

**“Exploring Extensive Reading in Cultivating Positive Attitudes and Reading
Comprehension with Grade 8 Learners: A Case Study in a Selected Namibian
Secondary School”**

BY

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“A child who reads, will be an adult who thinks”.

(Sasha Salmina)

DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I Sylviana Engelbrecht, bearing student number: 17E7751, herewith make this declaration that the work of "*Exploring Extensive Reading in Cultivating Positive Attitudes and Reading Comprehension with Grade 8 learners: A Case Study in a Selected Namibian Secondary School*", is my own work. Where I have made use of other scholars' works, I have acknowledged them by using the Rhodes University's Educational Guidelines for referencing. I have not submitted this work to any other university, in whole or in part, for awarding of degree purposes.

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ABSTRACT

Extensive reading, otherwise known as “reading for pleasure”, “recreational reading” or “voluntary reading”, appears to be absent in the Namibian society, especially within public educational institutions. With the reformed Education System, the Namibian Curriculum for Basic Education makes room for a reading period in a 7-day cycle, from grade 1 to 11, in which all learners are expected to engage in a sustained silent reading (SSR) of interesting material of their choice. Nevertheless, such a period seems to be insufficient for engaging learners in an enjoyable reading experience, which could possibly create a positive attitude towards reading as well as enhance their reading skills of comprehension and reading fluency, possibly resulting in a habit of individual SSR.

This research intended to explore an out-of-school, extensive reading program, over the period of one year, in the hope of cultivating Grade 8 learners’ positive attitude toward reading, in a selected secondary school in the township of Katutura, Windhoek, Khomas Region, Namibia. This one-year study, in which eight Grade 8 learners participated, focused on English only reading, as it is the Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT). Operating within the interpretivist paradigm, the research adopted a qualitative approach, using a single case study to explore how participants make meaning of their experiences and attitudes toward ER. Qualitative data was collected through pre- and post-questionnaires and document analysis of learners’ reading journals as well as the researcher’s reflective journal. The research site was purposively and conveniently selected. The study drew on Krashen’s, input and affective filter hypotheses as the driving theory of this study, which according to some scholars, is the main second language acquisition theory applied in ER research. Findings of this study suggest that ER programs have a positive impact on learners’ attitudes towards reading as well as on their reading comprehension, even in poorly resourced schools in previously disadvantaged communities.

Keywords: extensive reading, comprehension, affective filter, reading and fluency, reading experiences and attitudes.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my beloved husband and friend Dawie Engelbrecht, to my wonderful daughters Beulah Lizelle Dax and Lee-Ann Engelbrecht. To Damian Dax my lovely grandson and the newest addition to the family. Your understanding and support during the work of this thesis has been immense. The four of you, remain my pillar of strength and my motivation. Thank you.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ER	Extensive Reading
NCBE	National Curriculum for Basic Education
SSR	Sustained Silent Reading
ESL	English Second Language
LoLT	Language of Learning and Teaching
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
FLA	Foreign Language Acquisition
IR	Intensive Reading
L2	Second Language
EFL	English Foreign Language
OL	Ordinary Level
NIED	National Institute for Educational Development

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Figure 1: Mathewson's model of attitude

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the overview of the thesis. It consists of the introduction, contextual background of the study, statement of the problem, research aim and objectives, research questions, significance of the study, research assumptions, limitation of the study, an overview of the research methodology and the organization of the thesis.

1.1 Introduction

Extensive reading, henceforth ER, is still a relatively new topic in the Namibian educational context. There appears to be little or no evidence on studies carried out on this topic, especially at secondary school level in the country. Extensive reading that includes “reading for pleasure”, “recreational reading”, or “voluntary reading” is meant for enjoyment. However, in a society where there appears to be no role models who would portray positive attitudes and habits towards reading— whether at home or school – fostering a culture of reading, seems to be a grave challenge for many young people in Namibia.

Realizing this dire need, the Namibian education authorities have, during the review of the Curriculum in 2016, introduced a compulsory reading period in the National Curriculum for Basic Education (2016), henceforth NCBE, in order to inculcate a culture of reading in schools, so that all schools could enhance a productive reading culture once a week in their 7-day teaching cycle. As outlined in the NCBE (2016, p. 53):

A reading period for sustained silent reading (SSR) is added to the timetable from grade 1 to 11. The purpose is to allow learners to read for enjoyment. The ideal situation would be that everyone in the school, including the principal, teachers and institutional workers, should be reading during the weekly reading period. Schools will be provided with guidelines on how to organise the reading period. Printed material, such as books (both novels and non-fiction), magazines and newspapers, in all the languages offered at the school and catering for the interests of the learners, should be made available in each classroom. These are the books, magazines and newspapers that learners will be reading from during the reading period, but they can also bring appropriate books from home.

It is important to emphasize from the above statement that the purpose of the reading period is to allow not only learners but also everyone else within the school “to read for enjoyment”. The NCBE also states that schools should be provided with “guidelines” regarding the reading period. Whether such guidelines are available and effectively implemented in Namibian schools remains a question. Moreover, it is worthy to note that the prescribed reading period is limited to one period of forty minutes per 7-day teaching cycle, which seems insufficient. Therefore, extending ER time could perhaps be done through the implementation of after-school reading programs, where learners are motivated and encouraged to read on their own, to develop a reading culture not only for schools but for themselves as individuals. In this regard, Francois (2015) posits that by implementing certain approaches, a school can influence its learners to engage in various reading activities.

Moreover, the NCBE (2016) advocates reading in all languages offered at schools. However, this study only explored reading in English Second Language (ESL), mainly because it is the Language of Learning and Teaching, henceforth referred to as LoLT, in both private and public Namibian schools. While this study focused on reading in the LoLT, learners were given the freedom to choose what they wanted to read as they might have picked reading material that intrigued interest in them, which in turn could have changed their attitude towards reading. In addition to possible positive experiences and attitudes towards reading, learners could possibly have developed or improved reading comprehension, subconsciously acquired ESL vocabulary, grammar, sentence structures and other linguistic features in the LoLT. The focus of this research, therefore, was to explore an out-of-school extensive reading with Grade 8 learners, who are regarded as newcomers in the junior secondary phase, with a seemingly poor level of reading skills, as lamented by some educators.

1.2 Contextual Background of the Study

The Namibian society, like many African countries, is multicultural and multilingual, and as such the classrooms are packed with learners from culturally, linguistically and socio-economically diverse backgrounds. An average class size ranges from 40 to 50 learners, resulting in overcrowded classrooms, especially in public schools. The LoLT is English, which is taught both as first and but mostly as second language. The Namibian curriculum

also includes other languages such as Afrikaans as an additional second language, French and Portuguese as foreign languages, German as first and foreign language, and Oshidonga/Oshikwanyama, Khoekhoegowab, Otjiherero, Silozi, Setswana, Rukwangali and Ndiriku as mother tongues.

The school that was the chosen research site for this study has an infrastructure that can be defined as reasonably average. Although the school has a shortage of classrooms, it has an office block, a staff room with only chairs and tables, a poorly sourced school library, an old school hall, teachers' and learners' toilet facilities in usable conditions, a soccer field and a netball field. The location of the school, as well as the learners it accommodates, can be described as that of a disadvantaged background. Some learners walk long distances from the outskirts of the town to attend school, while others stay within the school vicinity. Additionally, some learners' household backgrounds range from single-parent headed homes, child-headed homes as well as homes where unemployment is common. Even though the school does not offer a feeding program, it introduced afternoon remedial classes, which most learners do not attend, mainly due to socio-economic circumstances. Apart from having eaten nothing in the morning as well as during break-time, other reasons learners give for not attending these classes range from the responsibility they carry for picking up siblings from neighbouring primary schools or walking long distances to get back home.

Moreover, social stratification according to class is a global phenomenon that cannot be ignored when addressing issues of disadvantaged communities. Therefore, this study also took into consideration the concepts of class, code and control introduced by Bernstein (2003, pp. 46-51). According to Bernstein, social class is where the first inequality of education begins, as learners from disadvantaged backgrounds have lesser opportunities than their peers from advantaged backgrounds. These inequalities, according to Rose (2005, p.133) are later evident in classrooms. This is especially true in the case of overcrowded classrooms with learners of different abilities and different socio-economic as well as socio-cultural backgrounds, among others. Rose (2005, p.138) further maintains that such inequalities, especially agonized by learners from disadvantaged backgrounds, where there are no parent-to-child reading opportunities, are later reinforced in classrooms that do not teach reading skills explicitly in schools. It could further be argued that even if such explicit reading skills were taught in language classroom, they

might not be fully beneficial or practical if learners are not motivated and encouraged to engage in reading, on their own and during their free time, especially in extensive reading activities, provided that relevant reading materials are made available to them.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Learners from disadvantaged communities seem not to engage in extensive reading activities. This can particularly be observed at schools that do not appear to create a school reading culture for learners, for example, no learner can be seen carrying a book that they read during break time or during their free time such as free periods where a teacher is absent or is busy with other classroom tasks. Teachers also do not appear to be role models themselves to encourage learners to read. This could be ascribed to the fact that both teachers and learners might hail from the same socio-cultural background where reading is not a norm. In addition to lack of reading role models, another apparent obstacle for extensive reading could be the lack of availability of suitable reading material. Thus, Bernstein (2003) and Rose (2005) maintain that learners from disadvantaged backgrounds need reading programs in education which might, amongst others, inspire a desire for reading to aid in developing reading skills such as reading comprehension and fluency amongst others.

Besides, Hill (2008) noted that in families and societies where books are widely available and children are given time and encouragement to read, the techniques of ER are picked up unconsciously from childhood, whereas in societies where books are not available or where there is no tradition of ER, the techniques must be taught. Therefore, ER programs might help learners from disadvantaged backgrounds to not only acquire languages subconsciously but mainly to become habitual readers, who read for enjoyment and on their own. It is also important to note that ER programs seem to be lacking in Namibian secondary schools, as there seem to be no apparent studies on the issue, particularly in public secondary schools. It is against this background, that this study explored an ER program, out-of-school reading, with Grade 8 secondary school learners from a disadvantaged community, in the hope of cultivating positive attitudes and motivation towards reading, so that reading becomes an enjoyable, habitual activity. As mentioned before, this could further lead to learners' subconscious acquisition of ESL.

1.4 Research aim and objectives

After due cognizance of the problem stated above, the core aim of this study was to explore an out-of-school ER program with a single group of Grade 8 learners. An out-of-school program refers to reading that is done outside of the classroom, at the learners own preferred place and time. This type of reading is for enjoyment purpose and not for assessment purpose. Therefore, no pre- and post-tests were carried out.

Drawing on this aim, the objectives of the study were to:

- Explore whether ER programs influence grade 8 learners' experiences and attitudes towards reading.
- Explore whether ER programs have an impact on grade 8 learners' reading comprehension.
- Establish possible challenges faced in implementing ER.

1.5 Research questions

Based on these aims and objectives, this study addressed the following research questions:

1. What are the current Grade 8 learners' experiences and attitudes towards reading?
2. How does ER impact Grade 8 learners' attitudes towards reading?
3. How does ER impact Grade 8 learners' reading comprehension and fluency?
4. What are possible challenges faced in implementing ER within a public school?

1.6 Significance of the Study

It seems that there has been limited research on the effects of ER and the experiences and attitudes of learners towards reading in public secondary schools within the Namibian context. It also appears that schools, as well as researchers, have generally neglected ER, perhaps because it was not explicitly outlined within the reformed curriculum. This study, therefore, recognised the need for exploring ER in a public secondary school within

a disadvantaged community, in the hope of drawing more researchers to ER in public secondary schools within the Namibian educational context. This, in turn, might not only add to the body of ER research but also bring about different possible resolutions to curb reading problems seemingly experienced nationally at secondary school level.

1.7 Research assumptions

This explorative study had the following research assumptions based on the benefits of ER:

- Learners will be able to read extensively for enjoyment.
- Learners will be able to better comprehend what they read by inferring the meaning of unknown words, which will result in reading fluency.
- Learners' attitudes and experiences towards reading will improve.
- ER will turn reading into a culture or a habitual and personal activity.

1.8 Limitations of the Study

All research regardless of the nature it takes on has limitations. Hence, this exploratory study also had its shortfalls. Firstly, there was a limitation on the research site and the study participants, followed by data generative instruments and lastly, there was a limitation on data and the findings thereof. The research site and study participants is a limitation, since findings might have been different if other learners of other public schools differently located, in the capital were included in the study. The most important limitation was in the generation of data. As researcher and teacher employed at the site of the study, I could have included post-study interviews to generate rich data for triangulation. Post-study interviews might have allowed participants to express themselves richly with follow-up questions. However, using observation and videotaping as tools would not have been practically possible for this study as reading was done out of school, at home or elsewhere and on learners' own time, making it impossible to observe learners' reading. Furthermore, this study focused on reading for enjoyment and not on reading for comprehension instruction and/or assessment, thus testing learners were avoided. It is also noteworthy that the global Covid-19 pandemic interrupted the normal flow of schools, causing unforeseen school closures due to some learners and teachers being off sick or hospitalised, which resulted in less time for researcher and participant interactions.

Consequently, learners, with the guidance and advice of the researcher, had to pick several books at once from the school library, which they had to read at home and on their own time, during these school closures. Therefore, the reading journals, as a source of data generation, were useful to help participants keep track of their readings and the feelings that accompanied such readings. Lastly, the study had a data limitation because it was a small-scale study and as a result, the findings cannot be generalized to a bigger population.

1.9 Overview of Research Methodology

1.9.1 Research Design

This study adopted the Interpretive paradigm, using a qualitative case study as a research method, drawing on Grade 8 learners' experiences and attitudes towards ER. The Interpretivist paradigm also known as the constructivist paradigm, according to Kivunja and Kuyini (2017) makes every effort to understand the viewpoint of the subject being studied. As a researcher, I had to rely on the data generated from participants via different instruments of participant questionnaires, participant reading journals and my own personal reflective journal, to make meaning of the data.

1.9.2 Research methods

This qualitative research adopted a case study, which according to Maree (2007, p. 59) is concerned with understanding the processes, the social and cultural contexts which underlie various behavioural patterns. Maree further defines a case study as striving towards a comprehensive understanding of how participants make meaning of a phenomenon under study. Through a single case with a group of Grade 8 learners as participants, I explored an ER program over the period of one year, in the hope of cultivating positive attitudes towards reading as well as developing reading comprehension and fluency.

1.9.3 Sample and sampling procedures

A sample in research is a group of people who are chosen as representatives of the target population (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014, p. 59). I chose purposive sampling because I

had to “make specific choices about people, groups or objects to include in the sample” (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014, p. 60), as I opted for junior secondary school learners in Grade 8. The sample for this study was also conveniently selected because as researcher, I am employed at the site of the study. Maree (2007, p.177) defines convenient sampling as referring to situations when population elements are selected because they are “easily and conveniently available” as well as useful in “explorative research” where the researcher is interested in getting an inexpensive, quick approximation of the truth. Therefore, I opted for participants that are already available, making the research inexpensive as I was not obliged to leave my work nor travel for the research.

1.9.4 Data generating instruments

I used instruments such as pre and post questionnaires and participants’ reading journals to generate data for this qualitative study. As researcher, I set up and administered the questionnaires myself to avoid delays amongst other things. I further supplied the participants with reading journals which they had to keep throughout the ER program, in which they had to complete the reading calendar and information on readings, their duration, number of total pages read, short summary for comprehension and indicate opinions about the reading. These journals were checked by me at monthly sessions and collected at the end of the study. In addition to these tools, I kept my own journal to reflect on learners’ interactions among themselves as well as with me as researcher.

1.10 Thesis organization

This section provides an overview of the structure of the thesis chapter by chapter.

Chapter 1

Introduces the study, discusses the contextual background of the study, statement of the problem, research aim and objectives, research questions, significance of the study, research assumptions, limitations of the study, an overview of the research methodology and the organization of the thesis.

Chapter 2

The purpose of this chapter is to review relevant literature and to provide the theoretical framework of the study. In reviewing the literature, this chapter defines key concepts of Extensive Reading drawing on definitions and insights offered by other scholars' work on ER, discusses the reading materials of ER, contrasts Extensive Reading with Intensive Reading, discusses the principles of ER followed by Implementation issues of ER, revisits the benefits of ER, deliberates on reading comprehension and fluency, reading experiences and attitudes as well as Mathewson's attitude model. Then the chapter reviews research that has been conducted on ER, specifically focusing on areas of experiences, attitudes, reading comprehension and implementation issues, to identify the similarities and differences with this study. In addition, the chapter focuses on the theoretical framework that anchored the study. The chapter further unpacks Krashen's (1982) Comprehension and Affective Filter Hypotheses, widely applied by various educational researchers as the main theory behind ER, as the chosen theoretical framework for the study. In addition to Krashen's hypotheses, reading theories such as bottom-up and top-down as well as the schema theory in relation to ER are discussed.

Chapter 3

This chapter details the research methodology of the study, namely the research design, research methods, target population, sample and sampling procedures, research instruments, data collection procedures, data analysis, the validity and trustworthiness of the study and then concludes with ethical considerations.

Chapter 4

This chapter presents and analyses the data. It further, explores and interprets the research findings presented by the data in answering the research questions of grade 8 learner's current experiences and attitudes towards reading; how ER might affect grade 8 learners' reading comprehension and attitude towards reading as well as the possible challenges faced in implementing ER in this public school. The chapter opens with data presentation and analysis and further discusses the findings in detail, starting with the learner experiences followed by learner attitudes as per pre- and post-study questionnaires data; the reading comprehension as per reading journals and further looks at the implementation challenges that surfaced and which were encountered by both the

learners and the researcher. The chapter concludes by providing the limitations of this study.

Chapter 5

Concludes the study and makes relevant recommendations and suggestions for further study.

1.11 Conclusion

This introductory chapter contextualised the study for the reader by providing the background, the statement of the problem, research objectives, research questions, the significance of the study, the research assumptions, the overview of research methodology, limitations of the study and the organizational structure of the thesis.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Extensive reading (ER) has been widely researched in different cultural contexts globally and has been found to be an effective tool in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) as well as Foreign Language Acquisition (FLA). According to Waring (2011), the main aims of extensive reading, by contrast, are to build the learners' fluency, reading speed and general comprehension of reading texts as well as practising the skill of reading itself. Typically, learners will be reading a text with a very high percentage of the words already known, so they can read fluently and smoothly with high levels of comprehension. The present study focussed on exploring learner experiences and attitudes towards ER, developing reading comprehension and fluency, and unearthing the challenges in implementing ER, in the hope of cultivating positive attitudes towards reading. The study was narrowed to a selected group of Grade 8 learners in a public secondary school within a previously disadvantaged community, in the township of Katutura, in Windhoek the capital city of Namibia.

The first chapter of the introduction gave an overview of what this study entails. The purpose of this chapter is to review the literature that informed this study. In reviewing the literature, this chapter defines key concepts of Extensive Reading drawing on definitions and insights offered by other scholars' work on ER, discusses the reading materials of ER, contrasts Extensive Reading with Intensive Reading, discusses the principles of ER followed by Implementation issues of ER, revisits the benefits of ER, deliberates on reading comprehension and fluency as well as reading experiences and attitudes. Then the chapter reviews research that has been conducted on ER to identify the similarities and differences with this study. In addition, the chapter focuses on the theoretical framework that anchored the study by unpacking Krashen's Comprehension and Affective Filter Hypotheses (1982). This theory is widely applied by various educational researchers as the main theory behind ER and thus it has been adopted as the theoretical framework for the study. In addition to Krashen's hypotheses, reading theories such as bottom-up and top-down as well as the schema theory in relation to ER are discussed.

2.2 Definition of Key Concepts

2.2.1 Definition of Reading

Before attempting to define Extensive Reading, it is only reasonable to look at some definitions of reading, regarded by many, as the main and important activity in the process of learning. The Cambridge Advanced Learners' Dictionary (4th Edition) defines reading as "the skill of getting information from books" (p.1276). Apart from dictionary definitions, reading is also defined by various scholars. As cited in Essays (2018), some scholars define reading as:

- "A process whereby one looks at and understands what has been written (Williams, 1984).
- "A personal activity that is mainly done silently and alone" (Rohani Ariffin, 1992, p.2).
- "A two-way interaction in which information is exchanged between the reader and the author" (Brunan 1989), which Smith (1973, p. 2) equally agrees to as "an act of communication in which information is transferred from a transmitter to a receiver".
- Stallfter (1969), acknowledges how teachers define reading as "a complicated procedure". This is because, for readers to get information from printed pages, they should be able to "pronounce and comprehend printed words, signs, letters and symbols by assigning meaning to them".

In other contexts, such as classroom-based reading comprehension instructions, reading is defined as a sociocultural activity. In this regard, Reza and Mahmood (2013), define reading by acknowledging Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory of learning. This theory regards reading as a social activity and thus puts social factors first and individual or personal factors secondary. In a study that argues for reading as a social activity, requiring mediators, Reza and Mahmood focused on English Foreign Language learners (EFL) and used techniques such as teacher and/or peer scaffolding for reading comprehension. While I agree that Vygotsky's sociocultural theory is applicable for reading instructions especially within a social setting such as in a classroom for scaffolding purposes, it is, however, noteworthy that reading can be an individual activity when done outside of a classroom or

school setting, such as was the case of this present study. It also appears that attitudes towards reading, as well as how one perceives reading as an activity, influences one's individual reading experiences. This is perhaps why, reading is also defined as an individualistic experience shaped by attitudes towards reading (Lukhele, 2013). Nevertheless, for the sake of researcher and participant interactions, on book recommendations, advice and selection amongst others, I would agree that reading can be viewed both as social and individual.

For book exchanges/selections, book recommendations and advice, the present study's participants had to interact among themselves as well as with the researcher on a monthly basis whenever possible. I say whenever possible because some of these pre-arranged sessions did not take place due to unforeseen school closures and lockdowns caused by the Covid-19 pandemic national regulations. Hence, participants were mostly encouraged to read unassisted and individually at home, during these school closures and lockdown periods. The study further focused on ESL learners reading for pleasure and not on reading instruction per se, thus I consider this approach of reading as more individual (while not disregarding the social aspect) since learners had to read on their own. The social aspect of this present study was, as mentioned before, limited as participants and researcher were sometimes not able to attend all sessions.

From the definitions of reading, for this particular study, I concur with the definition that reading is "a personal or individual activity" which involves "an interactive process between the reader and the text". Furthermore, Nunan (2003, p. 68, as cited in Mart, 2012, p. 92) posits that reading is a fluent process, through which, readers "combine information from a text with their own background knowledge to build meaning, for which the goal is comprehension". It is evident that this interaction between the reader and the text is supported by the top-down and bottom-up reading processes, where the reader uses prior knowledge and new knowledge to engage with a written text. These top-down and bottom-up processes will further be discussed in the theoretical section of this chapter.

Reading is also considered as an activity that brings "emotional engagement" and "educational attainment".

For emotional engagement, Billington (2015, p.4) states that reading produces higher levels of self-esteem and a greater ability to cope with difficult situations, it also helps readers to look at their own lives with a new perspective and understanding. It further produces a greater understanding and empathy with others and creates openness for sharing experiences meaningfully in social conversations and it engages readers in awareness of social and cultural diversities (*ibid*). For educational attainment Wu (2012, as cited in Endris, 2018) posits that reading is of the essence, mainly for foreign and second language learners, as “it provides opportunities of exposure to the target language in input-poor countries” (p.2).

It should be noted that in education, the “main goal of reading is comprehension” (Grabe, 2009). This indicates that reading cannot take place without comprehension. However, despite its importance, reading comprehension seems to be lacking in English Foreign Language as well as English Second Language contexts, as in the case for many Namibians. The complexity of reading comprehension “covers various interactions between the reader, the text, the purpose and the context” (Snow, 2002, as cited in Endris, 2018, p. 2). This shows that reading is an active process in which we continuously construct meaning from texts. Hence, for learners to engage in this complex process of reading comprehension, they need to engage more in ER activities, for example, Yamashita (2013) argues that “the more texts learners read in the second language, the more input, of the language, they obtain” (p. 249). Furthermore, Bright and McGregor (1970, p. 52), equally maintain that a learner who wants to learn a language must read themselves into a knowledge of it unless they can move into an environment of the target language. Similarly, Nuttall (1982, as cited in Endris, 2018), states that “next to living among native speakers, the best way to improve language learning or input is to read in it extensively” (p. 2).

2.2.2 Definition of Extensive Reading

Extensive reading cannot be defined properly without mentioning its origins. According to Chiu-Kuei (2015), the term “extensive reading” was originated by Palmer in 1917 to differentiate it from intensive reading. This term was defined as reading lengthy texts just for enjoyment in simplified language and the purpose was to comprehend the general meaning and be able to pursue it to the end without focusing on the grammatical and lexical

components. Additionally, extensive reading has been defined by various scholars simply as “reading in large quantities in order to get a general understanding of what is read” (Richards & Schmidt, 2002, p. 193) which is corroborated by Drew and Sørheim (2009). For other scholars, as cited in Boakye (2017, p.2), extensive reading is sometimes referred to as pleasure reading (Day & Bamford, 2009), sustained silent reading (Garan & DeVooged, 2008), or free reading (Krashen, 2004). Hill (2008), simply refers to extensive reading as “reading in quantity”. The latter might be a very brief but most truthful definition of ER. However, since “quantity” is difficult to specify, Hill suggests that one book per week should be the target for an average learner. The scholar further opines that if learners are to read in quantity, they should possess a reading fluency or speed and have access to interesting reading material of their level of language proficiency. In line with Hill’s suggestion, this study opted at aiming for one book per week. However, Firth (2009) suggests that the learners’ current level of ability and motivation which is of primary concern could make room for accepting any number of books read at learners’ own pace as being extensive (p. 244).

Moreover, learners for this study hailed from disadvantaged backgrounds, thus it is important to consider the fact that English is not only their second language but also the LoLT of all subjects across the curriculum. This implies that English is not a completely foreign language to these learners and therefore they could simply not be dismissed as unable to read a book per week. However, different reading volumes or sizes of reading material might have caused learners to read a book in less than a week or more than a week, also considering learners’ other responsibilities like homework, extra-mural activities and/or other domestic responsibilities. Thus, a book regardless of its volume might have taken lesser or more days to finish. I harmonise with Day and Bamford’s definition of ER as “pleasure reading” and this is the definition that has been adopted for this study because I wanted learner participants not only to read extensively but also to enjoy reading.

2.2.3 Reading comprehension and fluency

Reading comprehension is defined by Woolley (2011), as a “flexible ongoing cognitive and constructive process which involves top-down and bottom-up processes to construct a situation or mental model of text ideas” it is further defined as a “two-way process of integrating text-based information with reader prior knowledge by means of inferential processing”. This definition of reading comprehension seems to imply that comprehension

is facilitated by the reader's prior knowledge as well as the new knowledge presented by the text, which the reader understands through word recognition and word decoding. It seems that whether we are beginner readers or avid readers, reading comprehension is an important aspect in making reading enjoyable. This reading comprehension coupled with the love of reading further leads to reading fluency.

Moreover, rapid word recognition and automatic word decoding are identified to be two ways to reading fluency and are supposedly taught at the primary school level. For Wolf (2018), word recognition has to do with repeated reading of the same text and automatic word decoding is reading a slightly different text to practice word decoding. Morris (2015) supports the claim that children master decoding text when they are offered simple, decodable spelling patterns at the beginning reader stages of their lives. For those of us who went to primary schools, it is evident that reading at this level was mostly that of word recognition and word decoding through simplified texts. These simplified texts, with or without pictures, were drilled by teacher/mediators for mastering reading. In this regard, Mohaideen et al. (2020), argue for the proper and careful selection of primary school reading texts or reading materials in ESL contexts, to ease learners reading experiences. It is also noteworthy that, while all learners within a given primary school class were taught reading by the same teacher, using same methods and materials, that as learners we had different reading abilities. Some of us loved storytelling and thus loved reading sessions, while other classmates preferred, for example building blocks and/or other activities. Therefore, as mentioned earlier, I can attest, as a passionate reader myself, that the love of reading coupled with comprehension results in reading fluency.

For Rasinski et al. (2021), the capacity to read texts accurately, at the right speed, and with the right prosody are three characteristics that are commonly equated with fluent reading, with the goal of deriving meaning from reading. However, it appears that reading fluency instruction does not take place in classrooms. In this regard, Gilner and Morales (2010), opine that since reading fluency is not explicitly taught in schools but rather seen as a skill developed through reading, only those learners who master word recognition and word decoding strategies from early ages tend to become fluent readers in future. Many avid readers are likely to agree to this, because the more we read, the more we are able to

derive meanings from reading and the more we are able to read with speed. Reading fluency is further linked to reading comprehension (Guerin & Murphy, 2015). From numerous studies that attested to this claim, I concur with one Turkish study on reading fluency and reading comprehension, carried out with learners from grade 4 to grade 8, which found that word recognition was a significant predictor of comprehension (Yildirim et al., 2019). This seems to further imply that reading comprehension does influence reading fluency.

Hence, adopting Krashen's Comprehensible Input (1982), this present study looked at whether learners understood (by subconscious word recognition and word decoding), what they read as well as whether this comprehensible input could have helped improve their reading fluency. Most importantly, learners were not tested for assessment, rather they were tasked to write short summaries of each reading in their reading journals as entries for reading comprehension which also, by means of their reading calendars, revealed their reading frequency to determine their reading fluency. However, because of lack of enjoyable reading material, learners might not have engaged in reading as much as it was desired.

As a researcher exploring reading, perhaps I am obliged to acknowledge the five key concepts of reading instruction identified by the American National Reading Panel (Shanahan, 2005). These are phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. According to this Reading Panel, phonemic awareness refers to the awareness of sounds within words; while phonics refers to the instruction of how letters and sounds relate to one another and how this knowledge can help decode or pronounce words in written texts; fluency refers to oral reading fluency which is defined as the ability to express oneself properly when reading aloud with precision and rapidity; vocabulary either refers to word meanings or teaching of word meaning but could also refer both word recognition and word meaning; and comprehension which the panel defines in length is the act understanding a written text by using one's own prior knowledge and beliefs in order to infer what the author communicates, and like many scholars, the panel finally defines reading comprehension as the ongoing interaction between reader and text .

Having acknowledged the above key concepts of reading instruction put forth by the National Reading Panel, it is worth mentioning that the present study focused on reading comprehension because the onus was on ER as an activity. ER as the name suggests, has to do with reading extensively, which in turn requires comprehension and fluency. Most importantly, it should be noted that the present study was not based on classroom reading instruction per se but on unassisted reading as an activity itself, requiring individualistic reading for comprehension and fluency, and gain pleasure by so doing.

2.2.4 Reading experiences and attitudes

2.2.4.1 Reading experiences

Reading experiences of learners can be defined as foundations laid from their childhood at home and later throughout primary school before they get to high school. In her study of *Infants' Experiences of Shared Reading with Their Educators in Early Childhood Education and Care Centres*, Torr (2019), found that shared parent-to-child reading affects the development of language and literacy in children. In another study by Tremblay et al. (2020) found that early reading experiences of children are linked to literacy skills in the teenage years. This seems to agree that reading attitudes are a result of reading experiences, thus learner reading experiences prior to secondary school have a huge influence on how they perceive not only reading as an activity but how they see themselves as readers.

Scholars such as McKenna and Kear (1990, as cited in Akhmetova, Imambayeva and Csapo, 2022) are of the opinion that primary school learners because of experience portray a positive attitude towards leisure and academic reading, but that these attitudes drop drastically when they reach secondary schools. The authors maintain that attitudes towards reading are determined by learners' experiences which influence their state of mind as well as their emotions. Could this mean that adolescents at secondary schools are perhaps more under pressure, psychologically and emotionally which hinders their state of mind and emotions, as compared to their counterparts at primary schools, who are perhaps exposed to more reading time through story readings in favourable environments?

It appears that primary school reading experiences result in learners liking or disliking reading which in turn results in positive or negative attitudes towards reading. Tremblay et al. (2020), further reiterate that it takes a longer period of time for children to assimilate the actions and beliefs of the “significant others” with regards to reading, thus I believe that reading attitudes and experiences should be given ample time to see positive changes in learners who start reading for enjoyment at secondary school level, regardless of how “poorly” learners see themselves as readers. As teacher-researchers, we should also not hastily assume “delayed impact” upon running an ER program for a year whilst dealing with learners who have not been avid readers for years. These learners need to experience for themselves the pleasure they can achieve from leisure reading, not only for reading comprehension and fluency but also for them to have a positive attitude towards reading as a pleasurable activity.

2.2.4.2 Reading attitudes

No study on reading or extensive reading would be complete without including the impact of the affective component or the attitude of the participant towards reading. Hence, adopting the Affective filter hypothesis put forth by Krashen (1982), this study attempted to explore learners’ reading experiences and attitudes via pre- and post-study questionnaires. Furthermore, it appears that the affective element is widely recognized as an important component of reading programs and thus could be directly linked to attitudes towards reading. Yamashita (2004), points out that affective factors influence reading abilities, and maintain that reading attitudes are importantly shaped by reading experiences and parental and teacher influences, emphasizing the relevance of parents and teachers who read as role models. Therefore, the affective domain of attitudes should be nurtured in reading programs to motivate actual reading activities. However, one should acknowledge that attitude as a phenomenon is challenging to define, let alone to study. This is perhaps because attitude is seen as not directly measurable because feelings are a hidden component (Moodley, 2003 as cited in Nkomo, 2018). Similarly, Eagly and Chaiken (2007) posit that attitude is something “inside the mind of an individual” (p.584). Eagly and Chaiken further maintain that since attitude is inside and individual, it is not directly observable but can be manifested through covert and overt responses (p.585). However, these responses are said to be observable through research instruments, thereby giving evidence of the existence of attitudes. Moreover, overt attitudes refer to behaviours which are openly visible

and observable such as physical actions, whereas covert attitudes are hidden and not easily observable behaviours such as mental processes (Hasa, 2020). This seems to suggest that reading is both overt as it requires action and covert as it requires mental processes, hence the two are inseparable in reading. Recent deliberations on attitudes differentiate between implicit and explicit attitudes. Eagly and Chaiken (2007) report on the explicit attitude as the predominant one, stating that explicit attitudes are self-reported by the person who is the holder of the attitude, simply because “the owner of the attitude is aware of the expression of the attitude that is elicited by the instrument”. The implicit attitude as defined by these authors as one that is not consciously recognized by the owner of the attitude. This present study sought to explore learners’ covert as well as explicit attitudes. Covert, since learners had to read extensively and individually at home and overt attitudes which constituted the action of reading could not be directly observed by the researcher, and explicit because the researcher had to rely on participants’ self-reported attitudes.

Accepting this complexity of reading attitude, I further concur with some of the definitions attempted by various scholars. For example, Subadrino (2019), defines it as an individual’s feeling regarding reading (covert and explicit) and behaviour such as selecting and reading books (overt). This could imply that an individual’s positive feelings towards reading is insufficient if not coupled by positive behaviour and the selection of a book in order to engage in actual reading. In addition, Alexander and Filler (1976, p.1) define it as “a system of feelings related to reading which causes the learner to approach or avoid reading”. In this regard of approaching or avoiding reading, Mathewson (1994) proposes a model of reading attitude, which will be explored in the next session to further discuss what attitude towards reading comprises.

2.2.4.3 Mathewson's model of attitude

Below is a simplified version of Mathewson's (1994) model of attitude and how it influences reading, followed by a discussion and how it relates to the present study.

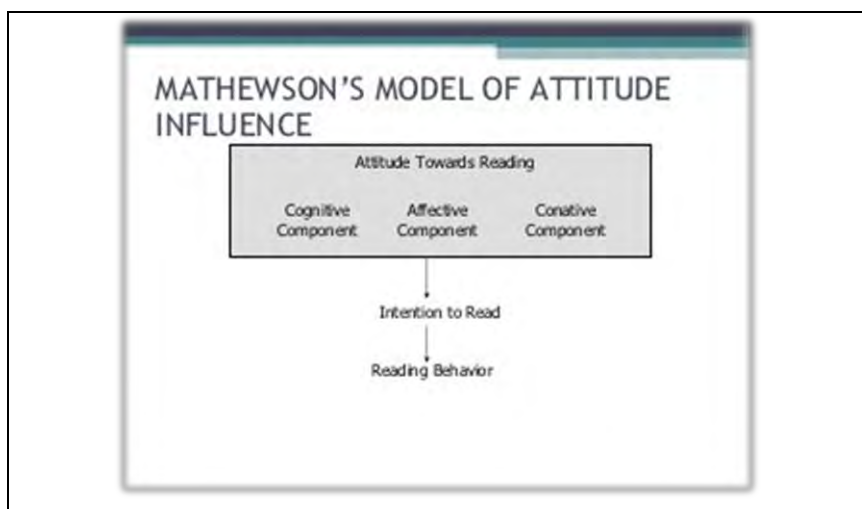


Figure 1 adopted from prezi.com

Mathewson's model of attitude as seen above, proposes 3 components such as the cognitive, the affective and the conative. The cognitive component refers to beliefs that one holds onto, the affective component refers to one's feelings or emotions and conative component stands for behavioural intentions, without which readers will not read actively or committedly. In other words, our beliefs and feelings are incomplete without our intentions to act on them. Another way of simplifying Mathewson's model of reading attitude would mean that positive attitude alone cannot guarantee actual reading habits, and noting that attitude alone cannot influence reading, the scholar emphasizes that behaviour as intention mediates the decision to actually read. Additionally, Mathewson argues against the relevancy of attitude, as he believes that even with a positive attitude one can lack the intention to read and therefore reading will not happen. However, I am of the opinion that the intention to actually read is primarily influenced by our beliefs and our feelings, and thus agree that all of these 3 components are intertwined as one cannot stand isolated.

In addition to these 3 components, Mathewson identified external motivators as important factors influencing the intention to read or to continue reading. For Mathewson "incentives, purposes, norms and settings" make up external motivators. Incentives and

purposes could be anything that encourages a learner to read, such as rewards, getting high grades, or any other socially driven incentives. Norms refer to objectives that could guide both educators and learners as external motivators. Settings involve fostering an environment and mood favourable for reading. This present study has indeed considered these 3 components by means of exploring participants' beliefs and feelings towards reading, influenced by their reading experiences, as well as nurturing their intentions to read through external motivation of purpose and setting. For this present study, ER explained as a beneficial activity to participants served as purpose while setting was at the participants' own choosing. Learners positive attitude towards reading in and out-of-school can result in greater chances of them engaging in actual reading seeing that motivation, whether intrinsic or extrinsic, can make learners to spend time reading (Udu, 2021).

To conclude Mathewson's model of reading attitude, our positive perceptions of reading seem to result in positive attitude towards reading, which finally causes us to read and to continue reading. This present study, considering Mathewson's model, not only facilitated reading for learner participants but it is evident that some learners still continue to engage in reading as they are still coming back for books after the study has ended. It appears that these learners' positive attitude towards reading has become prolonged. As suggested by Eagly and Chaiken (2007) attitudes can be short or long termed, depending on different individuals and how they respond to a given phenomenon (p.585). This is evident in various ER studies, including this present study, that some learners tend to continue reading because they have developed a positive attitude toward reading as evidenced through their actions, while others stop reading after ER programs come to an end.

2.2.5 Reading materials for Extensive Reading

Extensive reading requires reading huge amounts of a variety of relevant reading material. I would like to think that this variety of reading material could be any type of reading available at hand, if it makes reading pleasurable. However, many ER program facilitators seem to emphasize the reading of graded readers. Waring (1997) for example uses the term graded readers and extensive reading interchangeably or equates them as the same thing while he further defines graded readers as "texts which are simplified into reading proficiency levels

to accommodate the developing reading competency of the second language reader". I would however think of the two as separate components; extensive reading as an approach that advocates for reading extensively and graded readers as books made available to facilitate extensive reading programs, since such books might not be widely available, as in the case of this present study, where learners had to read available novels and other reading materials. Besides, Hill (2008, p. 185) defines graded readers as "books for learners of English with limited lexis and syntax". Waring (2011), further defines graded readers as books written at varying levels of difficulty from beginner to advanced and are the most common, but not the only resources for ER. Albay (2017) similarly posit that graded readers are to move learners from one level of reading to the next as they are said to be produced for the second language learners. It is worth mentioning that Waring (2011) suggests graded readers as the most common but not the only means of reading material for ER, thus reading programs could be facilitated with what is available. For example, this study used books available from the school library as well as what learners could find outside of the library.

2.2.6 Difference between Extensive Reading (ER) and Intensive Reading (IR)

Extensive Reading (ER), which is mostly done outside of the classroom, aids learners to practice Intensive Reading (IR) which they learn in the classroom. For example, IR is said to be similar to "learning driving lessons at a driving school, while ER has to do with the actual driving on the street" (Endris, 2018, p.2). Miller (2011, p.70), posits that IR as a methodology is "teacher-centred" because "the teacher directs and facilitates most of what happens in the classroom, including what to read, when to read, how to read and what vocabulary, grammar, text organization or comprehension points are to be discussed", this usually follows a pattern of pre-, during, and post-reading activities. Boakye (2017, p. 2) similarly highlights that while "IR aims to develop reading skills explicitly by teaching strategies such as identifying main ideas, recognising text signals and finding the meaning of words, ER encourages reading of comprehensible texts for pleasure". This can be summarised in the words of Endris (2018 p.2) that defines IR as similar to "learning driving lessons at a driving school, while ER is the actual driving on the street". This is probably why ER programs should not incorporate pre and post-tests activities. Furthermore, Miller elaborates on IR as a method where bottom-up and top- down processes are interactively used to achieve reading comprehension, giving attention to phoneme, root, and word

recognition to progress towards meaning (bottom-up) as well as to process (top-down) of starting with background knowledge and general meaning to a more specific comprehension (p.70).

According to Miller (2011) IR “focuses too much on sentence-level syntax which can turn a reading class into a grammar class” and while acknowledging that there is nothing wrong in teaching grammar, he accentuates that it is not the same as “reading”. On the other hand, Miller emphasizes that ER places priority on fluency rather than accuracy and overall comprehension rather than a detailed understanding of every word and syntactical structure; and that ER is more autonomous than IR as it puts the responsibility on learners to monitor their own progress” (p.71). For this reason, participant learners of this study were encouraged to read as much as possible and to make meaning of a whole text by inferring words, instead of trying to understand every challenging word separately if such words appear in their reading, as this improves fluency which in turn results in reading speed.

The following table further illustrates how IR is different from ER:

Table 1

Intensive Reading		Extensive Reading
Analysis of the Language	LINGUISTIC FOCUS	Fluency, Skill Forming
Usually difficult	DIFFICULTY	Very easy
Little	AMOUNT	A book a week
Teacher selects	SELECTION	Learner selects
All learners study the same material	WHAT MATERIAL	All learners read different things (something interesting to them)
In class	WHERE	Mostly at home
Checked by specific questions	COMPREHENSION	Checked by reports/summaries

Note. Adapted from *Getting an Extensive Reading Program Going*, by Waring 2000 (based on Welsh,1997).

From this table, it is evident that IR is more teacher-centred compared to ER which is learner-centred. The table further illustrates that learners are to be in charge of their own reading, from choosing the reading material of their level to where and when they read, as well as keeping track of their reading experiences via short notes.

2.2.7 Principles of ER

From the principles of Day and Bamford, it is evident that for ER to be successful, it should be carefully planned and carried out, while also considering possible issues that may inhibit its implementation brought forth by Renandya et al. (2021). This study, while recognizing all ten principles put forth by Day and Bamford, opted to put in place principles 3, 4, 6, 8 and 9 as guidelines. I concur with Renandya et al. (2021), who posits that the principles offered by Day and Bamford do not need to be followed thoroughly as they are not rules for flawless implementation of ER but rather should be seen and used as guiding principles.

In brief, as per the third principle learners were given the liberty of choosing what they wanted to read with the option of dropping a book when it becomes difficult or boring to continue. Applying the fourth principle, learners were encouraged to read as much as possible for reading to become a norm or habit. Reading as much as possible could in turn result in reading speed or fluency. The sixth principle was the most important for this study because reading was not for assessment nor for following up with comprehension questions, for this reason, I did not opt for pre and post-study comprehension tests with two groups of participants as widely used by ER researchers.

For data generation, this study opted for pre- and post-study questionnaires and learners' reading journals. The eighth principle emphasizes the importance of letting learners choose when and where to read which in other words also determined their pace of reading. To apply the ninth principle, I thoroughly informed the learners about the benefits of ER. Besides, as researcher, teacher, and librarian at the site, I had to introduce the study participating learners to available books in the school library, while advising them to read other available reading materials outside of the school library since the library might not have a rich variety to choose from.

For ER to be pleasurable, Day and Bamford (2002) proposed the following ten principles for an extensive reading approach (p.137-140):

1. The reading material is easy.

This evidently shows how ER is different in comparison to other reading approaches, as learners are to read material within their level of comprehension. The authors posit that one or two unknown words per page might make overall comprehension difficult for beginner readers and up to five unknown words for intermediate learners. They also admit the controversy over easy reading material but maintain that texts should be within learners' language ability, easy and enjoyable to motivate learners to read (p.137).

2. A variety of reading material on a wide range of topics must be available. According to

Day and Bamford, a variety of reading materials help learners to read for different reasons such as for entertainment, for information or for passing time. A variety of texts makes reading inclusive for a variety of learners, seeing that different learners have different preferences of what to read. Moreover, variety "awakens or encourages a desire to read".

3. Learners choose what they want to read.

Learners are at liberty to choose what they want to read because this encourages them to pick anything of their interest. Furthermore, learners are also at liberty to stop reading if they find the material too boring to enjoy or difficult to comprehend. This is proof that learners read for themselves and not for teachers, nor for assessments.

4. Learners read as much as possible.

Day and Bamford posit that this is the "extensive" of extensive reading. This principle accentuates the importance of time spend on reading and thus proposes a book per week as minimum ER to be a beneficial and habitual activity. This is because the authors argue that beginner and low-intermediate learner books are very short. To describe a book as short seems ambiguous. For example, is it the font or the number of pages that determine the shortness of a book?

5. The purpose of reading is usually for pleasure, information, and general understanding.

In ER, learners are required to read for the same reasons that native language readers are expected to read, for pleasure, information, and general understanding. A detailed understanding is not a necessity, but global comprehension of a text and the “reader’s personal experience”. The purpose of reading determines how the reader interacts with the texts.

6. Reading is its own reward.

For ER, the reading experience is more important than comprehension tasks. Day and Bamford maintain that ER should not involve comprehension questions but that teachers could otherwise ask learners for follow up activities for example “to find out what the learner understood and experienced; to monitor attitudes towards reading; to keep track of reading, and to make reading a shared experience” (p.138).

7. Reading speed is usually faster, rather than slower.

To read with fluency learners are to be discouraged to use dictionaries and encouraged to ignore unknown words and to depend on the general understanding of a text as the onus is not on detailed understanding.

8. Reading is individual and silent.

ER is an individual experience of a reader interacting with texts and this is usually silent reading. This principle further suggests that learners are at liberty to choose when and where to read.

9. Teachers orient and guide their learners.

Learners ought to be properly orientated towards an ER program. To start, teachers should explain the benefits of ER, assuring learners of their own choice of what to read and that

this reading is not for assessment. Then teachers should introduce different types of reading materials to learners.

10. The teacher is a role model of a reader.

ER teachers are supposed to be readers themselves. Setting an example of a positive attitude and behaviour towards reading might encourage and/or motivate learners to become habitual readers.

In summarizing the above principles proposed for ER, it can be assumed that reading simply must be done by means of the reader taking charge of what to read, when to read, to read extensively and fluently for the sole purpose of enjoyment and not for assessment. Additionally, these principles should not be taken as rules but applied as some guidelines in ER programs to curb some implementation issues.

2.2.8 Top Ten Implementation issues of ER

Having looked at the principles of ER, it is beneficial to look at some issues that could inhibit its implementation. It is worthy to note that ER programs from different studies brought forth different results. Some scholars had beneficial ER programs while others seemed to have implementation issues of different natures. Renandya et al. (2021), recently identified ten implementation issues regarding ER and offered some solutions as presented below:

1. Limited Time.

Limited time seems to be a challenge for teachers to implement ER. The scholars opine that teachers see ER as time-consuming because of the numerous duties they must attend to such as heavy teaching load, marking, supervision, mentoring subordinates, extra tuition, staff meetings and organising school trips. They suggest two possible solutions, one is to convince teachers with evidence of ER benefits, the other is to mention ER explicitly in the curriculum to motivate teachers to include it in a sustainable manner. However, these suggested solutions might make ER seem like a replacement approach for some classroom tasks instead of an additive approach that learners could benefit from without adding on teachers' workload. Robb and Kano (2013), make a helpful distinction between

replacement and additive ER in this regard and note that the bulk of the research thus far has been undertaken evaluating reading within the language class. So-called 'replacement' occurs within class time, and necessarily something must give way to allow the time for the reading. But, duly noting that class time is and remains limited.

Additionally, and in agreement with the limited time that may inhibit classroom-based ER implementation, I am of the opinion that ER could successfully be implemented as an out-of-school reading program that puts learners in charge of their own reading. ER is supposed to be learner-centred and the teachers can act as orienteers, facilitators and guides instead of seeing ER as teacher-centred where the teachers are expected to put in additional time which they seem not to have.

2. Lack of relevant reading materials.

Availability of relevant reading material is another implementation issue for ER. The scholars posit that these reading materials are books that are specifically designed for language learners also known as "graded readers" that cater for different reading abilities. As possible solutions, they suggest that learners read graded readers online or download other online reading materials that are widely available to both teachers and learners. Graded readers seem to be preferred by several ER researchers, however, in a society such as Namibia, we make do of the available reading material, which is not graded, readers. In addition, this study was carried out in a community where most learners and their parents do not own smart devices and do not have an internet connection to access online reading. The solutions that are suggested here might only work in well- resourced areas. This study encouraged learners to borrow available books from the school library, community libraries and each other.

3. Delayed impact of ER.

Expectations of quick results from ER, especially in the form of reading comprehension seem to be a worrisome issue. What ER implementors need to understand is that ER should probably be lengthy to reap possible benefits thereof. According to Renandya et al. (2021) amongst other internal processes, "comprehending the language input takes time". According to them, ER suggests that language acquisition is slow, requires continuous

exposure to comprehensible texts and can stimulate “incidental language learning adding to implicit knowledge of the language”.

The tricky question to ask is, how long ER would take to show visible results. For reading fluency, the scholars suggest that fast reading is determined by the number of words per minute after 100 000 to 200 000 words are read, for looking at all language competencies of reading, writing, listening, and speaking the numbers are expected to be from 500 000 to 1 million words. This suggestion seems to be vague as books are not explicitly mentioning the number of words they contain unless of course they are counted. However, I agree that language acquisition via ER takes time as learners need to process the comprehensible input before any benefits are reaped. The scholars do not suggest solutions for this implementation issue but rather maintain that lengthy ER programs yield evidence of visible results as reported by various authors.

4. Legitimacy issue.

This issue is concerned with teachers feeling unproductive when learners choose their reading material, excluding teacher involvement. It is said to make both teacher and learner feel that learning and teaching do not take place. Thus, it is suggested that teachers create ER reading materials link thematically to coursebooks. If ER materials are created by teachers linking them to coursebooks, then I am of the opinion that it does not give learners the ownership of what they want to read, thereby making ER teacher- centred.

5. Lack of support from school leaders.

It is believed that school leaders do not support ER programs and should be encouraged to do so. Renandya et al. (2021), opine that though school leaders are aware of ER benefits, they are not keen to support it. The scholars suggest that such leaders be brought on board by showing them visible results, for example, of poor-performing schools who improved in learner final examination performances after a year of ER implementation. With this goal of producing excelling learners, they might be convinced to support ER. This is one suggestion that might work in our schools as it seems that our school leaders are performance-driven, and which school would not want to be seen as an academically performing school?

6. Limited knowledge about ER.

It is believed that ER information is broadly available on the internet but it must be taken into consideration that such information can only be accessed by deliberate search, therefore it must not be assumed that because it is available, it is accessible without interest in it. This might be why, as teachers, we are not knowledgeable about ER as we ought to, especially language teachers we are the ones teaching and assessing reading in various ways. They suggest that fiction be incorporated in learner reading programs as these are seen as more interesting to learners.

7. No personal experience with ER.

Renandya et al, maintain that it is not sufficient to only have information about ER. They state that not having “personal success experiences” in their past school life, might be one of the reasons why teachers are not keen on ER, like one ER author who kept implementing it with her university students because of her past personal experience. Although her ER journey with her students was not always rosy, she committed to making it work, unlike some teachers who would drop an ER program because of obstacles only to claim that ER does not work for one or the other reason. The scholars suggest that both teachers and learners could go on a year ER program to build a personal experience for the teachers, who could, in turn, be motivated to implement more of such programs with their learners. This seems a doable suggestion if there is relevant reading material available both to teachers and their learners.

8. Lack of motivation.

According to Renandya et al. (2021) concur with Day and Bamford, that motivation plays a major role in ER. People with high motivation are believed to be more successful than those who lack motivation. Sustained motivation thus become vital in ER as the effectiveness of ER can mainly be seen after a lengthy duration. According to Renandya et al. (2021), teachers see their learners as not interested in ER and thus lack motivation. They uphold that interest and motivation are driven by the availability of enjoyable and relatable books for learners to self-select. They are further in agreement with Day and Bamford, that teachers must not only be verbal about ER but must rather be role-models themselves if they are to be motivators of ER.

9. Limited professional development opportunity.

To be acquainted with ER, it is suggested that teachers attend professional development workshops regularly, if such workshops are available for their school, to keep their knowledge and abilities up to date. If explicit workshops on ER are not available, it may lead to limited chances of including ER programs at such schools. Even if such workshops were available, teachers may still have ER implementation concerns, and thus may require help from other ER professionals like the largely found online networks they can join for free. These online platforms may help teachers to discuss their concerns, share their success stories, as well as offer practical advice on how to engage the reluctant reader in developing healthy reading habits. I believe this type of advice may only work in areas where teachers have access to the internet and may not be a practical solution for all teachers.

10. ER principles are too demanding.

Renandya et al. (2021), claim that some ER teachers inaccurately believe that an ER program may not work if all ten principles offered by Day and Bamford are not included. They do agree that some principles are fundamental for ER implementation but suggest that the ten principles should only be viewed as guidelines and not as rules that must be strictly adhered to.

2.2.9 Benefits of Extensive Reading

Extensive reading is believed to have various benefits for the reader. One such benefit can be a subconscious acquisition of new vocabulary. According to Cunningham and Stanovich (2001, p.138), the bulk of vocabulary growth occurs indirectly through language exposure rather than through direct teaching. This 'bulk of vocabulary growth, occurring indirectly through language exposure' could also be referred to as subconscious language acquisition defined by Krashen's (1982) input hypothesis through extensive reading.

Furthermore, Cunningham and Stanovich state that "reading volume, rather than oral language, is the main contributor to individual differences in vocabulary – giving credit to reading volume as an effective means of more word-learning opportunities by expanding vocabulary because according to the speech is lexically impoverished as compared to the written language" (p.139). The authors maintain that although there are considerable

differences in the amount of reading volume in school, it is likely that differences in out-of-school reading volume are an even more “potent source of the rich-get-richer and poor-get-poorer achievement patterns”. This is probably one of the many reasons why schools should facilitate out-of-school reading programs for their learners.

Apart from vocabulary expansion, ER is also linked to developing fluency and positive attitudes towards reading (Probyn, 2009). Similarly, Savaş (2009) outlines the following ER benefits (p.6):

- It boosts confidence and motivation to improve learners’ overall attitude toward L2 while developing reading skills.
- It increases learners’ exposure to L2 and enhances their general language competence.
- It facilitates the development of prediction skills to predict the content of a text based on the pre-existing schema.
- It encourages learner autonomy.
- ER is a process of naturalization of L2 language learning.

This study explored an ER program with a single group of Grade 8 learners in the hope of cultivating learners’ reading experiences and attitudes. ER enables learners to infer the meaning of new words by means of prediction on existing schema and makes reading an enjoyable experience which in turn could result in positive attitudes. Moreover, the ER program could be argued as transformative since learners may not only have benefited by acquiring ESL subconsciously but possibly improved in reading skills of comprehension and fluency as well as in reading experiences and attitudes.

Apart from the above-mentioned benefits, scholars also argue for the effectiveness of ER, for example, Nakanishi (2015) using meta-analysis, carried out a study to investigate the effectiveness of ER, and whether learners’ ages impact learning from ER differently. The scholar further investigated whether the length of time that second language learners engaged in ER influenced outcome measures, and if an effect is found, identify effective periods of time for learners to engage in ER. In sum, the available ER research to date suggests that ER improves students’ reading proficiency and should therefore be a part of

foreign language reading curricula. Similarly, Chae (2019), investigated the overall effectiveness of extensive English reading through a meta-analysis and found that the available research to date suggests that extensive reading improves students' reading proficiency and should be a part of language learning curricula.

2.3 Review of Empirical Studies on Extensive Reading

Numerous studies have been conducted over the years on the influence and the effectiveness of Extensive Reading on reading experiences and attitudes to reading in the context of English as a Second language (ESL). In this review, I attempted to cover some ER programs facilitated in primary schools, secondary schools, and tertiary educational institutions in different contexts, with the focus on reading attitudes and experiences, reading comprehension and implementation issues.

2.3.1 Extensive Reading (ER) in Primary Schools

A study in Asia, carried out by Touhid (2015) analysed the implementation of extensive reading in ESL classrooms. It was a small-scale study exploring practices of extensive reading in the ESL classrooms at primary levels in Bangladeshi classrooms, Asia. It mainly focused on the principles of extensive reading and investigated to what extent the principles are followed in ESL classrooms as well as the difficulties faced by teachers to successfully implement ER programmes while considering teachers' attitudes, opinions and ideas concerning ER. The study found that teachers acknowledged the benefits of ER but encountered challenges in its implementation. It further showed that most learners read ER materials to pass the exams. In the class, the teachers emphasized the details of stories that may come in exams. This limited the carefree environment in which the students could read to get pleasure. Moreover, it made the students reluctant to read, forcing teachers to push them to read. The schools usually set exam questions from the ER textbooks to examine the students' reading of the "Graded Readers" hence the students were mostly concerned about passing the exams, instead of getting pleasure from the ER books. One could argue that implementing ER was a challenge here since the focus was on passing examinations and not free reading for enjoyment.

With a group of eighty grade five Namibian learners, hailing from an informal settlement in Windhoek, Olivier and Simasiku (2015) investigated whether ER could enhance learners' reading and writing skills. Using questionnaires, case study surveys, a quasi-experiment, pre and post-tests for mixed-method data, they found that the sessions of pleasure reading and practice in writing improved reading and writing scores for the experimental group. Findings further indicate that there was an increase in enjoyment, interest, and a positive attitude towards reading.

In Namibia, Hautemo (2016) evaluated factors that contribute to English Second Language acquisition in the upper primary phase of an urban school. The study focused on language acquisition and literacy. It explored factors contributing to the effectiveness of English language acquisition, investigated, and evaluated how the school context supports English second language acquisition of upper primary learners in an urban school in Namibia. What is of interest is that this Namibian study considered learners' reading skills, reading tools and resources in addition to school libraries and classrooms as providing a rich learning environment. The findings indicated that the provision of well-structured classroom activities containing comprehensible input a bit beyond the learners' current level – and a low affective filter allowed them to acquire the second language easily. This paper suggests that a good supportive environment for reading, scaffolded by sufficient assistance by the teachers and peers, helps learners develop good language acquisition and learning skills. Although the focus of the paper was not necessarily ER, its findings revealed some similarities on challenges I encountered with regards to library shortage of interesting, relevant reading material in English in addition to classrooms where there seemed to be a lack of equipment to set up reading corners or class libraries. According to the study, the teachers are blaming this on overcrowded classrooms. Furthermore, as found by Hautemo's study, a lack of interesting reading material seems to be a worrisome concern within the Namibian school context.

Kirchner & Mostert (2017) explored "the relationship between reading motivation, reading activity and achievement as well as gender differences" within urban primary school Namibian learners and found that learners preferred reading for pleasure, which can be translated into extensive reading which is based on pleasure or enjoyment, rather than for academic purposes. In addition, these learners seem to prefer print as opposed to digital texts. The scholars found curiosity and reading for assessment as motivating factors and

further established that there were positive relationships between motivation and reading activity or achievement. My study also opted for pleasure reading rather than reading for assessment. Therefore, pre- and post-tests on comprehension were not conducted.

An Ethiopian study on the effects of ER on reading comprehension and attitudes with primary school learners collected data via reading comprehension tests and attitude questionnaires with a control and interventionist groups for six weeks and twelve weeks (Endris, 2018). Findings show no significant differences in the two groups for six weeks but when the reading was extended to twelve weeks with ongoing motivating activities, the interventionist group scored higher on both reading comprehension and attitude towards ER. These findings suggest that ER should be done for a longer period to reap its benefits.

Nkomo (2018) investigated Grade 3 learners' attitudes towards reading at a primary school in Grahamstown, South Africa. As is the case in the Namibian education system, South African Grade 3 learners are instructed in their mother tongue while English is taught as a subject. Some learners from the study indicated that they preferred reading in their mother tongue while some preferred reading in English. The preference of mother tongue reading is understandable at this stage because it is the LoLT, however from grade 4 up to secondary school and beyond the LoLT is ESL. To understand learners' perspectives or experiences about reading, drawings were used and focus group discussions were held, in the learners' mother tongue. By presenting 10 learners' drawings, findings indicate that learners provided detailed insights about their daily experiences with reading, attitudes towards reading and their varied individual views about reading. Findings also reveal that the setting or the reading environment can influence learners' attitudes towards reading. The present study focused on ESL only reading, not only because it is the LoLT at secondary school but also because of the lack of reading materials in various Namibian mother tongues. Moreover, as with Nkomo's study, my study also explored learners' reading experiences and attitudes towards reading although at a different level of schooling.

Summary of ER in Primary Schools

Asian based ER studies show that reading comprehension and fluency can be achieved through ER. In addition, ER has proven to work best in comparison to IR for reading comprehension and fluency. Implementation issues are also evident within the Asian context especially when ER was based on reading material for the exam. The Namibian studies at primary school levels show that pleasure reading can improve reading and writing skills, however, there seem to be a lack of relevant reading materials in Namibian school libraries. One Ethiopian study found that reading comprehension and attitude can be influenced by ER. Finally, the South African study reveals that conducive reading environments at primary levels can produce positive attitudes towards ER. From these few studies at the primary school level, it can be assumed as evidenced that ER can have positive influences on learner comprehension and attitudes regardless of the implementation challenges faced.

2.3.2 Extensive Reading (ER) in Secondary Schools

Erfanpour (2013) investigated the effect of intensive and extensive reading strategies on English Foreign Language learners' reading comprehension. To achieve this goal, seventy EFL learners were conveniently selected from two high schools in Shiraz (Iran). All the participants in this study were third-grade high school students and most of them were male. To determine if the two groups have the same level of reading comprehension or not; both took pre- and post-reading exams. It should be mentioned that the extensive group with the help of their teacher became familiar with various books other than their textbook for ten weeks. During this period, they studied their ideal books out of class without fear of exams. To obtain students' feedback, an interview was carried out with five students in each group in relation to the effect of these two strategies on reading comprehension. In general, the results from the interview and reading exam indicated that these two strategies extensive reading had positive effects on EFL learners reading comprehension.

An American study which explored "*Reading for Pleasure with struggling teenage readers*", for five months, took place in three different middle schools, with three teachers and eighteen students selected for the study. The study adopted Guthrie and Anderson's theory on reading engagement. Fisher (2013) generated data by means of questionnaires,

interviews, observations, and journals. It was found that motivation to read for pleasure was successful in the beginning phase but declined as the program progressed. It is reported that although few students developed a personal reading interest and enjoyed books, most did not develop this interest perhaps because books were selected by teachers. Perhaps this might have been because learners were not given the opportunity to choose their own readings. The present study allowed learners to choose their own readings, while peers also recommended reading material to each other. Learners were reminded of ER benefits during the monthly interactions as well as motivated and encouraged to engage in ER activities.

Huang (2015) carried out a study on implementing ER in Taiwan, to promote senior high school students' English reading motivation and to foster a positive attitude towards reading in English. The researcher noted Krashen's input hypothesis and reading hypothesis as the most well-known frameworks that are in support of ER. The twelve-week long ER program carried out with grade 11 students found that, despite challenges, teachers observed some benefits and encouraged students to read extensively. Some of the challenges faced by students were heavy workloads from tests, homework, or cram school. The study concluded that ER is "time-consuming" and that apart from positive attitudes toward ER, these challenges resulted in a lack of motivation. Since the study concluded that time was not enough for reading extensively, it can be argued that principles 4,5,6,7 and 8 of Day and Bamford were not realisable. The present study explored ER with junior secondary Grade 8 learners because learners in the senior secondary phase in comparison to junior secondary classes, face more challenges in terms of school workload including ongoing assessments and might also regard ER as "time-consuming" as found by the above study.

A South African research on ER, '*Using a Classroom Library to Promote Extensive Reading in A Grade 8 Class in a Fort Beaufort District School, Eastern Cape*' by Bushula (2015) found that learners developed a positive attitude towards reading as some express their love for reading which was the case for my findings. The challenges that surfaced from the findings of the said study are also similar to my study, for example, there was a scarcity of books and the ones that were available were not of learners' level as some learners referred to them as long, boring or difficult, another similarity with this study and my study

amongst others was that learners preferred to read and did not like giving feedback either in speech or in writing.

Youn (2015) conducted a study to investigate the implementation of Extensive Reading in a Regular Korean High School Context. The study carried out over the period of one year investigated how ER could be incorporated into a regular Korean high school English curriculum. It focused on L2 learner characteristics, their evaluation of the ER program, their motivations for L2 reading, and their perceived benefits from ER. Online reading activities, quizzes, and standardized tests were gathered for a quantitative analysis. Results showed that learners had a very positive attitude toward ER, perceived benefits in reading fluency, vocabulary growth and other skills such as speaking and writing. Intrinsic motivation was expressively correlated with both reading benefits and reading amounts. It was also found that learners' reading amounts have considerable effects on national standardised tests.

A study by Byberg (2015) examined Norwegian EFL learners' experiences with reading in English and their experiences with extensive reading (ER) as an alternative way of learning a foreign language. Ten EFL learners in 9th and 10th grades considered as reluctant readers participated in a four-week ER program intervention. Pre- and post-intervention semi-structured interviews were used. Learners were not required to keep book reports or to do oral presentations, they were given "Reading Record Forms" for the books they read. During this time, the learners were not given any homework related to reading. Results showed that amongst other difficulties, learners did not enjoy reading in English because they saw it as difficult and boring in addition to them being slow or struggling readers. However, it was found that most learners had a positive attitude towards ER as they viewed reading in English as vital and beneficial for travelling and in job-related issues. Furthermore, the findings show that the learners believed that reading promotes writing and reading skills.

Drawing on Krashen's input and affective filter hypotheses, Hanslo (2016) carried out an action research over the course of a year in South Africa. The study investigated "*The impact of a reading intervention based on ER, on reading proficiency and reading motivation with a grade 9 class*". The study experimented with an intervention class and a

control class and found that exposure to ER improved learners' reading proficiency. Nevertheless, it was also found that learners took longer to change their attitude in making reading a habit. Questionnaires, interviews, and classroom observations were used to determine learners' reading habits and attitudes. Standardised tests were also administered for the study. Lawrence (2016) emphasized that the temptation of administering tests during ER should be avoided as this could lead to learners stressing about being assessed (p. 81). I am also of the opinion that ER programs are meant to encourage enjoyable reading and thus should not be assessed in any way. If learners are to be assessed for reading comprehension, it should be done as part of classroom intensive reading tasks, continuous assessment tasks, for tests and examinations. It seems that the principles of Day and Bamford, "reading is individual" and "reading is its own reward" has been neglected. This might be the reason why learners' attitudes towards reading took longer in improving. Krashen (1982) asserts that "real language acquisition develops slowly and in the form of supplying comprehensible input in low anxiety situations (p.7). Watkins (2018) also maintain that reading is more important than understanding details and that assessments might be "anxiety provoking, lessening the pleasure of reading" (p.2). Du (2009) also notes that "test anxiety is a psychological condition in which a person experiences distress before, during and after an assessment to such an extent that it causes poor performances or interference with normal learning" (p.163). The present study did not assess learners' readings because its goal was not assessment, rather learners' readings were monitored through monthly sessions of sharing and recommending readings to peers, as well as making notes in their reading journals.

Wafula (2017) investigated ER and its influence on language skills among ESL learners in secondary schools in Kenya where learners hardly read extensively because of the lack of organised ER programs. The scholar found a lack of reading material as the main challenge, followed by reading time and space, and concluded that drills were the primary source of ESL input of learners. This challenge of lack of reading materials could easily be generalized to other African countries when it comes to the implementation of ER.

One recent study carried out by Aka (2019) on *Reading performance of Japanese high school learners following a one year extensive reading program* found that middle and lower proficiency readers increased, with findings that suggest that these learners not only

improved in language knowledge but in reading abilities which can be translated to reading comprehension. This could probably be attributed to the length of the study, seeing that some scholars suggest lengthy ER programs to see benefits or ER. Similar to this study, my research was also carried out over a period of one year.

Ithindi et al. (2020) explored the exposure to the reading of ESL learners at Ordinary Level (OL) in Khomas region secondary schools, Namibia. The selected schools revealed inappropriate materials and poor exposure to reading at OL. According to the researchers, this corresponds with the poor curriculum in the current discourse on the teaching and learning of reading in ESL classrooms. Besides, it was discovered that OL teachers and learners do not engage in regular reading because the OL syllabus does not assign time for reading. Thus, a need for the Ministry of Education “to create new patterns for re-inventing reading in the OL syllabus” is emphasized to allow ESL teachers to fully engage OL learners in reading. Furthermore, National Institute for Educational Development (NIED) is urged to prescribe authentic reading materials to the OL syllabus which are relatable to learners to make reading enjoyable. The study suggests that for a reading culture to emerge and be visible in Khomas secondary schools, pleasurable reading should be more emphasised as from the primary school phase, and instructional methods should be more interesting in all phases. Similarly, programmes promoting reading meant for the whole community could be reinforced, as reading should eventually be part of all aspects of life and be available to the whole population, not only to teachers and other educational stakeholders. The study concludes by re-iterating that a love of reading should start at home at an early age and that a positive attitude towards reading from parents, teachers, and the government is likely to ensure that learners grow up reading for enjoyment, which in turn could lead to reading for learning, for information and to solve social problems that affect learners.

Summary of ER in Secondary Schools

The Taiwanese study found ER to be time-consuming and therefore motivation did not take place. The Ethiopian study found no difference in learner reading abilities, while the Iranian study found that reading comprehension improved after ER. The American study found that few learners developed the motivation to read for pleasure while the majority did not

enjoy reading because books were teacher selected. The Korean study on implementation issues reported improved attitude, reading fluency and vocabulary while the South African study reported that learner attitudes took longer to change perhaps due to standardised tests that were carried out. The Norwegian study focused on learner experiences and found that some learners did not enjoy reading because they saw English as a difficult language, some however had a positive attitude towards reading because they saw English as vital for travel and work. The Kenyan and Namibian studies reported a lack of reading materials and lack of reading cultures as challenges, whilst Aka's lengthy study with Japanese learners showed how effective ER was.

2.3.3 Extensive Reading (ER) in Tertiary Educational Institutions

Tamrackitkun (2010) investigated reading comprehension, reading fluency and attitudes of students after exposure to ER. The study took place in Thailand over a period of four months with EFL university students. Although the findings suggest that there were positive effects on students' reading comprehension and reading fluency as well as a positive attitude towards ER during this short time, it recommends lengthy future ER programs.

The effects of extended e-book reading on tertiary level EFL students' English reading attitude, comprehension, and vocabulary were investigated in this study which applied Krashen's comprehensible input and affective filter as theory. Chen et al. (2013) selected 89 individuals divided into two groups of 46 students in the experimental group and 43 students in the control group. In addition to a standard curriculum for both groups, the experimental group participated in a ten-week e-book ER program that encouraged students to read freely from three e-book library collections sorted by level of difficulty. The control group, on the other hand, did not participate in any intensive reading. Findings from the data show that the experimental group had a much better reading attitude, reading comprehension, and vocabulary than the control group. However, in a different study on researching the effect of ER on reading, writing and vocabulary, Bibby (2018) self contradicts by suggesting that it is inappropriate to use ER as an approach in teaching new vocabulary seeing that ER emphasizes free and fluent reading which ultimately necessitates familiar vocabulary in the text while further arguing that implicit vocabulary approach is ineffective, and that explicit vocabulary approaches should be used. Contrary to this statement, the author notes that

a prolonged ER program can provide language learners with increased in-depth vocabulary knowledge, due to repeated exposure to the same vocabulary recommending further research to focus on this area. While advances in areas of writing may seem intuitively desirable, there is still a scarcity of rigorously done studies with L2 students in this area. As mentioned earlier under the limited time of classroom teaching, Bibby (2018) opines that ER could be beneficial as an additive approach rather than a replacing one. The author concludes by suggesting that gains in vocabulary comprehension, reading speed and comprehension, and potentially writing appear to be feasible.

The impact of two instructors' classroom practices on their students' second language (L2) reading motivation and the amount was investigated by Ro (2016) in a study on extended reading (ER) approach in the English for Academic Purposes (EAP) setting. It was found that students' motivation and the amount they read were affected by the ER classroom activities and the degree and type of instructor direction, as well as inherent elements of ER (e.g., reading for pleasure and the benefits to language skills of substantial L2 reading). The scholar suggests that teachers should examine a wide range of book choices, attitudes toward ER and quiet reading, and additional ER activities such as providing book reviews when implementing ER. A few common reasons for not liking ER given by the students' in Ro's study (2016) that correspond with my study are amongst others boring and difficult books that result in readers' negative perception of ER.

A study carried out in South Africa, at the tertiary level, incorporated ER as a component into a broader reading program with first-year students. The researcher acknowledged Day and Bamford's principles on ER and agreed that formal assessments should be avoided, and other follow-up activities could be used. The study incorporated the linguistic interdependence hypothesis (LIH), the linguistic threshold hypothesis (LTH) and the transfer hypothesis to determine if linguistic skills could be transferred from L1 to L2. Students had to read material of their choice and keep a portfolio on their affective and cognitive experiences (Boakye, 2017). In addition, pre- and post-study questionnaires on reading habits and interviews on reading experiences were analysed. Findings show that students benefited from ER as their reading habits, affective and cognitive reading levels, as well as their reading speed improved. Transfer of reading strategies from ER to academic reading was also reported. Furthermore, it was found that students believed that

their interest in reading increased because of ER. Perhaps this study's findings were positive because almost all ten principles of Day and Bamford were applied. My study also considered learners' affective and cognitive reading experiences, by letting learners take charge of their own reading because these might have played a role in establishing learners' reading skills.

Another investigation at tertiary level carried out by McLean and Rouault (2017, p.103) researched the impact of ER and grammar-translation treatments on reading rate development among Japanese undergraduates conducting timed-reading practice. Even though post-treatment reading rates in both groups were significantly higher than pre-treatment reading rates, the ER and timed-reading treatments permitted significantly bigger reading rate gains than grammar-translation and timed reading. The study showed that classroom-based experimental research on reading can be done with students assigned to different treatment groups for homework. This experiment also recorded how much reading was done, providing more evidence than prior reading rate studies that the ER reading materials were understood. Furthermore, this research found that comprehension of timed-reading passages was not compromised in exchange for a faster reading pace. Most importantly, data that the two groups spent roughly the same amount of time completing the two treatments supports the claim that ER is not only more successful, but also more efficient at boosting reading rate than grammar-translation. In short, this study found that ER affects reading speed which can be translated into reading fluency.

Summary of ER at Tertiary Institutions

From the above, Thailand and South African studies, found improved reading comprehension, reading fluency, reading habits, and reading attitudes, whilst the Japanese study found ER to be effective in reading speed. The study of Ro (2016) corresponds in book challenges with my study.

In brief, I opted to review literature at primary, secondary and tertiary levels of education, although my focus was on the secondary school level. This was done to demonstrate that ER can be explored with learners or students of all ages across the globe. It also broadens ones' perception of ER programs and how various scholars have approached them.

2.4 Theoretical Framework: Key Theories of Reading

This section discusses the theoretical framework which drives the study. Renandya (2007, p. 135) opines that the theory behind ER is a simple one and cites Krashen (1997), as stressing that “we learn language by understanding messages or understanding what people say to us and we comprehend what we read”. This according to Renandya is a position held by numerous theorists, but it was Krashen who formalized it as the theory known as the “input hypothesis” which later became the “comprehension hypothesis”. Ng et al. (2019, p. 173), agree that the input/comprehension hypothesis is the main theory that underlies ER. As an educator myself, specialising in languages, I agree that comprehension plays a vital part in reading as an activity as well as in formulation of positive attitude towards reading. In addition, many of the studies reviewed with regards to ER, show that Krashen’s (1982) Input/Comprehension Hypotheses was applied extensively as the driving force behind Second Language Acquisition (SLA). This study adopted and focused on the Input/Comprehension Hypotheses of acquiring language subconsciously for example through reading, and the Affective Filter Hypotheses in exploring attitudes towards reading and specifically ER, with grade 8 learners whose LoLT is ESL. Krashen’s (1982) SLA theory in *Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition*, introduces five hypotheses namely, the acquisition learning hypotheses, the monitor hypotheses, the natural order hypotheses, the input hypotheses, and the affective filter hypotheses (p.10-32). All five hypotheses will not be explained in detail as the present study only considered the input and the affective filter (attitude or habit) as providing insight for exploring extensive reading for this study.

2.4.1 Input/Comprehension Hypothesis

Krashen (2004) considered the term ‘Input Hypothesis’ as acceptable but has come to prefer ‘Comprehension Hypothesis’ as it, according to him, reflects what the hypothesis really say. He acknowledges that the Comprehension Hypothesis is not new in the field of second language acquisition and that James Asher and Harris Winitz discussed it years before him. It seems that the Comprehension Hypothesis has been consistent with research in several fields and that it continues to be validated. Krashen further emphasizes that the Input/Comprehension hypothesis is both theoretically and practically important as it deals

with the crucial question of “how we acquire language” (1982, p.20). To answer this “how” question, the hypothesis claims that:

“A necessary condition to move from stage i to stage $i + 1$, is that the acquirer understands input that contains $i + 1$, where “understand” means that the acquirer focusses on meaning and not on form of the message. We acquire, only when we understand language that contains structure that is “a little beyond” where we are now. But how do we understand structures we have not acquired? We use more than our linguistic competence such as context, our knowledge of the world, our extra-linguistic information to help us understand language directed at us” (Krashen, 1982, p.20-21).

From the above statement, it can be construed that the Input/Comprehension Hypothesis has two important parts, firstly, it relates to language acquisition and not language learning, and secondly, this acquisition happens when we understand messages with language structures a bit beyond our level. This is particularly accurate for the current study, as it mainly focused on learner participants reading books they understand and enjoy, and not books chosen by teachers for instructional or assessment purposes. These were self-selected books, dropped by participants whenever they became hard to understand or non-enjoyable. This was done in line with the comprehension hypothesis, which chiefly refers to the subconscious acquisition and not the conscious learning (Krashen, 2004). This can be accepted in terms of ER activities which aids in subconsciously acquiring language. In addition, this means that learners are not only to read texts of their current language level but texts which introduce new vocabulary as well. The learner’s current level (i) is slightly stretched to the learner’s level plus new vocabulary ($i+1$) to allow language acquisition. This mean that learners can try to understand new words in the context of the story being read. It is further argued that stretching far beyond learners’ comprehensible input ($i+2$), would raise learners’ affective filters and result in problems for acquisition, and thus learner participants were encouraged to drop a book anytime it becomes too difficult to comprehend.

2.4.2 Krashen’s Affective Filter Hypotheses and ER

It is almost impossible to explore ER without considering learners’ attitudes towards reading. Thus, in the process of SLA, the Affective Filter Hypothesis is vital as it deals with such variables as “motivation, self-confidence and anxiety”. As stated by Krashen (1982, p.31), individuals with high “motivation” generally do better in SLA; those with “self-

confidence and good self-image” tend to do better in SLA; and “low anxiety” – whether personal or relating to the classroom – can be conducive for SLA. In breaking down the affective filter variables, Yang (2012), outlines motivation as “the definite purpose for a certain activity or an endless effort in achieving a goal”; self-confidence as “one’s opinion of one’s own worth” – it is believed that individuals with high self-confidence have more chances to succeed in learning or acquiring a language; anxiety is linked to self-confidence as Yang claims it as an uncomfortable emotional state caused by the frustration of one’s self-worth (p.41). To motivate learners, build their self-confidence and lower their anxiety, Yang suggests that language teachers focus on acquisition, taking learners from “simple to complex”, from “known to the unknown” while taking into consideration learners’ language proficiencies; hold “a positive and receptive attitude towards learners and their mistakes” (p.42). This could imply that motivation, self- confidence, and anxiety all play an important role in Second Language Acquisition which in this case is through ER, thus motivating learners through informal sessions, boosting their self-confidence by allowing them to choose their own readings and lowering their anxiety levels by allowing learners to read at their own pace as well as deciding when and where to read was at the core of this ER study.

In summary, this SLA theory advocates for acquisition rather than learning and a low/weak affective filter to make room for the input. This SLA could be facilitated through ER programs which could lower affective filters by putting learners in charge of their own reading, all the while encouraging, motivating, and monitoring them. Moreover, Krashen’s (1982), Input and the Affective Filter Hypotheses define the language teacher in a new way, that “an effective language teacher is one who can provide input and help make it comprehensible in a low anxiety situation” (p.32). This, I believe, coincides with number 9 of Day and Bamford’s principles which describes a teacher’s role as one who should “orient and guide learners”. Additionally, being an effective language teacher could, amongst others, also mean being a role-model as a reader, by for example reading during break time, keeping a classroom library, sharing age appropriate readings with learners and having book talks with learners.

2.4.3 The Schema Theory

Although first used in psychology, Schema Theory was introduced in reading by different scholars (Rumelhalt, 1980, Carrell, 1981, and Hudson, 1982, as cited in An, 2013, p.130). This theory assumes that texts do not carry meaning by themselves but provide insight for readers to make meaning from their prior knowledge. The schema theory of Anderson (1984, as cited in Savaş, 2009) agrees that prior knowledge is vital for the comprehension of new information within a given text or context. A reader's mental stores are said to be divided into "content" and "formal" schemas which provide a coherent interpretation of a text when combined during reading. Thus, consistent with the schema theory, understanding a text is an interaction between the reader's background knowledge and the text. Therefore, for starter readers, it is important to start with reading stories that relate to their social context, for example African learners can easily relate to African literature because it triggers their background knowledge. The schema theory can be equated to Krashen's Comprehensible Input, where the focus is on moving learners from their prior knowledge to what a text presents as new knowledge. This two-way interaction is further described through what scholars refer to as "bottom-up and top-down" reading processes.

2.4.4 The Bottom-Up and Top-Down Reading Processes

Bottom-up reading puts the focus on the text whereas the top-down reading puts the focus on the reader's prior knowledge. According to Angosto et al. (2013, p. 84), bottom-up processing is based on "the smallest linguistic units of a text" from which knowledge schemas are activated while top-down processing refers to "global comprehension of a text" in which prior knowledge is paramount. Angosto et al. (2013) like many scholars, acknowledge that reading is an interactive process of both bottom-up and top-down processes. The authors argue that bottom-up "sensory input" for perception, comprehension and thought is as important as top-down "memory and prior knowledge", and that one cannot be held superior over the other but that both should be considered in how they interact in producing "fluent comprehension". Likewise, Ngabut (2015, p.26) argues that both processes occur simultaneously, and that comprehension is dependent on textual/visual information as well as the reader's prior information. As mentioned earlier, this prior information refers to the readers' background which eases comprehension.

Comprehension is only said to be obstructed when a piece of knowledge is missing, obliging the reader to rely on decoding of a text, on the context or both word and context. This could suggest that when learners engage in ER activities, they depend on both bottom-up and top-down processes.

Although this may be true about top-down and bottom-up processes in some cases, we need to consider learners who lack general information about the world around them, especially in the African contexts of rural or previously disadvantaged communities who might not have prior knowledge nor comprehend what a text presents to them. In such cases, we should ask ourselves if top-down or bottom-up processes can be at play. Some learners may only have limited knowledge of the world because of “bad schooling or environmental factors and may thus have deficiencies in academic reading ability” when they lack background knowledge (Ferris & Hedgcock, 2013). Background knowledge seems to be strongly tied to schemata, which are knowledge structures brought to the text by the reader to help organise such knowledge. Hence it is strongly believed that the reader’s prior knowledge helps in understanding a written text. In cases where learners have limited knowledge of the world, relevant books which are relatable to them should perhaps be produced and made available if possible, seeing that top-down and bottom-up processes might likely only work in contexts where learners have ample knowledge of the world and the environment around them.

2.4.5 Rationale for choosing Krashen’s theory

This study adopted Krashen’s (1982) comprehension and affective filter as the theory that informs and guides it, mainly because it stresses comprehension as a vital component to reading and the affective filter as a crucial part of attitudes and motivation as it emphasizes low anxiety for enjoyable reading. Moreover, Krashen’s theory has its focus on Second Language Acquisition amongst others and learner participants of this present study are all doing English as Second Language (ESL). Besides this ER program was based on ESL only reading, simply because these learners hail from different linguistic backgrounds and they had to share books and recommend books to each other. Another reason for choosing ESL only reading, is because most, if not all available books in our school library as well as in some community libraries are in ESL. This ESL only reading needed to be based on

comprehensible input, for participants to understand and enjoy their readings, and low anxiety as proposed by the affective filter, which allowed self-selecting of books, as well as deciding when and where to read.

The comprehensible input or $i+1$ for this study can be explained as what learners understand in ESL plus a few unknown words appearing while reading, that could require a global understanding of a text or deduction of word meaning based on the story context being read. The affective filter which emphasises low anxiety can be explained in terms of simply putting learners in charge of their own reading for this out-of-school reading, in the hope of cultivating a positive attitude towards reading. Out-of-school reading is completely different from classroom based reading, it means that participants read after school or whenever they choose to, unassisted and on their own, which makes reading more individual while the social aspect of reading is not neglected, since interactive sessions also took place. Moreover, it is noteworthy that Krashen's theory has been widely applied by numerous studies on ER (Byberg, 2015, Chen, et al., 2013, Endris, 2018, Erfanpour, 2013, Fisher, 2013, Hanslo, 2016, Huang, 2015, Youn, 2015).

Nonetheless, the comprehensible input and affective filter received criticisms from various scholars. For example, Liu (2015, p.142-144), in *A critical review of Krashen's input hypothesis*, cites outdated scholars such as McLaughlin (1978, 1987) and Gregg (1984) in criticising the comprehensible input as lacking evidence and as ambiguous claiming that Krashen seemingly never gave a precise definition of what comprehensible input means and that this ambiguity is mainly on what the $i+1$ stands for, causing it to be interpreted differently. The affective filter is similarly criticised as not explaining the growth and function and hence is assumed as having no evidence to prove its existence. It seems that critics of Krashen based their arguments on the above-mentioned claim, for example, Lai and Wei (2019), in *A critical evaluation of Krashen's Monitor Model*, also cites McLaughlin and Gregg as back up to claim that Krashen does not avail evidence for his theories and further adds that Krashen's focus on the input neglected the output which according to these scholars is an important component in SLA. The scholars further question the presence of affective filter in SLA and why it is not present in the first language acquisition.

In my view, the above criticisms do not hold water as numerous studies on Foreign Language Acquisition (FLA), Second Language Acquisition (SLA), as well as studies on Extensive Reading (ER) programs, still apply Krashen's Comprehension and Affective filter hypothesis to this day, concluding with findings that prove as evidence of the existence of these hypotheses. For example, Mason (2011) found that a comprehension-based approach, with no output, could be more efficient than any other approach. Similarly, Huffman (2014) used Krashen's comprehensible input in a study of FLA with Japanese students and found as proof that providing huge amounts of comprehensible input to foreign language learners resulted in visible reading comprehension and reading fluency. To conclude, several studies reviewed for this study, as evidenced above, also show the effectiveness of Krashen's theory in SLA as well as in ER. Given this discussion, I adopted Krashen's theory as the most suitable one to guide this study, in an ESL based context.

2.5 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was two-fold, to review the literature and to discuss the theoretical framework. In reviewing the literature, this chapter defined key concepts of Extensive Reading, discussed ER reading materials, contrasted Extensive Reading with Intensive Reading, discussed the principles of ER as well as implementation issues of ER, reviewed the benefits of Extensive Reading and deliberated on reading comprehension and fluency, reading experiences and attitudes as well as the Mathewson attitude model. The chapter discussed Krashen's Comprehension and Affective Filter Hypotheses as the chosen theoretical framework for the study and concluded with reading theories about ER.

Although there is a considerable abundance of research findings on the influence and effectiveness of ER, it seems that little research has been carried out within the Namibian context on ER, particularly in public secondary schools. Additionally, there seems to be a scarcity of studies on the affective aspects (attitude) of reading (Yamashita, 2013), as the onus is seemingly on ER's effects on cognitive aspects of reading. The current study attempted to fill these gaps by exploring ER to develop learner experiences and attitudes

as well as comprehension and fluency with secondary school learners within the Namibian context.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

Chapter 2 reviewed the literature and discussed the theory that underpins this study. This chapter revisits the research aim, objectives, and questions. It explains the research methodology of the study namely the research design, research methods, target population, sample and sampling procedures, research instruments, data collection procedures, data analysis and validity. The chapter closes by providing the ethical principles which guided this study.

3.2 Research Aim, Objectives, Questions

3.2.1 Research Aim

The core aim of this study was to explore an out-of-school ER program with a single group of grade 8 learners, in the hope of cultivating positive attitudes and reading comprehension and fluency, in a low affective filter zone without the commonly used pre- and post- tests of two groups of participants.

3.2.2 Research Objectives

Based on the above aim of this study, the objectives of this qualitative case study were to explore an out-of-school extensive reading program, in the hope of cultivating positive attitudes towards ER as well as reading comprehension. The chief focus on learners' participation in the research process was to understand their experiences and attitudes towards ER, while as a teacher/researcher my role was to facilitate the ER program.

3.2.3 Research Questions

Based on the above objectives, this study addressed the following research questions:

1. What are the current Grade 8 learners' experiences and attitudes towards reading?
2. How does ER impact Grade 8 learners' attitudes towards reading?
3. How does ER impact Grade 8 learners' reading comprehension and fluency?
4. What are possible challenges faced in implementing ER within a public school?

3.3 Research Design

The research design refers to the ontological standpoint on the nature of reality and the epistemological viewpoint of what constitutes adequate knowledge of a study. It simply refers to how the paradigm chosen for the study, the method used for the study such as qualitative, quantitative, or mixed, the methodology such as case study and methods used for a study such as data-generating instruments and the analysis thereof relate to the study (Wahyuni, 2012, p.70). Research design also refers to the process of how a researcher approaches and carries out a study. As researcher, I was the facilitator, starting off with a research site and deciding on the participants for the study. As facilitator, I explained what the research entails to volunteering participants, after gaining their permission, before engaging them for data generation. Henceforth, I remained available to participants throughout the study, which lasted for a year, and met with them once per month for interactive sessions, during which I kept an informal reflective journal. The study found that learners developed positive attitude towards reading as they still continue to come to the school library, even after the study has ended.

3.3.1 Interpretive Paradigm

This study adopted the Interpretive Paradigm, using a qualitative case study as a research method drawing on Grade 8 learners' reading skills, experiences, and attitudes towards ER. The Interpretivist Paradigm also known as the Constructivist Paradigm, according to Kivunja and Kuyini (2017), makes every effort to understand the viewpoint of the subject being observed or studied. It is further assumed that theory does not precede research but

follows it so that it is grounded on the data generated by the research. According to Wahyuni (2012), interpretivists think that social actors and people's views of reality shape reality. They recognize that via social contact, individuals with diverse origins, attitudes, and experiences contribute to the ongoing production of reality in their broader social environment. Furthermore, social reality can change and have different perceptions since these human perceptions and experiences are subjective (p.71). My analysis guided by the Interpretivist perspective allowed me to appreciate the data as texts that needed interpretation and to make meaning of the participants' reading engagement from the findings instead of holding onto already existing beliefs or perceptions. This study used pre- and post-study questionnaires and learners' reading journals to determine how their social realities shape their attitudes and experiences towards reading, and how in turn ER could affect their reading comprehension, experiences, and attitudes. The study was carried out over a period of a year and the data generation lasted for eight months.

3.3.2 Qualitative Research

Although this study included some closed-ended questions in the pre-study questionnaire and reading journals, it is predominantly qualitative because the pre-study questionnaire and reading journals both include open-ended questions, making these two semi-structured. The post-study questionnaire is strictly open-ended, therefore deemed as qualitative. The mixed questions do not necessarily mean that a research method is mixed because the same instrument used mixed questions as opposed to different instruments that would make a study a mixed study. According to McGuirk and O'Neill (2016), qualitative questionnaires involve both open and closed questions, to generate data about people, their experiences, attitudes, opinions, and behaviours. Thus, the usage of open and closed questions in the data generative instruments are acceptable in qualitative studies. Furthermore, a quantitative method is widely used for larger-scale studies requiring quantitative surveys and this was a small-scale study carried out as a single case study.

3.3.3 Case Study

This research adopted a case study approach, which according to Maree (2007), is concerned with understanding the processes, the social and cultural contexts which underlie various behavioural patterns and define a case study as striving towards a comprehensive understanding of how participants make meaning of a phenomenon being

studied (p. 59). Creswell and Poth (2017) further maintain that “a case study involves studying of and exploring of an issue through one or more cases within a bounded system”. In this study, I explored ER through a single case of Grade 8 learners, in the hope of cultivating reading comprehension and positive attitudes towards reading. Additionally, Denscombe (2017) posit that a case study aims to comprehend the intricate interplay of elements that work within a certain social sector and that it is an excellent way for both theory building and theory testing. This latter definition allowed me to build as well as test Krashen’s theory that guides this study.

3.3.4 Target Population

A research population refers to a group of people with the same characteristics, coming from similar backgrounds. Bertram and Christiansen (2014), refers to the population as the total number of people that could be included in a study (p.59). The target population of this research comprised of Grade 8 learners at the site of the study. The reason for choosing grade 8 learners as the target population is not only because they are newcomers to secondary school education but also because these learners are expected to do literature as a new component in the ESL syllabus. Studying literature amongst others requires learners to read different genres with comprehension and thus as the researcher I wanted to determine if ER could cultivate positive attitudes towards reading. Moreover, as it was practically impossible to include all the Grade 8’s as participants for the study, as a researcher I selected a voluntary sample from the target population. A sample in research is a group of people who are chosen as representatives of the target population (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014, p. 59). It is noteworthy that this research was learner participant based and teachers were not chosen as participants, simply because the target population was grade 8 learners. Furthermore, the focus of this study was on learners’ reading comprehension and attitude towards reading, influenced by their experiences and beliefs. Thus, teachers were not seen as effective partakers as they might not have been able to provide answers on learner experiences and attitude, perhaps a study on classroom based reading instruction or teachers’ attitude towards reading could accommodate teachers.

3.3.5 Sample and Sampling Procedures

3.3.5.1 Sampling

Maree (2007) refers to sampling as a “process used to select a portion of the population for study” (p. 79). A portion of grade 8 learners from a previously disadvantaged community was selected for this case study. A case study means that “specific choices are made about people, groups or objects to include in the sample” (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014, p.60). Furthermore, this case study required me to use purposive and convenient sampling procedures for this study.

3.3.5.2 Purposive and Convenient Sampling

This study used a purposively and conveniently selected sample. Purposive because as a researcher, I intended to work with junior secondary school learners in Grade 8. Creswell and Poth (2017) define a purposive sample as “a group of people that can best inform the researcher about the research problem under study”. This sample is further deemed purposive as it excluded learners from all other grades and only included a portion of grade 8 learners. The Grade 8 learners are seen as probably the most favourable group with which to explore ER seeing that they are at the entry stage of secondary education where the reformed curriculum requires them to do literature as an additional component to the English syllabus (English Second Language Syllabus, 2016, p.22). Besides, my sample was conveniently selected since as teacher-researcher I am employed at the site of this study. Maree (2007, p.177) defines convenient sampling as referring to situations when population elements are selected because they are “easily and conveniently available” as well as useful in “explorative research” where the researcher is interested in getting an inexpensive, quick approximation of the truth. These learners were selected with the permission of the principal, the parents/guardians and with the permission of learners themselves as participants of the study.

3.3.5.3 Participants

Voluntary participant learners were invited for the study to a thorough information sharing session on the benefits of ER, the duration of the study, what is expected of them and that

participation is voluntary in nature. The study made room to include twenty to thirty learners as participating members in the ER program but voluntary participants for data generation were limited to twenty learners, considering the possibility of learners who could drop out from the study at a later stage. This number of participants was deemed sufficient for this qualitative case study based on Dworkin (2012, p. 1319) view, that in qualitative research a sample size is often smaller ranging from 5 to 50 participants. A sample, otherwise referred to as the study participants, is a group of people who partake in a study. Moreover, initial participants of 20 learners, 10 boys and 10 girls to avoid gender bias, who took part in the pre-study questionnaire, were reduced to 8 participants of 3 boys and 5 girls. These were the remaining 8 participants who fully completed the study by providing their reading journals and completing post-study questionnaires for data at the end of the study.

3.3.5.4 Demographic information of the participants

This section presents the gender and age groups of the eight research participants.

Gender	Number
Males	3
Females	5

Table 2: Gender distribution of participants (N=8)

Age	Number
14	1
15	5
16	2

Table 3: Age range of participants (N=8)

Table 1 and table 2 show demographic information of the 8 participants, of which 5 are females and 3 are males, who completed the study. These learners', who are all in grade 8, ages ranged from 14 to 16.

3.3.6 Data Generating Instruments

To generate data for understanding the notion of “extensive reading”, this study used qualitative research instruments such as pre - and post-study questionnaires for learners and document analysis of learners’ reading journals. These data generative instruments are outlined below. The third item was an informal journal kept by the researcher to reflect on monthly informal interactive sessions with participants, and although it did not follow a specific checklist of items, it serves as an additional source of data.

3.3.6.1 Questionnaires

A questionnaire is a list of either close-ended, open-ended or both open and close-ended questions which respondents are required to answer (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014, p.73). Close-ended questionnaires require respondents to select appropriate answers from proposed possible answers, whereas open-ended questionnaires require respondents to write out answers in words or phrases. Although closed questions are easily “coded and analysed”, they limit participants to a range of optional answers designed by the researcher, whereas open questions have a “greater potential of yielding valuable in-depth” responses from participants as they “give voice” to participants to narrate their “understandings, experiences, and opinions (McGuirk & O’Neill, p.449-450). This study used both closed and open-ended questions for learner pre-study questionnaires and reading journals for the purpose of data generation. The post-study questionnaires consisted only of open questions. Questions of both questionnaires and journals were in simple and clear language for easy comprehension for participants. Kazi and Khalid (2012) reiterate that “questionnaires should be at the level of understanding of the participants to avoid different interpretations by participants and bias responses” (p.514). Pre-study questionnaires were distributed in the beginning phase of the study to ER program participating learners and the post-study questionnaires were handed out on the day of collecting reading journals which also marked the end of the ER program for learners.

The pre-study questionnaire sought to understand grade 8 learners’ pre-school experiences and was composed of the following items: (1) as a child, did you have bed-time stories; (2) do you enjoy reading books, why or why not; (3) what is your general opinion about reading; (4) how do you see yourself as a reader; (5) do you have access to reading material; (6) does

anyone in your family read for enjoyment; (7) how do you spend your free time; (8) at school what do you do during the reading period; and (10) if the school had a reading program, would you join (see Appendix 1). The post-study questionnaire questions differed from the pre-study because they sought to understand learners' post-study reading attitudes and experiences. The post-study questionnaire was composed of the following items: (1) how often did you read; (2) where did you read; (3) where did you get your reading material; (4) what did you like most about the reading program; (5) what did you not enjoy; and (6) now that the reading program has ended, what will you do during your free time (see Appendix 2).

3.3.6.2 Reading Journals

Bowen (2009), defines document analysis as a "systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents, both printed and electronic" (p.27). According to the aforementioned author, documents serve a variety of purposes as part of a research undertaking. Bowen (2009, p.31) asserts that, documents provide background and context, additional questions to be asked, supplementary data, a means of tracking change and development, and verification of findings from other data sources and that documents may be the most effective means of gathering data whenever an event can no longer be observed or when informants have forgotten details. For this study, learners were required to keep reading journals throughout the study. The purpose of the reading journals was two-fold. Firstly, it was for learners to keep track of their readings by shading the days they read on the provided calendar (see Appendix 3) as well as writing journal entries composed of (1) starting date; (2) book title; (3) author(s); (4) reading duration in days; (5) ending date; (6) number of pages; (7) short summary of the reading; (8) was I able to read to the end, why, and would I recommend the reading; and (9) personal thought about the reading (see Appendix 4). Lastly, these journals served not only as a data instrument to the researcher but as means for ongoing monitoring of learners actual reading.

These journals were checked after the informal discussion sessions and collected at the end of the study. Eight participating learners' reading journals were collected for analysis.

3.3.6.3 Researcher reflective diary

Reflective writing became a vital part of reflective practice. It is assumed that reflective writing “develops the writer’s critical thinking and analytical abilities, contribute to their cognitive development, enable creativity and unique connections to be made between disparate sets of information, and to contribute to new perspectives being taken on issues” (Jasper, 2005). These qualities are said to be anticipated in skilled researchers. Jasper considers reflective writing in qualitative research as a method in its “own right”, as a source of data as well as in the analytical process. The author suggests that reflective writing be acknowledged as significant to research methodology. Similarly, Walker et al (2013) regard it as a useful tool for “ensuring the standard of qualitative research”, providing information about the positionality and personal values of the researcher that could affect data collection and analysis”. Walker et al, argue that reflexivity is seen as the best practice in qualitative research. This reflective research diary allowed me to capture what transpired during interactions with participants. Furthermore, it is an instrument that helps define researcher and participant relationships.

3.3.7 Data Collecting Procedures

Data collection procedures are parallel with research instruments used for generating data. The data collection procedures are outlined below:

3.3.7.1 Questionnaires

Pre- and post-study questionnaires were self-administered by the researcher, as self-administered questionnaires are “cheaper than other methods of administration” (Kazi & Khalid, 2012). These questionnaires were distributed to learner participants and collected on the same day. This was to ensure that questionnaires were returned without delays which might have occurred if learners could remain with questionnaires for days. Bell and Waters (2014) also emphasize the benefit of personally administering questionnaires, as it allows the researcher to explain the study's aim and increases the likelihood of obtaining completed questionnaires on schedule. In addition, learners were given ample time, a duration of a 45-minute period and privacy in the form of allowing learners to write their answers without the influence of others to complete and return the questionnaires. Before

questionnaires were handed to learners, voluntary participation was emphasized and learners were assured of anonymity, that their names would be replaced by pseudonyms (Creswell & Poth, 2017). Furthermore, participants were implored to be honest as possible to ensure that the information they provide reflects their reality. Questionnaires were transcribed for analysis after collection.

3.3.7.2 Reading Journals

Reading journals were checked throughout the study to observe learner participants' activities to keep track of their participation in the study. These journals were collected at the end of the study for transcription and analysis.

3.3.7.3 Researcher reflective journal

The reflective journal was only used for recording interpersonal interactions between learner participants as well as participants and researcher as facilitator. These recordings were informal but served as descriptive notes added as a source of data generation to be presented and analysed in the next chapter.

3.3.8 Analytical Framework

After generation, data need to be organized for analysis. Quantitative analysis uses data to provide numerically expressed answers, while qualitative analysis is more concerned with meaning (O'Connor & Gibson, 2017, p.64). Data refers to information that can help a researcher to answer research questions and can come from different sources. Data analysis started with the collection of data (Flick, 2013, p.10), through pre- and post-study questionnaires and document analysis of reading journals analysed as qualitative data. Although the research tools included some closed questions, the data being predominantly qualitative has been analysed as qualitative. Flick (2013), defines qualitative data analysis as "the classification and interpretation of linguistic or visual material to make statements about implicit and explicit dimensions and structures of meaning-making in the material and what is presented in it". The data presentation and analysis were done in table formats, pie charts and graphs, and were later discussed in a narrative form. Wahyuni (2012) states that interpretivists use a narrative form of analysis to describe specifics and detailed

accounts of a particular social reality being studied, by applying an approach called the idiographic approach (p. 71). For analysing qualitative data which is usually “textual or visual”, this study opted to make use of both the inductive and deductive approaches. These approaches are discussed below.

3.3.8.1 The inductive approach to qualitative data analysis

The inductive approach starts the analysis from the raw data generated by the study and builds on themes to make meaning of the data (Creswell & Poth, 2017). For this study, the inductive approach broadened the understanding of what is said to be emerging from the data, relevant to the research theory and research questions. In applying the inductive approach, what I discovered as emerging from the data were challenges faced by learners. These challenges faced by learners were additional themes because research questions initially focused on learners’ reading comprehension and reading experiences as well as attitudes towards reading and not on challenges faced by learners in the ER program. After all, as researcher, I believed I would mainly encounter challenges. The learner challenges which surfaced from data as well as the ones encountered by me are analysed and interpreted in chapter 4.

3.3.8.2 The deductive approach to qualitative data analysis

The deductive approach uses the study theory for which categories are developed for organising the data (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014, p.117). In applying the deductive approach, I looked at the research questions theoretically to organise data that speak to the comprehension and affective factors. These were categorised, presented, and interpreted as part of research findings.

3.3.9 Validity and trustworthiness of the study

According to Cohen et al. (2013) validity is an important key to effective research and a prerequisite for any research. In qualitative research, validity means “honesty, depth, richness and scope of the data achieved, participants approached, the extent of triangulation and the disinterestedness or objectivity of the researcher” (Winter, 2000, as cited in Cohen et al., 2013, p.179); and trustworthiness to show that the research collection methods work consistently in different contexts. Validity according to Kazi and Khalid

(2012) is the degree to which an instrument measures what it is supposed to measure. The authors further postulate that valid instruments generate data of quality.

For trustworthiness in qualitative study Anney (2014, p.6) notes four concerns brought forth by Guba (1981) that should be considered by any researcher regardless of the paradigm they choose. These are truth or value concerns, applicability concerns, consistency concerns and neutrality concerns. In brief these concerns, according to Anney (2014) question the authenticity of the findings; applicability of the findings in other settings; consistency of findings if repeated with participants in the same context; and lastly how findings are without bias. To address these concerns, I am of the opinion that findings of this study reveal learners' genuine responses; that these findings might be applicable in other settings of similar context; that if this study was repeated at the current site of the study, it would probably yield similar results; and lastly I believe that this current study was without bias of gender, race, age or any background of learner participants, as they were all treated equally with dignity and respect.

Finally, to maintain validity and truthfulness, learner participants were thoroughly informed beforehand what the study entails, and that participation was of a voluntary nature and they were all urged to remain honest and truthful throughout the study. Thus, I trust that the data generated through the research instruments are truthful and valid.

3.3.10 Triangulation

As previously mentioned, data were generated through two questionnaires (pre- and post-study) and reading journals of learner participants transcribed for data analysis, as well as an informal reflective journal which I kept for interactive sessions with participants. Since qualitative research requires usage of different data generative tools, I deem my instruments as sufficient for triangulation. Cohen et al, (2013) highlighted triangulation in qualitative research as "a powerful way of demonstrating concurrent validity" (p.195).

3.3.11 Subjectivity, Objectivity, Bias and Reflexivity

Any research whether quantitative or qualitative could be inevitably subjective because it involves a researcher, whether insider or outsider, interacting with study participants in

generating data. For example, Ercikan and Roth (2006) while stating that qualitative research, which is context-based, includes the researcher's subjective perspective to enhance the quality of the research and that quantitative research is considered objective for findings to be replicable. The authors argue that both qualitative and quantitative methods include subjective judgments. According to Ercikan and Roth (2006), quantitative data can be argued as subjective taking into consideration, firstly the selection of an interpretation model and secondly the application of scoring rubrics for participant responses. They further posit that any form of "data constructed arise through an interpretation model that involves subjective judgments" (p.17). Data construction processes involve data generative sources such as questionnaires, interviews, observations, and interpretation models such as scoring rules, coding protocols and filters.

Finally, Ercikan and Roth (2006) maintain that all forms of inquiry regardless of "quantitative" or "qualitative" involves subjective, objective, reproducible and verifiable moments (p.18). Yet, subjectivity appears to be understood as bias by some qualitative researchers, therefore objectivity is always sought and justified. According to Roulston and Shelton (2015, p. 332), equating subjectivity with bias is problematic in research and creates a threat to the credibility of the research. Bias is viewed as a "source of error" that may originate from, amongst others, "the chosen research design; researcher personal characteristics; participant response; flaws in data collection instruments; and confirmation bias of data analysis and interpretations" (Roulston & Shelton, p.334). It is evident that any research where the researcher is the "instrument" will be subject to accusations of bias given "the difficulties of controlling personal attributes of researchers in interaction with participants".

What may be considered crucial in any research is acknowledging both objectivity and subjectivity, while "examining one's own subjectivity through a reflection of how it shapes the research". Such ongoing reflection is termed as reflexivity. According to Gough (2003) as cited in Roulston and Shelton reflexivity (although it is not without critique) involves, "thoughtful self-awareness of the intersubjective dynamics between researcher and the researched and requires critical self-reflection of social background, assumptions, positioning and behaviour impact".

For this study, I attempted to keep a balance between objectivity, by working with junior secondary learners that I do not teach directly, and subjectivity, by interacting with these learners for data generation purposes, data analysis and interpretations, while being reflexive throughout the whole study.

3.3.12 Ethical Considerations

Every researcher, regardless of the type of research, must abide by some ethical considerations because all research requires the collection of data from people. Creswell and Poth (2017) argue that ethical practices are much more than merely following a set of guidelines, that researchers should also anticipate and address any ethical dilemmas that may arise during their research. The authors mention three ethical issues for research, firstly for data collection, then for data analysis and lastly for writing and dissemination of the final research. For data collection, they state that “all participants should be respected and should not be put at any form of risk, and vulnerable populations should be taken into consideration”. To protect participants during the data collection process, Creswell and Poth point out that researchers develop an “informed consent form” to be signed by participants before they engage in the research process. This obtaining of informed consent by parents/guardians and participating learners was done prior to this research, making sure that all participants had a detailed understanding of all data generative instruments and how these will be carried out.

In addition, voluntary participation was emphasized so that no harm in whatsoever manner is done if a learner decides to drop out of the study. Any physical, verbal, emotional and psychological harm to anyone due to the research exercise was avoided at all cost. For data analysis, as mentioned earlier, Creswell and Poth are concerned with “the anonymity of participants during coding and recording, keeping, storing of data, not sharing data and checking its accuracy through validation” (p. 91). The participants’ privacy was upheld, and questionnaires and journals were further coded to maintain anonymity.

For the writing and dissemination of the final report, Creswell points out that “the language usage should not be biased because of participants’ gender, sexual orientation, age or race; the potential falsifying or inventing of findings to meet an audience’s needs; not misusing results to the advantage of one group or another; not omitting authorship of individuals who contributed to the study and finally to release the details of the research design so that

readers can determine for themselves the credibility of the study” (p.92). Thus, when we carry out research, ethical practices are not limited to participants’ but plays an important role in how we analyse and how we handle the writing-up process and as such should be handled carefully. As a researcher, I was obliged to follow all these guidelines. In addition, as a Rhodes University scholar, I was granted ethical approval from Rhodes Department of Ethics, not forgetting local approvals from my Education Department, School Principal, parents/guardians of participants as well as consent from the participants themselves. Not only did these ethical approvals grant me the permission to carry out this study but it may have given the participant learners an opportunity to possible beneficial changes in their behaviour towards reading which might have further enhanced their reading comprehension and fluency.

3.4. Conclusion

This chapter discussed the research design, research methods used in the study, the target population, sample and sampling procedures, research instruments, data collection procedures, data analysis, the validity of the study, triangulation, subjectivity, objectivity, bias, and reflexivity. The chapter closed with ethical considerations of the study.

CHAPTER 4

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

In chapter 3 there was a discussion on the methodology used in this study where 20 Grade 8 learners initially participated in this out of school Extensive Reading program, from which only 8 participants completed the study over a period of 8 months. This chapter presents, analyses, and interprets data generated by means of the research instruments I used by linking them to the research objectives, questions, literature, and the theoretical framework. To do this, I opened this chapter by reiterating the objectives of this study, the research questions, the study participants' demographic information and how the data generated attempted to answer these questions. The chapter presents data in table formats followed by an analysis and the interpretation thereof. These presentations, analysis and interpretations of data are done in three parts of pre-study and post-study questionnaires followed by the reading journals in answering the research questions. The information gathered by means of the researcher's reflective journal will also be incorporated in the interpretation of findings. In the interpretation of findings, learners are referred to as Learner 1, Learner 2, Learner 3, Learner 4, Learner 5, Learner 6, Learner 7, and Learner 8. The numbering of learners was done by a range of good, average, and poor learners from how learners perceived themselves, in-line with the explicit attitude which suggests that only an individual can self-report on how they perceive themselves. This is to say that Learner 1, Learner 2, and Learner 3 are good readers according to how they see themselves, Learners 4, 5 and 6 see themselves as average readers whilst learners 7 and 8 described themselves as poor readers according to data generated.

4.2 The outline of the research objectives and the three research questions

The core aim of this study was to explore an out-of-school ER program with a single group of Grade 8 learners. Drawing on this aim, the objectives of the study were to determine whether ER impacts on grade 8 learners' experiences and attitudes towards reading and whether it develops their reading comprehension and fluency, as well as looking into

possible challenges of ER implementation in a public school. To achieve these objectives, this study attempted to answer the following research questions:

Research question 1: What are the current grade 8 learners' experiences and attitudes towards reading?

By means of a pre-study questionnaire, this question sought to understand learner experiences and attitudes towards reading. Firstly, the question allowed me to determine whether learners had bedtime stories read to them when growing up, whether they had access to reading materials, whether they hailed from families where reading was a norm and what they did during the reading period allocated for pleasure reading at school. Lastly, the question also gauged learner attitudes towards ER by asking whether they enjoyed reading and how often they read for enjoyment, what their opinions are about reading, their self-perception as readers, how they spend their free time and whether they would join an out-of-school reading program if offered.

Research question 2: How does ER impact grade 8 learners' attitudes towards reading?

By means of the post-study questionnaire, this research question sought to understand learner experiences and attitudes after they participated in the study. For learner experiences, I wanted to find out how often learners read, where they read and from where they got their reading materials. For their attitudes toward reading, I wanted to know their likes and dislikes regarding the reading program and what activities they would engage in during their free time after the reading program has ended.

Research question 3: How does ER impact on grade 8 learners' reading comprehension?

This research question sought to understand whether ER could aid in developing learners' reading comprehension and was primarily answered by the short summary that learners had to write in their reading journals. These short summary entries were not meant for assessment purposes but rather to determine whether learners understood what they had read.

Research question 4: What challenges are faced when implementing ER in a public school?

This research question's objective was to establish the possible challenges that would surface during this ER explorative study. I wanted to unearth these challenges to come up with possible ways in which to curb these to make the implementation of ER effective in future.

4.3 Pre-study and post-study questionnaires

This section presents and analyses data generated by using pre- and post-study questionnaires on learner experiences. The learners' own words (verbatim) are written in italics in the tables.

4.3.1 Pre- and post-study questions on learner reading experiences

Both pre-study and post-study questionnaires intended to unearth learners' reading experiences and attitudes. The pre-study questionnaire sought to understand learners' current or prior experiences and attitudes regarding reading before the ER program, these prior experiences included, amongst others, childhood conditioned habits or experiences before attending any formal school. The post-study questionnaire sought to determine whether learners' experiences and attitudes towards reading had changed during or after the ER program in any way or not. The pre- and post-study questions differ because the pre-study focused on prior and current experiences and attitudes whilst the post-study focused on post-study experiences and attitudes. In addition, the researcher found it impractical to keep asking the same questions, for example, learners in grade 8 might not at this point have bed-time stories read to them and the school which is the site of this study has lifted the reading period from the school time-table during the year of this study and learners could therefore not be asked what they do currently during the reading period which is non-existing. For this reason, the post-study questions had to be different but not too farfetched as they included questions on reading material accessibility, reading time and reading place. Besides, it is noteworthy to reiterate that this study was not based on testing of reading comprehension which usually make use of pre-tests and post-tests with the same

questions using two groups of learner participants for research, but it was rather an explorative study with a single group of learner participants on reading experiences and attitudes whilst comprehension was looked at through short summaries.

4.3.1.1 Pre-study questions on learner experiences

The pre-study questions on learners’ experiences were four. These questions sought to understand whether learners had bedtime stories read to them when they were small children; whether they currently had access to reading material; have family members who read for enjoyment; and what they do at school during the prescribed reading period. The data for these are presented, analysed and interpreted below.

Response	Number
Yes	1
No	6
No response (spoilt)	1

Table 4: Learner exposure to bedtime stories as a child (N=8)

To determine learners’ past experiences with regards to reading, Question 1 was: “As a child, did you have bedtime stories read to you?” In response to this question, 1 of the 8 of learners responded that they had bedtime stories read to them, 6 of the 8 of learners had a negative response, showing that the majority of them did not experience parent-to-child reading whilst growing up, 1 of the 8 of learner’s response was spoilt as it was left unanswered.

The above findings reveal that only one learner (Learner 1) out of eight had bedtime story experiences while others could not relate to this because they had no bedtime stories read to them and learner 6 left the question unanswered. Findings further reveal that Learner 1 is one of the learners who perceived themselves as good readers, thus the assumption that the learner’s attitude towards reading is positive. This self- perception of a good reader can further be linked to continuous childhood experiences that conditioned this learner to see reading as an enjoyable activity. Moreover, if the assumption is that reading can turn

into a culture or habit then the bedtime stories read to this learner could be the reason why she has maintained a reading culture by continuing to read. According to Morni and Sahari (2013), there seems to be a “positive relationship between reading environment and the time learners spent on reading”, this shows that homes with an environment that encourages reading with reading materials availability and a positive attitude towards reading influences reading habits (p.415). One cannot overemphasize the importance of parental or guardian role modelling of reading for pleasure at home level and as early as possible.

Response	Number
Yes	1
No	3
Sometimes	4

Table 5: Learners’ access to reading materials (N=8)

Table 5 above, shows learner responses on Question 2 which was: “*Do you have access to any reading material?*” (N=8). Out of 8 learners, 1 out of 8 responded positively with a yes, while 3 out of 8 responded with a no, and 4 out of 8 responded that they sometimes had access to reading material.

The pre-study questionnaire which provided the data presented and analysed above revealed that Learner 1 had access to reading material, while Learner 2, Learner 3, Learner 5 and Learner 6 sometimes had access to reading material and Learner 4, Learner 7 and Learner 8 did not have access to reading materials. Once again, the availability of reading material puts Learner 1 in an advantageous position over the other learners. The findings showing that most learners only access reading materials at sometimes or not at all could be worrisome, seeing that learners’ reading experiences are unquestionably dependent on the availability of and access to reading materials, amongst others. One of the challenges in reading extensively identified by Renandya et al. (2021) is the “lack of relevant reading materials” which corroborates these findings. However, the solutions they suggest such as online reading or downloading reading materials are not practical in the context of this study because schools are not well resourced with internet connections and learners, perhaps not all, might not have internet connections at home because they come from disadvantaged

backgrounds. Besides, learners who might own cell-phones do not necessarily have smartphones, let alone data to browse the internet for reading or downloading online books. The practical solution would be using what is available in the school library as well as asking for book donations from relevant organisations. Apart from school libraries, learners could also continue to take out books from community libraries, read from family members or friends, exchange books between themselves and exchange their own books at the book exchange shop in town. Additionally, learners could form small book clubs where they can share and recommend books. Hardcopy books are also easier to navigate, bookmark and are portable in comparison to online reading. This could make it easy for learners to bring their reading books to school to read during free periods or during break time whereas phones would be confiscated because learners are not allowed to bring phones to school as part of school rules implemented due to cell-phone theft and so on. I personally prefer reading hardcopy books to online books as electronic devices can also have many distractions such as message pop-ups, phone calls, advertisements, and the temptation of browsing all over.

Response	Number
Yes	3
No	5

Table 6: Grade 8 learner families who read for enjoyment (N=8)

Table 6 above shows how learners responded to Question 3: *“Does anyone in your family read for enjoyment?”* 3 out of 8 learners responded that they had family members who read for enjoyment, while 5 out of 8 of the learners did not have any family members who read for pleasure.

Findings show that Learner 1, Learner 2, and Learner 5 come from reading families while Learner 3, Learner 4, Learner 6, Learner 7, and Learner 8 do not have reading role models at home. These non-reading families could be one of the reasons that learners perceive reading as a boring activity. Nevertheless, some might see reading families as a link to bedtime story readers, but this seems not the case. Only Learner 1 indicated bedtime stories as an experience while Learner 2 and Learner 5 indicated to have reading families although bedtime stories were not part of their upbringing. This could imply that reading

families do not necessarily mean that adult-to-child reading takes place, as some adults or siblings may only read for their own enjoyment instead of motivating and encouraging young ones in the family to read for pleasure. Perhaps this could be done by means of sharing relevant and enjoyable books within the family home or by suggesting readings or even by buying books as gifts for each other.

Response	Number
Nothing	5
Read my books	2
Do homework	1

Table 7: Pre-study reading period activities (N=8)

Table 7 presents answers to Question 4: *“At school, what do you do during the reading period?”* 5 out of 8 learners do nothing during the period allocated for reading, while 2 out of 8 learners read their books and 1 out of 8 learners do homework.

Findings seem to suggest that the prescribed reading period is not implemented in this school. What is more surprising is that the prescribed reading period for schools, by the Namibian Curriculum for Basic Education, is seemingly not catered for in terms of the provision of reading materials and motivation to engage in pleasure reading. This is evident from data that show only 2 learners out of 8 were reading, 1 learner doing homework and 5 out of 8 learners doing nothing during the reading period. This was before the reading period was lifted from the school timetable for reasons unknown to the researcher. This is worrisome as it can suggest that this school does not consider reading as important and thus this could add to other reasons why the school seem not to have a reading culture. Apart from lamenting the unavailability of books, schools could be innovative in making copies of available fictional or non-fictional stories even from local newspapers as a start, if the availability of reading material is indeed the problem.

4.3.1.2 Post-study questions on learner experiences

The post-study questions on learners' experiences were three. The questions sought to understand how often learners read during this ER program; where learners read and where they got their reading materials from. The data for these are presented, analysed, and interpreted below. To start, the first question on how often learners read was looked at by reading frequency. As highlighted by Mathewson, reading attitude can only be measured by intentions to read which result in actual reading experience. The table below as well as learners reading calendar entries taken from the reading journals indicate learners' reading frequency. The table indicating the number of books read by learners are also included in this section. The data interpretation is below the last table which indicates the number of books read.

PARTICIPANT	RESPONSE
Learner 1	<i>Every time I got a book to read</i>
Learner 2	<i>Whenever I am free to read</i>
Learner 3	<i>Few times every month</i>
Learner 4	<i>I read every month</i>
Learner 5	<i>I read verry month 2 to 3 books</i>
Learner 6	<i>I read only when I was free, sometimes more sometimes less</i>
Learner 7	<i>I tried to read something every month</i>
Learner 8	<i>Few time a month</i>

Table8: Reading frequency (N=8)

Table 8 shows responses to the post-study question, "How often did you read?" 5 out of

8 learners read every month, whereas 2 out of 8 learners read when they are free and 1 out of 8 learners read whenever a book is available. Below are reading calendars of each learner participant which also indicates their reading frequency.

The reading calendar was adopted from Kiplan (2017) and given to learners to keep track of their reading habits by shading or colouring the days on which they read. This calendar appears on the first page of each learner's reading journal. The days where no reading happened were left blank, however, some learners chose to write "skip" when they had skipped a day or more while reading the same book to show that it was one reading with skipped days in between, then the days completely left blank meant they did not read for those days.

To ensure that learners did not randomly shade or colour the reading calendar, the calendar entries were compared with the book entries to see whether these two reflected the same thing.

Keeping track of reading habits (adopted from Kiplan, 2017). Pencil shade or colour the days you read.

	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March
1								
2								
3								
4								
5								
6								
7								
8								
9								
10								
11								
12								
13								
14								
15								
16								
17								
18								
19								
20								
21								
22								
23								
24								
25								
26								
27								
28								
29								
30								
31								

Learner 1 Reading Calendar entry

This learner's (good reader 1) calendar indicates that reading happened every month, however, it can be categorised as most read to least read months. The learner's most-read months are September and January, the least October and December, while reading happened throughout.

Keeping track of reading habits (adopted from Kiplan, 2017). Pencil shade or colour the days you read.

	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March
1	shaded							
2	shaded				shaded		shaded	
3	shaded	shaded		shaded	shaded		shaded	
4	shaded	shaded		shaded	shaded	shaded		
5	shaded	shaded	shaded	shaded	shaded	shaded		
6	shaded	shaded	shaded	shaded	shaded	shaded		
7		shaded	shaded	shaded	shaded	shaded	shaded	
8	shaded		shaded		shaded		shaded	shaded
9			shaded	shaded	shaded		shaded	shaded
10	shaded	shaded		shaded			shaded	shaded
11	shaded	shaded		shaded			shaded	shaded
12		shaded	shaded	shaded		shaded	shaded	shaded
13	shaded	shaded	shaded	shaded		shaded	shaded	shaded
14	shaded	shaded	shaded	shaded	shaded	shaded		shaded
15	shaded	shaded	shaded	shaded	shaded	shaded		shaded
16		shaded		shaded	shaded			shaded
17	shaded			shaded	shaded	skip	shaded	shaded
18	shaded			shaded	shaded		shaded	shaded
19	shaded		shaded	shaded	shaded	shaded	shaded	shaded
20	shaded		shaded	shaded	shaded	shaded	shaded	shaded
21	shaded	shaded	shaded	shaded	shaded	shaded	shaded	shaded
22	shaded	shaded	shaded	shaded	shaded	shaded	shaded	shaded
23	shaded	shaded	shaded	shaded	shaded	shaded	shaded	shaded
24		shaded	shaded			skip		shaded
25	shaded	shaded				shaded		shaded
26	shaded	shaded				shaded		shaded
27	shaded		shaded			shaded		shaded
28	shaded		shaded			shaded		shaded
29	shaded		shaded			shaded		shaded
30	shaded		shaded			shaded		shaded
31	shaded		shaded			shaded		shaded

Learner 2 Reading Calendar entry

This learner's (good reader 2) calendar indicates that reading happened every month. From August as the most read month and the rest from between September to March as average ranging between 12 and 14 days of not reading.

Keeping track of reading habits (adopted from Kiplan, 2017). Pencil shade or colour the days you read.

	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March
1	Read							
2				Read				Read
3	Read	Read		Read	Read	Read		Read
4		Read		Read	Read	Read		
5		Read	Read	Read	Read	Read		
6	Read	Read	Read	Read	Read	Read		
7	Read	Read	Read	Read	Read	Read		
8	Read	Read	Read	Skip	Read	Read		Read
9		Read	Read	Read	Read	Read		Read
10				Read	Read	Read	Read	Read
11	Read			Read	Read	Read	Read	Read
12	Read		Read					Skip
13	Read		Read					Skip
14	Read		Read					Skip
15	Read	Read	Read					Read
16		Read	Read	Read	Read	Read	Read	Read
17		Read	Read	Read	Read	Read	Read	Read
18		Read	Skip	Read	Read	Read	Read	
19	Read	Read	Read	Read	Read	Read	Read	
20	Read	Skip	Read	Read	Read	Read	Read	
21	Read	Read	Read	Read		Read		
22	Read	Read	Read	Read		Read		
23	Skip	Read				Read		Read
24	Read	Read				Read	Read	Read
25	Read					Read	Read	Read
26	Read					Read	Read	Read
27	Read					Read	Read	Read
28	Read					Read	Read	Read
29	Read					Read	Read	Read
30								
31								

Learner 3 Reading Calendar entry

This learner's (good reader 3) calendar also indicates that reading happened every month. January was the most read month and the least read across the other months indicate an average of 11 to 16 days of not reading.

Keeping track of reading habits (adopted from Kipian, 2017). Pencil shade or colour the days you read.

	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March
1								
2								
3								
4								
5								
6								
7								
8								
9								
10								
11								
12								
13								
14								
15								
16								
17								
18			skip					
19								
20								
21								
22	skip							
23	skip							
24								
25								
26								
27								
28								
29								
30								
31								

Learner 4 Reading Calendar entry

This learner's (average reader 1) calendar indicates that reading happened every month, with the most-read month being August and the least read month being December.

Keeping track of reading habits (adopted from Kiplan, 2017). Pencil shade or colour the days you read.

	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March
1								
2								
3								
4								
5								
6								
7								
8				Skip				
9								
10								
11								
12								
13								
14								
15				Skip				
16	Skip							
17								
18								
19								
20		Skip						
21								
22								
23								
24								
25								
26								
27								
28								
29								
30								
31								

Learner 5 Reading Calendar entry

This learner's (average reader 2) calendar indicates that reading happened every month with most reading happening in September and the least in December.

Keeping track of reading habits (adopted from Kiplan, 2017). Pencil shade or colour the days you read.

	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March
1		SKIP						
2								
3								
4								
5								
6								
7								
8								
9								
10								
11								
12			SKIP					
13								
14								
15	SKIP							
16	SKIP							
17								
18			SKIP					
19								
20								
21								
22				SKIP				
23								
24								
25			SKIP					
26								
27								
28								
29								
30								
31	SKIP							

Learner 6 Reading Calendar entry

This learner's (poor reader 1) calendar indicates that reading happened every month, with the most reading in September and the least in March.

Keeping track of reading habits (adopted from Kiplan, 2017). Pencil shade or colour the days you read.

	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March
1								
2								
3								
4								
5								
6								
7								
8								
9								
10								
11								
12								
13								
14							Skip	
15							Skip	
16								
17								
18								
19								
20								
21								
22								
23								
24								
25								
26								
27								
28								
29								
30								
31								

Learner 7 Reading Calendar entry

This learner's (poor reader 2) calendar also indicates that reading happened every month, showing the most read month as August and the least read as December and March.

Keeping track of reading habits (adopted from Kiplan, 2017). Pencil shade or colour the days you read.

	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March
1								
2								
3								
4								
5	SKIP							
6								
7	SKIP							
8	SKIP							
9	SKIP							
10	SKIP							
11								
12								
13								
14								
15								
16								
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21								
22								
23								
24								
25								
26								
27								
28								
29								
30								
31								

Learner 8 Reading Calendar entry

This learner's (poor reader 3) calendar indicates that reading happened every month, indicating October as the most read month and March as the least read.

As mentioned earlier, the interpretation of the data is done after the following table on the number of books read by each learner, as it also answers to the question of how often learners read.

Learner 1	Learner 2	Learner 3	Learner 4
B1 3days (103p), B2 2days (59p) B3 2days (95p)	B1 6 days (200p) B2 1 day (207) no B3 2 days (474p) no	B1 1 (22p) B2 1 (29p) B3 3 (92p)	B1 10 days (208p) B2 5 days (106p) no B3 10 days (207p)
B4 3days (146p) no B5 9days(209p), B6 4days (94p), B7 2days (90p), B8 2 days (102p) no B9 6 days (149p) B10 8 days (277p) B11 3 days (68p) B12 4 days (109p) B13 5 days (not indicated) no B14 1 day (20p) B15 10 days (342p) B16 8 days (359p) B17 11 days (384p) B18 10 days (223p) B19 12 days (452p) B20 7 days (276p) B21 3 days (474p) no B22 8 days (236p) B23 5days (126p) B24 8 days (288p) B25 8 days (300p)	B4 3 days (94p) B5 7 days (212p) B6 7 days (254p) B7 5 days (196p) B8 7 days (211p) B9 6 days (107p) B10 5 days (157p) B11 4 days (109p) no B12 6 days (97p) B13 4 days (92) B14 5 days (110) B15 12 days (346p) B13 8 days (231p) B14 10 days (282p) B15 4 days (108p) B15 15 days (481p) B16 2 days (not indicated) no B17 7 days (132p) B18 5 days (102p) B19 8 days (509p) no B20 10 days (342p)	B4 5 (198p) B5 10 (236p) B6 7 days (192p) B7 9 days (239p) B8 5 days (150p) B9 10 days (367p) B10 9 days (300p) B11 7 days (206p) B12 11 days (232p) B13 5 days (118p) B14 13 days (272p) B15 11 days (266p) B16 8 days (474p) no B17 7 days (107p) B18 7 days (432p) no	B4 5 days (182p) B5 5 days (184p) B6 7 days (114p) B7 15 days (306p) B8 5 days (112p) B9 5 days (197p) no B10 2 days (124p) no B11 6 days (274p) no B12 4 days (92p) B13 4 days (110p) B14 4 days (108p) B15 4 days (109) no B16 4 days (114p) B17 10 days (256p) B18 6 days (231p) B19 3 days (191p) B20 11 days (482p) B21 8 days (230p)
Learner 5	Learner 6	Learner 7	Learner 8
B1 6 days (187p) B2 9 days (300p) B3 11 days (362p) B4 12 days (397p) B5 3 days (75p) no B6 5 days (138p) B7 4 days (not indicated) no B8 14 days (487p) B9 6 days (208p) B10 4 days (126p) B11 3 days (98p) no B12 3 days (not indicated) no B13 3 days (159p) no B14 3 days (81p) no B15 4 days (186p) no B16 9 days (215p) B17 4 days (318p) no B18 20 days (1026p) B19 14 days (419p)	B1 7 days (285p) no B2 11 days (253p) B3 16 days (474p) B3 5 days (170p) no B5 10 days (202p) B6 5 days (261p) no B7 17 days (448p) B8 8 days (195p) B9 6 days (not indicated) B10 9 days (231p) B11 4 days (96p) B12 8 days (186p) B13 7 days (102p) B14 4 days (71p) B15 2 days (38p) no B16 2 days (52p) B17 6 days (109p) B18 4 days (101p)	B1 6 days (208p) B2 14 days (519p) B3 7 days (195p) B4 5 days (130p) B5 17 days (629) B6 4 days (88p) B7 4 days (not indicated) B8 8 days (181p) B9 3days (96p) B10 6 days (109p) B11 1 day (16p) B12 4 days (93p) B13 7 days (102p) B14 4 days (68p) B15 3 days (77p) no	B1 5 days (223p) no B2 11 days (323p) B3 12 days (280p) B4 6 days (89p) B5 12 days (323p) B6 10 days (404p) no B7 6 days (101p) B8 5 days (220p) no B9 6 days (101p) B10 1 day (27p) B11 4 days (120p) B12 2 days (66p)

Table 9: Number of books, days read, and pages of each book read by learners (N=8).

Table 9 above presents data derived from learner reading journals entries, showing how many books they read for the period of 8 months. B stands for book followed by the number, for example, B1 means Book 1. Then learners had to indicate how long it took them to read a book by indicating the number of days. Furthermore, learners indicated the number of pages of the book read, whether such a book was completed or not. However, some learners forgot to indicate or left page numbers blank, which the table above shows as “not indicated”. Lastly, learners had to indicate whether they had finished reading a book or not. To show that a book was not read until the end, the table above indicates with a “no”.

The interpretation of the above data (table 8, learner reading calendars and table 9) is as follows:

Table 8 shows responses to the post-study question, “How often did you read?” 5 out of 8 learners read every month, whereas 2 out of 8 learners read when they are free and 1 out of 8 learners read whenever a book was available.

Findings reveal that all eight learners read every month although there were some indications of some reading more than others, depending on the availability of free time and reading material. Below is a discussion of how learners complied with reading one book a week.

The fourth principle by Day and Bamford (2002) proposes that *learners read as much as possible* and suggests that a learner read one book per week as a minimum. The study thus measured the amount of learner’s reading as proposed; one book a week considering Day and Bamford’s proposition of a week as the number of days; seven and not the beginning and end of a calendar week. The learner data are discussed under good readers, average readers, and poor readers in response to the question of how often they read.

i) Good Readers

The first participant under this category; Learner 1 read a total of 25 books of which 4 were discontinued due to reasons such as the book being boring, difficult, or long. It is noteworthy that the learner spent a minimum of 3 days and a maximum of 5 days on the discontinued books which is evidence that the learner did not immediately discontinue reading the books

but tried to read them. The longest book read by the learner had 452 pages and was completed within 12 days whereas the shortest book read by the learner had 20 pages and was completed in a day. The findings show that Learner 1 read some books in a minimum of 2 days and would thus start another book within the same 7-day cycle. As per the one book per week proposition, the learner completed a 276 paged book within 7 days however, at times, the learner read up to 2 books within a space of 7 days. Learner 1 read the most among the study participants as well as in the good readers' category.

The second participant; Learner 2 read a total of 20 books of which 5 were also discontinued because of similar reasons cited for Learner 1. Learner 2 spent a minimum of a day and a maximum of 8 days on a discontinued book. Significantly, the learner spent 8 days on a book before she decided to discontinue it providing no reason for the discontinuation. The longest book read by this learner had 346 pages and was completed within 10 days while the shortest one had 93 pages and was read within 3 days. Unlike Learner 1 who could read 2 books within 7 days, it is not the case with Learner 2 whose reading speed according to the data could be slightly slower than Learner 1. Although both Learner 1 and Learner 2 consider themselves as good readers; reading speed could be the reason Learner 2 had read fewer books compared to Learner 1.

The last participant under the good reader category; Learner 3 read a total of 18 books of which 2 were discontinued after spending a minimum of 7 and a maximum of 8 days on reading the books. The learner cited length and difficulty as reasons for discontinuing the books. Similar to Learner 2, the amount of days spent on a book before discontinuing them is significant and shows perseverance on the part of the learner. The longest book read by Learner 3 had 367 pages and was completed within 10 days. Similar to Learner 1 the shortest book that Learner 3 read had 22 pages and was read within a day whilst the longest book had 367 pages and was completed within 10 days.

ii) Average Readers

The first average reader, Learner 4 read a total of 21 books of which 5 were discontinued after spending a minimum of 2 and a maximum of 6 days on reading the books. Learner 4 cited boring and difficulty as reasons for not completing the books. However, the amount of days spent on a book before discontinuing it is commendable. The longest book

completed by Learner 4 had 482 pages and was completed within 11 days whereas the shortest book had 92 pages and was completed within 4 days. Learner 4's data is consistent when it shows that on average the learner completed a 100 paged book within four days which is less than a week but completed books that were longer between 5 and 15 days. It is noteworthy that despite considering themselves an average reader that Learner 4 completed a 482 paged book in 11 days compared to completing a 306 paged book within 15 days which is more. The learner cited that the 482 paged books despite being long was interesting and thus this could have influenced their reading speed.

The second average reader, Learner 5 read a total of 19 books of which 8 were discontinued because they were either boring, long, or difficult. The learner spent a minimum of 3 and a maximum of 4 days on the books that she discontinued. The learner thus only completed half of the books she recorded in her journal. The longest book read was 1026 pages and was completed within 20 days and thus the length of this book could easily make up for the overall lesser number of books completed by the learner. The shortest book read by the learner had 126 pages and was completed within 4 days. Furthermore, for the completed books, the number of days spent on a book is slightly more than the suggested 7 days which could be attributed to the fact that the learner considers herself an average reader and could thus be a slow reader as well.

iii) Poor Readers

The first participant under the category of a poor reader; Learner 6 read a total of 18 books of which he discontinued 4 because they were either boring, long, or difficult. The learner spent a minimum of 2 and a maximum of 7 days on books he discontinued. The longest book completed by Learner 6 had 474 pages and was completed within 16 days whereas the shortest book of 52 pages was completed within 2 days. Like Learner 5 who is an average reader, Learner 6 also completed reading most of his selected books in a little over 7 days per book.

The second participant under this category; Learner 7 read a total of 15 books of which he discontinued the last book because he found it boring. His longest read was 519 pages within 14 days whilst his shortest read was 16 pages within a day. Most of the books read by

Learner 7 were completed in less than 7 days per book which is impressive for a learner that considers themselves a poor reader.

The last participant under the poor readers' category is Learner 8 who read a total of 12 books of which he discontinued 3 because he found it long, difficult, and boring. The longest book completed by Learner 8 had 323 pages and was completed within 12 days whilst the shortest had 27 pages and was completed within a day. Learner 8 read the least number of books amongst all the participants as well as in this category. Half of the books read by Learner 8 were completed in less than the suggested 7-day period whilst the others were completed in the range of 11-12 days.

In summary of how often learners read, there is a steady decline in the number of books read starting with the good readers and ending with the average readers. Good Readers tend to have read more and often chose books that were lengthy as opposed to the Poor Readers who read fewer books and chose shorter books. The Average Readers, as implied by the name were right in the middle of the Good and Poor Readers regarding the number of books and length of books they had read.

The table below answers the question on where learners read.

Response	Number
Home	8
School	6

Table 10: Reading place (N=8)

Table 10 shows the responses to "*Where did you read?*" 2 out of 8 learners read at home, while 6 out of 8 responded that they read both at home and school.

Day and Bamford's (2002) eighth principle suggests that learners are at liberty to choose where to read. Findings show that six out of eight learners read at home and two of the participants read both at home and school. This could imply that learners felt comfortable reading at home because there were possibly lesser disruptions, or domestic responsibilities and/or they had more free time. It is interesting to note that the two learners who read both at home and school fall under the category of Good Readers who enjoy

reading and could have used their school breaks to read as the school does not implement or set apart the prescribed reading period for sustained silent reading.

Response	Number
Library	8
Friends	2
Peers	1
Family members	1

Table 11: Reading materials source (N=8)

Table 11 shows responses to “*Where did you get your reading materials?*” All 8 out of 8 learners take out reading materials from the library, from these 2 out of 8 learners got additional readings from friends, 1 out of 8 learners from co-learners and another 1 out of 8 learners from family members.

The findings show that all learners took reading material from the school library whereas Learner 2 additionally took out books from a community library. Moreover, Learner 1 accessed books from family members and friends whilst Learner 7 in addition to the school library also accessed books from friends. Learner 6 in addition to the school library received books from co-learners. This indicates that learners were not limited to the school library books but that they had access to diverse sources. According to Day and Bamford’s (2002) second principle variety “awakens or encourages a desire to read”. Although the learners were not limited to obtaining books from diverse sources, all of them cited using the school library and this could be due to reasons such as friends or family members not having books or because other libraries were possibly out of the learners reach due to distance. This could imply that since the library is the closest source of obtaining books for learners, it should be the first place that should be well resourced by stakeholders with relevant books that will capture and sustain the learners’ attention for ongoing motivation to read.

4.3.2 Learners’ Attitudes towards Reading

Both pre-study and post-study questionnaires sought to uncover learners’ attitudes towards reading. The pre-study questions sought to understand learners’ prior attitudes to reading

before the ER program and the post-study questionnaire sought to determine what learners' attitudes towards reading were during or after this ER program has come to the end.

4.3.2.1 Pre-study questions on learners' attitude

The pre-study questions on learners' attitude towards reading were six. These questions sought to understand whether learners enjoyed reading books; what they thought about reading; how they see themselves as readers; how often they read for enjoyment; how they spend their free time; and whether they would join an out-of-school reading program if made available. The data for these are presented, analysed, and interpreted below.

PARTICIPANT	YES	NO	NOT SURE
Learner 1	<i>Books are exciting</i>		
Learner 2	<i>It makes imagine what I read and also learn more about the world.</i>		
Learner 3			<i>I only read if I see something</i>
Learner 4			<i>I only read when I get a nice book</i>
Learner 5			<i>I don't read books</i>
Learner 6		<i>I don't read books</i>	
Learner 7		<i>I don't have books to read</i>	
Learner 8		<i>I don't read books</i>	

Table 12: Do you enjoy reading books and why? (N=8)

Table 12 shows learners' answers to the question of *"Do you enjoy reading books and why?"* Out of 8 learners, 2 learners indicated that they read for enjoyment, one because *"books are exciting"* and the other stating *"it makes imagine what I read and I also learn more about the world"*. Out of 8 learners, 3 indicated that they do not read books. Out of these 8 learners, 1 indicated not reading books because of unavailability stating, *"I don't have books to read"*. The remaining 2 out of 8 learners indicated that they are not sure if they enjoy reading books because they only read when they have something to read.

The findings indicate that Learners 1 and 2 answered affirmatively because they both enjoy reading books because according to Learner 1 *"books are exciting"* while for Learner 2 *"it makes imagine what I read and also learn more about the world"*. The findings show a correlation between Learner 1 and 2's answer to this question and the fact that they consider themselves Good Readers.

Secondly, Learners 3, 4 and 5 stated that they are not sure whether they enjoy reading because Learner 3 reads when she sees something, Learner 4 reads when she finds a book she enjoys and Learner 5 stated that she does not read books. Learner 3,4, and 5's response of 'not sure' implies that it is neither a yes nor a no. Learner 3 reads when she sees something which is a vague answer because not much can be deduced from it whereas Learner 4 reads depending on how enjoyable a book is but Learner 5 does not read books. Learner 5's response could imply that she reads other materials that are not in the form of a book.

Finally, the third set of learners; Learner 6,7 and 8 all answered in the negative to this question. The reasons provided by Learners 6 and 8 is that they do not read books which is a similar answer to Learner 5's response in the previous paragraph. However, Learner 7's reason for not enjoying reading books is because of the unavailability of books to read.

In summary, three attitudes are evident from the above responses; learners that definitely enjoy reading, those that are not sure and those that do not enjoy reading. The learners that stated that they do not enjoy reading (3), as well as those who are uncertain of enjoying reading (3), are more than the learners (2) that responded that they enjoy reading. Three learners do not read, one because of unavailability of books and two only read when there is something to read, in other words when the need arises to read.

Response	Number
Boring	4
Good	2
Enjoyable	2

Table13: General opinion about reading (N=8)

Table 13 above shows learners' answers to the question of "*What is your general opinion about reading?*" 4 out of 8 learners see reading as a boring activity, 2 out of 8 learners see reading as a good activity and the remaining 2 out of 8 learners see reading as an enjoyable activity.

In response to the question above that was aimed at determining learner attitudes prior to the study, the data indicated that half of the learner participants see reading as a boring activity, while two of the other half see reading as an enjoyable activity and the last two as a good activity. This seems to indicate that the prior attitudes of half of the participants toward reading were not favourable. None of the participants also perceived themselves as fluent readers on the pre-study questionnaire. They ranged from three good readers, two average and three poor readers. There is thus a link between the learners' opinions about reading and their self-perceptions as readers as described in the following section.

Response	Number
Poor	3
Average	2
Good	3

Table 14: Learner self-perception on reading (N=8)

Table 14 above shows how learners responded to the question: "*How do you see yourself as a reader?*" 3 out of 8 learners, who are boys, see themselves as "*poor*" readers, 2 out of 8 learners, who are girls, see themselves as "*average*" readers and 3 out of 8 learners, who are girls, see themselves as "*good*" readers.

In response to the question above the study found the following: Learners 1, 2 and 3 perceive themselves as Good Readers, whilst Learners 4 and 5 perceive themselves as Average Readers and Learners 6,7 and 8 perceive themselves as Poor Readers. As

explained in the previous paragraph, Learners 1 and 2, who are Good Readers, consider reading as an enjoyable activity whilst Learners 3 a Good Reader and Learner 4 an Average Reader respectively, considers reading a good activity. Learner 5 is an Average Reader and Learners 6, 7 and 8 who are Poor Readers all considered reading as a boring activity. The data shows that learners who do not enjoy reading because they find it boring are poor readers. On the other hand, the learners who enjoy reading because it is enjoyable are good readers.

Girls mostly see themselves as good to average readers whereas boys perceive themselves as poor readers. This could be as a result of the home environment or simply because of their femaleness. In their study, *Gender differences in reading motivation*, McGeown, Goodwin, Henderson, and Wright (2012), reported that girls have more positive attitudes towards reading and are thus highly motivated to read for enjoyment in comparison to boys. This is possibly because of how boys and girls are conditioned from an early age. The authors reported that home environments mostly nurture, mother-to-child reading, where mothers or other female family members are the ones who would read to their children or teach them reading skills and not the fathers or male members of the family. Furthermore, the authors found that boys only engage in reading for assessment to either please their parents or teachers. Similarly, Senn (2012) as well as Wigfield, Gladstone and Turci (2016), reported that girls seem to have higher motivation towards reading than boys.

Senn posits that boys are more interested in science and sports and thus see reading as boring and time-consuming. Senn further states that a lack of motivation toward reading by boys is a global issue that needs caring teachers in motivating and engaging reluctant boys in reading, maintaining that lack of academic performance due to not engaging in reading is one of the reasons for early school drop-outs. Wigfield et al. (2016), are also concerned about boys and maintain that early education needs to motivate and encourage boys to read, as this is later related to achievement outcomes. From what these scholars reported, it is crucial to consider ways in which boys could be motivated to become readers who enjoy reading and not only read for assessment. This responsibility of motivating boys to read will chiefly rest on schoolteachers, seeing that research findings point to home environments as portraying reading as a female-only activity.

Response	Number
Never	4
Few times a year	3
Hardly ever	1

Table 15: How often do you read for enjoyment? (N=8)

Table 15 above show that 4 out of 8 learners *never* read for enjoyment; 3 out of 8 learners read a *few times* a year and 1 out of 8 learners *hardly ever* read for enjoyment.

The findings indicate that four learners from the eight never read for enjoyment, three from the eight read a few times a year and one of the eight hardly ever read for enjoyment. There is an evident link between learners' opinions of reading and how often they read. Learners 1,2 and 3 responded that they read a few times a year, Learners 5,6,7,8 that they never read, and Learner 4 responded hardly ever. The link is evident in that the same Learners 1,2 and 3 expressed a positive attitude towards reading when they stated that it is an enjoyable and good activity whereas Learners 5,6,7,8 all expressed that they perceive reading as a boring activity. The learners' responses to the time spent on reading for enjoyment relate with the responses they provided for the following question on free-time activities.

PARTICIPANT	RESPONSE
Learner 1	<i>With friends, reading books, watching TV, cleaning</i>
Learner 2	<i>On social media, with friends, reading books, watching TV</i>

Learner 3	<i>On social media, with friends, listen to music</i>
Learner 4	<i>On social media, with friends, watching TV</i>
Learner 5	<i>On social media, with friends, cleaning house</i>
Learner 6	<i>With friends, watching TV, doing homework</i>
Learner 7	<i>On social media, with friends</i>
Learner 8	<i>With friends</i>

Table 16: Free time activities (N=8)

Table 16 presents data on how learners spend their free time. Amongst other things, 5 out of 8 learners spend their free time on social media; all 8 learners spend their free time with friends; 2 out of 8 learners do house cleaning when free; 4 out of 8 learners watch TV when free; 2 out of 8 learners read; 1 out of 8 learners listens to music and 1 out of 8 learners spend time doing homework.

As evidenced above, findings show that amongst other activities, all eight learners spend their free time with friends, 5 out of 8 learners spend their free time on social media, 4 out of 8 learners watch TV when free, 2 out of 8 learners do house cleaning when free, 2 out of 8 learners read; 1 out of 8 learners listen to music and 1 out of 8 learners spend time doing homework. The learners' attitudes towards reading are reflected in how they spend their time as only two; Learner 1 and Learner 2, who perceive themselves as Good Readers and find reading enjoyable indicated that they read during their free time whereas reading seems not to be a priority for the rest. Interestingly, Learner 3, a good reader indicated that she reads a few times a year, but reading is not one of the activities she practices during her free time.

PARTICIPANT	RESPONSE (answers with justification)
Learner 1	<i>Yes. Maybe we will be given nice books</i>
Learner 2	<i>Yes. I enjoy reading but I don't have nice books to read</i>
Learner 3	<i>Yes. I want to improve my reading and also enjoy more stories</i>
Learner 4	<i>Yes. Maybe to improve reading by enjoying books.</i>
Learner 5	<i>Not sure. I don't know if it is nice to read books.</i>
Learner 6	<i>Yes. To learn to enjoy reading</i>
Learner 7	<i>Yes. Maybe it will help me improve reading and writing and also enjoy reading</i>
Learner 8	<i>Yes. Maybe to improve reading</i>

Table 17: Would consider joining an out-of-school reading program and why? (N=8)

Table 17 presents data that shows learners' response to whether they would consider joining an-out of school reading program and for which reasons. 1 out of 8 learners was not sure of joining the reading program, not knowing "if it is nice to read books", the remaining 7 out of 8 learners responded that they would join the reading program for different reasons. 4 out of 8 learners stated they would join the reading program to improve reading; 4 out of 8 learners for enjoyment; 2 out of 8 learners anticipating nice books; and 1 out of 8 learners hoping to improve writing skills in addition to improved reading.

Learners' responses to whether they would consider joining an-out of school reading program and the reasons thereof show the following responses presented verbatim; Learner 5 responded that she is *not sure. I don't know if it is nice to read books*, the remaining 7 out of 8 learners responded that they would join the reading program for different reasons such as Learner 1, *maybe we will get nice books*; Learner 2, *I enjoy reading but I don't have nice books to read*; Learner 3, *I want to improve reading and also*

enjoy more stories; Learner 4, maybe to improve reading by enjoying books; Learner 6, to learn to enjoy reading; Learner 7, maybe it will help me improve reading and writing and also enjoy reading and Learner 8, maybe to improve reading.

This suggests that the majority of the learners' aim for joining an after school program was not only to read for enjoyment but to improve their reading skills of which the latter is noteworthy because all the Poor Readers who consider reading boring, one Good Reader and one Average Reader who both consider reading a good activity responded affirmatively.

In addition, the learners hoping to receive pleasant books; Learner 1 and Learner 2 are learners who explored other options like friends, family and a community library to obtain books and this could be an indication that they did not previously have relevant reading material or they would want to broaden their options. The interest in joining an after-school program is significant as 7 out of the 8 learners responded affirmatively.

4.3.2.2 Post-study questions on learner attitudes

The post-study questions on learners' attitudes were three. These questions sought to determine what learners enjoyed about the reading program, what they did not enjoy and what they would do during their free time after the reading program has ended. The data for these are presented and analysed below.

PARTICIPANT	RESPONSE
Learner 1	<i>Nice books for imagining what I read</i>
Learner 2	<i>Reading on my own time</i>
Learner 3	<i>I enjoy most of the books I read</i>
Learner 4	<i>Enjoying nice books</i>

Learner 5	<i>Nice books</i>
Learner 6	<i>Other boys taking books to read</i>
Learner 7	<i>I learn to enjoy reading even long story reading</i>
Learner 8	<i>I learn to read new words and improve reading</i>

Table 18: What did you like most about this reading program? (N=8)

Table 18 shows that 3 out of 8 learners liked the reading program because they had access to nice books; 3 out of 8 learners enjoyed reading; 1 out of 8 learners liked it for reading in their own time; 1 out of 8 learners liked it because other boys also took books; 1 out of 8 learners “*learn to read new words and improve reading*”.

Findings indicate that 4 learners enjoyed the reading program because they had access to “*nice books*”, 1 liked the program for reading on her own time, 1 boy liked it because he saw other boys taking books, whilst 1 indicated even enjoying long stories and another boy enjoyed the program for reasons such as learning words and improving reading.

The findings indicate that Learner 1’s attitude towards reading has remained consistent because she had indicated in the pre-study questionnaire that she enjoys reading books. Similarly, in response to the question above, she responded that she enjoyed reading pleasant books because she could imagine what she reads. On the contrary, the aforementioned response that Learner 1 provided was Learner 2’s response in the pre-study questionnaire. Thus, Learner 2’s response to what she enjoyed most about the Reading Program was that she could read in her own time.

There is an evident positive shift in the attitudes of Learners 3,4,5 who had indicated that they are not sure whether they enjoy reading but after the program stated that what they enjoyed the most was reading ‘nice’ or pleasant books. Learner 6, a Poor Reader, who had stated that he does not read books and perceives reading as a boring activity also had a positive shift in attitude towards reading because he felt a sense of solidarity by witnessing other boys taking out books from the library.

In the pre-study, Learners 7 and 8 both indicated that they perceived reading to be boring and thus Learner 7 provided the lack of books as a reason for not enjoying reading whereas Learner 8 stated that he does not read books. However, a shift in attitude is evident because in the post-study Learner 7 stated that he learnt to enjoy reading, even if a story was long and Learner 8 learnt to read new words and improved his reading.

It is evident from the outcome that learners' attitudes towards reading have been affected by this ER program as they not only appreciated enjoyable books but also ended up enjoying reading as an activity. This agrees with the claim that reading is its own reward since learners seem to find pleasure from reading. These findings are similar to the findings of another Namibian study by Olivier and Simasiku (2015), whose results indicated an increase in enjoyment, interest and a positive attitude towards reading after they investigated the effect of ER on reading and writing skills.

PARTICIPANT	RESPONSE
Learner 1	<i>Writing in the journal, I only wanted to keep reading</i>
Learner 2	<i>Writing about every book in the journal ogh</i>
Learner 3	<i>Not finding nice books and writing in the journal</i>
Learner 4	<i>Long boring books</i>
Learner 5	<i>Writing in the journal</i>
Learner 6	<i>Not finding nice books</i>
Learner 7	<i>Writing everything down</i>
Learner 8	<i>Writing in the journal was not nice I just wanted to read</i>

Table 19: What did you not enjoy about the reading program? (N=8)

From table 19, 6 out of 8 learners did not like writing in the journals; 1 out of 8 learners did not like long, boring books; and 2 out of 8 learners “*not finding nice books*”.

In response to the question above, the findings indicate that 6 out of 8 learners all expressed their dislike for writing in the journal they were provided for the study. One of the 6 in addition to another learner responded that they did not like the lack of enjoyable (nice) books. 1 out of the 8 responded that she disliked long boring books.

Learners 1,2 and 3 who categorized themselves as Good Readers expressed that they disliked writing in the journals. Learner 4, the first Average Reader disliked the long boring books whilst Learner 5, the second Average Reader also disliked writing in the journals. Learners 7 and 8 who categorized themselves as Poor Readers also disliked writing in the journals whilst the third learner under this category; Learner 6 disliked the lack of pleasant books. In summary, the most significant response to this question was the learners’ dislike for writing. This will be discussed in detail under the learner challenges.

PARTICIPANT	RESPONSE
Learner 1	<i>I will still read without writing a journal</i>
Learner 2	<i>I will continue to read, I also started reading newspapers</i>
Learner 3	<i>I will read when I find nice books but not write a journal</i>
Learner 4	<i>I will only read nice books</i>
Learner 5	<i>I don't know</i>
Learner 6	<i>Maybe I will read but only if books are nice</i>

Learner 7	<i>I will read more because I start to like reading it also help to learn new words</i>
Learner 8	<i>I will try to read short books because long books are boring</i>

Table 20: Now that the reading program is over, what will you do during your free time? (N=8)

This table shows what learners said they would do during their free time after this reading program has ended. 6 out of 8 learners will continue to read; 1 out of 8 learners will try to read; 1 out of 8 does not know what to do in future free time.

Findings further show that the majority of the learners indicated that they would continue to read after this reading program has ended, while one learner will try to read and another does not know what to do during future free time.

Learners 1 and 3 both expressed that they would read without writing. It seems that for these two learners, who consider themselves as Good Readers, writing was an obstacle because they reiterate it in their response to the question above.

Learners 4 and 6 will only read enjoyable (nice) books during their free time. This implies that to encourage these learners to become habitual readers, the school library will need to expand their collection of books, perhaps by way of a survey for learners, to indicate what they enjoy reading, as both indicated that the school library is their primary source where they get books. Both these learners did not indicate reading as an activity they pursue during their free time as they prefer social media, spending time with friends and watching television. The use of the word 'only' in the learners' responses imply that they will not read if the books are not enjoyable.

Learner 2, a Good Reader, has been consistent in her reading because her post-study response correlates to her pre-study response. She had indicated that one of the activities she does during her free time is reading and maintains in the post-study that she will continue to do so.

Another significant finding is that Learner 7 and 8 who in the pre-study indicated that they found reading boring and thus spent their free time on social media and with friends shows a change in attitude when they both indicate in the post-study that they will read. Learner 7 states that *I will read more. It helps to learn new words* and Learner 8 states *I will read short books*. This is a positive result in terms of change in attitude towards reading because firstly, both these learners did not enjoy reading; they found it boring; they considered themselves as poor readers and they also never read.

In summary, the findings confirm that the availability of enjoyable books can either motivate or hamper learners from reading (see 3rd bullet of assumptions). The findings further suggest that learners who do not know what they will do during future free time probably might need ongoing motivation and encouragement to keep reading.

4.4 Reading journals

The learners' reading journals present information on the reading calendar, the title, author, reading duration with starting and ending dates, short summary entries on reading comprehension, whether books were read to the end and why, whether such a book would be recommended to another, and personal thoughts on the reading. This section however only presents, analyses, and interprets the short summaries on reading comprehension without considering sentence structures or spelling errors. This is because the onus was on reading comprehension in answering research question 2 of how ER could affect grade 8 learners' reading comprehension. Another study could perhaps investigate the effect of ER on writing to consider sentence structures, spelling and other linguistic features that apply to writing. It is also important to note that the calendar entries from learners' reading journals were presented, analysed, and interpreted in answering to how often learners read, thus this section only investigates the journal entries on reading comprehension of books read.

For presentation, analysis, and interpretation, it is practically impossible to include all the book entries of 8 learner participants, therefore I opted to only include the calendar entries and first and last book entries of each learner.

As mentioned earlier, the short summaries on reading comprehension written by learners for the first and the last books they read are presented, analysed, and interpreted to determine if learners had understood what they read as this plays an important role in reading fluency and how much they read. Using the first summary entry and the last one also indicates whether learners were able to better express what they read as time passed. From the eight learners, 3 female learners perceived themselves as good readers, 2 females as average readers and 3 boys as poor readers according to the pre-study questionnaire. The data from the journals are thus presented; accordingly, Learner 1, Learner 2 and Learner 3 as good readers, Learner 4 and Learner 5 as average readers and Learner 6, Learner 7 and Learner 8 as poor readers.

Reading Journal Entries for each book/article read

Start date: 2 August 2020
Title: Kelly and her cat
Author(s): Jean Davidson
Reading duration in days: 3
End date: 4 August
Number of pages: 103

1. Short summary of what I read (for comprehension)

The book is about a Kelly and her cat she got as a gift for her birthday. The cat became her best friend and her diary diary. But the cat got sick and the girl loss her best friend.

2. Circle the below. More than one option is possible for b).

- a) Was I able to read to the end? Yes ii) No
- b) Why? Because it was: interesting ii) easy iii) boring
iv) difficult v) short vi) long
- c) Would I recommend this to others? Yes ii) No iii) Not sure

3. My personal thoughts about this reading:

I think this book is about our everyday life with people or animals we favour. I will recommend it.

Reading Journal Entries for each book/article read

Start date: 18 March 2021
Title: Anastacia
Author(s): Delfa Weinberg
Reading duration in days: 8
End date: 25 March
Number of pages: 300

1. Short summary of what I read (for comprehension)

This book is about a young girl that has a magic necklace to help her know between bad and good people. She was running away from people who want to kill her and her family, she meet a friend who help her.

2. Circle the below. More than one option is possible for b).

- a) Was I able to read to the end? Yes No
- b) Why? Because it was: interesting easy boring
 difficult short long
- c) Would I recommend this to others? Yes No Not sure

3. My personal thoughts about this reading:

I like magic stories. This book teach us that in life there are bad and good people and we must know them to safe ourself

The two summaries above indicate that the learner appeared to have a good comprehension of what she read. It could also be because she found both these readings interesting and thus managed to read to the end.

Learner 1 provided the following summary for the first book she read: *The book is about a Kelly and her cat she got as a gift for her birthday. The cat become her best friend and her diary but the cat got sick and the girl loss her best friend.*

She then provided the following summary for the last book she read.

This book is about a young girl that has a magic necklace to help her know between bad and good people. She was running away from people who want to kill her and her family, she meet a friend who help her.

In the first summary Learner 1 uses the wrong word; *the girl loss her best friend* instead of lost her best friend. In the last summary, she makes mistakes with regard to tense such as *she meet a friend who help her* instead of she met a friend who helped her. Irrespective of the minimal mistakes highlighted above, Learner 1 expressed herself well in summarising the first book as well as the last. Despite poor tense usage, she displays good sentence construction and punctuation and thus the reader can understand what is written.

Reading Journal Entries for each book/article read

Start date: 1 August 2020
Title: The Price of Freedom
Author(s): Ellen Ndishi Nambila
Reading duration in days: 6 days
End date: 6 August 2020
Total number of pages of the book: 200

1. Short summary of what I read (for comprehension)
This book explain how people lived in the 90's hundreds it explain how people survived and how the whites treated them, it is more about history and can help us understand history during school days

2. Circle the below. More than one option is possible for b).

a) Was I able to read to the end? Yes ii) No

b) Why? Because it was: interesting easy iii) boring
iv) difficult v) short vi) long

c) Would I recommend this to others? Yes ii) No iii) Not sure

3. My personal thoughts about this reading:
I really liked reading this books because I like reading books about the past they are more interesting and nice

Reading Journal Entries for each book/article read

Start date: 17 March 2021

Title: Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone

Author(s): J.K. Rowling

Reading duration in days: 10

End date: 26 March 2021

Total number of pages of the book: 342

1. Short summary of what I read (for comprehension)

The book is about a boy named Harry Potter who finds out he is wizard and later goes to wizard school. His best friends are Ron and Hermione. They have mysteries to solve.

2. Circle the below. More than one option is possible for b).

- a) Was I able to read to the end? Yes ii) No
- b) Why? Because it was: interesting ii) easy iii) boring
iv) difficult v) short vi) long
- c) Would I recommend this to others? Yes ii) No iii) Not sure

3. My personal thoughts about this reading:

This book is very good to read because it makes me to imagine pictures in my head. It also talk of friendship in a new world to explore.

The two summaries above indicate that the learner appeared to have a good comprehension of what she read. She also found the two readings interesting which probably was the reason for good comprehension.

Learner 2 provided the following summary for the first book she read. *This book explain how people lived in the 90's hundreds. it explain how people survived and how the whites treated them, it is more about history and can help us understand history during school days*

She provided the following summary for the last book she read. *This book is about a boy named Harry Potter who finds out he is wizard and later goes to wizard school His best friends are Ron and Hermaine They have mysteries to solve*

In the first summary the learner makes a subject-verb-agreement mistake; *this book explain* instead of *this book explains*. The learner also uses punctuation incorrectly and starts a sentence with lower case. The summary of the last book is faultless except for the lack of punctuation marks at the end of the sentences. Based on these summaries, there is thus visible improvement in how Learner 2 expresses herself in the beginning as opposed to the end of the Reading Program. Once more it is noteworthy that the focus is on reading comprehension and not on writing per se.

Reading Journal Entries for each book/article read

Start date: 23 March 2021

Title: Pretty Girls

Author(s): Karin Slaughter

Reading duration in days: 7

End date: 29 March

Number of pages: 432

1. Short summary of what I read (for comprehension)

This is a story about a wife who lost her husband. She found out later that he faked his death and decided to look for him with her sister.

2. Circle the below. More than one option is possible for b).

- a) Was I able to read to the end? i) Yes ii) No
- b) Why? Because it was: i) interesting ii) easy iii) boring
iv) difficult v) short vi) long
- c) Would I recommend this to others? i) Yes ii) No iii) Not sure

3. My personal thoughts about this reading:

This book is very long and I decided to stop reading it.

The two summaries above indicate that the learner appeared to have a good comprehension of what she read even though she stopped reading the second book.

Good Reader 3 wrote the following summary for the first book she read.

It was a boy named John who dream about serpents. Now in this book their two Johns so one John gets taken by the serpend and the other John goes to safe him and tell the serpend not to eat the kids or no one will dream about him.

She wrote the following summary for the last book she read. *This is a story about a wife who lost her husband, she find out later that he fake his death and decide to look fo him with her sister.*

In the first summary there are several mistakes that do not hamper the reader's understanding of the message being communicated. Learner 3 spells *serpents* correctly the first but incorrectly the following two times. She also writes *now in this book their two Johns* instead of there are two Johns. In the last summary she makes tense mistakes such as *she find out later* instead of she found out later, *that he fake his death* instead of that he faked his death and *decide to look* instead of decided to look. Based on Learner 3's summaries, she makes more mistakes at the end of the Reading Program compared to when she started. As mentioned earlier, the focus is on comprehension rather than writing skills.

Reading Journal Entries for each book/article read

Start date: 01.08.2020
Title: Crocodile hunting
Author(s): Michael Williams
Reading duration in days: 10
End date: 10.08.2020
Number of pages: 208 p. 9

1. Short summary of what I read (for comprehension)

A boy named Seraki Madingi who lives among crocodiles in Swaziland. His neighbourhood is terrorized by gangs. People are beaten up, houses are burned and his brother Phake has been thrown into jail unjustly. Then when he became part of a successful theatrical group which goes on tour to New York, Seraki thinks he has escaped the crocodiles that haunted him in South Africa.

2. Circle the below. More than one option is possible for b).

- a) Was I able to read to the end? i) Yes ii) No
- b) Why? Because it was: i) interesting ii) easy iii) boring
 iv) difficult v) short vi) long
- c) Would I recommend this to others? i) Yes ii) No iii) Not sure

3. My personal thoughts about this reading:

It was very interesting because it encourage people to fight for the country and family and motivate you to do our best when it come to think, we don't do that well.

Reading Journal Entries for each book/article read

Start date: 15-08-2021

Title: The Women I Wanted to be

Author(s): Diane Von Furstenberg

Reading duration in days: 8

End date: 22-03-2021

Number of pages: 220

1. Short summary of what I read (for comprehension)

The book is about a woman, a fashion designer woman that was born poor in Brussels but she became designer for her wrap dresses

2. Circle the below. More than one option is possible for b).

- a) Was I able to read to the end? i) Yes ii) No
- b) Why? Because it was: i) interesting ii) easy iii) boring
 iv) difficult v) short vi) long
- c) Would I recommend this to others? i) Yes ii) No iii) Not sure

3. My personal thoughts about this reading:

It is a nice book that show you can change from poor to rich only work hard

The two summaries above indicate that the learner appeared to understand what she read.

Learner 4 wrote the following to summarise the first book she read.

A boy name Seraki Mandindi who lives among crocodiles in Soweto. His neighbourhood is terrorized by gangs. People are beaten up, houses are burned and his brother Phanke has been thrown into jail unjustly. Then when he became part of a successful theatrical group which goes on tour to New York Seraki things he has exscaped the crocodiles that haunted him in South Africa

She wrote the following summary for the last book she read. *The book is about a women, a fashion designer women that was born poor in Brussels but she became designer for her wrap dresses*

Except for one spelling mistake, exscaped instead of escaped and women instead of woman in the first and last summary, Learner 4 was one of the well-expressed learners among the participants. She also explained the first summary in more detail with advanced vocabulary compared to the other participants. This indicates that she understood these books as evidenced above.

Reading Journal Entries for each book/article read

Start date: 5 August 2020

Title: The silver sword

Author(s): Ian Serraillier

Reading duration in days: 6

End date: 10 August 2020

Total number of pages of the book: 187

1. Short summary of what I read (for comprehension)

About four children from Poland who went to Switzerland to find their parents after the war how their childhood was without their parents and how they managed to find them

2. Circle the below. More than one option is possible for b).

- a) Was I able to read to the end? i) Yes ii) No
- b) Why? Because it was: i) interesting ii) easy iii) boring
 iv) difficult v) short vi) long
- c) Would I recommend this to others? i) Yes ii) No iii) Not sure

3. My personal thoughts about this reading:

This book is an inspirational story. It tells how many people survive during war times and their feelings. This book is very interesting and it also has some history in it.

The second Average Reader wrote the following summary to describe the first book she read. *About four children from Poland who went to Switzerland to find their parents after the war how their childhood was without their parents and how they managed to find them*

She wrote the following summary for her last book. *It is about Yelena. She must learn magic or die she has to go to four fowers of magician.*

The first summary written by the second Average Reader is a run-on sentence that is incomplete, whilst the second summary is very short and has one spelling mistake. Despite these errors and although not entirely, the reader can decipher the meaning that is conveyed.

Learner 6 (Poor reader 1)

Reading Journal Entries for each book/article read

Start date: 2 August 2020

Title: The Scorb of Water

Author(s): Elizabeth Goudge

Reading duration in days: 7 days

End date: 8 August 2020

Total number of pages of the book: 275

1. Short summary of what I read (for comprehension)

goss about a family, house and treasured possessions which should be inherited by Mary an 8 year old but has family members who have other plans for the house and feel jealous about it.

2. Circle the below. More than one option is possible for b).

- a) Was I able to read to the end? i) Yes ii) No
- b) Why? Because it was: i) interesting ii) easy (iii) boring
 (iv) difficult v) short (vi) long
- c) Would I recommend this to others? i) Yes ii) No (iii) Not sure

3. My personal thoughts about this reading:

the book is based on someone's own life in so many different ways and keeps confusing me and leaving me hanging so I started to find it boring and difficult to continue reading so I had to quit reading it and never got to finish the book

Reading Journal Entries for each book/article read

Start date: ~~8~~ March 2021

Title: going to press

Author(s): D. M. Pidge

Reading duration in days: 4 days

End date: 11 March

Total number of pages of the book: 101

1. Short summary of what I read (for comprehension)

is all about getting a story about famous people like what they do in their life

2. Circle the below. More than one option is possible for b).

- a) Was I able to read to the end? i) Yes ii) No
- b) Why? Because it was: i) interesting ii) easy iii) boring
iv) difficult v) short vi) long
- c) Would I recommend this to others? i) Yes ii) No iii) Not sure

3. My personal thoughts about this reading:

i like the book because it will learn you to go for what you believe is not taking everything for your job and live your life

The two summaries indicate that the learner appeared to understand what he read and though he had not finished the first book he also managed to understand the overall idea thus giving a summary for it.

The first learner under the category of Poor Readers provides the following summary for their first book. *It's about a family house and treasured possessions wich should be inherited by Mary an 8-year-old but has family members who have other plans for the house and feel jealous about it.*

Learner 6 then provides the following summary for the last book. *Is all about getting a story about famous people like What they do in their life*

In the first summary, Learner 6 has one spelling mistake "wich" instead of "which" and this does not interfere with the meaning conveyed. In comparison to the last summary, the first summary is expressed and detailed better than the last. Despite having used 'it's' correctly in the first summary, the learner spells it incorrectly in the last summary, starts a word with a capital letter in the middle of the sentence and ends the sentence with no punctuation mark. Yet the learner's attempt to prove his comprehension of what he read is clear.

Reading Journal Entries for each book/article read

Start date: 04/08/2020

Title: Police man's holiday

Author(s): J. Farmer

Reading duration in days: 6

End date: 09/08/2020

Total number of pages of the book: 208

1. Short summary of what I read (for comprehension)

This story is about the police man's holiday when the police when to the holiday they was so much fun for the police man's they came together and they had a party of only the police man's because their ~~was~~ wear in holiday

2. Circle the below. More than one option is possible for b).

- a) Was I able to read to the end? Yes No
- b) Why? Because it was: interesting easy boring
 difficult short long
- c) Would I recommend this to others? Yes No Not sure

3. My personal thoughts about this reading:

This book is very nice because people who read this book will say is very motivating to the youth and some will say it is not motivating to the youth

Reading Journal Entries for each book/article read

Start date: 08/03/2021

Title: Learning disability

Author(s): Lawrence Clayton

Reading duration in days: 3

End date: 10/03/2021

Total number of pages of the book: 77

1. Short summary of what I read (for comprehension)

This story is about a boy who is twenty-three (23) years old who study psychology and was doing mental health at a clinic

2. Circle the below. More than one option is possible for b).

- a) Was I able to read to the end? i) Yes ~~ii) No~~
- b) Why? Because it was: i) interesting ii) easy ~~iii) boring~~
iv) difficult v) short vi) long
- c) Would I recommend this to others? i) Yes ~~ii) No~~ iii) Not sure

3. My personal thoughts about this reading:

This book is very boring but maybe nice for people with learning disability to learn better

The two summaries show that the learner appeared to understand what he read even though his expression in writing has some mistakes, but it must be noted that the focus of the summary was not to check writing but to check reading comprehension.

The second learner in this category; Learner 7 summarises his first story as follows.

This story is about the policeman's holiday when the police when to the holiday thary was so much fun for the police man's they came together and they had a party of only the police man's because their wear in holiday

Learner 7 summarises the last book as follows; *This story is about a boy who is twenty-three (23) years old who study psychology and was doing mental health at a clinic*

The first summary of learner 7 is poorly expressed with many spelling errors that cause confusion; when instead of went, thary instead of there policeman's instead of policemen, their instead of they and finally wear instead of were.

The second summary has fewer spelling mistakes, but a word is omitted and thus the meaning of the second half of the sentence is lost. A tense mistake is also observed, study instead of studies. For both summaries, he uses no punctuation mark at the end of the sentences.

Reading Journal Entries for each book/article read

Start date: 8 March 2021

Title: Colours of Navubian life A moment in time

Author(s): Mary Jane volkman

Reading duration in days: 2

End date: 09 March

Total number of pages of the book: 66

1. Short summary of what I read (for comprehension)

The story is all about a woman Name Jane Barber volkman who was born Cleveland Ohio USA who went exploring different type of towns and sharing the different type of people and how they live

2. Circle the below. More than one option is possible for b).

- a) Was I able to read to the end? i) Yes ii) No
- b) Why? Because it was: i) interesting ii) easy iii) boring
 iv) difficult v) short vi) long
- c) Would I recommend this to others? i) Yes ii) No iii) Not sure

3. My personal thoughts about this reading:

I enjoyed reading this book I got to learn alot of different things about other tribes live

The two summaries show that the learner appeared to understand what he read.

The last learner in the category of Poor Readers summarised his first book as follows.

It is a book divided in many chapters of different storys And they is an educational lesons talking about living things and the world there were different storys

Learner 8 then summarises his last book as follows. *The story is all about a women Named Jane Barbee volkman who was born Cleven land ohio USA who went exporing diffrent type of tows and sharing the different type of people and How they live*

The last learner in the category of Poor Readers had a few spelling mistakes in the summary of his first book; storys instead of stories, they instead of there and lesons instead of lessons. In his last summary, Learner 8 has spelling mistakes again; women instead of woman, exporing instead of exploring, diffrent instead of different and tows instead of towns. In addition, he has punctuation mistakes in both the first and the last summary in which he ends sentences without a full stop and writes proper nouns in lower case. This learner expresses himself poorly and the reader must try and decipher the meaning he is trying to communicate in his summaries.

In summary, the expression of the participants correlates with the reader category under which they have placed themselves. Overall, the Good Readers expressed themselves well although an unexpected result was that the first Average Reader expressed herself better than the Good Readers. Overall, the Poor Readers expressed themselves poorly, but the reader could understand the summary except for Learner 8. The poor expression of learners could be directly linked to their writing skills which will be addressed under the learner challenges in the following section which reveal some learners indicating that they disliked writing in the journals. According to Watkins (2018) the assessment of reading might be anxiety provoking. Perhaps unintentionally writing in the journal could have been anxiety-provoking for learners as they might have perceived it as an assessment and this could have contributed to the way they expressed themselves in writing.

In brief, learners' entries of short summaries were written as they finished reading a book and not collectively in the presence of the researcher. This was done to avoid the feeling of assessment as much as possible because the intention was to keep learners' affective filter as low as possible to avoid anxiety as well as the need learners might have felt to perform in pleasing the researcher. The purpose was to allow learners to be in charge of

their own reading, whilst the summaries were meant to check if ER could affect learners' overall reading comprehension.

It is evident from the summaries provided that the learners had an overall comprehension of the books they read.

4.5. Researcher reflective journal

As highlighted earlier, Jasper (2005) and Walker et al (2013) maintain the importance of a reflective diary kept by a qualitative researcher, throughout a study. For this present study, the reflective research diary entry was written to keep track of every interactive sessions and to reflect upon what transpired as the events of the day. These entries were not merely reflective but served as an instrument of helping me to understand the notion of attitude when participants interacted. The informal notes made in the reflective journal are outlined below as they unfolded from beginning of the study to the end:

- At first, learner participants seem not to know how to find their way around the library shelves and had to be guided by the researcher as facilitator of the reading program.
- Sometimes, even after guidance by the researcher, participants would end up choosing historical, geographical or scientific books and had to be redirected.
- Learners, like learner 1 and 2, would help other learner participants to find interesting books.
- Upon collecting many books for school closures, learners would get excited of getting permission to take many books as possible.
- Learner participants' interactions changed from simply looking for books to read, to recommending books to each other, even exchanging books (hence the evidence visible in some of their journals for having read the same books).
- As the time progressed, other random learners came to the library on invitation from participants, and although these learners wanted to read, they did not feel want to joining the reading program.
- Participant boys, who seemed shy in the beginning, also started coming to the library for books, this drew more boys to come look for books to read, although girls were predominant.
- Finally, even after the reading program has come to an end, learners still want to continue reading, this might mean they developed a habit of reading.

Findings from the above notes, suggest that learners who were disoriented at the beginning phase of the study, became more and more aware of library usage. Moreover, they turned from shy participants into expressive ones who started interacted with each other with the facilitation of the researcher. These notes also agree with the research assumptions that participants would read extensively for enjoyment; comprehend what they read; improve reading experiences and attitudes; and make reading a habitual, personal activity.

4.6. Challenges in implementing this ER program

The purpose of this section was to establish possible ER implementation challenges in answering research question 3. These challenges were encountered both by learner participants as well as by me as participant researcher and are discussed as follows:

4.6.1 Lack of motivation

The lack of motivation is evident in the dropping out of learners from this ER program. Voluntary participants were more than 20 in the initial stage of the study from which 20 learners, spread across gender of 10 boys and 10 girls, accepted to be part of the study. From these 20 learners only 8 participants, 3 boys and 5 girls, remained in the study to the end. The remaining 8 learners also required me to encourage them to continue reading as this might in the end make them habitual readers who enjoy reading, instead of only reading for school assessment purposes.

Additionally, learners who lacked the motivation to continue did so because of the influence of their peers, for example, boys would come to the library when they saw other boys taking books. Besides, as a researcher/teacher I urged the participating learners to share and recommend books to each other to keep the motivation ongoing. These learners still knew that they could drop out of the program if they wished to do so, without being obliged to stay, yet they remained. One could assume that apart from other challenging factors, girls remained in the program because as mentioned earlier, females seem highly motivated to read than males and that boys remained in the program because of their peers who stayed on and to support or motivate each other.

4.6.2 Dislike of writing in journals

The post-study questionnaire data on what learners did not enjoy about this ER program are two-fold: writing in the journals and not finding enjoyable books. Two important characteristics of ER programs are no “follow-up activities and self-selection” of books (Day & Bamford, 1998, p. 5). The journals were not for follow-up activities but rather to monitor whether actual reading happened and although learners self-selected books, the lack of

variety of relevant books left them with what they sometimes saw as boring, long, or difficult books.

Ideally for an ER program, the optimal way to find out what learners read is perhaps to have them tell the researcher what they read. However, as this was not possible, I used the journals for them to summarise what they read. The findings show that six out of eight learners disliked writing in the journals as they only wanted to keep reading. What is noteworthy is that there is a strong correlation between the reader category learners have identified with and their dislike for writing. The discussion on the learners' summaries provides some evidence on why learners probably disliked writing in the journals; learners struggle to write. They struggle to write because evidently, they have not mastered their tenses, spelling, and general sentence construction.

4.6.3 Lack of relevant reading materials

One of the challenges faced by both learners and teachers was the lack of relevant reading materials. As evidenced in the reviewed literature, the main issue impeding reading in Namibian schools seems to be the lack of reading material. The table below indicates the challenge brought forth by irrelevant books which resulted in non-completion of readings. These data were derived from the reading journals' section where learners indicated why or why not they had finished reading a book. The reasons for the non-completion of books were then seen as a challenge on learners' behalf. The B in the reasons column of the table below stands for Book, for example, B1 stands for Book 1.

READING JOURNAL	Number of books not completed	Reasons provided
Journal 1 / learner 1	4	<i>B1 – boring B2 – boring B2 – Boring, difficult, long B3 – Difficult, long</i>
Journal 2 / learner 2	5	<i>B1- blank B2 – boring B3 – boring, difficult B4 – boring, difficult B5 – blank</i>
Journal 3 / learner 3	2	<i>B1 – difficult, long B2 – long</i>
Journal 4 / learner 4	5	<i>B1 – boring B2 – boring B3 – boring, difficult B4 – difficult B5 – boring</i>
Journal 5 / learner 5	8	<i>B1 – boring, difficult B2 – boring, long B3 – difficult B4 - boring B5 – boring B6 – boring B7 – boring B8 – boring, long</i>
Journal 6 / learner 6	4	<i>B1 – boring, difficult, long B2 – difficult B3 - boring, difficult, long B4 – boring</i>
Journal 7 / learner 7	1	<i>Boring</i>
Journal 8 / learner 8	3	<i>B1 – Difficult and long B2 – Boring and long B3 – Boring</i>

Table 21: Irrelevant reading material (N=8)

Implementation issues brought forth by Renandya et al (2021), such as “lack of relevant reading materials” which also translates into a lack of variety that leaves readers with boring books, long books or books that are too difficult or beyond the learners’ level of proficiency. Looking back at Krashen’s *i+1*, this difficulty of books could be defined as input that stretches far from learners’ level of comprehensible input.

The findings indicate that learners in this study were limited to not finding a variety of reading materials from which they could freely choose for enjoyable reading. Renandya et al (2021), as mentioned earlier report “lack of availability of relevant reading materials” as a challenge to ER implementation. Furthermore, one out of eight learners disliked long, boring books; while two of the eight learners lamented “*not finding nice books*” to read as a challenge. Thus, the reasons for the non-completion of self-selected books in the reading journals ranged from boring, difficult to long books. Moreover, this unavailability or scarcity of relevant reading materials is similarly faced by ER implementing teachers as a challenge, as they are not having the means of providing a variety of reading materials that could intrigue learners interest, as was in my case. The only possible solution at hand was guiding learners in finding enjoyable reading materials from what was available in the school library as well as encouraging them to share and recommend books, either from the school library or from outside sources.

4.6.4 Library induction and guidance on selecting books

Another challenge faced by learners and me was the guidance that learners needed in finding relevant materials in the school library. Moreover, I am not teaching junior secondary classes and specifically not grade 8’s, thus I was unaware of the learners’ level of reading proficiency in order to properly guide them within the different sections of the library according to their reading levels or reading proficiency. And though learners were given the liberty of choosing their own readings as suggested by Day and Bamford, some did not know where to pick relevant books and would at times, for example, pick books on Geography that only portrays different rivers and their slopes, while others would pick Science books of human anatomy and so forth. This showed that, apart from visible signs on the shelves indicating different areas and types of books, these grade 8 learners still needed a proper induction into the library as well as continuous guidance so that they do not end up picking books that are none fictional or which do not have enjoyable stories.

However, if learners remained adamant about a book they chose, they were given the freedom to take it for reading and to return it if they could not continue reading such a book to the end.

4.7. Limitations

Not making room for hearing the learners retell their stories could be seen as a limitation because due to their struggle with writing some of the details that would probably have been shared in speech were lost in the process of writing. A study by Mart (2012), *Developing speaking skills through reading*, reported that large readings in other words extensive reading influences learners' speech, suggesting that "printed words relate to spoken words" and thus contributes positively to how learners express themselves in speech rather than in writing. Therefore, I am of the opinion that learners might have, given the opportunity, perhaps expressed themselves better in speech by retelling what they had read instead of expressing themselves in writing. Perhaps future research could look into this aspect.

4.8. Conclusion

This chapter unpacked, presented, and analysed the data generated by the study instruments in response to the 3 research questions. The chapter further discussed the key findings in detail, starting with the learner experiences and attitudes as per pre- and post-study questionnaires data; the reading comprehension as per reading journals and further looked at the implementation challenges that came up and which were encountered by both the learners and the researcher. The chapter also briefly discussed the limitations of this study. The next chapter concludes the study with recommendations.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented, analysed, and interpreted the findings of the study. The aim of this chapter is two-fold. Firstly, the chapter presents a summary of the findings to draw conclusions to the research questions and secondly the chapter closes by making relevant recommendations and suggestions for further study.

The overall aim of this study was to explore an out-of-school ER program with a single group of grade 8 learners from a disadvantaged community in the hope of cultivating positive attitudes and motivation towards reading so that reading becomes an enjoyable, habitual activity. Drawing on this aim, the objectives of the study were to determine whether ER affects learners' attitudes towards reading by answering the following research questions.

1. What are the current Grade 8 learners' experiences and attitudes towards reading?
2. How does ER impact Grade 8 learners' attitudes towards reading?
3. How does ER impact Grade 8 learners' reading comprehension and fluency?
4. What are possible challenges faced in implementing ER within a public school?

5.2 Summary of Findings and Conclusions

5.2.1 Learner experiences and attitudes

The first question the study sought to answer was "what are the current grade 8 learner experiences and attitudes towards reading?" The question was answered by analysing the experiences and attitudes separately and highlighting the connections that emerged.

5.2.1.1 Learner experiences

To assess experience, the participants were asked how often they read, where they read and from where they obtained reading materials.

The findings reveal that the study participants read more at the beginning of the reading program as there was a steady decline in the number of books read for all the participants.

The results also indicate that the learners who categorized themselves as Good Readers read more and often chose books that were lengthy as opposed to the Poor Readers who read fewer books and chose shorter books. The Average Readers, as implied by the name were right in the middle of the Good and Poor Readers regarding the number of books and length of books they had read.

In addition, the findings of the study indicate that the participants' preferred space to read was at home, except for two that read both at home and school. All the participants also cited using the school library except for three who also received books from friends and learners, another from a community library and another from other family members.

In general, the results reveal a decline in the time spent reading at the beginning of the study as opposed to the end. The decline, for most of the participants, was seasonal which means they did not read much during December. Self-perception of readers also played a role in how frequently these learners read. From Good Readers to Poor readers, all participating learners engaged in reading, whether the reading was at home or school and whereas some were not readers prior to the study, they look forward to continuing reading even after this ER program has come to an end. The study thus concludes that learner reading experiences improved even though there was a challenge of availability of relevant reading materials.

5.2.1.2 Learner attitudes

Regarding the participants' attitudes prior to the study, the results show that the learners that stated they do not enjoy reading (3) are more than the learners (2) that responded that they enjoy reading whilst (2) were unsure. Half of the participants perceived reading as a boring activity, while two of the other half perceived reading as an enjoyable activity and the last two as a good activity. However, girls, who were also most of the participants perceived themselves as good to average readers whereas the boys who were in the minority perceived themselves as poor readers. Similarly, the learners who categorized themselves as Good Readers responded that they read a few times a year whilst one

Average Reader and the three Poor Readers responded that they never read and the other Average Reader responded that she hardly ever reads.

In addition to the participants' attitudes prior to the study described above, the study found that participants when free spend their time with friends, on social media, watching TV when free, doing house cleaning when free, reading; listening to music and spend time doing homework. In response to the last pre- study question 7 out of 8 learners responded that they would join the reading program although for different reasons. This suggests that most of these grade 8 learners', whilst having other activities that occupy their free time, aim for joining an out-of-school program would not only be to read for enjoyment but to improve their reading skills. The latter is noteworthy because all the Poor Readers who consider reading a boring activity, one Good Reader and one Average Reader who both consider reading a good activity responded affirmatively.

There is a significant change in the participants' attitudes after the study. The evidence shows that learners' attitudes towards reading have been positively affected by the ER program as they not only appreciated enjoyable books but also ended up enjoying reading as an activity and recommended and shared readings among themselves. However, the findings also indicate that majority of learners all expressed their dislike for writing in the journal they were provided for the study while the minority expressed their dislike for the lack of enjoyable (nice) books as well as the dislike of long boring books. Finally, the findings show that most of the learners, including those that had indicated that they find reading boring responded that they would continue to read after this reading program has ended.

The evidence from this study corroborates previous studies on attitudes and experiences by confirming the following research assumptions.

- Learners will be able to read extensively for enjoyment.

The above assumption has been confirmed by the findings of the study because learners read extensively for their enjoyment. Learners were motivated by the fact that they could discontinue a book if they did not enjoy it.

- Learners' attitudes and experiences towards reading will improve.

The above assumption has also been confirmed by the findings because learners who before the study did not read or like reading, have taken a liking for reading because of the Extensive Reading Program.

- Extensive reading will turn reading into a culture or a habitual activity.

The above assumption has also been confirmed because learners who before the study preferred other activities to spend their time on, expressed their desire to continue reading.

5.2.2 The effect of ER on learner's reading comprehension

The second question the study sought to answer was how does ER impact on grade 8 learner's reading comprehension? The question was answered by analysing the number of books they read, their overall comprehension and whether there has been improvement in the way they express themselves. The question was answered from the data provided in the learners reading journals and yielded the following conclusions.

In response to the question about the number of books read, the study found that two Good Readers and 1 Average completed the greatest number of books whilst one of the Poor Readers completed the least number of books. The study concludes that there is a correlation between students' self-perception as a reader and the number of books they read.

The evidence from the findings confirms the following research assumption on reading comprehension.

- ✓ Learners will be able to comprehend what they read by inferring the meaning of unknown words.

This assumption has also been confirmed by the findings because learners were able to summarise what they have read as an entry in their reading journals.

The study thus concludes that the participants had an overall comprehension of what they read as the participants could read and were able to convey what they read through writing.

Moreover, the study found a noticeable difference between the way learners expressed themselves in summarising their first book compared to the summary of their last book. The expressions of the participants correlate with the reader category under which they have placed themselves. Overall, the Good Readers expressed themselves well although an unexpected result was that the first Average Reader expressed herself better than the

Good Readers. The Poor Readers expressed themselves poorly, but the reader could understand the summary except for Learner 8. The study concludes that ER can positively affect learners reading comprehension as is evident in the findings.

5.2.3 ER implementation challenges

The third question the study sought to answer was what challenges are faced when implementing ER in a public school? The question was answered from the post-study questionnaire data on what learners did not enjoy about this ER program and emerging implementation challenges that I noted as the researcher. Learner challenges were; lack of motivation, dislike of writing in reading journals, lack of relevant reading materials and the need for guidance to find books in the library, whilst the teacher/researcher challenges were; lack of relevant reading materials and guiding learners in the library.

i) Lack of motivation

Lack of motivation with regards to ER and particularly this present study is evident in the number of learners who dropped out of the study. The remaining learners, apart from being encouraged and motivated by the researcher, were self-motivated as they shared and recommended books, whilst boys were mostly motivated by the fact that other boys took out books to read. In brief, it is evident that though some learners lacked motivation, some remained motivated to the end.

ii) Dislike of writing in journals

The dislike of expressing oneself in writing was another issue brought up by participating learners, which I regard as a challenge. Although the short summaries that learners were required to write in their reading journals were only for establishing reading comprehension, as they were informed beforehand, most of the learners did not like this activity. Most of the participants did not like writing in the journals as evident in the findings. This is perhaps because these grade 8 learners foreknew their writing skills and though they knew it was not for assessment, the fear of making mistakes in their writing probably caused them not to like writing. Thus, it could be assumed that writing summaries in the reading journals raised learners' affective filters which might have caused them to dislike writing. As a researcher, I aimed to keep learners from any fear or anxiety triggers by avoiding

comprehension tests and yet the decision to use reading journals for entries still became a challenge for these learners. Perhaps future researchers on ER could introduce other means of checking reading comprehension.

iii) Lack of reading materials and guidance on selecting books

The study encountered a lack of relevant reading materials as a challenge. This is because learners lamented the lack of enjoyable books and not being happy about ending up with boring, long, or difficult books. This is even though some learners found stories that were enjoyable even in reading long books. Thus, the problem should perhaps have been boring and difficult books. Boring because learners did not find them enjoyable and thus had to stop reading or difficult because the language was beyond their level of comprehension. In addition to this, the learners did not know where to look for books in the library and needed my guidance in finding their way. The study concludes that lack of relevant reading materials is a serious matter of concern in Namibian public schools and that though schools may have libraries, learners do not know how to go about selecting a book for leisure reading.

5.3 Recommendations

After a year of exploring ER program in the hope of cultivating positive attitudes and experiences towards reading, establishing how ER can affect reading comprehension and facing implementation challenges, the researcher would like to make the following recommendations:

The study recommends that reading should start as early as possible. However, it appears that Namibian families, especially those of previously disadvantaged communities seem not to have a home environment where reading is a norm, therefore early childhood development centres, pre-primary schools and primary schools should be well resourced with relevant reading materials and committed educators to help learners experience enjoyable reading as of early ages. This recommendation is of utmost importance if we want to make reading a norm in the Namibian society and to curb academic failures so that learners do not struggle with reading, regardless of gender, when they reach secondary and later tertiary education, seeing that lack of reading skills can similarly cause school drop-outs.

Furthermore, the reading period as outlined in the National Curriculum for Basic Education as mentioned earlier needs to be implemented in Namibian schools nationwide. This reading period, according to the NCBE is primarily aimed at sustained silent reading for grades 1-11, and therefore this study recommends that the NCBE or its policy makers provide guidelines for schools to properly implement this reading period. Public schools should also do away with excuses of unavailability of reading materials and start with whatever little resources that are available, for example, local newspapers could be approached to produce short stories by Namibian writers so that, for starters, learners can relate to such stories. Since local newspapers are available nationwide and can be duplicated, this could be one way of bringing reading to the classroom for the reading period in engaging learners for SSR.

Additionally, schools could invite local writers to come to classrooms and read stories to learners to draw learners' interest to make them want to read more stories for themselves. Besides, language teachers could become pioneers of reading culture at their respective schools by sharing ideas on how to make reading exciting not only for learners but also for teachers. This might in turn, create a school reading culture where everyone feels the need to read during the reading period.

Finally, it is evident from the findings of this study that ER programs can be implemented at schools during challenges such as lack of relevant reading materials. Apart from the scarcely resourced school library, learners shared readings from other sources as friends and family members, they also recommended books to each other which they accessed from the school library as well as from the community library. In cases where schools do not have libraries, prescribed English literature books could be used for starters to engage learners in reading. Additionally, language teachers could download and make copies of enjoyable stories for learners to read. This is one of the suggestions offered by Renandya et al. (2021), that teachers could access various downloadable reading materials for their learners to engage in reading. Indeed, this might be costly and thus it is further recommended that schools provide aid in this regard.

5.4 Suggestions for further study

ER appears to be new in the African context, especially in the Southern African region, as there seem to be little research carried out in this region. To fill this gap, more studies need

to be carried out on ER to explore its various benefits on not only around pleasure reading but how it can positively affect other behavioural and linguistic aspects.

This present study found that ER can positively affect reading attitudes and reading comprehension when learners take charge of their own reading. This study also avoided the testing of comprehension through tests by asking learners to write summaries in their own time after having read a book, yet it is evident in learners' dislike for writing that affective filters might have been raised to a certain extent. Thus, to avoid anxiety triggering assessments in future research, other means of checking reading comprehension could be explored to make ER programs enjoyable and successful.

Furthermore, it should be noted that reading experiences need to happen over a longer period, and as suggested by various scholars reading experiences as early as pre-school play a vital role in how learners perceive reading and this ultimately affects their attitudes towards reading. However, in contexts where learners have no pre-school reading experiences, perhaps the only remedy is to implement ER programs on a longitudinal basis.

Findings from this study further indicate that learners comprehended what they read since they had to express it in writing short summaries in their journals. It is noteworthy that though the writing of summaries was chiefly for establishing learners' reading comprehension on what they have read, one cannot simply brush aside that these learners' writing skills need improvement. Nonetheless, the writing flaws of these learners were not discussed in depth under the findings as it was not part of the objectives of the study. Perhaps different research in the Namibian context could study how reading, especially ER, relates to writing. Thus, future researchers, amongst others, could explore the area of how ER might affect writing in improving learners' writing skills, grammar, vocabulary and sentence structures.

To conclude these suggestions, this study was deemed small scale and as a teacher/researcher I have realized that there is a greater need for further studies in Extensive Reading programs especially in the Namibian context. Evidently, numerous global studies on ER have proven the benefits of ER programs. These benefits vary from study to study because of different focus areas such as ER in developing reading attitudes; ER in developing reading comprehension; ER in vocabulary expansion; and ER in

developing speaking skills just to mention a few. However, to this date there seem to be no study carried out on any of these within the Namibian context especially at the secondary school level. Therefore, this study not only adds to the body of research presenting the Namibian context but calls on other scholars to engage in further studies with regards to Extensive Reading.

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter began by revisiting the research aim, objectives, and questions. I then presented a summary of the main findings of the research which answered research questions 1,2 and 3 confirming the research assumptions. I further presented a summary of implementation challenges, answering research question 4. Moreover, I offered recommendations on what policy makers and schools could do with regards to the prescribed reading period for Namibian schools as well as how schools can curb lack of relevant reading materials. Acknowledging that my study was small-scale with various limitation, I then concluded this chapter by suggesting future research to explore various other benefits of ER in the Namibian context.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: LEARNER PRE-STUDY QUESTIONNAIRE

LEARNER PRE-STUDY QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire is intended to collect data from Grade 8 learners on the topic of "Extensive Reading". The information collected via this questionnaire is intended for the purpose of the study only and will be treated with utmost confidentiality and anonymity. Names of participants will be replaced by pseudonyms (fake names for the sake of protecting identities).

Participation in completing this questionnaire is of voluntary basis and will be highly appreciated.

Please complete the following questionnaire as **honestly and as truthfully** as possible, by underlining your options or by writing short answers.

Name: Gender: Age:

1. As a child, did you have bedtime stories read to you? (a) Yes (b) No

2. Do you enjoy reading books? (a) Yes (b) No (c) Not sure

Why?.....

3. What is your general opinion about reading?

(a) Good (b) Enjoyable (c) Boring (d) Waste of time

4. How do you see yourself as a reader?

(a) Poor reader (b) Average reader (c) Good reader (d) Fluent reader

5. Do you have access to any reading material e.g. books or magazines?

(a) Yes (b) No (c) Sometimes (d) Never

6. How often do you read for enjoyment?

(a) Every day (b) Once a week (c) Once a month (d) Once a year

(e) Few times a year (f) Hardly ever (g) Never

7. Does anyone in your family read for enjoyment? (a) Yes (b)No

8. How do you spend your free time?

(a) On social media (b) With friends (c) Reading books

(d) Watching TV (e) Sleeping (f) Playing

(g) Other

9. At school, what do you do during the reading period?

.....

10. If the school had an out-of-school reading program, would you consider becoming a member?

(a) Yes (b) No (c) Not sure

Why?.....

.....

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire!

APPENDIX 2: LEARNER POST-STUDY QUESTIONNAIRE

LEARNER POST-STUDY QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire is intended to collect data from Grade 8 learners on the topic of "Extensive Reading". The information collected via this questionnaire is intended for the purpose of the study only and will be treated with utmost confidentiality and anonymity. Names of participants will be replaced by pseudonyms (fake names for the sake of protecting identities).

Completing this questionnaire is voluntary but will be highly appreciated.

Please complete the following questionnaire as **honestly and as truthfully** as possible.

Name:

1. How often did you read?
2. Where did you read?
3. Where did you get your reading materials?
4. What did you like most about this reading program?.....
5. What did you not enjoy?
6. Now that the reading program is over, what will you do during your free time?.....

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire!

APPENDIX 4: READING JOURNAL ENTRY

Reading Journal Entries for each book/article read

Start date:

Title:

Author(s):

Reading duration in days:

End date:

Number of pages:

1. Short summary of what I read (for comprehension)

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

2. Circle the below. More than one option is possible for b).

- a) Was I able to read to the end? i) Yes ii) No
- b) Why? Because it was: i) interesting ii) easy iii) boring
- iv) difficult v) short vi) long
- c) Would I recommend this to others? i) Yes ii) No iii) Not sure

3. My personal thoughts about this reading:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

APPENDIX 5: RHODES ETHICAL CLEARANCE LETTER



Rhodes University Human Ethics Committee
PO Box 34, Makhanda, 6141, South Africa
T: +27 (0) 48 603 4797
F: +27 (0) 48 603 6822
E: ethics@ru.ac.za

NIHREC Registration number: RC-241114-045

<https://www.ru.ac.za/research/gateway/ethics/>

30/03/2021

Sydney Engelbrecht

Email: sl767731@campus.ru.ac.za

Review Reference: 2020-0803-3332

Dear Dr. Esthela Mavala

Title: "Exploring Extensive Reading in Developing Reading Skills with Grade 8 Learners: A Case Study in a Selected Namibian Secondary School"

Principal Investigator: Dr. Esthela Mavala

Collaborator: Ms. Sydney Engelbrecht

This letter confirms that the above research proposal has been reviewed and APPROVED by the Rhodes University Human Ethics Committee (RU-HEC). Your Approval number is: 2020-0803-3332

Approval has been granted for 1 year. An annual progress report will be required in order to renew approval for an additional period. You will receive an email notifying when the annual report is due.

Please ensure that the ethical standards committee is notified should any substantive change(s) be made, for whatever reason, during the research process. This includes change in investigator. Please also ensure that a brief report is submitted to the ethics committee on the completion of the research. The purpose of this report is to indicate whether the research was conducted successfully, if any aspects could not be completed, or if any problems arose that the ethical standards committee should be aware of. If a thesis or dissertation arising from this research is submitted to the library's electronic thesis and dissertations (ETD) repository, please notify the committee of the date of submission and/or any reference or cataloguing number allocated.

Sincerely,

Prof Arthur Webb

Chair, Rhodes University Human Ethics Committee, RU-HEC

cc: Mr. Esthela Mavala - Ethics Coordinator

APPENDIX 6: INSPECTOR OF EDUCATION APPROVAL LETTER



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA
KHOMAS REGIONAL COUNCIL
DIRECTORATE OF EDUCATION, ARTS AND CULTURE

Tel: [09 264 61] 293 4356
Fax: [09 264 61] 231 367/248 251

Private Bag 13236
WINDHOEK

10 March 2021

P. O. Box 65460
Katutura
Windhoek
Namibia

For Attention: Ms Sylviana Engelbrecht

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH WITH SELECTED SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KHOMAS REGION

Your letter dated 09 March 2021 on the above topic is hereby acknowledged.

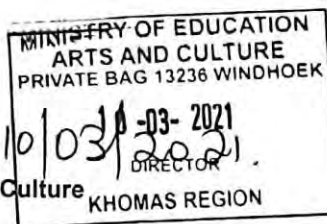
Permission is hereby granted to you to conduct research on the "Exploring Extensive Reading in Developing Reading Skills with grade 8 Learners" Immanuel Shifidi Secondary School in Khomas Region under the following conditions:

- ❖ The Principal of the selected school to be visited must be contacted in advance and agreement should be reached between you and the Principal.
- ❖ The school programme should not be interrupted.
- ❖ The learners who will take part in this exercise will do so voluntarily.
- ❖ The Directorate of Education, Arts and Culture should be provided with a copy of your thesis/ findings.

We wish you success in your research.

Yours sincerely


Paulus Lewin
Acting Director of Education, Arts and Culture



APPENDIX 7: SCHOOL PRINCIPAL PERMISSION LETTER



IMMANUEL SHIFIDI SECONDARY SCHOOL

Enquiries: The Principal
Telephone: (061) 261153
Fax: (061) 263751

Private Bag 15001
KATUTURA
WINDHOEK

24 July 2020

TO : Ms. Sylviana Engelbrecht

Email : sylvianaengelbrecht7@gmail.com

Cell : 0812891306

**Re: Request for permission to conduct research at Immanuel Shifidi
Secondary School**

Your letter dated 02 July 2020 bears references

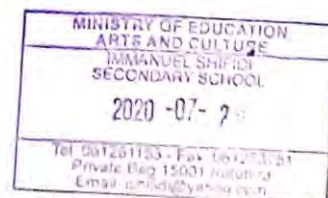
Hereby, permission is granted to Ms. SYLVIANA ENGELBRECHT to conduct her research at our school.

Provisional Title: "Exploring extensive reading in developing reading skills with grade 8 learners: A case study in a selected Namibian secondary school"

Kind regards

Mr. HNP KATJUONGUA

PRINCIPAL



APPENDIX 8: PERMISSION REQUEST TO PARENTS/ LEARNERS CONSENT

P.O. Box 65460

Katutura

Windhoek

Namibia

Dear Parent/Guardian,

RE: Request for permission to conduct research with your child as participant.

My name is Sylviana Engelbrecht, and I am teacher at your child's school and also a Masters' degree student at Rhodes University (RU) in Grahamstown, South Africa. The research I wish to conduct for my Masters' full thesis requires me to explore an extensive reading program with Grade 8 learners through completion of questionnaires, taking part in informal discussions with peers regarding books they read and keeping of reading journals which will be collected at the end of the study. This research will be conducted with the permission of the school principal, the school inspector and under the supervision of my supervisor, Doctor Rethabile Mawela.

This letter serves to seek formal consent from you as parent/guardian to work with your child as a participant of this research. The research is about exploring extensive reading with possible benefits of developing reading skills and creating a positive attitude toward reading. All learners who take part in this study are required to be members of the reading program which will be facilitated by me as researcher and teacher at the site of this study which requires me to interact with learners for data collection. Learners taking part in this reading program will be required to read as much as possible and whenever possible.

If you grant permission for your child's participation, I will explain in more detail what would be expected of him/her, and provide needed information to understand the research, at school, at a date to be announced. This information will include potential risks such as spending more time reading; potential benefits such as increased reading ability; as well as your child's rights as a participant which is volitional.

As participation in this research, learners will not be rewarded in any way. A positive response to this request does not oblige your child to take part in this research. To participate your child will be asked to sign a consent form to confirm understanding of and agreeing to the conditions, prior to any data collection. A copy of this consent form is attached for your perusal. Please note that your child has the right to withdraw at any given time during the study.

If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me on 0812891306 and/or sylvianaengelbrecht7@gmail.com.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Sylviana Engelbrecht (17E7751)
Rhodes University

If you wish to grant permission for your child's participation, please fill in and return the following form.

<p>I.....parent/guardian of hereby grant permission to Ms. Engelbrecht to carry out the reading program study with my child as participant during the 2020 academic school year.</p> <p>Signed:</p> <p>Date:</p> <p>Contact number(s):</p>
--

Below is a copy of the consent form, for your perusal as parent/guardian, only to be signed by the learner for participation.

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Research Project Title	"Exploring Extensive Reading in Developing Reading Skills with Grade 8 Learners: A Case Study in a Selected Namibian Secondary School"
Principal Investigator	Ms. Sylviana Engelbrecht

Participation Information

- I understand the purpose of the research study and my involvement in it.
- I understand the risks and benefits of participating in this research study.
- I understand that I may withdraw from the research study at any stage without any penalty.
- I understand that participation in this research is done on a voluntary basis.
- I understand that while information gained during the study may be published, I will remain anonymous and no reference will be made to me by name or student number.
- I understand that questionnaires will be used for data collection.
- I understand that my written work (reading journal) will be collected for the study.
- I confirm that I am **not** participating in this study for financial gain.

Information Explanation

The above information was explained to me by: Ms. Engelbrecht

The above information was explained to me in English and I am in command of this language.

Voluntary Consent	
I,, hereby voluntarily consent to participate in the above-mentioned research.	
Signature:	Date: / /

Investigator Declaration	
I, Sylviana Engelbrecht, declare that I have explained all the participant information to the participant and have truthfully answered all questions ask me by the participant.	
Signature:	Date: / /

APPENDIX 9: PARTICIPATION INVITATION LETTER

Participant's Name (not currently available)

Immanuel Shifidi Secondary School

Private Bag 15001

Katutura

Windhoek

Dear (participant's name)

RE: Invitation to participate in an educational research

You are invited to participate in an educational research entitled "Exploring Extensive Reading in Developing Reading Skills and attitudes with Grade 8 Learners: A Case Study in a Selected Namibian Secondary School". Your participation is important to determine the possible benefits that extensive reading can have to develop or enhance Grade 8 learners' reading skills and attitudes.

This extensive reading program will be facilitated by me (Ms. Engelbrecht), as researcher and data collector for the study. Data for the research will be collected through questionnaires and reading journals which will be kept by you as participant throughout the study period. While questionnaires will be collected at the beginning of the study, the journals will be collected at the end of the study. Your participation in this research is anonymous and your identity will not be revealed.

Upon agreement to participate, I will give a detailed explanation of what would be expected of you as participant, and also provide you with information to understand the research, at school, at a date to be announced. This information will include potential risks, benefits, and your rights as a participant.

Participation in this research is volitional with no reward or payment and a positive response to this invitation does not oblige you to take part in this research. To participate you will be asked to sign a consent form, prior to any data generation, to confirm that you understand and agree to take part in the study. Please be assured that you have the right to withdraw from the study at any given time during the study, if you wish to do so.

Thanking you in advance for your consideration.

Yours sincerely,

Ms. Sylviana Engelbrecht