apt to be higher than others in his reading group. However, more than half of his second-grade peers across the country have stronger attitudes toward reading in school. Data from this study document a widening attitudinal gap between low- and high-ability children as they move through school. Patrick’s teacher should be concerned about the likely effects of another frustrating year on his attitude toward instruction. Teaching methods and instructional materials should be scrutinized.

Ironically, the same conclusion might be reached for Deborah, a sixth-grade student of extraordinary ability. Her academic attitude score, however, is only 17, which is quite negative, whether one looks to its position among the pictures or notes that it represents a percentile rank of 11. If Deborah’s recreational score were substantially higher, her teacher would be correct in wondering whether the instruction she is receiving is adequately engaging. As with Jimmy, an inspection of her responses to items 11–20 could be helpful, followed by a nonintrusive reading interview and tactful observation. On the other hand, suppose that Deborah’s recreational score were also 17. This would place her total score (34) at the 5th percentile rank and suggest a strong disinclination to read despite the ability to do so. This would warrant action on the part of an insightful teacher who is willing to make instructional and leisure reading attractive.

Examples of this nature illustrate how the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey can enter into the process of instructional planning, especially near the beginning of a school year. As the year draws to a close, the survey can again be given, this time to monitor any attitudinal changes of the class as a whole. By comparing class averages from the beginning and end of the year, a teacher can gauge the movement of a class relative both to its own earlier position and to a national midyear average. Estimating year-long changes for individual students is a less reliable process and should only be attempted with regard to the standard error of measurement for a given subscale and grade level (see Table 2 in the Appendix). We recommend using twice the standard error to construct an adequate confidence interval. In other words, the pre/post difference would, in general, need to be 5 points or more on either the academic or recreational subscale before any real change could be assumed. On the total score, the pre/post change would need to be 7 or 8 points.

**Conclusion**

The instrument presented here builds on the strengths of its predecessors and, it is hoped, remedies some of their psychometric shortcomings. Its placement into the public domain by means of this article provides teachers with a tool that can be used with relative confidence to estimate the attitude levels of their students and initiate informal assessment efforts into the role attitude plays in students’ development as readers.

**Authors’ Note**

The authors wish to express their sincere thanks to Jim Davis for his Garfield illustrations and for his concern for children’s literacy abilities.

**References**


Elementary Reading Attitude Survey

Directions for use

The Elementary Reading Attitude Survey provides a quick indication of student attitudes toward reading. It consists of 20 items and can be administered to an entire classroom in about 10 minutes. Each item presents a brief, simply worded statement about reading, followed by four pictures of Garfield. Each pose is designed to depict a different emotional state, ranging from very positive to very negative.

Administration

Begin by telling students that you wish to find out how they feel about reading. Emphasize that this is not a test and that there are no “right” answers. Encourage sincerity.

Distribute the survey forms and, if you wish to monitor the attitudes of specific students, ask them to write their names in the space at the top. Hold up a copy of the survey so that the students can see the first page. Point to the picture of Garfield at the far left of the first item. Ask the students to look at this same picture on their own survey form. Discuss with them the mood Garfield seems to be in (very happy). Then move to the next picture and again discuss Garfield’s mood (this time, a little happy). In the same way, move to the third and fourth pictures and talk about Garfield’s moods—a little upset and very upset. It is helpful to point out the position of Garfield’s mouth, especially in the middle two figures.

Explain that together you will read some statements about reading and that the students should think about how they feel about each statement. They should then circle the picture of Garfield that is closest to their own feelings. (Emphasize that the students should respond according to their own feelings, not as Garfield might respond!) Read each item aloud slowly and distinctly; then read it a second time while students are thinking. Be sure to read the item number and to remind students of page numbers when new pages are reached.

Scoring

To score the survey, count four points for each leftmost (happiest) Garfield circled, three for each slightly smiling Garfield, two for each mildly upset Garfield, and one point for each very upset (rightmost) Garfield. Three scores for each student can be obtained: the total for the first 10 items, the total for the second 10, and a composite total. The first half of the survey relates to attitude toward recreational reading; the second half relates to attitude toward academic aspects of reading.

Interpretation

You can interpret scores in two ways. One is to note informally where the score falls in regard to the four nodes of the scale. A total score of 50, for example, would fall about mid-way on the scale, between the slightly happy and slightly upset figures, therefore indicating a relatively indifferent overall attitude toward reading. The other approach is more formal. It involves converting the raw scores into percentile ranks by means of Table 1. Be sure to use the norms for the right grade level and to note the column headings (Rec = recreational reading, Aca = academic reading, Tot = total score). If you wish to determine the average percentile rank for your class, average the raw scores first; then use the table to locate the percentile rank corresponding to the raw score mean. Percentile ranks cannot be averaged directly.

McKenna & Kear
# Elementary Reading Attitude Survey

Please circle the picture that describes how you feel when you read a book.

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<td>1.</td>
<td>How do you feel when you read a book on a rainy Saturday?</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>How do you feel when you read a book in school during free time?</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>How do you feel about reading for fun at home?</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>How do you feel about getting a book for a present?</td>
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Please circle the picture that describes how you feel when you read a book.

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<td>How do you feel about spending free time reading a book?</td>
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<td><img src="image1" alt="Garfield" /></td>
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<td>6.</td>
<td>How do you feel about starting a new book?</td>
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<td>7.</td>
<td>How do you feel about reading during summer vacation?</td>
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<td><img src="image8" alt="Garfield" /></td>
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<td>8.</td>
<td>How do you feel about reading instead of playing?</td>
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<td></td>
<td><img src="image10" alt="Garfield" /></td>
<td><img src="image11" alt="Garfield" /></td>
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Please circle the picture that describes how you feel when you read a book.

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<th>How do you feel about going to a bookstore?</th>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>How do you feel about reading different kinds of books?</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>How do you feel when a teacher asks you questions about what you read?</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>How do you feel about reading workbook pages and worksheets?</td>
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Page 3

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Survey designed by Dennis J. Kear, Wichita State University
Please circle the picture that describes how you feel when you read a book.

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<th>How do you feel about reading in school?</th>
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<th>How do you feel about reading your school books?</th>
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<th>How do you feel about learning from a book?</th>
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<th>How do you feel when it's time for reading in class?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td><img src="image13.png" alt="Image" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Please circle the picture that describes how you feel when you read a book.

17. How do you feel about stories you read in reading class?

18. How do you feel when you read out loud in class?

19. How do you feel about using a dictionary?

20. How do you feel about taking a reading test?
Elementary Reading Attitude Survey Scoring Sheet

Student Name

Teacher

Grade Administration Date

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scoring Guide</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Happiest Garfield</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly smiling Garfield</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mildly upset Garfield</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 point</td>
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<tr>
<td>Very upset Garfield</td>
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<table>
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</table>

Raw Score: ___________ Raw Score: ___________

Full scale raw score ............ (Recreational + Academic): ___________

Percentile ranks: ................. Recreational

.................... Academic

.................... Full scale

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Survey designed by Dennis J. Kear, Wichita State University
Appendix

Technical Aspects of the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey

The norming project

To create norms for the interpretation of scores, a large-scale study was conducted in late January 1989, at which time the survey was administered to 18,138 students in Grades 1–6. A number of steps were taken to achieve a sample that was sufficiently stratified (i.e., reflective of the American population) to allow confident generalizations. Children were drawn from 95 school districts in 38 U.S. states. The number of girls exceeded by only 5 the number of boys. Ethnic distribution of the sample was also close to that of the U.S. population (Statistical abstract of the United States, 1989). The proportion of blacks (9.5%) was within 3% of the national proportion, while the proportion of Hispanics (6.2%) was within 2%.

Percentile ranks at each grade for both subscales and the full scale are presented in Table 1. These data can be used to compare individual students’ scores with the national sample and they can be interpreted like achievement-test percentile ranks.

Table 1
Mid-year percentile ranks by grade and scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Raw Scr</th>
<th>Grade 1</th>
<th>Grade 2</th>
<th>Grade 3</th>
<th>Grade 4</th>
<th>Grade 5</th>
<th>Grade 6</th>
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<td>Aca</td>
<td>Tot</td>
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<td>Tot</td>
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Measuring Attitude Toward Reading
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</tbody>
</table>

McKenna & Kear
Appendix
Technical Aspects of the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (continued)

Reliability
Cronbach's alpha, a statistic developed primarily to measure the internal consistency of attitude scales (Cronbach, 1951), was calculated at each grade level for both subscales and for the composite score. These coefficients ranged from .74 to .89 and are presented in Table 2.

It is interesting that with only two exceptions, coefficients were .80 or higher. These were for the recreational subscale at Grades 1 and 2. It is possible that the stability of young children's attitudes toward leisure reading grows with their decoding ability and familiarity with reading as a pastime.

Table 2
Descriptive statistics and internal consistency measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Recreational Subscale</th>
<th>Academic Subscale</th>
<th>Full Scale (Total)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>S-M</td>
</tr>
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<td>2,518</td>
<td>31.0</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>1.2</td>
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<td>2,974</td>
<td>30.3</td>
<td>5.7</td>
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<td>27.9</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>1.2</td>
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<td>18,138</td>
<td>29.5</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>1.2</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

* Cronbach's alpha (Cronbach, 1951).

Validity
Evidence of construct validity was gathered by several means. For the recreational subscale, students in the national norming group were asked (a) whether a public library was available to them and (b) whether they currently had a library card. Those to whom libraries were available were separated into two groups (those with and without cards) and their recreational scores were compared. Cardholders had significantly higher (p < .001) recreational scores (M = 30.0) than noncardholders (M = 28.9), evidence of the subscale's validity in that scores varied predictably with an outside criterion.

A second test compared students who presently had books checked out from their school library versus students who did not. The comparison was limited to children whose teachers reported not requiring them to check out books. The means of the two groups varied significantly (p < .001), and children with books checked out scored higher (M = 29.2) than those who had no books checked out (M = 27.3).

A further test of the recreational subscale compared students who reported watching an average of less than 1 hour of television per week with students who reported watching more than 2 hours per night. The recreational mean for the low viewing group (31.5) significantly exceeded (p < .001) the mean of the heavy viewing group (28.6). Thus, the amount of television watched varied inversely with children's attitudes toward recreational reading.

The validity of the academic subscale was tested by examining the relationship of scores to reading ability. Teachers categorized norm-group children as having low, average, or high overall reading ability. Mean subscale scores of the high-ability readers (M = 27.7) significantly exceeded the mean of
Appendix

Technical Aspects of the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (continued)

low-ability readers ($M = 27.0$, $p < .001$), evidence that scores were reflective of how the students truly felt about reading for academic purposes.

The relationship between the subscales was also investigated. It was hypothesized that children's attitudes toward recreational and academic reading would be moderately but not highly correlated. Facility with reading is likely to affect these two areas similarly, resulting in similar attitude scores. Nevertheless, it is easy to imagine children prone to read for pleasure but disenchanted with assigned reading and children academically engaged but without interest in reading outside of school. The inter-subscale correlation coefficient was .64, which meant that just 41% of the variance in one set of scores could be accounted for by the other. It is reasonable to suggest that the two subscales, while related, also reflect dissimilar factors—a desired outcome.

To tell more precisely whether the traits measured by the survey corresponded to the two subscales, factor analyses were conducted. Both used the unweighted least squares method of extraction and a varimax rotation. The first analysis permitted factors to be identified liberally (using a limit equal to the smallest eigenvalue greater than 1). Three factors were identified. Of the 10 items comprising the academic subscale, 9 loaded predominantly on a single factor while the 10th (item 13) loaded nearly equally on all three factors. A second factor was dominated by 7 items of the recreational subscale, while 3 of the recreational items (6, 9, and 10) loaded principally on a third factor. These items did, however, load more heavily on the second (recreational) factor than on the first (academic). A second analysis constrained the identification of factors to two. This time, with one exception, all items loaded cleanly on factors associated with the two subscales. The exception was item 13, which could have been interpreted as a recreational item and thus apparently involved a slight ambiguity. Taken together, the factor analyses produced evidence extremely supportive of the claim that the survey's two subscales reflect discrete aspects of reading attitude.
APPENDIX B

SURVEY: PARENT/GUARDIAN CONSENT

STUDENT ASSENT FOR SURVEY PARTICIPATION

Parent/Guardian Consent for Reading Motivation Attitude Survey

Please read this consent agreement carefully before you decide to have your child participate in the study. A consent form for your child is attached. Please review this consent form with your child.

Study Title: A Critical Analysis of Academic & Recreational Reading Motivation and its Correlations to Reading FCAT Performance for 6th grade students.

Principal Researcher: Karen S. DiBella
Faculty Sponsor: Dr. Debra Giambo

You are being asked to allow your child to participate in a research study conducted through Florida Gulf Coast University. This study is being conducted by a student in pursuit of a doctorate degree and will be used for purposes of a dissertation. The University requires that you give your signed agreement for your child to participate in the study.

A short description of the study follows. Please read it carefully. You can ask the researcher any questions you have to help you understand the study. The researcher can be reached at (239) 910-5466 or by email at Karedsdb@ieschools.net. The faculty sponsor can be reached at (239) 590-7814 or by email at dgiambog@fgcu.edu. The researcher will also explain the purpose and the nature of the study to your child.

You will be given a copy of this form to keep.

If you choose not to allow your child to participate or your child does not want to participate in the study, it will have no effect on any future services you or your child may be entitled to from the University. Anyone who chooses to participate in the study is free to withdraw from the study at any time with no penalty.

The purpose of a research study is to answer 20 questions, which will reflect your child’s attitude about reading. I am asking your child to take part in the study because I am interested in the level of reading motivation of 6th grade students. The survey will take about 10-15 minutes to complete.

There are no known or anticipated risks to your child if they join the study.
We hope the information we get from this study will help others who demonstrate similar levels of motivation so educators can focus on better engaging students in an effort to increase student motivation to read.

If your child joins the study, we will take the following steps to keep your information confidential and secure. Student identification will remain private and will not be disclosed. Students who participate in the study will be given a numerical code by which they will be referred with no reference to their identity.

Your child will not be paid to take part in this study; and there will be no cost to participate.

If you have any questions about your child’s rights as a participant in this research, you can contact the Chair of the Human Subjects’ Institutional Review Board through Sandra Terranova, Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, at 239-590-7029.

I have read this form and I understand it. I understand that if at any time I become uncomfortable with the study I am free to stop my child’s participation. I understand also that it is not possible to identify all potential risks in a study, and I believe that reasonable safeguards have been taken to minimize both the known and potential but unknown risks. I agree to allow my child to participate in the research study described above.

___________________________  __________________________
Signature of Parent/Guardian  Date

___________________________  __________________________
Signature of Parent/Guardian  Date

Child's Name, please print
Student Assent Form for Survey

A Critical Analysis of Academic & Recreational Reading Motivation and its Correlation to Reading FCAT Performance for 6th Grade Students.

I have been told that my mother/father/parent/grandparent/guardian (circle one) said it's okay for me to take part in a project about reading motivation.

I will be asked to answer 20 questions about my feelings and attitudes toward reading. I will simply need to circle the Garfield that most closely shows how I feel about the reading statement. I understand that it will take about 10-15 minutes to complete.

I am doing this because I want to. I know that it is okay if I want to stop. I know that I can stop at any time if I want to and nothing will happen to me if I stop.

______________________________  _________________________________
Child’s Signature/Date          Child’s Name Printed

Witness:
In my judgment, my child understands about the study and agrees to be in the study.

______________________________  _________________
Parent/Guardian                Date
APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW: PARENT/GUARDIAN CONSENT

STUDENT ASSENT FOR INTERVIEW

Parent/Guardian Consent for Reading Motivation Interview

Please read this consent agreement carefully before you decide to have your child participate in the study. An assent (consent) form for your child is attached. Please review the assent form with your child.

Study Title: A Critical Analysis of Academic & Recreational Reading Motivation and its Correlations to Reading FCAT Performance for 6th grade students.
Principal Researcher: Karen S. DiBella
Faculty Sponsor: Dr. Debra Giambo

You are being asked to allow your child to participate in a research study conducted through Florida Gulf Coast University. This study is being conducted by a student in pursuit of a doctorate degree and will be used for purposes of a dissertation. The University requires that you give your signed agreement for your child to participate in the study.

A short description of the study follows. Please read it carefully. You can ask the researcher any questions you have to help you understand the study. The researcher can be reached at (239) 910-5466 or by email at Karensdib@leeschools.net. The faculty sponsor can be reached at (239) 590-7814 or by email at dgiambo@fgcu.edu. The researcher will also explain the purpose and the nature of the study to your child.

You will be given a copy of this form to keep. If your child agrees to participate, he/she will sign the assent form. If you choose not to allow your child to participate or your child does not want to participate in the study, it will have no effect on any future services you or your child may be entitled to from the school. Anyone who chooses to participate in the study is free to withdraw from the study at any time with no penalty.

The purpose of a research study is to answer questions. I am doing this study to answer these questions:

- In what ways do early literacy experiences influence reading motivation? What do you remember about parents/teachers/others reading to you when you were little?
- In what ways would you describe your motivation to read? What motivates you to read?
- How do you feel about recreational and academic reading? What is your favorite type of book to read, when can you choose what to read? What is your favorite textbook for school?
I am asking your child to take part in the study because I am interested in the level of reading motivation and literacy experiences that they have acquired. If your child joins the study, he or she will be asked to meet with Mrs. DiBella for one-20 minute interview session, at the school and a mutually agreeable time will be scheduled for the interview.

We hope the information we get from this study will help others who demonstrate similar levels of motivation so educators can focus on better engaging students in an effort to increase student motivation to read.

If your child joins the study, we will take the following steps to keep your information confidential and secure. Student identification will remain private and will not be disclosed. Students who participate in the study will be given a numerical code by which they will be referred.

Your child will not be paid to take part in this study; and there is no cost to participate in this study. There are no known or anticipated risks involved in participating in this study.

If you have any questions about your child’s rights as a participant in this research, or if you feel your child has been placed at risk, you can contact the Chair of the Human Subjects’ Institutional Review Board through Sandra Terranova, Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, at 239-590-7029.

I have read this form and I understand it. I understand that if at any time I become uncomfortable with the study I am free to stop my child’s participation. I understand also that it is not possible to identify all potential risks in a study, and I believe that reasonable safeguards have been taken to minimize both the known and potential but unknown risks. I agree to allow my child to participate in the research study described above.

______________________________  ________________________
Signature of Parent/Guardian        Date

_______________
Child's Name, please print

(239) 590-7800  •  TTY: (239) 590-1450  •  Fax: (239) 590-7801  •  http://coe.fgcu.edu
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Student Assent Form for Interview

A Critical Analysis of Academic & Recreational Reading Motivation and its Correlation to Reading FCAT Performance for 6th Grade Students.

I have been told that my mother/father/parent/grandparent/guardian (circle one) said it's okay for me to take part in a project about reading motivation.

I will be asked to answer questions about my feelings and attitudes toward reading and my experiences with reading. I understand that I should answer the questions honestly and can refuse to answer any questions that I do not wish to answer. I understand that it will take about 20 minutes to complete the interview.

I am doing this because I want to. I know that it is okay if I want to stop. I know that I can stop at any time if I want to and nothing will happen to me if I stop.

_________________________________________  _______________________________
Child's Signature/Date                      Child's Name Printed

Witness:
In my judgment, my child understands about the study and agrees to be in the study.

_________________________________________  _______________________________
Parent/Guardian                              Date
APPENDIX D

QUALITATIVE QUESTIONS FOR STUDENT INTERVIEWS

Name: __________________________________  Date: ____________

In what ways do early learning experiences influence reading motivation? What do you remember about parents/teachers/others reading to you when you were little?

In what ways would you describe your motivation to read? What motivates you to read?

How do you feel about recreational and academic reading? What is your favorite type of book to read, when you can choose what to read? What is your favorite textbook for school?