Study of Adolescent Choice and Use of E-books versus Print Books

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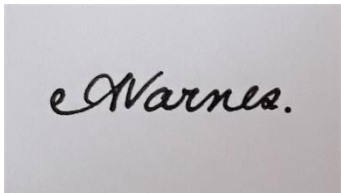Anne Varnes (BSocWk, BA (Hons Psych), GradCert)

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Abstract

This dissertation details a mixed-methods survey based research project that investigates the factors that influence adolescent decision-making when choosing between print books and e-books. Despite their history in contemporary publishing, e-books represent a relatively new and not yet mature technology. Whilst much of the current literature explores how adults make decisions about the adoption and use of e-books and e-reader technology there is a significant gap in the scholarship regarding how adolescents approach these decisions. In an attempt to begin to address this gap in the literature an online survey was developed largely informed by reading practice research and consultation with an industry expert in the field of Publishing Studies. The online survey focussed on gathering qualitative data regarding topics such as reading habits, device access, library use, and format preferences. Concurrently, quantitative data was gathered regarding adolescents' opinions about best device and best application to access e-books, experiences of difficulties borrowing e-books from libraries, and how certain factors influence their decision-making when choosing between a print book and an e-book. Fifty-six adolescent participants aged between 12 and 18 years who had some experience reading e-books for pleasure responded to the survey. A thematic analysis of the qualitative data was performed using a theoretical and methodological bricolage influenced by reading practice studies, Cultural Studies, and Publishing Studies. The results showed that participants were a diverse group with varied reading interests. With regard to device use and choice, app use and choice, and decision-making participants exhibited heavy device use, thoughtful device choice, varied app choice, and similar decision-making patterns to adults. Of interest, were the findings of cost consciousness, access facilitators and mitigators, and the complex relationship between digital literacy and digital access. Overall, the results indicate that while adolescents continue to prefer to read print books, they recognise the utility of e-books and choose to use them at their convenience.

Certification of Dissertation

I certify that the ideas, experimental work, results, analyses and conclusions reported in this dissertation are entirely my own effort, except where otherwise acknowledged. I also certify that the work is original and has not been previously submitted for any other award, except where otherwise acknowledged.

Warnes.

_____   3/12/2020

Signature of Student   Date

ENDORSEMENT

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Signature of Supervisor   Date

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Chapter 1: Introduction

To paraphrase Shakespeare, an e-book is a many splendored thing.

Electronic books (e-books) have been a part of the publishing landscape for nearly 50 years, however, they still represent a challenge to the publishing industry. This dissertation aims to explore one of those challenges and thus fill a gap in the scholarship. Historically research has focussed on the reading skills, reading habits, and book choices of adolescents (Manuel 2012). Only recently has attention turned to their use of digital technologies to access reading materials (Loh & Sun 2018). Building on this research, this dissertation attempts to answer the research question: How do adolescents choose and use e-books? More specifically, what factors influence their choice toward e-books when choosing between print books and e-books? To gauge these influences an online survey will be used to explore the thoughts, attitudes, behaviours of adolescents (12-18 years) regarding e-book choice and use.

Definition of terms

Adolescent

According to Rutherford, Merga and Singleton (2018a, p. 75), who use the term 'teenager' in their survey of reading research, the most common indicator of the fluid concept of the teenager is age (p. 39). Rutherford et al. (2018a) go on to note that the studies reviewed varied widely in the age-ranges utilised. For example, one study included participants as young as 8 years old under the concept 'teenager'. For the purposes of this research project, adolescence will be conceptualised as young people aged 12-18 years. This age range has been chosen because it roughly aligns with the ages of young people enrolled in secondary schooling (Grade 7-12) in Australia. Secondary schooling falls between primary schooling (Prep-Grade 6), that is, childhood and future studies or work, that is, adulthood.

Electronic books (e-books)

There are a variety of definitions within the literature for what constitutes an electronic book (e-book). James and de Kock (2013) delineate between traditional e-books and 'enhanced' or 'amplified' e-books. An enhanced or amplified e-book is described as a digital version of the text, supplemented with other media such as audio clips, timelines and maps which can be accessed by the reader as they engage with the text (James & de Kock 2013, p.108). Bouchardon (2010) takes pains to differentiate digitised works and digital works. The former is described as a work conceived for another medium (e.g. a printed book) made accessible on a digital medium (Bouchardon 2010). Whilst the latter is specifically created for the digital medium and utilises some of their capabilities such as interactivity, hyperlinks etc. Finally, Esposito (2012) expresses the idea of an e-book as a 'containerless spirit' capable of alighting on one device (an e-reader) or another (a paperback) and maintaining its textual shape. For the purposes of this project the concepts of a 'standard e-book' (James & de Kock 2013) or a 'digitised work' (Bouchardon 2010) will be used when referring to e-books.

Reading devices

Compounding the issue of defining what an e-book is, are the myriad of devices that can be used to read such a work (Merga & Roni 2017). Further, when commentators discuss the advantages and disadvantages of e-books, there is often a lack of discrimination, or indeed an inextricable entanglement of device and document (Baron 2016; Runcie 2017; Wilber 2018). For example, Wilber (2018) lists the ability to read in the dark as an advantage of e-books. Other commentators mention eye strain as a result of reading on a device as a disadvantage of e-books (Baron 2016). Neither of these is a function of the text but rather the device being used to read the text.

Computer screens, laptops, smartphones, tablets, and dedicated e-readers are some of the devices currently available for downloading and reading digitised works. Given that adolescents may have access to a variety of devices suitable for e-reading (Merga & Roni 2017), reading e-books on computer screens, laptops, smartphones, tablets, and e-readers will all be considered as part of this project.

Reading for pleasure

Reading for pleasure is an oft used but difficult to define concept. The Australian Book Readers Survey differentiated between individuals who read for pleasure and those who read for work or study (Throsby, Zwar & Morgan 2017). The survey places reading for pleasure alongside other leisure activities but stops short of defining reading for pleasure. Jacobs (2011) comments that once the ability to make sense of the printed word is achieved, reading can become a deeply pleasurable activity. And it is not easy to say why (p. 19). Clark and Rumbold (2006) define reading for pleasure as reading that we do of our own free will, anticipating the satisfaction that we will get from the act of reading. Further, reading for pleasure involves reading material typically of our own choosing, at a time and place that suit us (Clark & Rumbold 2006, p. 6). For the purposes of this research project, reading for pleasure is defined as reading not for work or study from which the reader derives pleasure or satisfaction.

Electronic Books (e-books)

In 'A Short History of EBooks' Lebert (2009) claims that the first electronic book, also known as the e-book, was published in 1971 as part of Project Gutenberg. Project Gutenberg is an ambitious project to create low cost electronic versions of literary works and disseminate them worldwide (Lebert 2009). In contrast, the first commercial e-books became available in the 1980s and 1990s on CD-ROM (Vassiliou & Rowley 2008; Bartram 2014). It was not until the

late 1990s that e-books in their current form, that is digital files, emerged alongside electronic reader technology (Manley & Holley 2012).

There are currently a variety of definitions within the literature for what constitutes an e-book (Vassiliou & Rowley 2008). Vassiliou and Rowley (2008) undertook an analysis of existing definitions of the concept "e-book" with hopes of generating a robust definition. The resultant definition includes two parts:

> Firstly, an e-book is a digital object with textual and/or other content, which arises as a result of integrating the familiar concept of a book with features that can be provided in an electronic environment. Secondly, e-books, typically have in-use features such (as) search and cross reference functions, hypertext links, bookmarks, annotations, highlights, multimedia objects and interactive tools (Vassiliou & Rowley 2008, p. 363).

The two-part nature of the definition is defended with the assertion that it is essential to capture both the persistent characteristics of e-books, and their dynamic nature, driven largely by changing technologies through which they are delivered and read (Vassiliou & Rowley 2008, p. 364).

Velagić (2014) provides an overview of the discourse surrounding e-books and print books. Of particular interest are repeated representations which rely on references to the analogous relationship of e-books to print books (Velagić 2014). Consequently, Velagić (2014) suggests that historical struggles to define what a book is contribute to difficulty defining the concept of 'e-book'. This difficulty is further compounded by the changing nature of e-books (Velagić 2014). Vassiliou and Rowley (2008) note that in many of the works reviewed in their study (over 80%) the print book analogy of e-books is used in defining what is an e-book. This suggests that when people think of e-books they may unconsciously think of and equate them

with print books. Further compounding the difficulty of defining the concept of e-book is the interchangeable use of the terms, for example the term e-book can be used to refer to the software and hardware used to read a digital file (Carreiro 2010).

Research from the Pew Research Center conducted in the US in 2012, shows that print books dominate, but e-books have a notable audience (Rainie, Zickuhr, Purcell, Madden Brenner 2012, part 2, section 4). Of adults aged 18 and older, the audience who read e-books are disproportionately likely to be under age 50, with higher levels of education and income (Rainie et al. 2012, part 3, section 1). These individuals are described as avid readers; they read more books than others; they read more frequently than others and for a variety of purposes (Rainie et al. 2012).

In Australia, the most comprehensive research regarding reading has been the Australian Book Readers Survey (Throsby et al. 2017). Results from the survey clearly indicate that print books continue to dominate the reading habits of Australians. Only 10.5% of respondents indicated that they 'often' read using an e-reader, in contrast to 73.6% of respondents who indicated that they 'never' read using an e-reader (Throsby et al. 2017). In 2014, Roy Morgan research reported that in the 12 months to September 2014, 7.0% of Australians aged 14+ bought at least one eBook via the internet in an average three months (*More Australians buying eBooks* 2015). Further, according to a report produced by Scholastic in conjunction with YouGov one-third of children (33%) have read an ebook, with children aged 12–17 being most likely to have done so (Scholastic 2016, p. 71). When asked about format preferences more than half of children who have read ebooks (55%) prefer to read print books. Overall, boys are less likely than girls to prefer print books (Scholastic 2016). Finally, IBIS World makes the following observation under the heading 'Industry Outlook',

> While ereaders offer consumers greater convenience, ebook sales have declined over the past five years, with many consumers continuing to prefer physical books. Ebooks can also be easily acquired illegally through piracy websites, allowing consumers to circumvent internet protocol (IP) restrictions (Chapman 2020, p. 16).

Finally, according to Books + Publishing in 2017

> It is estimated that ebook sales make up around 15-20% of the market in Australia, although this can vary greatly between genres. Similar to other English-language markets, ebook sales appear to have plateaued in recent years—at least within traditional trade publishing ('The market down under' 2018, np).

It should be noted that only an estimate is offered because the sales of e-books and audiobooks are not tracked in any reliable way ('The market down under' 2018).

Taken together, this data suggests that e-books are more than a passing fad and that a small portion of the book buying public are committed to reading in this format.

Electronic Readers (e-readers)

The idea for an electronic reader (or e-reader) was born in the 1930s. Bob Brown, Vannevar Bush and others are variously credited with the idea that led to the development of the modern e-reader (Manley & Holley 2012; Wilson 2013; Bartram 2014). Bush wrote an essay titled 'As We May Think' that considered the need for a mechanised private file and library in which an individual could store all his books, records, and communication (Manley & Holley 2012). In contrast, Brown, after watching his first "talkie" (movies with sound) imagined a device called a Readies (Bartram 2014). The Readies, a device based on miniature microfilm, was conceived as 'a simple reading machine which I can carry or move around, attach to any old electric light

plug and read hundred-thousand-word novels in 10 minutes if I want to, and I want to' (Wilson 2013; Bartram 2014).

Attempts to create the technology imagined by Brown were unsuccessful (Schuessler 2010). Further, some might argue that what Bush (1945) described was in fact a laptop or personal computer or indeed a mobile phone or tablet computer rather than an e-reader (Manley & Holley 2012). However, Brown and Bush are credited with inspiring the scientists and engineers who began the process of inventing the modern e-reader (Schuessler 2010; Manley & Holley 2012; Bartram 2014). It would appear that both men imagined a future where books moved beyond static words printed on a page to a more dynamic method of encountering the written word. A way of encoutering the written word that many have described as the biggest revolution in publishing since the invention of the Gutenberg press (Lyons 2010, cited in Velagić 2014).

Michael Hart, Bob Brown, Vannevar Bush and others imagined products such as the e-book and e-reader that would revolutionise books, reading, and consequently publishing (Lebert 2009; Schuessler 2010; Manley & Holley 2012). However, the process of their development, has not been a smooth transition from one media, the printed codex, to a new media, the e-book (Wilson 2013). Ballatore and Natale (2016) chart the development of e-readers from their beginnings in the late 1990s through the dot.com bubble burst in 2001, to the second wave in the late 2000s which saw greater commercial success. Indeed it has only been in the last 10 years that both the e-book and e-reader have seen mainstream adoption (Wilson 2013). However, it is also apparent that paper has not disappeared and that hypertext is far from having killed the codex as a cultural form (Ballatore & Natale 2016, p. 2382). Today e-books can be read on a variety of devices including laptops, personal computers, tablets, mobile phones, and dedicated e-readers (Merga & Roni 2017).

Advantages and Disadvantages of E-books and E-readers

Modern commentators have been quick to highlight perceived differences between e-books and print books and ascribe value judgements (Runcie 2017; Ferrer 2018; Wilber 2018; Sachin 2019). For example, some commentators enthusiastically embrace e-books, deriding antiquated and out-dated formats (Wilber 2018). In contrast, other commentators remain die-hard fans of print books, unwilling to be swayed by the seductive siren call of progress (Runcie 2017; Ferrer 2018). Included on these lists are items regarding the visual presentation of e-books for example, 'cookbooks, kid's books and anything with pictures look rubbish on an e-reader' (Runcie 2017). Ferrer (2018) comments on the tactile experience of reading a print book with the observation 'feel your progress; you can physically feel your progress through a book as the upcoming pages get fewer and fewer. Not so with ebooks'. Finally, comparisons are made regarding the accessible nature of e-books and print books, for example, 'ebooks are more portable than print books' (Wilber 2018). These commentaries highlight features of e-books that variously impact readers' engagement and experience. These sentiments are mirrored in the academic literature (Chen 2015; Ketron & Naletelich 2016; Nedeljkov 2016; Antón, Camarero & Rodríguez 2017; Merga & Roni 2017). When considering advantages and disadvantages of e-books, common themes include but are not limited to accessibility, cost, privacy, tactile experience, environmental concerns, and visual presentation (Chen 2015; Ketron & Naletelich 2016; Nedeljkov 2016; Antón et al. 2017; Merga & Roni 2017).

The advent, and the perceived growing popularity of the e-book has inspired more than a few writers to wax lyrical about the death of the printed book (Ballatore & Natale 2016). Price (2012) claims that the death of print books has variously been prophesied since 1835. Further, every generation rewrites the book's epitaph; all that changes is whodunit (Price 2012, para. 6). However, despite repeated predictions that e-books were going to 'kill' print books, both formats coexist and appear to offer readers something unique (Zhang & Kudva 2014).

As an emerging technology, e-books present a topic ripe for further research and exploration.

Adolescents

Adolescents as a group are often characterised as being technologically savvy with a strong preference for consuming written material via electronic devices such as mobile phones, laptops, tablets, and e-readers (Merga & Roni 2017). This characterisation appears to have originated in the field of education studies with Prensky (2001, referenced in Loh & Sun 2018) who suggested that modern adolescents could be considered 'digital natives', effortlessly adept in the use of technology and every hungry for the latest device, software, or application. In the original metaphor, Prensky (2001) contrasted digital natives with digital immigrants, the preceding generation who had not grown up surrounded by digital technology with the Internet as an ever-present part of their lives. Subsequently, the biggest criticism of the notion of digital natives is that it is has led to simplistic forms of analysis (Thomas 2011). Whilst the polarisation of digital natives (those born after 1990) and digital immigrants (those born before 1990) was exciting, easily digestible, and media-friendly, by overstating the differences between generations and understating the diversity within them, Prensky's (2001) idea failed to recognise many of the subtle nuances that exist within and between these two groups (Buckingham 2011). Given these subtle nuances, it is important to consider modern adolescents' experiences with and preferences for accessing written materials. Taken together these findings suggest there is still much to be learned about how adolescents choose and use e-books and e-readers.

Publishing Studies

Publishing Studies is concerned with the culture, practice, and business of publishing: the production, distribution, publication, and reception of books, journals, magazines, and other publications (Baker, Brien & Webb 2019). The publishing industry in Australia are responsible

for the production, distribution, and publication of books, atlases, textbooks, travel guides and ebooks (Chapman 2020). Anecdotal and academic evidence suggests that historically decision-making in the publishing industry has been largely subjective, "gut" decisions, or 'wet finger held up in the air' (Balow 2014; Lichtenberg 2014; Squires 2017), and thus has lacked academic and scientific rigour. More recently, the publishing industry has attempted to incorporate book sales data into their decision-making process (Squires 2017). In her study of how publishers incorporate "big data" including books sales data, digital research, and sophisticated insight tools into decision-making regarding titles to pursue and authors to develop, Squires (2017) discovered a resistance to mass-market and data-driven practices. Indeed, when questions are asked regarding how publishers decide in which format to publish a book, e-book, print book, or both, the resultant answers reflect a dizzying array of experience and knowledge but a lack of guiding or unified understanding (Carreiro 2010).

For publishers, Prensky's (2001) assertions seemingly made it easier to anticipate the needs and wants of adolescent readers. Digital publications, that is e-books and enhanced e-books became the holy grail of children's and young adult (YA) publishing. This is perhaps best demonstrated in school libraries in both Australia and the United States choosing to remove and replace all written material with e-books (Merga 2014a). However, given the criticism of Prensky's dichotomy and the presence of research that suggests that adolescents may prefer to read print books (Loh & Sun 2018), and may read 'better' from print books (Merga 2014a), this area warrants further exploration.

Summary

Despite their age, e-books represent a fairly new technology that has only recently achieved mainstream adoption (Wilson 2013). As mentioned previously, e-books present a number of challenges both to the publishing industry and academia, beginning with their definition and

continuing through their awkward evolution (Vassiliou & Rowley 2008). Despite characterisations of adolescents as 'digital natives' (Prensky 2001) and presumptions regarding their preferences for engaging with digital media, little is known about adolescent preferences for digital over traditional book forms (Merga 2014a). By engaging in the study of adolescents and their choice and use of e-books versus print books it is hoped that our understanding of this issue from a publishing studies perspective will be broadened.

Chapter 2: Literature review

Two of the major foci for this research project are adolescents' reading and adolescents' use of e-books. Adolescents and their reading have become a focus for researchers as links between reading for pleasure and academic achievement have emerged (Manuel 2012). With the development of new technologies, in particular technologies associated with reading such as e-books, e-readers, and digital publishing, a new research focus is emerging (Rutherford, Singleton, Derr Merga 2018b). In order to situate the current research, a literature review was undertaken to evaluate existing research in the areas of reading research and cultural studies.

Reading research

An abundance of research exists regarding adolescents and their reading habits, preferences, and abilities (Rutherford, Waller, Merga, Mcrae, Bullen Johanson 2017). Within the Australian context a smaller subset of research regarding adolescents and reading exists (Merga 2014b; Manuel & Carter 2015). Manuel and Carter (2015) conceptualise reading as a communicative act requiring the capacity to decode, interpret, respond to, and derive meaning from a myriad of print, visual, oral, non-verbal multi-modal texts. Based on the research they surveyed, Rutherford et al. (2017) conceptualise reading differently, providing both broad and narrow definitions. The narrow definition of reading is simply long-form reading in print and e-book formats, such as reading novels (Rutherford et al. 2017). In contrast, the broad definition includes short-form reading and a wide range of digital applications such as texting, social media, and web browsing (Rutherford et al. 2017). Interestingly, when given a choice adolescents chose the narrow definition to define what it means to read (Rutherford et al. 2017). Reading is undertaken for a variety of purposes; within the field of adolescent reading practices research, it has been important to differentiate between reading for school (or work) and reading for pleasure (Rutherford et al. 2017). The latter is also known within the literature as voluntary

reading, reading for recreation, leisure reading, reading self-selected material, and reading for fun (Hughes-Hassell & Rodge 2007).

Historically, reading has been viewed as a worthwhile leisure pursuit for personal betterment and thus worth studying (Manuel 2012). More recently, reading research has uncovered a link between reading for pleasure and educational success (Manuel 2012). Indeed, success in educational settings is largely determined by an individual's ability to accurately or meaningfully decode, interpret, derive meaning from and respond to texts (Manuel 2012). Consequently, teaching and educational studies appear to have been the main driving force behind much of the reading research conducted (Merga 2014b; Manuel & Carter 2015; Rutherford et al. 2018a). The competition of reading for pleasure with firstly, television and video, and secondly, digital technologies has been a particular focus for this research (Thomson 1987; Bunbury 1995; and Nieuwenhuizen 2001 cited in Manuel 2012). Most recently, attention has shifted to engagement in reading through traditional technologies and emerging digital technologies (Merga 2014a; Loh & Sun 2018).

Manuel (2012) provides an historical overview of four large research studies designed to explore adolescent reading in the Australian context. In the late 1980's Thompson (1987) undertook seminal research into the reading choices and practices of adolescents alongside their television and video viewing habits. According to Manuel (2012), Thomson (1987) concluded that mental passivity was the characteristic feature of the leisure pursuits of the majority of adolescents in the study. Further, Thomson's (1987) conclusions were critical of the role of educators in fostering a love of reading for enjoyment, choosing relevant reading material, and engaging students in literary experiences. In 1995, Rhonda Bunbury in conjunction with Deakin University conducted national research into the reading and leisure activities of Australian students. Of particular interest was the impact of emerging digital technologies on reading and other leisure activities. Published as the 'Children's Choice' project, Bunbury (1995) noted

gendered differences in attitudes and behaviours associated with reading for pleasure. Subsequently, Nieuwenhuizen (2001) conducted research into the motivations, reading behaviours, and habits of young people relative to their use of technology. The findings of this research were consistent with the previous studies in terms of the place of reading for pleasure amongst other leisure activities (Manuel 2012). Interestingly, Nieuwenhuizen (2001) noted a dramatic drop-off in the rating of reading for pleasure as a preferred activity between primary school and high school; no other activity registered such a significant decline in the transition from primary to high school. In concluding, Manuel (2012) mentions ongoing research with a particular focus on reading practices and preferences, reading experiences, and adolescents' self-image as readers. Consequently, in 2015 Manuel and Carter published this research undertaken with a large group of geographically and socio-economically diverse Australian adolescents. Manuel and Carter (2015) found that reading fiction was maintaining its place as a leisure activity in the lives of Australian adolescents but that it fell well behind television viewing and computer usage for the majority of participants sampled (Manuel & Carter 2015). Further, they discovered the powerful role of teachers in encouraging or discouraging adolescent reading through their choice of teaching practices and reading materials (Manuel & Carter 2015). Using the results of their study, Manuel and Carter (2015) sought to inform teachers about how to better engage adolescents in meaningful reading experiences.

More recently Rutherford et al. (2017) conducted a scoping study of reading research primarily published since 2005. Their aims were threefold, firstly to explore what is currently known about teenagers' reading practices in the digital era (Rutherford et al. 2017). Subsequently, they explored what disciplines are interested in this question and how do they define reading; and lastly what frameworks, themes, and study designs have been used to guide research studies in the field (Rutherford et al. 2017)? The studies reviewed included both Australian and internationally based research, with an emphasis on Australian based studies where possible

(Rutherford et al. 2017). The themes Rutherford et al. (2017) identify as salient to discussions of adolescents and reading are participation, preferences, peers, personal attributes, pleasure, platform and place.

Several of Rutherford et al.'s (2017) findings warrant further mention. Similar to Nieuwenhuizen (2001), Rutherford et al. (2017) reported that the most prevalent finding of the studies reviewed was that participation in long-form reading, that is reading of books and other extended texts, by young people is in decline. In addition, the amount of time spent reading decreases as young people get older. Further, gender differences were noted in a number of studies and the concept of a gender-gap was expressed around ideas of access (Rutherford et al. 2017). At its simplest, males and females prefer to access different reading material; more seriously, reading for pleasure is gendered female thus influencing male access of this activity (Loh, Sun & Majid 2019). This is illustrated in the findings of the survey of Australian reading conducted Throsby et al. (2017) who found that 75.1% of males surveyed identified as non-readers in contrast to 24.6% of females. Further, amongst those participants who classed themselves as frequent readers, 61.1% were female in contrast to 38.8% male (Throsby et al. 2017). It should be noted that these figures include both reading for pleasure and reading for work or study.

Exploration of adolescent reading preferences (both genre and platform/device) has been a popular topic of research (Manuel & Robinson 2002; Birr Moje, Overby, Tysvaer Morris 2008; Merga 2014a; Manuel & Carter 2015). When considering genre preferences, of note is the finding of overlapping taste cultures between print and screen genres amongst adolescents (Birr Moje et al. 2008). In other words, adolescents use their personal tastes or interests such as television shows, movies, manga/anime to identify books they may like to read (Birr Moje et al. 2008). Similarly, Bunbury (1995) observed that adolescents often identify books with TV, film, or video game tie-ins as favoured choices.

When considering preference as it relates to device choice, according to Rutherford et al. (2017) a significant proportion of the existing studies of reading on eReader platforms use experiments to assess reader experience (p. 35). Such studies have focused on text comprehension, platform preferences, visual fatigue, cues for different reading processes and strategies, and narrative immersion or transportation into the world of the story (Rutherford et al. 2017). The results and conclusions of these studies have been mixed (Rutherford et al. 2017). For example, (Rutherford et al. 2017) cite a Norwegian study comparing print and electronic books concluded that eReaders are more popular with students (in classroom contexts) with no substantial loss of comprehension compared to print (Tveit and Mangen 2014). This study is contrasted with, Merga's West Australian Adolescent Book Reading (WASABR) study which found that avid readers generally prefer print. Although they are not heavy users or borrowers of eBooks, avid readers find the affordances such as easy portability and immediate access (via purchase) of additional series or author titles appealing (Merga 2014b).

Despite Prensky (2001, cited in Loh & Sun 2019) caricaturing adolescents as 'digital natives' effortlessly adept in the use of digital technologies by, the research reviewed paints a different picture. Not all young people have access to digital media (Rutherford et al. 2017). Further, those that do have access to digital media do not choose to use it in a homogenous fashion (Loh et al. 2019). Merga (2014a) cautions that generalising the technological proficiency and preferences of the current generation of adolescents has the potential to do them a disservice, as their true preferences and proficiencies never need to be analysed or understood if they are already assumed (p. 28). Citing Leonard et al. (2016) Rutherford et al. (2018b) note that e-reading devices require varying degrees of competence in order to purchase e-books, borrow titles from libraries, and to negotiate the differing file types appropriate to each reading-capable device. Understanding when, for whom, and how reading is done is crucial for developing

complex understandings of how different technologies are used differently for different purposes (Singer & Alexandra 2017, cited in Loh et al. 2019, p. 664).

According to Loh et al. (2019) students' online reading preferences reflected their offline reading practices. That is, a marked difference was noted between the online reading habits of adolescents who reported enjoying reading and those who did not (Loh et al. 2019). Adolescents who reported enjoying reading often used their phones and other devices to extend their reading habits, reading print, e-books, or online depending on which was more convenient or enjoyable for the occasion (Loh et al. 2019). In contrast, adolescents who reported that they did not enjoy reading were less likely to use their phones and devices for reading (Loh et al. 2019). Similarly, Rutherford et al. (2018b) found that digital devices with e-reading capabilities did not cultivate higher reading engagement for "avid" or "reluctant" readers.

Rutherford et al.'s (2017) final noteworthy observation regarding studies of adolescent reading practices concerns the social role of reading in peer networks. Three studies are presented that suggest adolescent reading is a socially located practice, situated within social networks and generative of social capital (Birr Moje et al. 2008; Howard 2008; Zasacka 2017 cited in Rutherford et al. 2017). In other words, adolescents cement friendships by talking about reading, making recommendations, lending and borrowing reading material, and endorsing one another's text choices.

Within the Australian context, a study of particular note is the West Australian Study in Adolescent Book Reading (WASABR). Conducted in Term 4, 2012 the WASABR examined current trends in adolescent recreational book reading in Western Australia (Merga 2014b). Merga's (2014) original study supported the results found in the research summarised by Manuel (2012). What is noteworthy is how Merga's (2008) initial WASABR study acted as a launch pad for future reading research. Of interest to this research project is her research around

the topic of digital reading (Merga 2014a). According to Merga (2014a) research into adolescent preferences for digital over traditional book forms is scarce (p.29). Drawing on research from the US, Merga (2014a) suggests that it is not access limiting engagement with e-books. Whilst a large proportion of the US population (of all ages) own or have access to devices with e-reading capabilities, very little reading of e-books occurs (Merga 2014a). Further, Merga (2014a) highlights a pervasive view of adolescents and children as a homogenous group who will uniformly prefer to read e-books. In contrast, Merga (2014a) found that few of the students interviewed actively read books as e-books. A myriad of reasons were given for this behaviour including eye strain, knowing 'where I'm up to', difficulty locating books online, and appreciation of the aesthetic experience of print books, especially covers (Merga 2014a).

As noted, beyond Australia there is a significant body of research regarding adolescents and reading (Birr Moje et al. 2008; Rutherford et al. 2017). The question of adolescents' preferences of traditional or digital formats, that is print books or e-books, has begun to permeate the scholarship. For example, Loh and Sun (2018) undertook research with Singaporean secondary students examining their print and online reading habits as they pertained to school-based and outside school reading. Two significant findings from Loh and Sun's (2018) research are that specialised reading devices such as Kindles seem to have a limited lifespan; students report intensive usage over a period, followed by subsequent boredom with the device. Students also report different reading habits and preferences depending on whether they enjoy reading (Loh & Sun 2018).

Collectively reading studies and research provide an excellent starting point for this research project. Common findings noted in the research regarding adolescents and reading include:

- the social function of reading (Birr Moje et al. 2008; Loh et al. 2019),

- the overlapping of taste cultures (Bunbury 1995, cited in Manuel 2012; Birr Moje et al. 2008).

Common issues or concerns noted in the research regarding adolescents and reading include:

- an age related decline in reading between primary school and high school (Nieuwenhuizen 2001, cited in Manuel 2012),

- a gender-gap in reading (Bunbury 1995, cited in Manuel 2012),

- a rural-urban literacy gap (Rutherford et al. 2018a), and

- an overall decline in reading among adolescents combined with an emerging trend of aliteracy (i.e. the situation where an individual can read proficiently but chooses not to) (Rutherford et al. 2017).

Of note is the commonality of results and findings across countries and contexts (Hopper 2005; Hughes-Hassell & Rodge 2007; Manuel 2012; Rutherford et al. 2017) and the exciting new directions for future research (Merga 2014a; Loh & Sun 2018). Examples of new research directions include exploration of how to use the social aspect of reading to motivate reluctant readers (Loh & Sun 2018) and evaluation of whether interactive digital reading experiences offer a similar cognitive benefit to reading print books (Merga 2014a).

E-book Research

Following the release of e-books and e-readers into the marketplace, academic research tended to focus on their adoption and use in academic settings (Borchert, Tittle, Hunter Macdonald 2009). Research has been conducted at universities and colleges around the globe, including but not limited to India (Anuradha & Usha 2006), Australia (Borchert et al. 2009; Wells & Sallenbach 2015; Kent 2017), Spain (Romero Otero, Iglesias Fernández & Giménez Toledo 2013), United Kingdom (*A Survey of eBook Usage and Perceptions at the University of Liverpool* 2010) and United States of America (Staiger 2012). As e-books and e-readers moved

toward mainstream adoption the focus of research shifted from their use in academia to everyday use.

Given that e-books represent a new technology or media, researchers have applied various theories to understand adoption and continuance behaviour of e-book readers. Motivation theory and theories of media adoption such as Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), Diffusion of Innovation (DOI), and Use and Gratification Theory (U&G) have all been used to understand and explain why readers choose e-books (Shin 2011; Zhang & Kudva 2014). One of the major focuses of this research was why e-books are chosen in preference to print books, or not. As such within the body of research regarding e-books, seven articles that apply a variety of approaches have been chosen that provide insight into potential influences.

Firstly, Gall (2005) in an early yet insightful article attempts to dispel five myths regarding e-books. Namely, (1) that e-books represent a new idea that has failed, (2) that e-books are easily defined, (3) that e-books and printed books are competing media, (4) that e-books are expensive, and (5) that e-books are a passing fad (Gall 2005). Moving beyond this commentary Gall (2005) uses an example from his experience teaching graduate students, to comment on the varying responses to the introduction of e-books and how these can change over time. Initial reactions tend to be polarised, bibliophiles v. technologists, that is, those who love print and those who love devices. After a period of use, Gall (2005) observed that the discussion moved to 'what materials are best left on the printed page (usually described as pleasure reading) and what would be useful in e-book format (reference works, course catalogs, how-to-manuals)' (p. 27). Finally, Gall (2005) noted that a preliminary study of e-book features found that the most desirable features tended to reflect the functionality of traditional books and the least desirable features provided functionality not found there (p. 26).

Secondly, MacFadyen (2011) explored e-book affordances. Affordances are the fundamental properties of an object, in this case an e-book, that determine how the object can be used by a human being (MacFadyen 2011). The ways users understand and describe their experiences of reading on digital devices are shaped by well-established cultural expectations about the abstract as well as the physical affordances of the print book (MacFadyen 2011, p. 3).

Other writers perpetuate the notion that reading a print book or an e-book are equivalent experiences with little or no discernible differences (Nedeljkov 2016). Another opinion widely touted is that the advantages of e-books, properties such as storage ability, and light-weight compact design, should make them instantly more desirable than print books (Chen 2015). However, MacFadyen (2011) highlights that it is our attempts to fit the experience of digital reading into mental models derived from print culture that reveal the affordances and cultural expectations of the print book. This revelation then informs our judgement of the viability and utility of e-books. Finally, the tendency for terms to encompass both content and enabling technology points to the unsettled status of digital reading practices (MacFadyen 2011, p. 4). An example of terms encompassing both content and enabling technology is the use of the term e-book to refer to all of the folllwing: a digitised facsimile of a paper book, an electronic text with only a passing resemblance to the paper book's form, an electronic text hyperlinked to many other texts, a type of software used to access digital texts, and a piece of hardware (MacFadyen 2011).

Thirdly, Wilson (2013) takes an unusual approach examining the e-book as a technological advancement that by its very nature is a disruptive technology. According to Wilson (2013) e-books disrupt the usual process of traditional publishing. Indeed, authors may become the central figure in new publishing processes, replacing publishers (Wilson 2013). Further evidence of their disruptive nature is their simpler and cheaper nature (than the established equivalent) and their emergence in emerging or insignificant markets (Wilson 2013, p. 8).

Following the discussion of the e-book as a disruptive technology Wilson (2013) reaches four conclusions:

> The first thing we can be reasonably sure about is that the e-book phenomenon is not yet a mature technology and that further developments are not only likely, but inevitable. Secondly, it is evident that different cultures and different countries, as well as different market sectors, proceed at different rates and perhaps adopt the technologies for different reasons. (p. 11)

The third and fourth conclusions relate to the future of publishing. The ability of publishing, bookselling, and library lending to accommodate the developments that result from the emergence of e-books is questioned (Wilson 2013). Consequently, e-books are likely to continue being a disruptive technology that result in the reshaping of the book scene (Wilson 2013).

Taking yet another approach, Girard (2014) employed a user studies approach to examine research that sought to identify opportunities and barriers that facilitate or prohibit adoption, access, and use of e-books by readers. User studies is understood to be the study of human beings and their activities within the fields of information science and library studies (Girard 2014). In user studies research

> …people begin with a need for information, which motivates information seeking, and use. At any stage of this process, people often encounter a variety of barriers that must be negotiated to fulfil their need. In this way, a barrier is a physical or immaterial blockade to an intended path; it represents the lack of ability, or need to overcome an obstacle of some kind in order to obtain and use information (Girard 2014, n.p.).

A thorough systematic literature review of 92 peer reviewed and vetted scholarly articles and conference papers was conducted (Girard 2014). For each paper the study scope, research methods, and barrier levels were examined (Girard 2014). Of interest were the three levels of barriers:

- Physical barriers - barriers that relate to hardware or software features that impede physical movement for interaction;

- Cognitive barriers - factors that impede or prohibit mental processes, or ideas in relation to e-book use; and

- Social and Cultural barriers - barriers to the use of e-books that result from social or cultural rules that pertain within the time and place where reading is taking place (Girard 2014, n.p.).

Findings regarding physical barriers were further divided into two categories: those that derive from expectations associated with print books (e.g. annotating and bookmarking) and those that derive from expectations to move beyond affordances associated with print books (e.g. full text searching) (Girard 2014). A large portion of the studies reviewed focussed on physical barriers, the majority of items identified as physical barriers were actually opportunities such as, convenience or portability; ability to print, highlight, and bookmark; and searchability (Girard 2014). A smaller portion of the studies reviewed focussed on cognitive barriers which were conceptualised as general user perceptions, adoption studies, and learning efficiency and effectiveness (Girard 2014). Finally, with regard to social and cultural barriers, Girard (2014) notes that of the 92 studies included in the data set, very few make mention of the fact that social and cultural factors can impact e-book reading practices. Only two studies make reference to social and cultural barriers; it is noted that these appear to be authorial observations rather than formal study findings (Girard 2014). For example, Walton (2008) cited in Girard

(2014, n.p.) suggested that 'cultural norms in Western society toward reading print books will make the widespread adoption of e-books for reading a very slow process'. In conclusion, Girard (2014) observes that less attention has been paid to social and cultural impacts on e-book use. Further, Girard (2014) notes that books have traditionally been regarded as cultural products carrying their own associations and meanings, something that is also true with e-books. Given the rising popularity of e-books, Girard (2014) suggests that the meanings and interactions associated with e-reading practices require greater research focus.

Ketron and Naletelich (2016) sought to investigate how e-readers have changed personal connections with books. They used as the starting point for their investigation the functional-hedonic dichotomy between e-books and print books (Ketron & Naletelich 2016). The functional benefits of e-books have been touted frequently in the literature. However, little is understood of how e-books have changed consumers' hedonic/emotional connections with books, that is the pleasure consumers derive from books or in this case, e-books. Ketron and Naletelich (2016) asked the question, if the functional benefits of e-books are so compelling, why do some people still use printed books? To explore this question Ketron and Naletelich (2016) use self-concept theory and the notion of possessions as extensions of the self as the basis for qualitative interviews. Belk (1988, cited by Ketron & Naletelich 2016) posits that possessions are extensions of an individual's self-concept. Further, a consumer's possessions showcase their identity and generate strong emotional or hedonic ties to the consumer's life (Belk, 1988). This has implications for product categories with high propensity to serve as treasured possessions (such as books) because these products have both emotional and functional value. When considering digital products, it is believed that while digital possessions are capable of consumer attachment and incorporation into the self, the lack of tangibility and perceived authenticity of digital possessions may diminish the role of such goods as extensions

of the self (Ketron & Naletelich 2016). A parallel example is drawn from music to support the assertion that e-books are unlikely to replace printed books (Ketron & Naletelich 2016).

Research interviews were conducted with 11 adult participants aged 28-67 years. Participants were asked 13 base interview questions and follow up questions where necessary. Ketron and Naletelich's (2016) analysis revealed six primary themes: convenience, change, community, collection, connection, and children.

The themes most relevant to this research project are convenience, community, collection and connection. Convenience, linked to ideas of accessibility (portability), affordability, and avoidance of clutter was considered the foremost functional benefit of e-books (Ketron & Naletelich 2016). Within the theme community three subthemes were identified: online communities, physical communities, and sharing books (Ketron & Naletelich 2016). Online communities provide e-book users with details and review of books that inform the decision to purchase (Ketron & Naletelich 2016). Involvement in online communities signal a shift away from the use of physical bookstores (Ketron & Naletelich 2016). However, Ketron and Naletelich (2016) found that for some respondents involvement in physical communities by way of physical bookstores was still important and offered an experience that could not be replicated online. It is noted that traditionally book borrowing and other such activities associated with sharing books have been important among readers (Ketron & Naletelich 2016). Whilst the technical restrictions of e-books prevent easy sharing of books with others, some readers find "work arounds" that allow them to circumvent the restrictions of their device or app to share e-books (Ketron & Naletelich 2016). Regarding collection, participants identified the biggest negative associated with print books is the space required to hold them (Ketron & Naletelich 2016). However, Ketron and Naletelich (2016) found that participants who generally prefer e-books indicate that they will purchase a printed version of a highly favoured book/s, suggesting a hedonic benefit. Within the theme connection three subthemes were identified:

distance, distractions, and physicality (Ketron & Naletelich 2016). Distance had two meanings for respondents, firstly, physical distance travelled to purchase printed books (functional benefit) and secondly, the idea that e-readers lead to feelings of removal from books (Ketron & Naletelich 2016). This latter theme was captured eloquently with the observation that e-reading has a sense of 'reading through a window' (Ketron & Naletelich 2016). Linked to theme of distance was the theme distraction, Ketron and Naletelich (2016) reported that participants identified that print books serve a single function, in contrast e-readers include functions that distract and detract from the reading experience. Examples of distraction included formatting issues, the need to charge devices, and difficulty navigating forwards and backwards (Ketron & Naletelich 2016). When considering the subtheme physicality, two opinions emerge (Ketron & Naletelich 2016). Firstly, that e-books offer experiences not available via printed books. Conversely, that printed books offer experiences not available via e-books. Ketron and Naletelich (2016) suggest that consideration of the subtheme physicality highlighted debate over whether format or content is more important when reading.

The findings of Ketron and Naletelich (2016) confirm:

> that e-books do offer some hedonic benefits such as faster access to new titles, broader connections with other readers across online communities and richer colors for children's books, but e-books also lack many benefits offered by printed books, such as lack of environment offered by bricks-and-mortar bookstore shopping, the ability to hold and showcase favorite books, weakened connections with stories, a lack of tangibility in holding a cherished book and reduced experiences with reading books to children. These hedonic drawbacks certainly alter the relationships consumers have with books as parts of their self-concepts and extended selves, such that these relationships are weaker in some aspects with e-books (p. 448).

In other words the functional advantages of e-books are not strong enough to supplant the hedonic benefits of printed books. Printed books offer benefits that cannot be matched by current e-book technology. Ketron and Naletelich (2016) concluded that the implications for e-book designers, publishers etc. are that significant innovations are needed to overcome the difficulty of quickly navigating the pages of an e-book, which reinforces the use of printed books for reference materials and books with maps, diagrams and intricate plot and character details.

In contrast to intention to adopt studies Antón et al. (2017) studied post-adoption behaviour. Claiming that previous studies have focussed on cognitive and rational motives for adoption, this study attempted to explore emotional motives such as pleasure, enjoyment, playfulness and entertainment. Using the starting point that reading is a source of pleasure, Antón et al. (2017) speculated that e-readers have the ability to enhance or diminish that pleasure. Further, adopters of e-book readers will use the device as long as it offers at least the same pleasure as a book in the conventional paper format. Finally, moderating effects might include attachment to paper books which acts to undermine intention to use, and involvement with new ICTs (information and communication technologies) which acts to increase intention to use.

An online survey was conducted through social network groups, websites, and online forums dedicated to reading, bookshops, e-books, and new technologies to elicit the responses of 144 Spanish participants (Antón et al. 2017). The results indicate that:

> The real use of e-book readers is related to their ability to provide a pleasant experience, similar to the gratifying experience afforded by paper books, and enhanced by the other advantages this technology affords. The pleasure felt when using this technology is influenced by the perception of the e-reader's relative advantage compared to paper books and the compatibility with the

individual's beliefs, said influences being shaped by the consumer's

involvement with new ICTs (Antón et al. 2017, p. 228).

It appears that reading in the traditional format is a hard to change habit and users who are more attached to paper books resist the change even though if they have an e-book reader device. Further, in the current context in which the e-reader competes with other technologies for reading (mainly paper books, but also with other devices such as tablets or smartphones), merely owning an e-reader does not imply it will be used and that paper books will be given up. These findings suggest there is a mismatch between determinants of intention to adopt e-readers and the factors that explain actual use (Antón et al. 2017). Like a number of other authors, Antón et al. (2017) note that both printed books and e-books have unique attributes and may serve distinct functions to meet heterogeneous reading needs, needs which may vary due to individual situational factors (p. 230). Antón et al. (2017) conclude that the lesson for e-reader designers and marketing managers is that their focus should be not on extra features but on the essential features that add value during the act of reading which undoubtedly make the whole experience more pleasurable.

Finally, Helm, Ligon, Stovall Van Riper (2018) argued that digital products do not elicit the same psychological signals of ownership or influence self-identity in the same way material objects do. Consequently, people may not like e-books because they fail to meet important secondary needs. To explore these assertions Helm et al. (2018) conducted focus groups with four generational categories (Baby Boomers, Generation X, and two Millennial groups (college students and post-college young adults)) who were recruited based on their usage of digital technologies and e-books. The number of participants was relatively small (31), with the overwhelming majority identifying as female (26). Helm et al.'s (2018) analysis of the focus groups discussions identified six main themes about digital ownership. Firstly, a constricted sense of ownership limits the digital book usage experience. Secondly, limited control over

digital books hinders social exchange and bonding. Thirdly, digital books preclude development of attachment, a sense of self, and belonging. Fourthly, a minimalist lifestyle encourages a preference for digital books. Fifthly, preference for value-in-use encourages e-book usage. (Benefits derived from use rather than ownership influence usage.) Finally, in the book realm, the generational divide is tenuous.

With regard to the final theme pertaining to the generational divide, Helm et al. (2018) note that media sources portray this age group (Millennials) as technologically savvy with digital experiences embedded into many aspects of their lives. Further suggestions have been made that 'to those who have grown up in the digital age, physical copies and individual ownership are less important'. However, Helm et al. (2018) found that overall attitudes toward e-books were more negative than expected amongst the youngest age group. In contrast, e-book adoption was more widespread in older age groups largely due to the physical advantages in the e-book reading experience such as being able to increase font size. Interestingly, regardless of age, no participant was comfortable with the idea of a wholly digital reading experience as almost everyone expressed strong attachments to physical books in certain circumstances and contexts (Helm et al. 2018, p. 184). The resultant conclusion is that consumers' needs are currently only partially met in the digital realm.

Helm et al. (2018) propose two oppositional marketing implications for the electronic marketplace, namely *emulation* and *emancipation*. Emulation involves narrowing the gap between digital and material consumption experiences, that is, making the experience of reading e-books as similar to that of reading print books as possible. Conversely, emancipation involves making the digital experience uniquely different from the material experience. With e-books this could be achieved through the introduction of novel value components such as recommendations or dictionary feature. Alternately, Helm et al. (2018) suggest framing digital

consumption as a service rather than ownership, to enable consumers to recognise the limits imposed within the digital sphere.

Taken together, these seven studies suggest that individuals choose to use and not use both e-books and print books for a variety of reasons. However, an overarching reason for readers choosing print over digital books is that e-books are not quite the product they want (Ketron & Naletelich 2016; Antón et al. 2017; Helm et al. 2018). This sentiment has also been captured in the popular media. In a recent interview, Arnaud Nourre, chief executive of Hachette Livre,[1] is quoted as saying 'It's the limit of the e-book format. The e-book is a stupid product. It is exactly the same as print, except it's electronic. There is no creativity, no enhancement, no real digital experience' (Flood 2018, n.p.). Nourre is further quoted as saying that he expects the product (e-books) to see no further growth, that the recent plateau or rather slight decline in sales apparent in recent years in UK and US markets will irreversibly continue (Flood 2018). This attitude has been expressed by other bloggers, journalists, and technical writers (Runcie 2017; Ferrer 2018; Wilber 2018). Within the mass media, there is a distinct impression that e-books have failed to meet the expectations of publishers, authors and perhaps most importantly readers (Mod 2018).

The research cited in this section largely explores how adults make decisions about the adoption and use of e-books and e-reader technology (Gall 2005; Girard 2014; Ketron & Naletelich 2016; Antón et al. 2017) and highlights the gap in the scholarship regarding how adolescents choose and use e-books.

Cultural Studies

The other field of theory and research critical to this research project is cultural studies. Cultural studies has a rich and varied history. It has been loosely described as the alchemic process of

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[1] Hachette Livre is one of the world's largest publishers.

producing useful knowledge about the broad domain of human culture (Nelson, Treichler & Grossberg 1992). More concretely, cultural studies is concerned with the analysis of mass, public, dominant, popular or mainstream culture (Franklin 2010). After initial teething problems and growing pains, cultural studies has emerged as a discipline with recognised methodologies, ways of constructing knowledge and the capacity for critical reflection (Storey 2010).

Reading studies, reception/audience studies, the study of everyday objects, and publishing studies sit within the field of cultural studies. As an expression of cultural and reception studies, the study of reading practices or reading theory examines how individuals and groups encounter and experience texts and consequently construct meaning about the texts, themselves and their wider circumstances (Bennett 1995). However, Skjedingstad and Rothbauer (2016) highlight the challenges of examining this encounter:

> Targeting the experience of reading, however, is not easy. To experience and to read are both highly complex phenomena that involve body, sense, and affect; at the same time, they entail cognitive processes taking place in certain historical and geographical settings (p. 1).

Historically, reading theory has had two focuses (Bennett 1995). Firstly, a recognition that there is no singular definition of reader, readers are historically or socially constructed. Therefore, any analysis of readers and reading requires consideration of social, economic, gender and ethnic factors (Bennett 1995). Secondly, a recognition that not only are readers different from one another, but that any individual reader is multiple, and that any reading is determined by difference (Bennett 1995, p. 4). That is, that each time a 'reader' encounters a text, even the same text, the combination of their experience, identity, and influences can result in a different 'reading' of the text. Whilst this research project is not explicitly interested in adolescents'

'reading' of certain texts, it is interested in how their experiences, their identity, and the influences of their situation impact on their format choice (i.e. e-book v. print book).

Long (1986) conducted a study of four women's reading groups or book clubs active in America in the late 1980s. By attending and recording the sessions of these reading groups, Long (1986) gathered information about the groups' book selections, and their discussions and interpretations of the books they read. Based on her observations, Long (1986) explored the cultural influences on the women's book choices and their discussions, their resultant interactions with cultural authorities, and how the women's social situation informed their cultural participation. For example, Long (1986) notes that:

> The book choices reading groups make show how heavily they depend on institutions and trends both within and outside the literary world to decide what to read, but also show women selectively choosing from the range of available books and topics for discussion (p. 597).

In other words, the women's book choices and discussions were guided by mechanisms of the cultural elite such as book reviews. However, the women were also reactive to or distanced from these mechanisms by the expression of personal choice (Long 1986).

Long's (1986) study built on the work of Radway (1984), Shudson (1984) and Tompkins (1986) which had begun to augment the understanding of cultural products by examining their production and especially their reception, considered in its broadest and most concrete terms (Long 1986, p. 594). With regard to this research project, Long's (1986) study of reading groups highlights the ways in which groups, including groups of adolescents, can respond to cultural expectations and create culture around reading, the use of digital devices and format preferences etc. According to Storey (2010), culture is not something essential, embodied in particular 'texts' (that is, any commodity, object or event that can be made to signify), it is the practices

and processes of making meanings with and from the 'texts' we encounter in our everyday lives (p. 3).

In *A Short History of Cultural Studies*, Hartley (2002) charts the evolution of cultural studies and notes that 'cultural studies are the study of everyday life in modern, urban, and suburban socieities' (p. 121). When examining everyday life, people were viewed as agents who struggled with ideas and images produced for them, with amenities designed for them, and with corporations whose success depended on their own – or their children's – active collusion (Hartley 2002). This idea challenged the notion of passive audiences who were the recipients of culture and led to the emergence of an active audience who engaged in making meaning. This shift signals the emergence of reception studies.

Based in Cultural Studies and borrowing from Literary Studies, Reception Studies is concerned with an individual's report of their reception of cultural content (books, television series, works of art etc.) (Machor & Goldstein 2001). Further, the meaning of a text is not inherent within the text itself but is created in the interplay of the text and the reader. According to Machor and Goldstein (2001) Hans-Georg Gadamer (1979), Wolfgang Iser (1978), and Hans Robert Jauss (1982) are considered the forefathers of reception theory in literature studies. According to Storey (2017), Iser's (1978) focus was on the making of meaning, in particular the aforementioned interplay of text and reader. Jauss (1982) took this a step further situating both the text and the reader and their 'meaning making' attempts in their broader historical contexts (Storey 2017). Other significant contributors to the development of reception theory include Stanley Fish, Tony Bennett and Janet Woollacott, and Janice Radway (Storey 2010). According to Storey (2010), Fish (1982) is responsible for the consideration of a 'literary community' that gives rise to interpretative communities. Interpretative communities are responsible for providing specific contexts for operating as a reader; that is the group/s we identify with instruct

us in how to interpret what we read and further how to construct meaning about what we read (Storey 2010).

Reception studies have developed a rich history and content, prompting academics to explore not only the author's intention, but also the reader's reactions; the text's structures or rhetoric; as well as the authors', readers' and audiences' sexuality, gender, race or nationality (Goldstein & Machor 2008). Indeed, reception theory has moved beyond literature studies to incorporate art, television, movies, theatre productions, and other cultural artefacts (Goldstein & Machor 2008).

In his chapter 'Readers and Reading' Buckridge (2006) provides a conceptualisation of reading within the Australian context. Reading is seen in three ways, firstly as 'reading matter' that is what people read, secondly as 'an activity' that is how people read, and finally as 'a social institution' that is why people read (Buckridge 2006). Buckridge (2006) elaborates on this final point, defining reading as a social institution as a more or less coherent set of relationships, beliefs, and practices, organised around a specific social function or functions (p. 347). Each of these ways of viewing reading are potentially the focus of reading practice studies. Whilst this research project is not conducting reading studies research in the traditional sense, it is interested in examining adolescent reader's attitudes, perceptions, and motivations, both at an individual and a group level, with regard to what e-books they choose to read, how they choose to read e-books and how they make sense of the experience of reading e-books.

The current research project is tangentially linked to Couldry's (2000) suggestions for the future text-related research, in particular, the textual environment. A need to study the various ways in which people use, or negotiate, the vast textual resources around them is one of the research concerns associated with the textual environment. E-books and e-readers are some of the tools individuals and groups use to help navigate textual resources and are thus worth researching.

Publishing studies is concerned with the culture, practice and business of publishing (Baker et al. 2019). Of particular interest to this publishing studies project is the examination of the e-book, a cultural artefact. Cultural artefact is the term used for anything created by humans which gives information about the culture of its creator and users (*Cultural artifact* 2020).

Finally, *access* is a recurrent theme in cultural studies, particularly within the study of reading practices and textual analysis (Couldry 2000). Who has access, and how access and exclusion are determined by cultural structures is of particular interest (Couldry 2000). Couldry (2000) mentions 'passive' processes, which affect what texts are available to particular people. These range from material exclusion (economic, educational) to other more subtle forms of exclusion (like people's sense of what is 'appropriate' for them, their taste), which by endless repetition have come to have an almost material force (Couldry 2000, p. 84). In other words, individuals develop a sense of what cultural artefacts they have the right to access through the overt and hidden influences of cultural structures, such as product designers, the publishing industry, and cultural authorities.

Access is of interest to this research project in a number of guises. Firstly, whilst e-readers and other devices used to access e-books are typically considered luxury items thus restricting access (MacFadyen 2011), conversely, they permit access to a multitude of free or low-cost texts thus facilitating access (Lebert 2009). Secondly, many e-books receive online ratings or reviews, what 'passive' processes are at work through these ratings and reviews influencing readers and their access of e-books? Thirdly, the publishing industry act as 'gatekeepers' influencing which books are published as e-books thus influencing access (Carreiro 2010). However, one of the easiest ways to self-publish is through the production of an e-book which may disrupt the publishing industry's influence over access (Dalton 2016).

Summary

Reading research tends to focus on the links between adolescent reading and academic achievement (Manuel & Carter 2015). Peripheral attention is given to the social role of reading as a means of encouraging reading (Birr Moje et al. 2008). In contrast, the focus of cultural studies tends to be piecemeal, focussing separately on cultural artefacts and cultural groups. This research project seeks to draw together these two disparate yet similar approaches: examination of a cultural artefact and examination of a specific cultural group, to explore the experience of adolescents' interaction with e-books. In order to fill a gap in the scholarship, it is anticipated that by combining these two approaches to create a theoretical and methodological bricolage, this research project will be able to answer the question regarding what factors influence an adolescents' decision-making when choosing an e-book over a print book.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Many questions remain unanswered regarding how users feel about e-books, their expectations in different contexts, and aspects that may facilitate engagement (Shin 2011, p. 261).

Observations about e-books made by industry professionals, commentators, and consumers, prompt questions about how readers experience e-books. Informed by these observations and guided by research, this publishing studies project informed by cultural studies seeks to investigate reading practices. More specifically, using a mixed-methods approach, this project seeks to address the question:

What factors influence adolescent decision-making when choosing an e-book over a print book?

This study utilised a concurrent mixed-methods approach to explore the factors that influence adolescent decision-making when choosing an e-book over a print book. Further, this study used the research method illustrated in Figure 1 to develop, administer, and evaluate an online survey. The online survey was used to gather qualitative data regarding topics such as reading habits, device access, library use, and format preferences. Using the same online survey, quantitative data was gathered regarding adolescents' opinions about best device and best application to access e-books, experiences of difficulties borrowing e-books from libraries, and how certain factors influence their decision-making when choosing between a print book and an e-book.

A mixed-methods approach combines elements of qualitative and quantitative research approaches for the broad purposes of breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration (Schoonenboom & Johnson 2017). In a review of the reasons given by researchers for conducting mixed-methods research Bryman (2006) identifies 18 distinct motivations. Most

relevant to this research project are the reasons: completeness, credibility, and illustration. Using a mixed-methods approach ensures a more thorough overview of the area of interest, enhanced integrity of the findings, and greater description of the area of interest.

When exploring potential approaches, a purely quantitative survey, in-depth interviews, and focus groups were all considered for this research project. However, this research method was chosen over other competing methods in order to collect data with the greatest breadth and depth as a concession to resource constraints (e.g. time) and constraints created by the COVID-19 pandemic.

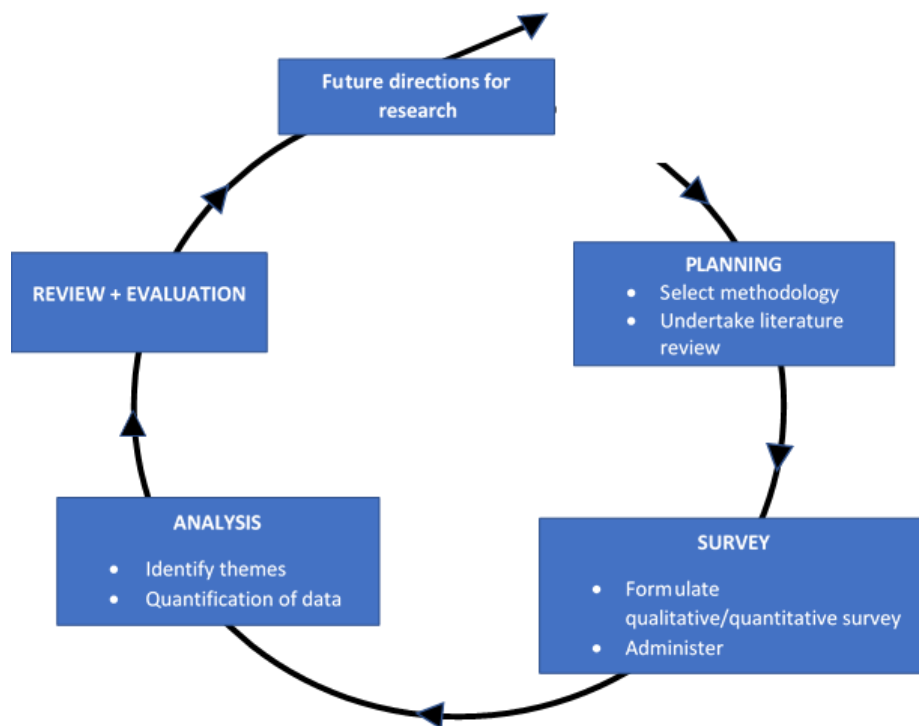*Figure 1 Research Method*

An online survey was chosen over more a traditional pen and paper survey because it was judged to be the most appropriate for the population being surveyed. Typically when conducting online surveys concerns are raised about whether all members of the population being sampled possess the necessary digital literacy skills to engage in the survey (Evans & Mathur 2018; Ball

2019). In the case of this research project, participants with a high level of digital literacy, in particular experience using e-books were the target population. According to Zhang and Kudva (2014) being an Internet user was a significantly positive predictor of e-book use. Further, in their review of reading research published since 2005, Rutherford et al. (2019) highlight the benefits of survey designs for gathering generalisable data. However, they also allude to the challenges of conducting research that accurately captures and portrays adolescent reading (Rutherford et al. 2019). Consequently, an online survey was judged to be the most appropriate method.

Survey techniques are often used to describe and explore human behaviour (Ponto 2015, cited in Ball 2019). Evans and Mathur (2018) outline the advantages and disadvantages of online surveys; the advantages include the global reach of the internet, flexibility of survey design, speed and timeliness of design and administration, and ease of data entry and analysis. Ball (2019) notes a further advantage, cost, there are minimal costs involved as delivery of the survey questions and capture of the responses is automated, reducing the need for paid researchers to ask face-to-face questions or enter data, reducing data entry errors (np). In comparison, the disadvantages of online surveys include unclear answering instructions, low response rates compared to other survey methods, and issues related to sampling (Evans & Mathur 2018). Elaborating on unclear answering instructions Ball (2019) also notes that the lack of an interviewer can be a disadvantage in online surveys as open-ended question responses cannot be explored with immediate follow-up questions and there is no scope for respondents to seek clarification of unfamiliar or ambiguous terms (np).

As noted earlier, a concern for other online surveys are respondents who lack internet access, online experience/expertise, and respondents who are nonliterate or illiterate (Evans & Mathur 2018; Ball 2019). Typically difficulties accessing these populations skews the data gathered through online surveys. However, regarding this research project, the sampling issues described

in the literature are actually an advantage. This research project is only seeking to survey respondents who have internet access and are digitally and traditionally literate. Consequently, an online survey was also judged to be the best method for accessing and assessing the factors that influence adolescent decision-making when choosing between e-books and print books.

Survey Formation

To explore the factors that influence decision-making, participants were asked to reflect and comment on the influence of factors such as cost, accessibility, aesthetics (i.e. cover art or illustrations), reading skills (i.e. speed, comprehension, and retention), concealment, *shareability*, tactile considerations (such as smell and feel), environmental impact, and functionality (i.e. *searchability*, dictionary or glossary functions etc.).

In line with more traditional reading practice studies, examination of the factors of functionality, accessibility, and shareability will explore issues of access and their links to cultural authority and power. Functionality refers to ease or otherwise of navigating and reading the text of e-books (Ketron & Naletelich 2016). Accessibility refers to ease or difficulty of accessing e-books in comparison to print books (Rutherford et al. 2017). Questions about this feature will explore the impact of differing availability of e-books across various platforms. Shareability refers to a reader's ability to share e-books with others, for example, through lending or gift giving (Manley & Holley 2012).

To explore the product of e-books in a more contemporary fashion, the factors of aesthetics, tactile considerations, cost, environmental impact, and cognitive experience (reading skills) will be investigated. Aesthetics refers to the cover art and/or illustrations of an e-book or print book. Tactile considerations refer to the physical sensations such as touch, and smell associated with holding an e-reader or print book. Cognitive experience or reading skills refer to how cognitively effortful reading e-books is in comparison to reading print books and readers

perceptions of their speed, comprehension, and retention (Mangen & Van der Weel 2016). Research comparing performance on comprehension or memory tests following e-reading or print reading suggest that whilst results are comparable, people reading print feel that have learnt more or performed better (Baron, Calixte & Havewala 2017).

The topics under consideration in this survey have been informed by modern commentators and consultation with an industry professional, Dr. D Baker. The survey has been designed with open ended questions to maximise participants' responses and is comprised of 36 items (Appendix 1).

The online survey draws heavily on the reading research referenced earlier in this paper. For example, Birr Moje et al.'s (2008) findings about the social role of reading in peer networks prompted this researcher to consider whether peer's device preferences might be a potential influence an adolescents' choice of an e-book or a print book. Thus, the survey included questions such as,

- Are your friends 'readers'? and

- Do your friends prefer e-books or print books?

In addition, research in the fields of library studies, behavioural studies, information and communication technologies, and user experience (UX) informed the development of the survey tool. For example, the survey included questions such as

- How hard or easy is it to borrow e-books from your library (community/school)? and

- If you can't borrow a book that you want from the library does that encourage you to purchase a copy?

The generation of these questions was informed by research conducted by the Pew Research Centre into libraries, patrons and e-books (Zickuhr, Rainie, Purcell, Madden Brenner 2012).

Zickuhr et al. (2012) sought to answer questions about library patrons e-book use. For example, Zickuhr et al. (2012) asked the question when an individual wants to read a book in print, or as an e-book or listen to it as an audiobook do they prefer to buy their own copy or borrow it from the library or another source.

Ethics Approval

Ethics approval was sought from the University of Southern Queensland's Human Ethics Review (USQ HREC) prior to the commencement of the online survey. When considering ethical concerns, the age of the participants and the potential revelation of illegal activity, that is digital piracy, were highlighted as areas that need to be considered. Due to a number of factors including the de-identified nature of the data, the project was assessed as low-risk by USQ HREC and received ethics approval (H20REA162).

In line with the requirements of the USQ HREC, participants were provided with a Pariticpant Information Sheet (Appendix 2). Information was provided about the purpose of the research, participation requirements, and participants rights, including the right to withdraw from the survey at any time without penalty, and their right to be informed of the results of the research. Once participants had read the Pariticipant Information Sheet informed consent was sought from all participants. If participants did not consent to participate, by ticking a box, they were exited from the survey and thanked for their time. Once consenting participants had completed the survey they were thanked for their time.

Survey and Participants

The online survey was conducted between 3 September – 28 October 2020 to gather three types of data from participants. These three types of data are non-identifiable autobiographical information, reading data such as amount of reading, genre preferences, and experience with

e-reading and e-books, and questions regarding factors that influence decision-making when choosing between e-books and print books.

Participants were adolescents aged 12-18 years. They were recruited via teacher appeals at two private schools (St John's Anglican College and The Springfield Anglican College), via an advertisement in a state school newsletter, and through appeals on Facebook. It should be noted that in an ideal world, participants would be recruited from a wider variety of sources. However, due to restrictions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, securing access to schools for purposes of research was extremely difficult. Further, due to time restrictions other attempts to sample the population i.e. through social media platforms such as Goodreads and Wattpad were unsuccessful.

Proposed Data Analysis

Cultural studies inflected publishing studies, form part of the theoretical and methodological bricolage that has informed the development of the online survey. According to Winter (2013) cultural studies often uses a range of theories, perspectives and methods that are combined in order to reach a particular goal. It is concerned with analysis of lived experiences, social practices, and cultural representations, which are considered in their network-like or intertextual links, from the viewpoints of power, difference, and human agency (Winter 2013, np). Given that this project explored the lived experiences and social practices of adolescents using e-books and print books, the inclusion of a cultural studies approach was deemed relevant. Further, the central characteristic of qualitative data analysis in the context of cultural studies is the theoretical and empirical examination of the relationship between experiences, practices, and cultural texts (or in this case, cultural artefacts) in a specific context (Winter 2013, np).

Much of the cited research utilises multiple choice; closed questions, that is questions that require yes or no answers; or Likert scales, that is rating scales that ask participants to indicate

their level of agreement with a statement (strongly agree to strongly disagree) (Rutherford et al. 2017). In contrast, the online survey tool utilised for this research project employed open questions in order to prompt participants to reflect on their use of the e-book as a cultural artefact and thus generate responses that can be analysed for thematic content. Thus, the central role of cultural studies was to inform the analysis and interpretation of the resultant data.

The participant responses to open-ended questions were analysed for themes. Inductive coding was used to convert the raw qualitative data into more useful quantitative data. According to Chandra and Shang (2019) the inductive coding approach generally relies on inductive reasoning, in which important themes, topics or models emerge from the raw data through repeated examination and comparison. The primary reason for using the inductive coding approach is to analyse data in areas with *limited knowledge* (e.g., an emerging field of research, a new aspect or dimension of interest within an existing field, or a knowledge gap in a concept, approach, or phenomenon) (Chandra & Shang 2019). For the question regarding factors that influence decision-making when choosing between e-books and print books, responses to the open question were coded 'preference for print', 'preference for e-books', and 'no clear preference'. After this initial stage of coding, sub themes were identified such as 'prefer print for display purposes' or 'prefer e-books for ease of concealment'.

Strengths and Limitations

When considering potential limitations of this research project, the biggest concerns were, firstly, recruiting participants with sufficient experience in e-reading, e-books, and reading for pleasure who were able to reflect on their experience and provide interpretable data. A second concern was the ability to recruit a large enough sample to generate data that can be generalised. Of further concern are the errors typically associated with online surveys. Firstly, measurement error, that is the survey not measuring what it is designed to measure (Toepoel 2016).

Measurement error is tyically addressed through pre-test of the survey. This was achieved by reviewing the survey with an industry professional. Secondly, item non-response error where respondents fail to complete an individual item within the survey (Toepoel 2016). Item non-response typically only affects results when it is not random (Toepoel 2016), that is when a subgroup within the sample fail to answer a question as a result of their difference from the larger sample. Finally, item non-response can occur as a result of unclear instructions (Evans & Mathur 2018). Potential occurences of item non-response error were be monitored.

In contrast, the potential strengths of this project include the online survey that comprehensively covers factors identified in the literature and the inclusion of publishing studies as guiding theoretical model for exploring this phenomenon.

Summary

As a start to filling a gap in the academic scholarship, this publishing studies project sought to investigate adolescents' use of the e-book as a cultural artefact, in particular what influences their decision-making when choosing an e-book over a print book. Attention was given to the meaning that readers make, not so much of the texts but of their experience of e-reading. A mixed-methods online survey was conducted to explore factors that influence adolescent decision making when choosing e-books over print books. The online survey focussed on several features of e-books and e-reading identified by modern commentators and an industry professional. Space was given for respondents to speak their own truth about their attitudes, motivations, and intentions with regards to e-books and e-reading. The information gathered was analysed for themes that reveal what influences adolescent decision-making when choosing an e-book over a print book, the results of which are presented in the following chapter.

Chapter 4: Results

Fifty-nine adolescents aged between 12-18 years completed the online survey. The responses of three participants were removed due to aberrant answers[2]. Eight participants provided some aberrant answers and some useful answers, the useful responses were included in the analysis. For these participants their aberrant answers were typically a failure to answer. In contrast, their useful reponses indicated some familiarity with and use of e-books, thus their responses were retained. In total, the responses of 56 adolescents were included in the final data set. Participants were allocated a subject code to preserve ther anonymity. The subject code consisted of Subject Respondent number, Gender, and Age for example, SR2_F_16.

Participant Characteristics

Figure 2 details the age and gender breakdown of the participants. There were 26 female respondents, 27 male respondents, and three respondents who did not specify their gender (referred to as 'otherwise gendered'). Participants' ages ranged from 12-18 years with a mean age of 14.3 years. Participants indicated that they were currently enrolled in grades 7-12 at both government (7.1%) and non-government schools (89.3%), as shown in Figure 3.
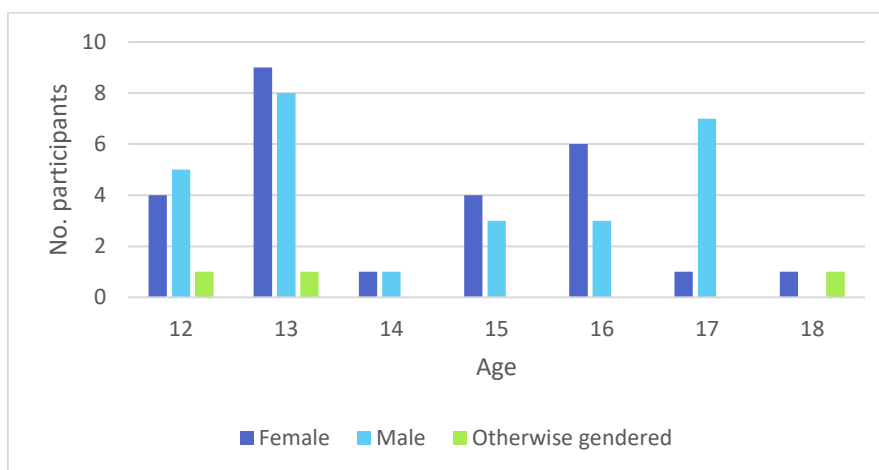
Figure 2 Participants' Age and Gender

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[2] Aberrant answers included failure to answer the majority of questions and repeated use of responses such as 'don't know'.
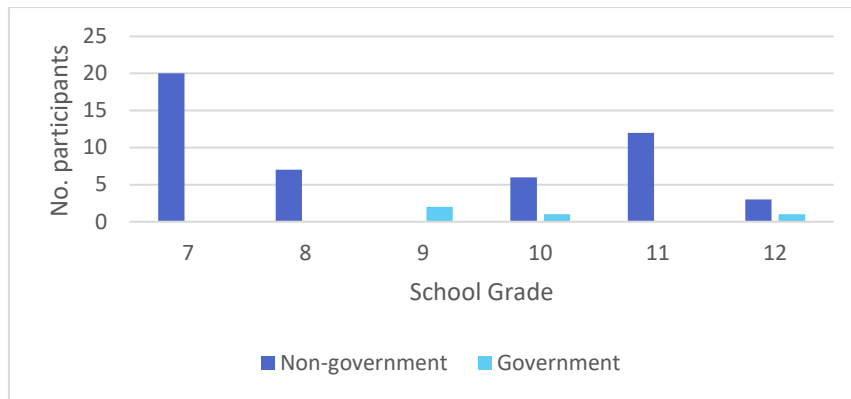
Figure 3 Participants' School Grade & School Type (Non-government/Government)

Reading Data

Reading Habits

More than half of the particpants (55.4%) indicated that they read for pleasure (RFP), that is long-form reading (i.e. novels, graphic novels etc.) that was not completed for school or work, 5-7 days per week (see Figure 4). With regard to average number of hours per day spent reading for pleasure, the majority of pariticipants (62.5%) indicated that they read for 1-2 hours. In contrast, less than a third read for 2-5 hours (30.4%), and a minority read for 5+ hours per day (7.1%). Taken together, the results suggest those who read more often also read for longer.
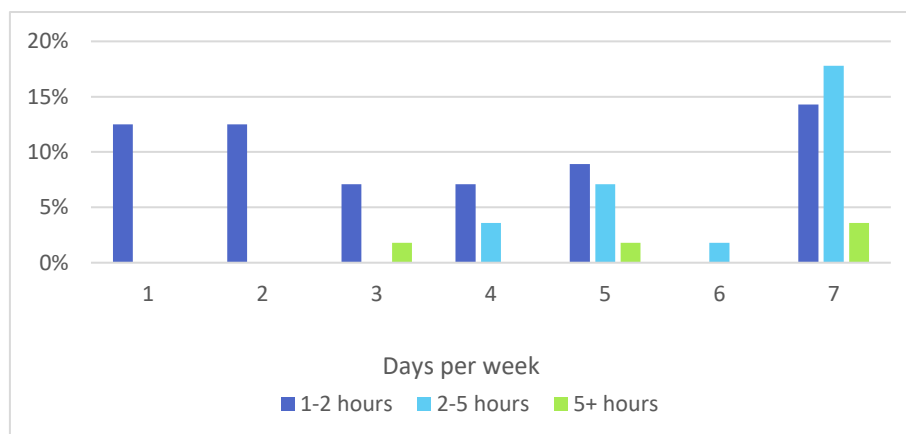

Figure 4 Number of days per week and average number of hours per day spent RFP
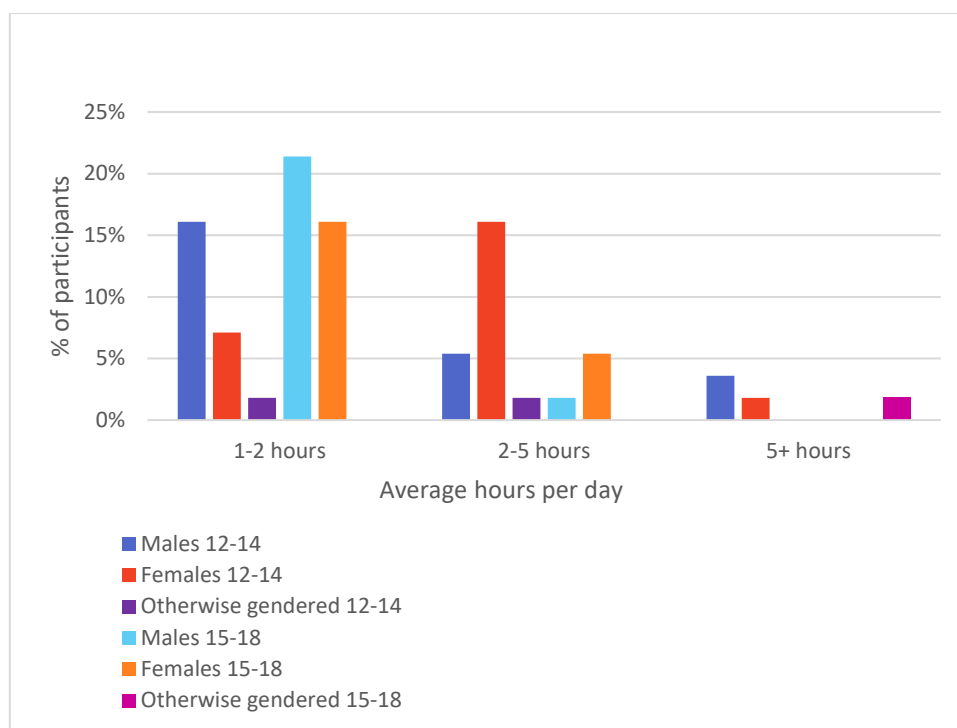
Figure 5 Average hours per day by Gender and Age spent RFP

In contrast to Nieuwenhuizen (2001) these results do not appear to suggest that the amount of time spent reading for pleasure decreases as adolescents age.

Reading Materials

When asked about favourite authors, books and series the 56 participants identified 93 authors they like, 55 book titles they have enjoyed, and 84 book series they like to read. These are detailed in Appendix 3. This finding is remarkable in light of recent findings about the rising incidence of aliteracy amongst adolescents (Rutherford et al. 2017). With the exception of the Harry Potter series and series by author Rick Riordan (i.e. Percy Jackson, Heroes of Olympus etc.) there was very little overlap between participant responses regarding favourite book series. Similarly with favourite authors, aside from J.K. Rowling who was identified as a favourite author by 19.6% of participants and Rick Riordan who was identified by 17.9% of participants, there was very little overlap in participant responses. The next most commonly identified authors were Derek Landy and Suzanne Collins (5.4%). Fourteen of the 55 book titles identified were part of book series further confirming the place of serialised fiction in adolescent reading

(Nilson 2015). Consistent with the findings of Birr Moje et al. (2008), roughly one-fifth of the book titles (21.8%) and book series (19.0%) had movie or TV tie-ins.

Genre Preferences

Action, fantasy and science fiction (sci-fi) are easily the most popular genres identified by 48.2%, 51.8%, and 37.5% of participants, respectively (see Figure 6 below). Responses indicated that adolescents read a wide range of genres including action, adventure, comedy, crime, drama, dystopian/post-apocalyptic, fan fiction, fantasy, historical fiction, horror, classic literature, mangas/manhuas, mystery, non-fiction, paranormal, romance, sci-fi, thriller, war, and young adult (not otherwise defined).
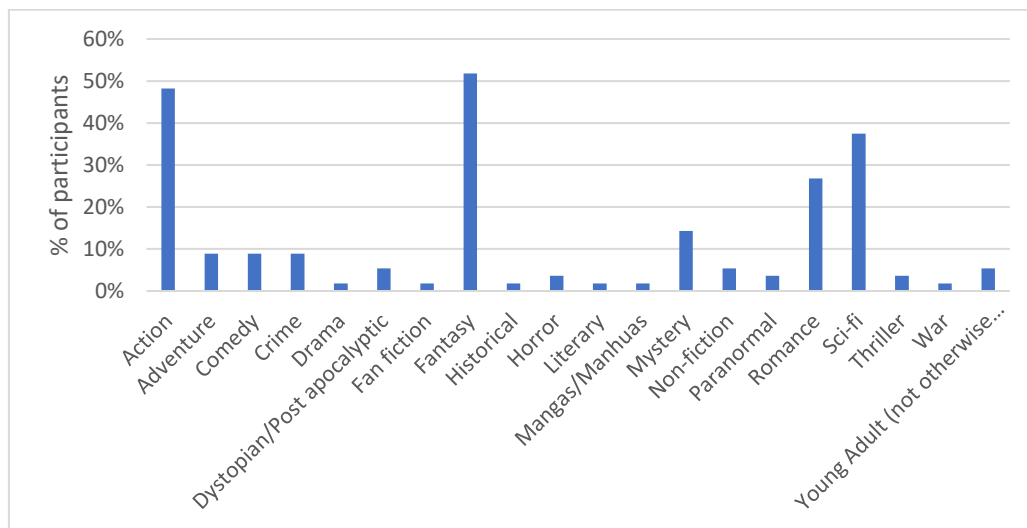
Figure 6 Participants' Genre Preferences

When looking at genre preferences by age or by gender (see Figure 7 and Figure 8 below) clear differences emerge. Female participants and older participants (15-18 years) indicate liking a wider range of genres.
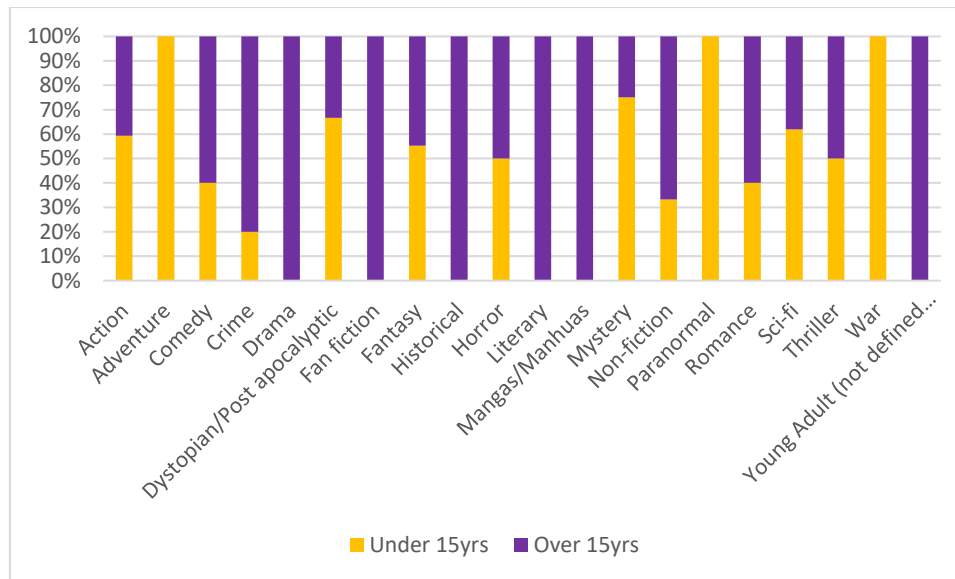
Figure 7 Genre Preference by Age
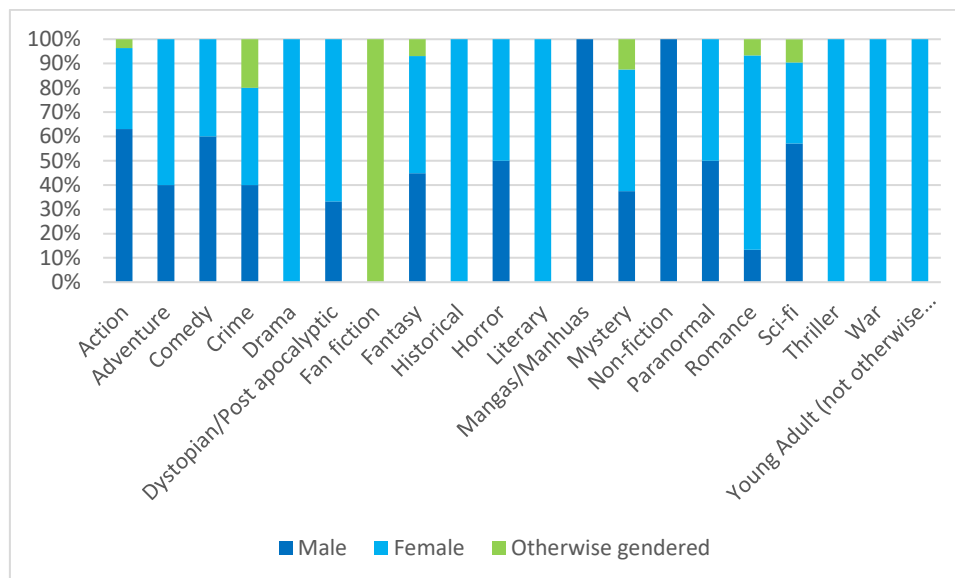
Figure 8 Genre Preference by Gender

All participants recruited for the survey had some familiarity with reading e-books. Similar to

the findings of Rainie et al. (2012) regarding individuals who read e-books, the participants in

this study appear to read more books, more frequently, and for a variety of purposes.

Accessing Reading Materials
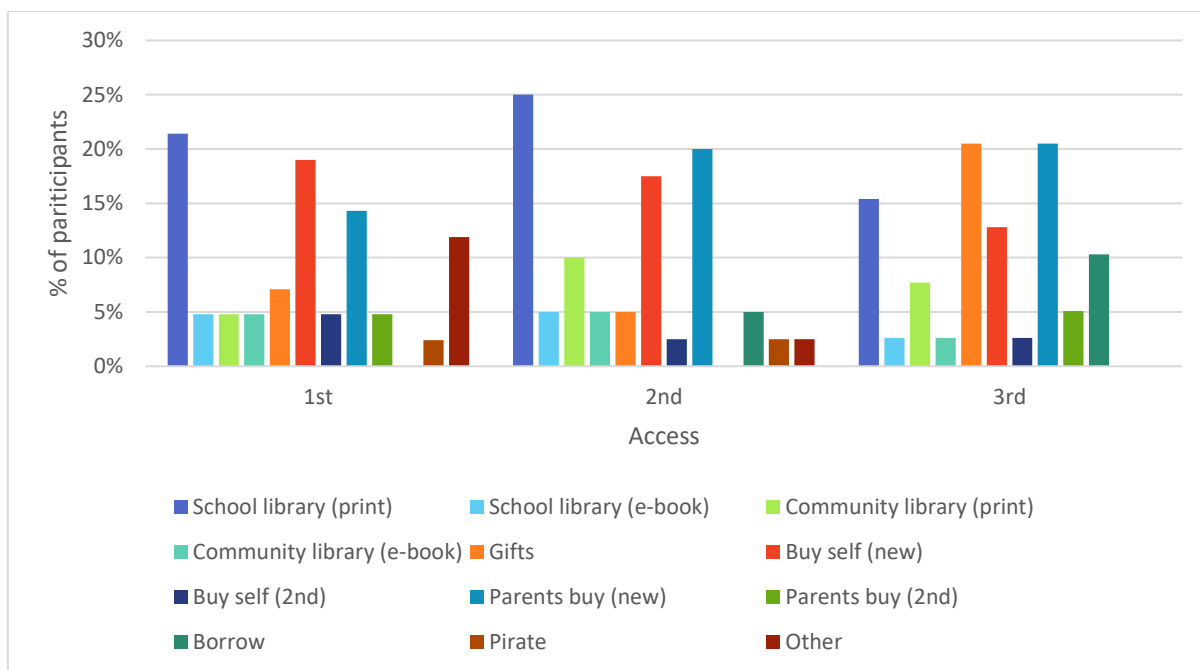
Figure 9 Top 3 Methods for Accessing Books

With regard to the question about how participants access books i.e. gifts, parents/carers buy new, community library (e-books) etc. this question was intended to evaluate all of the ways that adolescents access books. However, the inclusion of a second part to the question appeared to create confusion leading to an item non-response error. The second part of the question asked participants to number the top three ways that they accessed books. Most pariticipants only responded to the second part of the question. The data gathered is interesting because it shows that for most adolescents their school library is an important source of print books. Further, for the participants surveyed most of the books they access are bought for them new either by themselves or their parents. Figure 9 shows that within the first, second and third most common methods the top three methods of accessing books were:

	1st	2nd	3rd
1	School library (print)	School library (print)	Gifts and Parents/Carers buy (new)
2	Buy myself (new)	Parents/Carers buy (new)	School library (print)
3	Parents/Carers buy (new)	Buy myself (new)	Buy myself (new)

Table 1 Most Common Top 3 Methods for Accessing Reading Materials

The 'Other' methods for accessing books include free e-books (SR4_F_17), books we already had at home (SR58_M_13), and I know a website that finds free e books and e books on sale (SR51_M_12).

Cementing the importance of the school library is the fact that 44.6% of respondents use the library as the first place they look for recommendations about new books. Websites/Online was the next most common place to look for recommendations, followed by friends and bookshops. For this question respondents were asked to generate their response rather than ticking items on a list (see Table 2 below). Taken together, this data suggests that adolescents use a variety of sources for gathering information about new books to read, with 32.1% of participants (n = 18) spontaneously identifying that they utilise multiple sources when looking for recommendations.

Place	% of participants
Library	44.6%
Website/Online	33.9%
Friends	25%
Bookshop	25%
Other (e.g. YouTube, ads, movie/TV tie-ins)	7.1%
Family Members	5.4%
No answer	1.8%

Table 2 Source of Recommendations

Borrowing e-books

When asked about whether they borrow e-books from their school library or community library over half (55.4%) of participants indicated that they do not borrow e-books from their school or community library (see Figure 10). A much smaller portion indicate that they do borrow e-books from their school library (17.8%) or community library (19.6%).
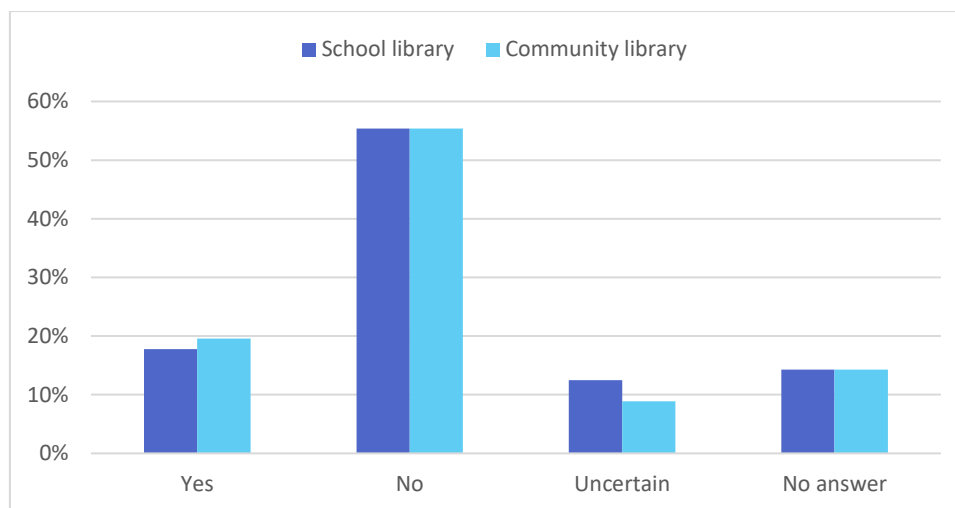
Figure 10 Borrowing E-books

When meeting with the Head of English and the Librarian from St John's Anglican College (SJAC) to discuss the administration of the survey, the Librarian revealed that the school library does not hold e-books in their collection. She explained that this choice was made to promote the value of relaxing reading and immersion in relaxing reading. Further, it is thought that the absence of e-books has the added benefit of reducing students' screen time and/or giving students a break from working on screens (Maullin & Podoliak 2020).

Students from SJAC constituted 76.8% (n = 43) of survey participants. Interestingly, eight participants who are students at St John's College indicated that they do borrow e-books from the school library. Consultation with the Librarian suggests that this may be accessing books for research via an external database and thus not the focus of this research project. However, it highlights the blurred boundaries that exist in the digital realm.

When asked about whether they have experienced difficulties borrowing or downloading e-books from their school or community library, a small number (n = 7) reported that they did. For example, SR2_F_16 explained that her difficulties include a lack of books at the school library. SR3_F_16 stated 'I don't typically borrow ebooks because I find the process difficult'. The majority (n = 37) indicated that they did not experience difficulties. However, it was unclear when participants indicated that they do not experience difficulty borrowing or

downloading e-books from their libraries whether they are indicating that they do not experience difficulties or that they do not bother to borrow e-books from these facilities. Without the constraints associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, results like these would have been followed up in interviews.

Overwhelmingly it would seem that participants will purchase print copies of books they are unable to obtain from community and school libraries (n = 33). This finding is consistent with the results of the Pew Center Research about libraries and borrowing cited earlier (Zickuhr et al. 2012). The reservations expressed regarding purchasing books seem to pertain to cost and potential buyer's remorse. For example, SR43_F_13 stated, 'I try all the possibilities before i buy a new book'.

Digital Devices
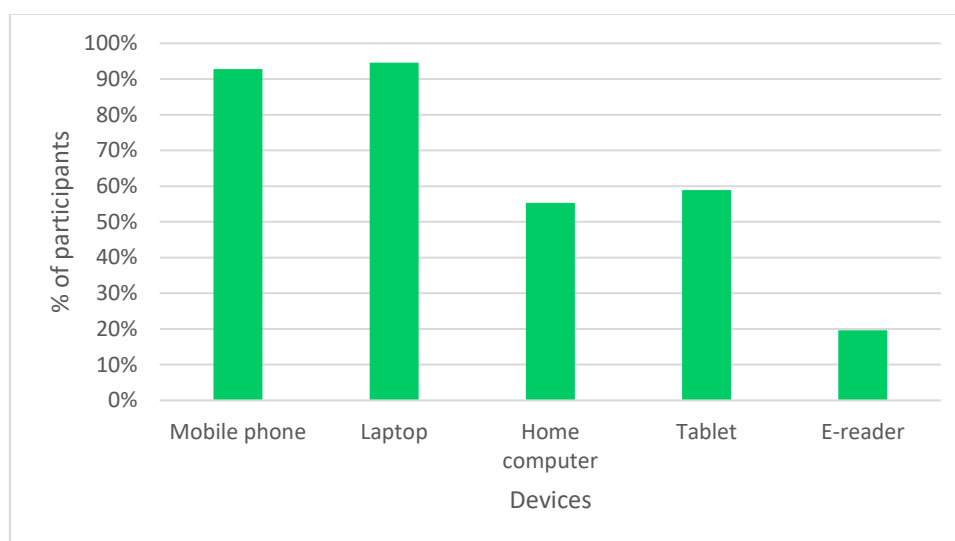
Figure 11 Participants' Device Access

Participants were asked to nominate the digital devices they can access. The results are presented above in Figure 11. Consistent with (Merga & Roni 2017), adolescents in this study had access to a large number of devices capable of e-reading. Only 3.6% of participants (n = 2) indicated having access to less than two devices. The vast majority of participants indicated they had access to two to four devices (92.8%) (see Table 3 below).

No. devices	% of pariticpants
1	3.6%
2	23.2%
3	26.8%
4	42.8%
5	3.6%

Table 3 Number of Devices Used to Read E-books

Participants were also asked which devices they owned. The results did not differ greatly from the results of the question about which devices they can access. Interestingly, participants seem to view devices they use regularly as being their possessions. During a discussion about digital literacy with the Head of English and Librarian from SJAC it was revealed that the school loans each student a laptop for academic use throughout the year (Maullin & Podoliak 2020). As stated previously, students from SJAC constituted 76.8% (n = 43) of participants, only four of these students (less than 10%) identified that they did not "own" the laptop they were using. This was one of a number of examples of blurred boundaries in the digital realm. In this case students appear to experience psychological ownership of the loaned laptops, that is feelings of possession that can arise even in the absence of legal ownership (Kirk & Swain 2018).

Friends

Given observations about the social role of reading for adolescents (Rutherford et al. 2017), participants were asked about whether their friends were readers and if so, how many (see Table 4 below). Not surprisingly, 82.1% of participants identified that yes, a few or most of their friends were readers.

Are your friends 'readers'?	% of participants
No, none	14.3%
Yes, a few	55.3%
Yes, most	26.8%
Yes, all	0.0%

No answer	3.6%

Table 4 Friends' Reader Status

A small portion of participants belong to an online community (17.8%) or a face-to-face group (7.1%) that discusses books. Two participants reported that their involvement in a group is largely informal, that is friends reading the same book and then commenting about it via a messenger or chat app.

E-reading Data

Device Choices

Figure 12 below shows the devices participants use for e-reading. The most popular device for e-reading is a mobile phone (39.3%), followed by laptop (32.1%), and tablet (28.6%). These findings are consistent with the earlier findings regarding device access, that is, adolescents read e-books on the devices they have the most access to (Loh & Sun 2018). Interestingly, 42.8% of participants read e-books on a single device, this contrasts with 25% and 10.7% of participants who read e-books on two or three devices respectively. Despite access to many devices capable of e-reading participants appear to prefer to use a single device for the task.
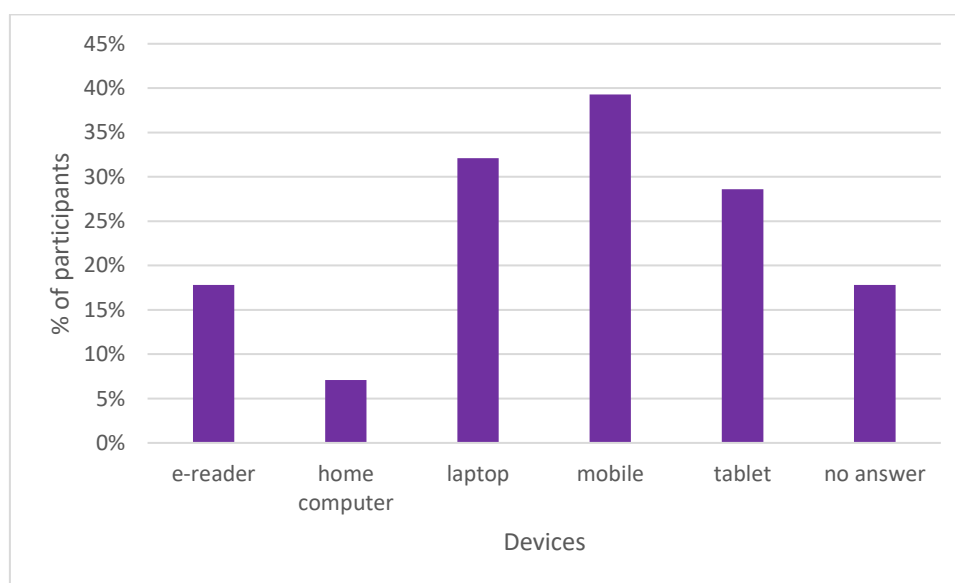
Figure 12 Device/s Used for E-reading
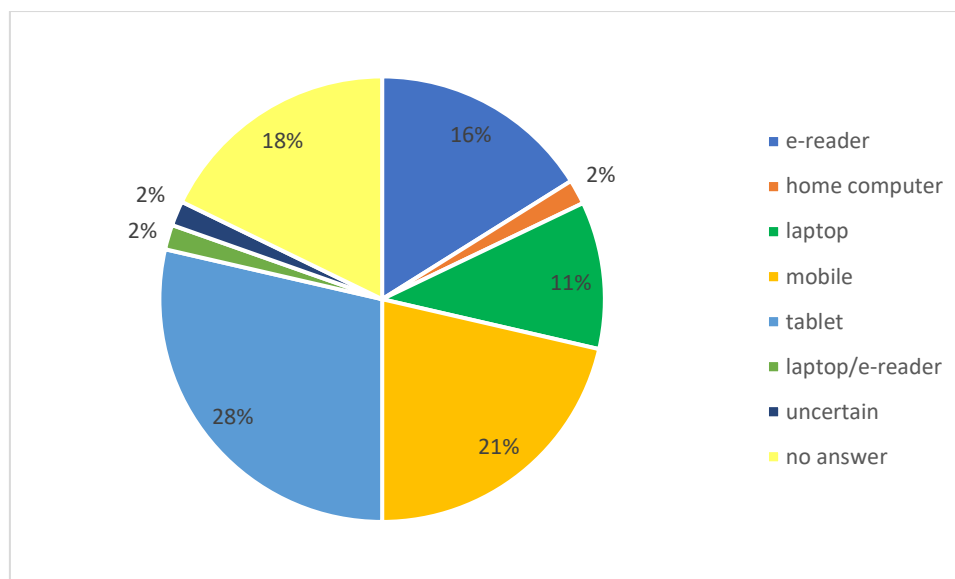
Figure 13 Device Recommended for E-reading

Participants were asked 'In your opinion which is the best device for reading e-books? Why?'. In response 28.6% of participants indicated that they believed a tablet was the best device for reading e-books. Mobile phone (21.4%), e-reader (16.1%), and laptop (10.7%) were identified as the next most useful devices for reading e-books (see Figure 13 above).

A number of participants recommended using devices different to those that they personally used for example, Kindle. Portability, access, and convenience seem to be the determining factors guiding choice of a favoured device. For e-readers, participants recommended this device because it is purpose-built and offers fewer distractions. For example, SR7_M_15 responded: 'kindle, it's specifically made to read e-books and has less distractions than print copies'. For laptops, participants recommended this device because of its portability and screen size. For example, SR17_M_12 responded: 'laptop Because it is easy to take everywhere and it is not as hard to read unlike a small phone screen'. For tablets, participants recommended this device because the screen is larger than that of a mobile phone and it is smaller than a laptop. For example, SR26_M_16 responded: 'In my opinion, I think reading on my iPad mini is the best because it is small but is bigger than my phone so it is easier to read. It is still portable and I can take it anywhere'. Finally, for mobile phones, participants recommended this device for

reading e-books because it is an everyday device that is often close at hand. For example, SR24_F_15 responded: 'iPhone because I always have it nearby and it is the most accessible device, meaning there is more opportunity to read'.

Interestingly given the youth of the study population, eye strain and ease of reading are mentioned by a number of participants. However, this may be explained by the large amounts of time that this group are required to and choose to use devices for education and recreation purposes.

The question about device recommendations and the subsequent questions about applications (apps) used for e-reading and app recommendations had a moderate percentage of item non-response (17.8% and 19.6% respectively). Whilst participants were asked if they had ever read an e-book they were not asked how much experience they had reading e-books. It is possible that some respondents felt that they did not have sufficient experience to provide their opinions for these questions.

Application (App) Choices

Participants use a wide variety of apps to access e-books. The 45 participants who answered this question identified 65 apps they use to access e-books. The most commonly identified apps are listed in Table 5 below. From the responses gathered it is unclear whether participants' choice and use of apps is a matter of convenience or experimentation. For example, SR18_F_12 reports using Audible but when asked 'In your opinion which is the best app/s for accessing e-books? Why?' her reponse was 'I have not tried any other so I can not judge'. This raises the question, do adolescents simply settle on the first app they find that allows them access to the content they want or do they engage in a process of exploring which app/s best meet their needs? For future research it would be worthwhile to ask participants to list all apps that they have used and explore the reasons for continued use or disuse.

App	% of participants
Amazon Kindle	21.4%
Apple Books	7.1%
Google Play Books	14.3%
Kobo	3.6%
Overdrive	5.4%
Manga specific apps	10.7%
Wattpad	14.3%

Table 5 Application/s (app/s) Recommended for E-reading

An interesting finding is that five participants (8.9%) identify Audible as a used and/or preferred app for accessing e-books. Audible is an app specifically for listening to audiobooks. As stated previously, participants were provided with a definition of reading an e-book, namely, reading an e-book includes reading fiction and non-fiction, such as novels, short stories, graphic novels, information books etc. on an e-reader, mobile phone, laptop, or tablet. This definition appears to exclude listening to audiobooks. However, listening to audiobooks uses the same technology as e-reading. This may provide a further example of the blurring of boundaries in the digital realm.

Format Choices

Participants were asked which format they prefer to use for reading for pleasure. In addition, they were asked to indicate the format preference of their friends. These responses are displayed in Table 6 below. The majority of participants indicated that they and their friends preferred print books (51.8% and 60.7%, respectively). These findings are consistent with the findings of Merga (2014a), Loh and Sun (2018) and Rutherford et al. (2018b) who consistently found that adolescents' prefer reading modality was print. Roughly one-third of participants (32.2%), responded 'It depends' ('Prefer both' category in Table 6) to the question about format preference. For future research it would be beneficial to ask these pariticipants a follow-up question in order to clarify what factors, contexts or situations their format choice is dependent upon.

Format preference	Self	Friends
Prefer print books	51.8%	60.7%
Prefer e-books	14.2%	10.7%
Prefer both	32.2%	14.3%
Don't know		5.4%
No answer	1.8%	8.9%

Table 6 Personal and Friend Format Preferences

Sixteen participants reported that they had stopped reading an e-book due to frustration over the experience including issues with formatting. (It was made clear to participants that this should not include instances where they had stopped reading because the books was boring or irrelevant). Of those 16 participants, 37.5% (n = 6) indicated that they had attempted to find a print copy of the same book in order to finish reading the book.

Participants were asked when reading an e-book, what if any functions do you use or find useful, results are shown in Figure 14 below. The most commonly used function was bookmarking (41.1%). For example, SR44_F_13 stated: 'I also bookmark pages, as if I later read on a different device, my progress is still saved'. In addition, SR26_M_16 stated: 'I find bookmarking the best because most of the mangas that I read have a lot of chapters (going up to around 700 chapters) and it helps me keep track of what I have and haven't read'. Further, when answering the question about factors that influence decision-making one respondent (SR54_F_13) responded that when choosing between e-books and print books she preferred e-books because 'It remembers where you are up to and don't have to fold the corner of a page or a bookmark'. It would seem that electronic bookmarking serves multiple purposes, helping readers remember their place in a single book, or many books and helping readers avoid damaging print books or needing to carry a physical bookmark. With regard to the dictionary function, 21.4% of participants nominated that they used the dictionary function or found it

helpful. However, the comments suggest that participants think this is a useful function but may not necessarily use it. For example, SR3_F_16 commented: 'I don't typically use any of the features but having the dictionary does seem useful'. Nearly half of participants (42.8%) did not answer this question. For some this may be because they have never used e-book or e-reader functions like SR8_F_13 who commented: 'Never used em or had access to em'. Alternately, participants may not have answered because they do not consider the functions offered by e-books or e-readers useful.
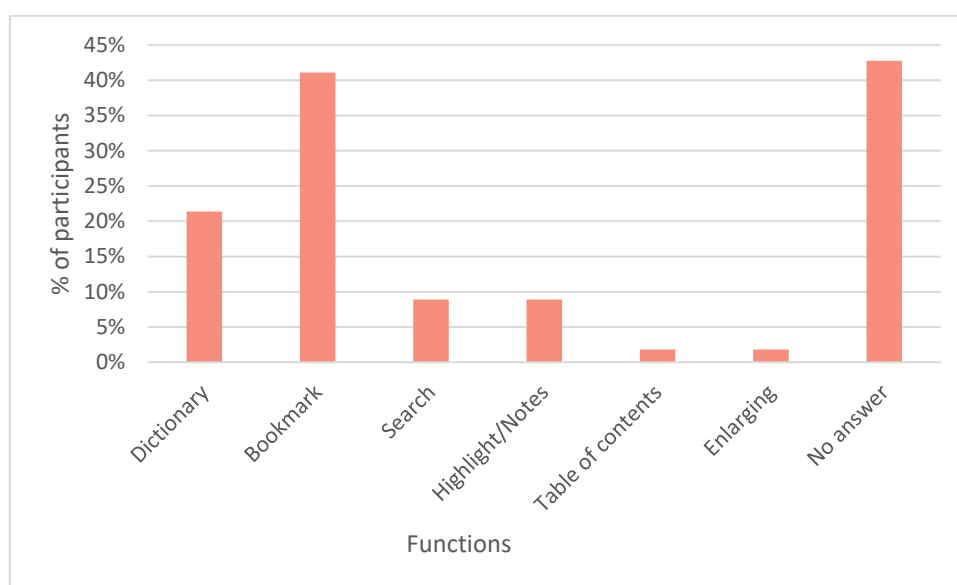
Figure 14 E-reading Functions Used

Influences on Decision-Making

Participants were asked to consider a time that they had to choose between and e-book and print books. In particular participants were encouraged to think about which of the following, cost, accessibility, visual elements, genre, concealment, sharing, tactile elements, reading skills, functions, environment, and others influenced their decision-making. Further, participants were asked to elaborate on any influences they identified as relevant.
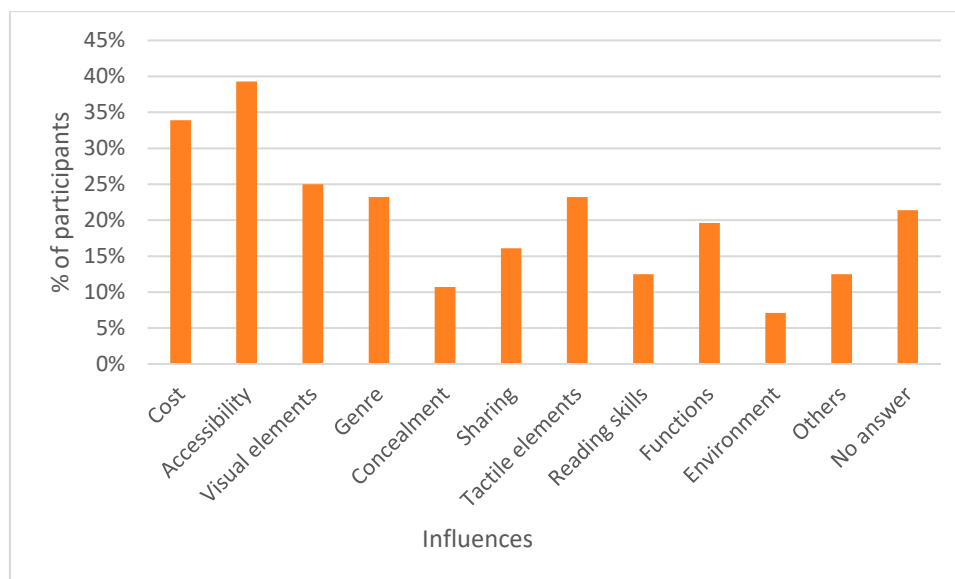
Figure 15 E-book v. Print Book Decision-Making Influences

Figure 15 shows the percentage of participants that indicated a particular factor influenced their decision-making. As stated previously, to determine the direction of the influence, the comments associated with these indications were coded 'preference for print', 'preference for e-books', and 'no clear preference'.

Cost

The data showed that cost was one of the principle factors influencing participants' decision on whether to buy print or e-books. Cost influenced the format choice or book buying decisions of 33.9% of participants. Fourteen participants responded to the observation 'Some readers make choices about which books to read based on cost' with comments. Eight participants indicated that cost led them to prefer e-books. For example, SR4_F_17 commented: 'E-books are generally more affordable that paperback'. One participant indicated no clear preference with the comment 'no i don't look at price I look for title of the books' (SR34_M_16). Three participants indicated a preference for print coupled with a concern about costs. For example, SR9_F_18 who commented: 'If I didn't have money for it, I would find it online'. Indeed, concern about cost was an overarching theme within the comments whether participants

preferred print or e-books. For example, SR43_F_13 commented: 'I like to save my money, so i don't buy really expensive series'. After 'school library (print)', 'buy myself – new' and 'parents/carers buy – new' were two of the most common ways for this group of pariticipants to access reading material (53.6% and 58.9% respectively). Given the abundance of ways for adolescents to access reading materials at low cost (purchasing second-hand) or free (library borrowing or piracy), concern about cost is an interesting finding.

Accessibility

Nearly two-fifths of participants indicated that accessiblity influenced their format choice (39.3%). Fourteen participants responded to the observation 'Not all books are available as e-books, some readers are forced to choose a print book because there is no e-book equivalent'. Two of the comments were unuseful (e.g. 'Yes' and 'okay?'), a third comment did not relate to the issue of accessiblity and was thus included in 'Other'. With regard to accessibility there is a clear preference for print books (n = 7). In contrast to the supplied comment, three participants commented that they were forced to choose e-books because the equivalent print book were not available. For example, SR38_F_16 commented 'It is difficult finding most books because they arent in the book stores and I am made to use an e-book version'.

Visual elements

A quarter of participants indicated that visual elements influenced their format choice (n = 14). Eight participants responded to the observation 'Cover art and/or illustrations are important to some readers and influence the type of books (e-books or print books) they choose to read. Two comments were unuseful (e.g. 'yes' and '3') and were thus discarded. Of the remaining comments, four indicated a clear preference for print. For example, SR5_F_13 commented 'I prefer print books as they all have different visual covers and I enjoy placing them on a bookshelf to decorate once I've finished reading it and I can always read it again, whereas that's

not always the case for e-books'. The role of visual elements in participants' preference for print books was linked to encouraging engagment and display purposes. The remaining two participants indicated no clear preference for print or e-books based on their visual elements.

Genre

This observation, 'Some readers argue that certain genres do not 'translate' well to e-books', seemed to confuse participants. Participants who commented about this item tended to focus on the influence of a genre on a reader's enthusiasm. One of the genres that does 'translate' well to e-book is standard, unillustrated novels which the overwhelming majority of participants indicate reading (see Appendix 3 Favourite authors, titles and series). Thus it is possible that the participants of this study have not encountered difficulties associated with displaying different genres in e-book format.

Concealment

Roughly one-fifth of participants indicated that concealment influenced their format choice (10.7%). Only three participants responded to the observation 'Some readers prefer e-books because it is easier to conceal what they are reading'. Two participants indicated a preference for e-books. For example, SR54_F_13 stated: 'Yes it is easier'. This finding is curious given the developmental stage and developmental tasks of this sample. However, a number of authors highlight that one of the consequences of the data trails created by online purchases and downloads is a reduction in privacy (Sokoloff 2014; Ketron & Naletelich 2016). It could be that participants recognise that whilst e-reading may allow concealment of the cover or content from peers, family, or teachers it is impossible to completely conceal all digital traces.

Sharing

Sharing influenced the decision-making regarding format choice of 16.1% of participants. Five participants commented on the observation, 'Some readers enjoy lending books to friends and

this influences whether they choose e-books or print books'. Three of the comments were unuseful. As expected, the remaining two comments showed a preference for print books. For example, SR3_F_16 commented: 'I love giving my friends my favourite books to read so that they can enjoy them also'.

Tactile elements

Nearly one-quarter of participants (23.2%) indicated that tactile elements influenced their format choice. Eight participants responded to the observation 'Some readers enjoy the tactile elements e.g. smell, feel of reading pring books'. Three of the responses were discarded as they were unuseful. The remaining five comments all endorsed print books as being superior to e-books in terms of tactile elements. For example, SR3_F_16 commented: 'I like turning the pages instead of just clicking because I feel as though I read more actively'.

Reading skills

This was another factor that appeared to confuse participants. Only a small group (12.5%) indicated that reading skills influenced their format choice. Three participants responded to the observation 'Some readers report that their reading skills e.g. speed, comprehension, retention are better when they read either e-books or print books'. The two useful comments offered both indicate a preference for print books. For example, SR34_M_17 commented: 'yes on print books read faster and more comfortable'.

Functions

Nearly one-fifth of participants indicated that functions influenced their format choice (19.6%). Eight participants responded to the observation 'Some readers enjoy the functionality of e-books e.g. searchability, dictionary function, other readers find these options distracting'. Six of the participants indicated a clear preference for e-books and their functions. For example, SR26_M_16 commented: 'It is easier to keep track of what I am reading and organising my

books'. Further SR13_M_13 commented: 'Yes as it is easier to clarify words and save the page'.

Environment

Interestingly, only 7.1% of participants indicated that environmental concerns influenced their format choice. Further, only one participant responded to the observation 'Some readers choose e-books because they believe they are better for the environment'. SR34_M_17 simply responded 'yes'. This result suggests that the participants of this study have not (yet) considered the environmental impact of either print books or e-readers.

Other

Participants were given an opportunity to nominate other factors that influence their decision-making when choosing between e-books and print books. Six participants (10.7%) provided observations about factors that influence their decision-making. These observations variously indicate a preference for print or e-books and in one case, a preference for print combined with an acknowledgment of the utility of e-books. Firstly, SR2_F_16 stated: 'My eyes don't hurt when I use a physical book'. SR3_F_16 commented: 'sometimes I am reading a series and finish one book and just have to start the next one but am unable to get the physical copy so i will buy the ebook as it is accessible from home. I also like to purchase my favourite books and display them'. 'I like reading print books because it allows my eyes to have a break from technology' observed SR24_F_15. SR26_M_16 stated: 'Some mangas and manhuas don't have physical copies'. SR36_M_15 commented: 'E books can be taken with you on your phone rather than an extra book you have to carry'. 'It remembers where you are up to and don't have to fold the corner of page or a bookmark' observed SR54_F_13. Overall, 12.5% of participants indicated that there were other factors that influence their format choice. The responses of the

participants further reinforce that adolescents choose e-books and print books for a variety of personal reasons.

Summary

Viewed as a whole, these results indicate that like SR3_F_16 many of the adolescents surveyed prefer print books whilst acknowledging the utility of e-books. When reviewing factors that may influence adolescent decision-making regarding format of reading materials, more factors appeared to influence the participants in this study to prefer print. When comparing the print preference and e-book preference of participants, it would seem that the innate characteristics of the two formats are linked to the perceived benefits. For example, the tactile and visual elements of print books are both percieved as benefits of print books that cannot be matched by e-books and thus influence the decision-making of participants towards a preference for print books. In contrast, the functionality and concealability of e-books are perceived as benefits that cannot be matched by print books and thus influence the decision-making of participants towards a preference for e-books.

Overall, some exciting findings regarding adolescent reading and factors that influence the decision-making of adolescents when choosing between e-books and print books emerged. Firstly, the rich and diverse reading lives of the participants of this survey signal that regardless of format preferences, reading and publishing are the clear winners. Secondly, how access to reading materials in either format is facilitated and inhibited by peers, parents, teachers, librarians, and publishers. Thirdly, the overarching consideration and concerns about cost of reading materials by participants in this survey. Finally, that device access and device use is not indicative of an adolescent's digital literacy or their format preference. These findings will be explored further in the following chapter.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion

The results of the online survey, adminstered to explore adolescent reading habits and factors that influence decision-making when choosing between e-books and print books, revealed that the reading habits of adolescents who have some experience reading e-books match those of avid readers described by Merga (2014a) and Loh and Sun (2018). Further, the social role of reading identified by Birr Moje et al. (2008) and Zasacka (2017) was confirmed by the findings of this study. The genre preferences of participants in this study show some similarity to those reported by Manuel and Carter (2015). Manuel and Carter (2015) used a different set of genre categories, however, participants in their study indicated that fantasy (68%), mystery (62%) and non-fiction (53%) were their top three most preferred genres. Results regarding participants' device access and use align with those of Loh and Sun (2018) and Merga and Roni (2017). Loh and Sun (2018) examined internet access and found that 96.3% of their participants had an internet connection at home and 82.6% of participants had a phone plan that allowed internet access. Further, the adolescent participants in Loh and Sun's (2018) study indicated that they read on dedicated e-readers, tablets, mobile phones and computers. Similarly, in their survey of 8-12 year olds, Merga and Roni (2017) found that 84.8% had access to a Kindle/iPad, 94.5% had access to a computer and 34.6% had access to a mobile phone. The majority of survey participants nominated a preference for print books despite reading e-books on a range of devices consistent with the findings of Loh and Sun (2018). When examining the factors that influence adolescent decision-making when choosing between e-books and print books it is clear that print books continue to be favoured by this cohort. Further, the advantages or intrinsic qualities of each format tend to inform preference for that format. For example, participants indicate preferring print books for their tactile properties, visual aesthetics and shareability, attributes not typically associated with e-books. In contrast, participants indicate preferring e-books because of their functionality (i.e. bookmarking, dictionary etc.) and ease of

concealment, attributes not typically associated with print books. These findings appear to support Ketron and Naletelich (2016) who observed that the functional advantages of e-books are not strong enough to supplant the hedonic benefits of printed books.

Of interest are the findings that cost is a concern and consideration for adolescents accessing books, that adolescent access to books is facilitated and mitigated by a variety of parties, and that adolescents' device access and use does not necessarily indicate digital literacy and may influence format choice.

Cost concerns

Within the literature references to e-books and cost typically relate to the cost of e-reading devices (Manley & Holley 2012), the hidden costs of e-books such as obsolescence of technology (Chen 2003), differing cost between e-books and print books (Carreiro 2010), and comparisons of willingness to pay for digital (i.e. e-books) and physical (i.e. print books) products (Atasoy & Morewedge 2018). Of particular interest is a study conducted by Chen (2015) into the effect of technological and psychological factors on users' intentions to continually read e-books. Whilst reporting of the study was flawed, that is essential information regarding participants was missing, a number of interesting findings emerged. For example, price consciousness significantly affects readers' continuance intentions (Chen 2015). Such that if an e-book is perceived to be too expensive, an e-book reader might refrain from reading e-books. In the reading research pertaining to adolescents it would appear that this finding is heretofore unrecognised.

Concerns about cost were revealed in participants' answers to a number of questions including factors influencing decision-making, how participants access reading materials, and whether participants would consider purchasing a copy of a book they could not obtain from the library. This finding is curious given that more than half of participants report that one of their sources

of reading materials, indeed for many their primary source, is parents/carers purchasing new books. This finding is unexpected given the myriad of free or low cost methods for accessing e-books.

Participants indicated that spending money on books (print or e-books) competed with spending money on other leisure activities which may encourage adolescents to seek value for money. The serialised nature of much adolescent fiction means that instead of buying a single book, readers are encouraged to invest in the entire series, which typically consists of three or more books. This could become a very expensive proposition for adolescents who typically do not have access to large amounts of disposable income. Chen's (2015) findings are of particular concern for adolescent readers, if the price consciousness exhibited by survey respondants negatively affects not only their continuance intentions with regard to e-books but also with regard to reading more generally.

Free or low cost e-books are available through libraries, Project Gutenberg, fanfiction websites, and digital piracy. Digital piracy involves illegally downloading a copy usually via a book-piracy website (Guest 2019). A certain level of digital literacy is required to procure pirated copies. It could be that adolescent readers surveyed may not be comfortable pirating e-books or may not possess the ability to pirate the titles they wish to read. Alternately, with regard to the other ways of accessing low cost or free e-books, it may be that the titles available are not those that adolescents are seeking. The finding of adolescent concerns about the costliness of books warrants further examination.

Access

One of the most interesting findings of this research project did not come from the survey, it was the incidental revelation that a modern school library does not hold e-resources in their collection. It led to considerations about the ways in which access to books (e-books and print)

is facilitated and mitigated by adults. This finding ties into the work of Long (1986) and her questions about the influences of cultural authorities. The results of the survey suggest that a range of individuals and groups influence the reading lives of adolescents especially their access to books; their preferred formats, devices, and apps; and their identity as readers. These individuals and groups include peers, online peers, family members, teachers (as individuals and as representatives of the education system), librarians, publishers, book sellers, authors, etc.

An example of this influence is the use of seriality by publishers and authors. Similar to the women in Long's (1986) study whose reading behaviour and interactions were influenced by trends both within and outside the literary world, the participants in this study appear to be subject to comparable influences. Notably, a number of the observations by participants suggest that by making serialised fiction the dominant genre in which adolescent fiction is available, publishers and authors appear to influence or indeed condition the behaviour of adolescent readers and buyers. In other words, seriality creates demand, particularly demand for e-books with their lower prices and their immediate availability and accessibility.

A further example entails one of the 'passive processes' that influence access to textual environments (Couldry 2000). Textual environments are conceptualised as the interaction and intersection of meanings, texts, and readers (Couldry 2000). In particular, Couldry (2000) refers to subtle forms of exclusion that signal to readers what texts are 'appropriate' for them. In the case of this research project, the attitude and behaviour of the librarian at SJAC and other commentators signals to adolescents the suitability for them of a format, the e-book.

Whilst the survey did not ask about experiences of eye strain, a number of participants (n =5) mentioned eye strain associated with e-reading, similar to the findings of Merga (2014b) and Loh and Sun (2018). Typically, this experience of eye strain influenced their choice of device (i.e. laptop, tablet etc.) or a preference for print books. Anecdotally, the experience of eye strain

is not limited to reading e-books. Driving long distances without a break, reading print books in low light, or focussing for extended periods on intricate work can produce a similar experience of eye strain ('Eye Fatigue: Causes, Symptoms, and Treatment' 2020). However, participants' observations align with the assertion of the SJAC librarian that not holding e-resources in the library's collection gives students the opportunity to reduce screen time and take a break from working on screens. This suggests that the attitudes and behaviours of librarians, teachers, and other education professionals may influence the format preference of adolescents.

For future research, it would be interesting to tease out the influence of passive processes on adolescents' format preference, including an exploration of adolescents' awareness of other's attitudes.

Digital Access and Digital Literacy

Finally, with regard to the finding that digital access and device use is not indicative of an adolescent's digital literacy or their format preference, most participants indicated having access to a range of devices and indicated some expertise using apps to find, download, and read e-books, however, the majority indicated that when reading for pleasure they prefer print books (51.8%).

Adolescent Australians experience increasing access to computers and devices both at home and at school (Merga & Roni 2017). However, assumptions that young people are a homongenous group of highly competent technology users are disproved by research of robust sample size, extending beyond more than one specific geographic location (Merga & Roni 2017, p. 189). Further, according to Rutherford et al. (2018b) while 'digital natives' leverage a wider range of technological skills than previous generations at school, teenagers' preference for specific technologies over traditional print media for recreational reading has not been

clearly established (p. 320). The findings of this research project would appear to confirm Rutherford et al.'s (2018b) observation.

Further, the pattern of non-responding to questions pertaining to devices and e-book use suggest an underlying discomfort or lack of knowledge. Eight or more participants chose not to answer questions about the following topics: difficulties borrowing e-books from libraries, devices used and recommended for e-reading, applications used and recommended for e-reading, functions used, and influences on decision-making. Loh and Sun (2018) found that online or digital reading preferences reflected offline reading practices however there was marked difference between students who liked reading and those who did not. Adolescents who enjoyed reading often used their phones and other devices to extend their reading habits, reading print, e-books, or online, depending on which was more convenient or enjoyable for the occasion (Loh & Sun 2018, p. 668). In contrast, adolescents who did not enjoy reading were less likely to use their phones and devices for reading and instead reported using them for other activities such as gaming (Loh & Sun 2018). Thus, it is possible that some participants in this research project despite their experience with reading e-books do not enjoy reading. As a result their reluctance to respond to questions regarding devices and e-book use may be a consequence of inexperience.

Given the recurring nature of this finding, it would be worthwile conducting further research to evaluate the digital literacy of adolescents and the potential impact of levels of digital literacy on e-reading practices and format preferences.

Reflection and Recommendations

As stated previously, Rutherford et al. (2019) highlight the benefits of survey designs for gathering generalisable data. However, they also allude to the challenges of conducting research that accurately captures and portrays adolescent reading (Rutherford et al. 2019). The two

largest limitations associated with this research project were unintended ambiguity within the survey responses and the challenge of recruiting a representative sample heightened by the global COVID-19 pandemic.

Unfortunately, the sample size and composition are both limitations of this research project. Due to time constraints and aforementioned constraints associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, recruitment opportunities were limited thus leading to the recruitment of a small, potentially non-representative sample. The sample included roughly equal numbers of male and female participants and participants aged 12-14 years and participants aged 15-18 years. However, the predominance of participants from non-government or private schools (89.3%) compared to participants from government or public schools (7.1%) created a skewed sample. Significantly, the fit between the reading data gathered by this research project with that reported in the literature would suggest that the participants sampled were relatively representative of the population being studied. It would be beneficial to repeat the study with a larger, more heterogenous sample to test the accuracy and validity of the observations presented in this dissertation.

Whilst the online survey generated and utilised in this research project discovered some unexpected and interesting findings, the responses and non-responses to the survey questions suggest areas for possible improvement. For example, to improve the survey it is recommended that 0-1 hours be included as an answer option for the question 'In an average week, how many hours per day do you spend reading for pleasure?' The inclusion of this answer option would allow greater differentiation between reader types (e.g. average, moderate, avid). Thus allowing comparison between the responses of these groups to other survey questions. As noted previously, the inclusion of a second part to the question 'How do you access books?' created confusion for most participants. In future iterations of the survey it would be beneficial to ask this as two questions, firstly 'How do you access books? Tick all the methods that apply.'

Secondly, 'Name the top three ways you access books?' In addition, it would be useful to add two further categories to the list of access methods, namely 'parents/carers buy (e-book)' and 'buy myself (e-book)'. The inclusion of these two responses may be helpful in generating data about how adolescents access e-books. Finally, when participants are asked 'Do you prefer e-books or printed books?' those that respond 'It depends' should be presented with a further question/s asking in which situations and contexts do they prefer print books and in which situations and contexts do they prefer e-books.

For future research, other research methods that could be paired with a revised survey are:

- A diary study to track reading patterns and format choice.

- In-depth interviews to expand upon the data gathered by the survey and to clarify ambiguous responses.

Other focuses for future research include an exploration of levels of e-reading experience amongst adolescents and the influence of degrees of experience on decision-making regarding format choice. Secondly, further examination of the repeated finding of blurred boundaries in the digital realm is warranted, especially understandings of ownership. This project did not have the opportunity to explore adolescent understanding of Digital Rights Management (DRM) as it relates to e-books. However, given the potential influence of understandings of DRM, digital privacy, and ownership on decision-making regarding format choice, further research could provide helpful insights. Thirdly, reports of eye strain were found in this study and two others conducted with adolescent samples (Merga 2014a; Loh & Sun 2018). Given the temporary nature of eye strain there does not appear to be a high degree of concern about this phenomenon. However, given the decrease in reading for pleasure observed as adolescents age, it would be interesting to examine what role eye strain plays in adolescents' commitment to reading as a leisure activity. Finally, a comparison of the e-reading behaviour of adolescents who can access

e-resources through their school library with those who cannot would be beneficial in order to verify the generalisability of this study.

Summary

In conclusion, this mixed-methods survey based research project sought to explore adolescent reading and factors that influence adolescent decision-making when choosing between e-books and print books. An online survey was administered to gather quantitative and qualitative data in an attempt to fill a gap in the scholarship. Responses to the survey were analysed for themes using a theoretical and methodological bricolage variously informed by Cultural Studies, Publishing Studies, and reading practice studies. The results of the study revealed that the reading habits of adolescents aged 12-18 years with some experience reading e-books for pleasure tended to align with those of avid readers described in the literature. The survey participants identified an impressive range of authors, titles, and series that they enjoy reading. In addition, the device access and use of participants was consistent with findings previously described in the literature. Finally, with regard to influences on decision-making the adolescents surveyed revealed a strong preference for reading for pleasure in print format. However, participants also revealed that they chose to use e-books for convenience, utility, and accessibility. Some unexpected findings emerged from the survey results, namely adolescent concerns about cost and value, how others mitigate and facilitate adolescent access to e-books and print books, and how device access and use should not be conflated with digital literacy. A number of directions for future research were indicated including refinement of the online survey used in this research project and conducting in-depth interviews to expand upon the data gathered.

Appendices

Appendix 1 Survey

This survey aims to explore the factors that influence adolescent decision makin when choosing an e-book over a print book.

I am looking for young people aged 12-18 years old to complete an online surve about their reading habits and e-book use.

If you...

read for pleasure, that is reading that is not completed for school or work purposes, have some experience with e-reading and e-books, are aged between 12 and 18 years old, and have 15-20 minutes to spare...

...you can help out!

All you have to do is answer a bunch of questions by either ticking a box or writing short sentence.

Participation in this study is completely voluntary and you can choose to withdraw from the study, that is stop answering questions, at any time without having to give reason. If you want to know more about the study you can contact the researcher Anne Varnes via email (u1093018@umail.usq.edu.au).

Please take the time to read the participant information sheet (click on the lin above) before starting the survey.

Section A: Participant consent

A1.   I understand that I can withdraw from this study at any time without having to
        provide a reason.

                                                          Yes   ☐

                                                          No   ☐

A2.   Have you read and understood the Participant Information document
        about this study and do you understand that if you have any
        questions about the study you can ask the researcher?

                                                          Yes   ☐

                                                          No   ☐

Section B: Key Question

B1. Have you ever read an e-book for pleasure?

Reading an e-book includes reading fiction and non-fiction, such as novels, short stories, graphic novels, information books, etc. on an e-reader, mobile phone, laptop, or tablet.

Yes ☐

No ☐

Section C: Reading habits

C1. How many days per week do you get the opportunity to spend time reading for pleasure?

Reading for pleasure is any long-form reading (i.e. novels, graphic novels etc.) that you do that is not for school or work.

C2. In an average week, how many hours per day do you spend reading for pleasure?

1-2 ☐
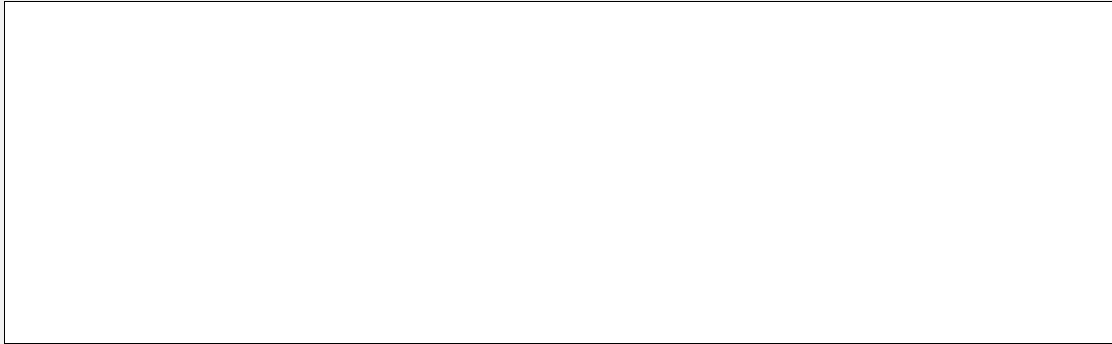
2-5 ☐

5+ ☐

C3. Who are your favourite authors?

C4. Name some of your favourite books/series.

C5.   What is your favourite genre/s? E.g. Action, romance, sci-fi, fantasy etc.

C6.   How do you access books?

In the comment section, please number the top three (3) methods by which you access books. For example, if all of your books are bought for you by your parents or carers, assign that method the number '1'. Or, if you mostly borrow books from friends, often download pirated copies, and sometimes borrow from your school library, assign those methods '1', '2', and '3' respectively.

Only number your top three (3).

School library (print book) ▼

Comment

School library (e-book) ▼

Comment

Community library (print book) ▼

Comment

Community library (e-book) ▼

Comment

Gifts ▼

Comment

Buy myself (new) ▼

Comment

Buy myself (second-hand) ▼

Comment

Parents/carers buy (new) ▼

Comment

Parents/carers buy (second-hand) ▼

Comment

Borrow from friends ▼

Comment

Download pirated copy ▼

Comment

Other, please specify ▼

Comment

Section D: Devices and applications

D1.   Which of the following devices do you own?

mobile phone ☐

laptop ☐

home computer ☐

tablet ☐

e-reader ☐

D2.   Which of the following devices do you have access to?

mobile phone ☐

laptop ☐

home computer ☐

tablet ☐

e-reader ☐

D3.   Which device/s do you use to read e-books?

D4.   In your opinion, which is the best device for reading e-books? Why?

D5.   Which app/s do you use to download e-books? e.g. Google Play Books, Wattpad, Kobo Books, Amazon Kindle etc.

D6.   In your opinion, which is the best app for accessing e-books? Why?

D7.   When reading an e-book, what if any functions do you use or find useful?
e.g. dictionary, bookmarking, notetaking, highlighting, search, etc.

Section E: Friends

E1.   Are your friends 'readers'?

Yes, all ☐

☐

Yes, most ☐

Yes, a few ☐

No, none

E2.   Do your friends prefer e-books or print books?

E3.   Are you part of an online community like Goodreads or Wattpad that discusses or reviews books? If yes, which one/s?

E4.   Are you part of a book group or club that discusses or reviews books face-to-face?

E5.   Where do you first look for a new book? e.g. library, website, bookshop, recommendations from friends, etc.

Section F: Libraries

F1. Do you borrow e-books from a library (community/school)?

	Yes	Uncertain	No
School library	☐	☐	☐
Community/local library	☐	☐	☐

F2. Do you experience any difficulties borrowing or downloading books from the library (community/school)?

F3. If you can't borrow a book that you want from the library does that encourage you to purchase a copy?

Section G: Decision making

G1. Do you prefer e-books or printed books?

E-books	☐
Print books	☐
It depends	☐

G2. Have you ever started reading an e-book and stopped due to frustration over the experience, or the formatting, or another reason specifically related to it being an e-book?

This question is not asking if you have stopped reading because the book was boring, or irrelevant.

Yes ☐

No ☐

Uncertain ☐

G3.   Did you then try to find a printed version of the same book to finish reading?

Yes ☐

No ☐

G4.   Below are a group of statements drawn from research about reading e-books.

Think about a time you had to choose between an e-book and a print book, which of the following influenced your decision making? For those items you select can you write a sentence about how the item influenced your decision making.

Cost - Some readers make choices about which books to read based on cost. ▼

Comment

Accessibility - Not all books are available as e-books, some readers are forced to choose a print book because there is no e-book equivalent. ▼

Comment

Visual elements - Cover art and/or illustrations are important to some readers and influence the type of books (e-books or print books) they choose to read. ▼

Comment

Genre - Some readers argue that certain genres do not 'translate' well to e-books. ▼

Comment

Concealment - Some readers prefer e-books because it is easier to conceal what they are reading. ▼

Comment

Sharing - Some readers enjoy lending books to friends and this influences whether they choose e-books or print books. ▼

Comment

Tactile elements - Some readers enjoy the tactile elements e.g. smell, feel of reading print books. ▼

Comment

Reading skills - Some readers report that their reading skills e.g. speed, comprehension, retention are better when they read either e-books or print books. ▼

Comment

Functions - Some readers enjoy the functionality of e-books e.g. searchability, dictionary function, other readers find these options distracting. ▼

Comment

Environment - Some readers choose e-books because they believe they are better for the environment. ▼

Comment

Other, please specify ▼

Comment

Section H: About you

H1.   How old are you?

12 years ☐

☐

13 years ☐

14 years ☐

15 years ☐

16 years ☐

17 years ☐

18 years

H2.   Which country do you live in?

H3.   Which school do you attend?

If you no longer attend school, please leave this blank.

H4.   Is your school a government school?

Yes ☐

No ☐

H5.   Which grade are you in at school?

If you are no longer attending school, please leave this blank.

H6.   What is your gender?

Male ☐

☐

Female ☐

No answer ☐ ▼

Other

Other

Section I: Closing questions

I1.   Is there anything else you think the researcher should know about how you or other adolescents choose and use e-books?

I2.   Would you like to receive a summary of the results of this study? If
        yes, please supply your email address.

Yes ☐

No ☐

Thank you for participating in this survey, your time and energy are appreciated.

If you have any questions please don't hesitate to contact the researcher (Anne
Varnes, u1093018@umail.usq.edu.au) or the university (USQ, 1800269 500).

Appendix 2 Participant Information Sheet

Under 18 years Participant Information for USQ Research Project Questionnaire

Project Details	

Title of Project:	**Study of Adolescent Choice and Use of E-books v. Print Books**
Human Research Ethics Approval Number:	H20REA162

Research Team Contact Details	

Principal Investigator Details

Mrs. Anne Varnes	Dr. Dallas J. Baker
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	Mobile: +61 413 185 312

Description	

This project is being undertaken as part of a Masters Project in Editing and Publishing.

The purpose of this project is to explore what influences adolescent decision making when choosing an e-book over a print book. The research team requests your assistance to help researchers and publishers understand what adolescents are looking for when they choose to read e-books.

Participation	

If you choose to participate, your participation will involve the completion of a questionnaire that will take approximately 15-20 minutes of your time. You can complete this questionnaire online in your spare time. The questionnaire was created using LimeSurvey and is hosted by USQ.

The questionnaire will include questions about your reading habits and use of e-books, for example:

1. Where do you first look for a new book? e.g. library, website, bookshop, recommendations from friends
2. When reading an e book, what if any functions do you use or find useful, e.g. dictionary, bookmarking, notetaking/highlighting, search?

You are free to decide if you want to be involved in this research project or not. If you do not wish to take part you, you do not have to. If you decide to take part and later change your mind, you are free to stop participating in the project at any stage. You will be unable to withdraw data collected about yourself after the data has been analysed. If you do wish to withdraw from this project, please contact the Research Team (contact details at the top of this form).

Your decision whether you take part, do not take part, or to take part and then withdraw, will in no way impact your current or future relationship with the University of Southern Queensland.

Expected Benefits

It is expected that this project will directly benefit you by letting publishers know what type of reading material adolescents prefer.

Risks

There are no anticipated risks associated with your participation in this project beyond normal day-to-day living.

Privacy and Confidentiality

All comments and responses will be treated confidentially unless required by law.

The names of individual persons are not required in any of the responses.

It is anticipated that the results from this research project will be published and/or presented in a variety of forums. Your data will be published in a way that you cannot be identified, that is, only grouped data will be reported.

Following the study, the data will be stored securely in a non-identifiable form and then destroyed after 15 years.

If you would like to know more about the results of the research, you will be given an opportunity during the survey to tick a box and supply your email address to indicate you wish to receive a summary of the results.

Any data collected as a part of this project will be stored securely as per University of Southern Queensland's Research Data Management policy.

Assent to Participate

Clicking on the 'Submit' button at the conclusion of the questionnaire is accepted as an indication of your consent to participate in this project.

Questions or Further Information about the Project

Please refer to the Research Team Contact Details at the top of the form to have any questions answered or to request further information about this project.

Concerns or Complaints Regarding the Conduct of the Project

If you have any concerns or complaints about the ethical conduct of the project, you may contact the University of Southern Queensland Manager of Research Integrity and Ethics on +61 7 4631 1839 or email researchintegrity@usq.edu.au. The Manager of Research Integrity and Ethics is not connected with the research project and can facilitate a resolution to your concern in an unbiased manner.

Thank you for taking the time to help with this research project. Please keep this sheet for your information.

Appendix 3 Favourite authors, titles, and series

Author (mentions)		
Agatha Christie	Holly Black	Mars Gravity
Aidalro	Holly Smale	Mary Higgins-Clark
Alice Oseman	J.K. Rowling (11)	Masashi Kishimoto
Banina Clarke (sic)	Jacqueline Harvey	Matthew Reilly (2)
Becky Albertalli	Jacqueline Wilson	Micol Ostow
Blake Pierce	James Dashner	Nick Bland
Brian Jacques	James Patterson (2)	Ordinary Magician
Bryan Lee O'Malley	Jane Austen	Patrick Ness
Cassandra Clare	Jeff Kinney	Pippa Dacosta
Chadda Sarwat	Jennifer A Nielsen	Raina Telgemeier
Charles Dickens	Jenny Han	Rainbow Rowell (2)
Charles Streams	Jodi Picoult (2)	Rick Riordan (10)
Chris d'Lacey	John Flanagan	Riichiro Inagaki
Christopher Paolini (2)	John Green	Roald Dahl (2)
Chu-Gong (2)	John Grisham	Robert Kiyosaki
Dale Carnagie	John Marsden	Ryan Holiday
David Burton	Jojo Moyes (2)	Sarah J Maas
David Walliams	Jonathon Stroud	Sarah Shepard
Derek Landy (3)	Kagyu Kumo	Scott Cawthon
Diane Zahler	Kaiu Shirai	Shakespeare
Dimitry Glokhovsky	Karen Foxlee	Sir Arthur Conan Doyle
Douglas Adams (2)	Kiera Cass	Stephen Chbosky
E. Lockhart	Kindhearted Bee	Suzanne Collins (3)
Edgar Allan Poe (2)	Koyoharu Gotouge	Sylvia Plath
Emily Rodda (2)	Lana Krumwiede	Tony Abbott
Eoin Colfer	Leigh Bardugo	Trudi Canavan
Erin Morgenstern	Lemony Snicket	Tui T. Sutherland
Ernest Cline	Lynette Noni	V.E. Schwab
Ernest Hemingway	Maile Meloy	Veronica Roth
F. Scott Fitzgerald	Marissa Meyer	Yongje Park
Garth Nix	Mark Manson	Yvonne Woon

Title (mentions)			
A Court of Thorns and Roses	S	My Sisters Keeper	T
A Horse Called Hero		Outsiders	
A Life in Parts		Pretty Little Liars	ST
Against the Gods (sic, may be Against All Odds)		Radio Silence	
Armada		Ready Player One	ST
Bad Dad		Rich Dad, Poor Dad	
Betrayal	S	Riverdale: Death of a Cheerleader	ST
Contest (2)		Scott Pilgrim vs. The World	
Daisy Jones and the Six		Six of Crows	S
Daughter of Smoke and Bone	S	Starry Eyes	
Dead Beautiful	S	Teresa, a new Australian	
Eleanor and Park		The Bone Houses	
Emma	T	The Great Gatsby	T
Fake Money, Fake Teachers, Fake Assests		The Hobbit	T
Five Feet Apart	T	The Incredible Adventures of Cinnamon Girl	
Great Zoo of China (2)		The Lying Game	
Heart of Danger	S	The Night Circus	
Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy (2)	ST	The Perfectionists	
How to be Happy - a memoir of love, sex and teenage confusion		The Perks of Being a Wallflower	T
It Sounded Better in my Head		The Starless Sea	
Lenny's Book of Everything		The subtle art of not giving a f*ck	
Life Eternal	S	This Side of Paradise	
Little Brother		To all the boys I've loved before	
Love Reborn	S	Turtles All the Way Down	
Love Simon	T	Vicious	S
Matilda	T	We Were Liars	
Me Before You (2)	ST		

S = series
T = movie/tv tie-in

Series (mentions)			
A Series of Unfortunate Events	T	Michael Vey	
Agatha Christie		Mortal Engines	T
Alex Cross		Nancy Drew	T
Alex Rider	T	Naruto (3)	
Artemis Fowl		Nevermoor	
Ash Mistry Chronicles		Nine Star Hegemon Body Arts	
Aurora Rising trilogy (2)		NYPD Red	
Avery Black series		One Piece	
Bad Guys		Percy Jackson (11)	T
Black Bullet		Ranger's Apprentice (2)	
Brotherband		Redwall	
Cassidy Blake		Riley Paige series	
Chaos Walking		Scarecrow series	
Clementine Rose		Scythe	
Deltora Quest		Sherlock Holmes	T
Demon Slayer (2)		Skulduggery Pleasant (3)	
Disney Twisted Tales (2)		Solo Leveling (2)	
Divergent series (2)	T	Star Wars	T
Dr Stone		Sword Art Online	
Edens Zero		The Apothecary	
Eragon (3)	T	The Arch of Avooblis	
Five Nights at Freddy's	T	The Chronicles of Narnia	T
Food Wars		The Copernicus Legacy	
Geek Girl		The Darkest Minds	
Goblin Slayer		The Hunger Games series (2)	T
Goosebumps	T	The Last Namsara	
Haikyuu		The Magician's Apprentice	
Harry Potter (14)	T	The Medoran Chronicles	
Heroes of Olympus (5)		The Odd One1s Out	T
Hetty Feather		The Promised Neverland	
How to Train Your Dragon	T	The Psi Chronicles	
Kane Chronicles		The Secret series	
Keys to the Kingdom		The Selection series	
Lockwood & Co.		The Three Door Trilogy	
Lord of the Rings (2)	T	Throne of Glass	
Lunar Chronicles		Toilet-bound Hanako-kun	
Mackenzie White series		Tokyo Ghoul	
Magisterium		Torodora	
Magnus Chase & The Gods of Asgard (2)		Trials of Apollo (4)	
Masterminds		Troubletwisters	
Maze Runner	T	When We Wake	
Metro trilogy			

T = movie/TV tie-in

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