EXPLORING YOUNG ADULT READING HABITS AND RETROSPECTIVE HOME LITERACY PRACTICES

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Rachel Hope Guy
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ABSTRACT

Reading self-efficacy is shaped over time by both internal and external feedback with the first form of external feedback coming from an individual's caregivers. How often caregivers read, take their children to the library, and read to their children all influence the effects of the home literacy environment on a child's academic performance, reading frequency, and reading self-efficacy. The purpose of this cross-sectional study was to explore retrospective informal home literacy practices alongside current young adult reading habits. Students attending various undergraduate and graduate classes in the College of Education, Heath, and Human Sciences of a major university in the South East United States were surveyed to measure their retrospective memories of early childhood informal family literacy practices alongside of their current (a) print exposure, (b) reading frequency, and (c) reading attitudes. A large majority of participants were single white female undergraduate students. Results indicate a statistically significant correlation between how often participants retrospectively reported how often they read for pleasure in their early childhood and participant's current reading attitudes, reading frequency, and print exposure scores. Limitations to the study and recommendations for future research are explained.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter One Introduction 1
Chapter Two Theoretical Perspective 4
Chapter Three Literature Review 6
  Reading Self-Efficacy 6
  Early Literacy Experiences 7
  Young Adult Reading Habits 9
  Research Questions 11
Chapter Four Methods 14
  Sample 14
  Measures and Procedures 15
  Data Analysis 22
Chapter Five Results 23
  Initial Analysis 23
  Informal Home Literacy Practices and Reading Attitudes 25
  Informal Home Literacy Practices and Reading Frequency 26
  Reading Attitudes and Literacy Levels 29
  Reading Attitudes: Book Choice 29
  Reading Frequency and Literacy Levels 31
  Informal Home Literacy Practices and Literacy Levels 32
Chapter Six Discussion 33
  Do you read? 34
  What do you remember reading? 35
  What do you read? 37
  Are you a reader? 38
  Limitations 39
  Implications 40
  Conclusion 42
References 44
Appendix 51
Vita 55

LIST OF TABLES

Table 4.1. Demographic data for all participants (*n* = 140). 16
Table 5.1. Descriptive statistics of reported leisure frequencies (*n* = 140). 27

Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

Reader self-efficacy is the perceptions an individual has towards their ability to read which is built over time by each interaction with print materials (Bandura, 1982; Henk, Marinak, & Melnick, 2013). These interactions produce positive or negative judgments about both a reader's ability to be successful in relation to reading as well as the act of reading itself (Bandura & Schunk, 1981; Henk et al., 2013; Petscher, 2010). In future interactions with print materials, these judgments influence the decision to read or not and how much time and effort is put into reading (Bandura & Schunk, 1981; Bandura, 1982). An individual with poor reading self-efficacy may choose to avoid reading and instead engage in an alternative activity with which they have higher levels of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1982; Petscher, 2010). However, the decisions behind a reader's choice to read is multi-faceted as an individual may have good experiences with books they choose themselves but become frustrated with assigned readings at school (Garces-Bascal & Yeo, 2017; McKenna, 2001). The influence of caregivers at home as well as what and how often they choose to read can further play a role in establishing an individual's early self-efficacy (Garces-Bascal & Yeo, 2017; Henk et al., 2013; McKenna, 2001).

Home literacy, in general, is often used to describe the quality and frequency of the language and literacy interactions between caregivers and children, such as how often they read together or the conversations they have about books (Bracken & Fischel, 2008). However, home literacy can also include attitudes towards reading, the number of books

and amount of print materials in the home, whether or not a computer is in the home, and how often children are taken to the library (Bracken & Fischel, 2008; Martini & Sénéchal, 2012). Research indicates that children who do not struggle to read were more likely to have someone who read to them five to seven days per week, own more books, and have a computer in the home (Tichnor-Wagner et al., 2015). Higher frequency and higher quality home literacy practices are associated with better reading comprehension and a larger vocabulary for children (Sénéchal & LeFevre, 2014).

To date, research has predominately studied the home literacy environment from the time period before the start of formal schooling up through Grade 4 (McKenna, Conradi, Lawrence, Jang, & Meyer, 2012; Reardon, Valentino, & Shores, 2012). There is the belief that the home literacy environment has less influence on a child's academic achievement as the child gets older which may mean that by middle childhood, the home literacy environment may no longer play a role in the child's reading habits and overall academic success (Samuelson et al., 2007; Sénéchal & LeFevre, 2014). However, the development of children's reading habits between fourth and eighth grade is considered to be a crucial time as it may determine the overall reading habits that children continue to have later in life (Garces-Bascal & Yeo, 2017).

Despite the potential benefits of the home literacy and school environments, it is evident that children are voluntarily reading less frequently as they age (McKenna, 2001; Perie, Moran, & Lutkus, 2005; Sullivan, Nichols, Bradshaw, & Rogowski, 2007). In 2004, over half of nine year olds reported reading voluntarily almost every day with less than a third of 13 and 17-year olds reporting the same (Sullivan et al., 2007). By Grade 8,

66-68% of students disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement "reading is a favorite activity" with only 10-14% indicating that they strongly agreed (Perie et al., 2005; McKenna et al., 2012). Young adults have the lowest voluntary reading habits of any age group with 48% of Americans between 18 and 24 reading no books voluntarily (Sullivan et al., 2007). After age 25, there is a slight increase in the frequency of reading habits that plateaus through age 44 (Sullivan et al., 2007). However, the reason behind the decline in voluntary reading habits is unclear as reading self-efficacy, reading motivation, and reading attitudes are each multidimensional (McKenna, 2001). Given this decline of reading habits into young adulthood, this study will seek to explore the relationship between self-reported retrospective early childhood family literacy practices and self-reported leisure habits of young adults attending university.

Chapter Two

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

The theoretical framework that supports this study is Bandura's theory of perceived self-efficacy which provides the foundation for how children's self-perceptions motivate or inhibit their learning process (Bandura, 1977). A child's belief about their ability to be successful at a task influences whether or not they choose to do the task, how much effort they put into it, and how long they persist at it (Bandura, 1982). In the context of literacy, those who see themselves as competent readers are more likely to have had positive experiences with literacy in the past and expect to continue to have positive experiences in the future (Henk et al., 2013). Conversely, those who see themselves as struggling readers probably had more negative experiences with literacy and will prefer to avoid future encounters so as to refrain from reminders of their past failures or frustrations (Henk et al., 2013; Petscher, 2010). However, Bandura (1982) posits that confidence in one's abilities to complete a task is not enough to sustain the behavior. In approaching the task, one needs to believe that one has the ability to cope with failures along with any uncertainty one may encounter (Bandura, 1982).

The Home Literacy Model serves as a conceptual framework further grounding this study. The Home Literacy Model details the distinction between informal and formal literacy practices as well as how these practices influence early literacy development differently (Martini & Sénéchal, 2012). Formal literacy experiences are centered around the print materials and include teaching letter names and sounds, how to print letters and words, how to read words, and how to print the child's name (Martini & Sénéchal, 2012;

Sénéchal & LeFevre, 2014). Informal literacy experiences are ones that expose children to print indirectly without the intention for direct engagement in teaching literacy concepts which can include an adult reading a storybook to a child, visits to the library, or the number of books in the home (Martini & Sénéchal, 2012). For the purposes of this study, the focus is on informal literacy as it is likely that informal literacy experiences may be better recalled retrospectively by participants than specific formal literacy activities. The Home Literacy Model relates to Bandura's (1977) theory of perceived self-efficacy as the parents completing these literacy practices are modeling behavior for their children and providing reinforcement that could influence the child's own self-efficacy towards print and literacy activities.

Chapter Three

LITERATURE REVIEW

Reading Self-Efficacy

Bandura (1982) defines self-efficacy as an individual's own beliefs about their ability to perform a behavior and the effect this self-judgement has on future behaviors. The subsequent motivation to perform a behavior and the behavior itself is largely self-directed (Bandura & Schunk, 1981). In one study, children with a high level of interest towards reading cited their ability to work through difficult parts of books and understanding challenging words as an important element in establishing their own perceived self-efficacy towards reading (Guthrie et al., 2006). Reading attitudes and motivation as both are shaped by an individual's self-efficacy towards their own reading ability (Bandura & Schunk, 1981; Henk et al., 2012; McKenna, 2001; McKenna et al., 2012).

Reading attitudes, or an individual's feelings about reading, are shaped over time with personal experiences, beliefs, and social norms as the three primary influencing factors (Cockroft & Atkinson, 2017; McKenna, 2001; McKenna et al., 2012; Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997). Reading attitudes are also based on an individual's beliefs about themselves and what they read as well as their expected outcomes (McGeown et al., 2015; McKenna, 2001). While an individual may be confident reading science fiction novels alone, they may experience anxiety when asked to read segments of classic literature out loud in class (McKenna, 2001). However, an individual's confidence

towards and technical proficiency in reading does not necessarily mean that an individual will choose to read voluntarily or even enjoy it (Garces-Bascal et al, 2018). An individual's reading self-efficacy and their subsequent choice to read for enjoyment is shaped not only by their attitudes towards reading but their own intrinsic motivation (Clinton, 2015; Cockroft & Atkinson, 2017).

Reading motivation is an eagerness to read which is influenced by an individual's own perceived self-efficacy about their reading ability (Bandura, 1977; Clinton, 2015). When an individual decides to read, it is not only a product of their reading attitudes but a motivated decision to choose reading over an alternative activity (Bandura & Schunk, 1981; McKenna, 2001). Furthermore, an individual's intrinsic motivation to read is based on the desire to read for enjoyment as the act of reading itself brings its own satisfaction (Becker, McElvany & Kortenbruck, 2010; Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000). This eagerness to read is self-directed whereby the reader creates their own standards and goals for specific behaviors (Bandura & Schunk, 1981). For example, an individual may enjoy reading to the point that they set a goal of reading a specific number of books every year. This self-directed motivation to read can lead to a higher frequency of reading and a wider range of what is read along with subsequently better reading skills (Becker et al., 2010; Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997). However, whether or not an individual is motivated to read voluntarily may also be influenced by their early experiences with reading.

Early Literacy Experiences

Caregivers act as the initial sphere of social influence for their children, helping to shape their children's positive or negative attitudes about literacy (Edwards, 2007; Lim,

Bong, & Woo, 2015; Martini & Sénéchal, 2012; McKenna, 2001). The establishment of reading attitudes is, in part, done through modeling wherein an individual observes a behavior and the possible outcomes resulting from that behavior (Bandura, 1977). An individual is more likely to model behavior that they personally value, that is associated with positive outcomes, and is performed by someone they frequently observe (Bandura, 1977). The modeled behavior is influenced by the social context in which one views others performing this behavior in addition to an individual's own motivation to repeat the behavior to achieve desired outcomes (Bandura, 1977). Parenting style, the types of home literacy activities completed, and how frequently they are done can influence the overall impact of the home literacy environment on a child's literacy acquisition prior to their entrance into formal schooling (Bingham, Jeon, Kwon, & Lim, 2016). However, the home literacy environment varies from family to family dependent on the income, education, and cultural and literacy beliefs of the caregivers (Segal & Martin-Chang, 2018). Furthermore, whether or not caregivers teach their children to read and write in early childhood is further dependent on many additional factors including their self-efficacy towards reading and their own ability or perceptions about their ability to teach their child (McGeown et al., 2015; Segal & Martin-Chang, 2018). Regardless, there are many benefits to a child's exposure to print through the home literacy environment.

Home literacy exposure prior to entering school as well as the attitudes of caregivers toward reading are linked to children's overall attitudes towards academics (Petscher, 2010; Samuelson et al., 2007). Caregivers can act as a model for their children with the more successful early readers as those with adults modeling various literacy

practices (Edwards, 2007; Garces-Bascal & Yeo, 2017). Home literacy resources such as the number of books and other printed material in the home along with accessibility to those items is associated with more positive reading attitudes (Lim et al., 2015). For example, Grade 12 students with more than 100 books in the home and parents with a high school diploma scored higher on each subject test than students who had less than 25 books in the home and parents with college degrees (Sullivan et al., 2007). One study in the Netherlands showed a decline in reading habits bin 14-year old and 23-year old students; however, those students whose caregivers were avid readers were more likely to have higher rates of reading frequency than their peers whose caregivers read less often (Nagel & Verboord, 2012). This study in particular points to the significant influence that informal home literacy practices can have on young adult reading habits. Even with the many benefits of caregiver involvement and the home literacy environment, the reading rates of children show a consistent decline into young adulthood (McKenna, 2001; Pryor, Hurtado, Saenz, Santos, & Korn, 2007; Sullivan et al., 2007).

Young Adult Reading Habits

As children get older, the voluntary reading rates and positive attitudes toward reading steadily decline (McGeown, 2015; McKenna, 2001; Sullivan et al., 2007). Those with stronger reading abilities tend to have more positive attitudes towards reading which may be a product of their perceived self-efficacy towards their own reading ability (Bandura, 1977; McKenna, 2001). In 2004, 54 percent of nine-year olds reported reading almost every day for fun while only 30 percent of 13-year olds and 22 percent of 17-year olds reported the same (Sullivan et al., 2007). In comparison to Americans of other age

groups, 15 to 24-year olds spend approximately 60 percent less time reading voluntarily for only 7-10 minutes a day (Sullivan et al., 2007). As children get older, the gap between readers who struggle and readers who do not struggle widens with reading attitudes for struggling readers declining sharply over time (McKenna, 2001; Reardon et al., 2012; Sullivan et al., 2007). This could be a result of the individual's perceived self-inefficacy which leads to anxiety, frustration, and feelings of worthlessness developed over time through repeated negative reading experiences (Bandura, 1982; Garces-Bascal & Yeo, 2017; Henk et al., 2012).

As more leisure options become available to children as they age, they are forced to decide between reading and other activities based on their attitudes associated with each option (McKenna, 2001). Children between ages six and 17 spend on average 1 hour and 17 minutes reading per week compared to 14 hours and 36 minutes watching television (Sullivan et al., 2007). Young adults between the ages of 15 and 24 years old spend 41.9 percent of their leisure time on weekdays watching television and 2.6 percent of their leisure time reading (Sullivan et al., 2007). However, all Americans aged 15 and older spend approximately half of their leisure time watching television (Sullivan et al., 2007). The motivation to watch television over reading books may also be due to social comparison in that they see more of their friends watching television than reading (McKenna, 2001). While there may be those who consider themselves to be voluntary readers, the research shows that people tend to pick activities other than reading as they grow older (Pryor et al., 2007; Sullivan et al., 2007).

This fixed decline in voluntary reading continues into young adulthood with young adults reading less than any other adult age group (Sullivan et al., 2007). Forty-eight percent of Americans between ages 18 and 24 read no books for pleasure (Sullivan et al., 2007). From 1982-2002, there was a 28 percent decline in young adults reading literature voluntarily (Sullivan et al., 2007). Higher levels of education are normally associated with higher levels of reading but the percentage of college graduates who read literature declined by 18 percent from 1982 to 2002 (Sullivan et al., 2007). Sixty-five percent of college freshmen read less than one hour per week or not at all with a third of students reading nothing at all by the time they are college seniors (Pryor et al., 2007). Furthermore, the reading proficiency for college graduates has declined at a rate of 20 percent from 1992 to 2003, which could offer one possible explanation for the decline in voluntary reading rates (Sullivan et al., 2007). Alternatively, the decline may be due to frustration with a lack of choice in relation to assigned readings for classes or the feeling of being too busy to have time to read voluntarily (Garces-Bascal & Yeo, 2017; Schraw, Flowerday, & Reisetter, 1998). However, in one study, those labeled as highly avid readers found the time to read despite their busy schedules (Garces-Bascal & Yeo, 2017).

Research Questions

The research shows a distinct decline in reading through childhood and adolescence, with the lowest reading scores among young adults (Pryor et al., 2007; Sullivan et al., 2007). The home literacy environment along with early experiences with literacy in general are incredibly formative (Garces-Bacsal et al., 2018; Martini & Sénéchal, 2012; McKenna et al., 2012). However, it is unknown whether the reasons

behind this decline in reading are due to lower levels of reading self-efficacy, a greater motivation to engage in other leisure activities, or something else entirely (McKenna, 2001; McKenna et al., 2012). The influence of retrospective self-reports of the home literacy environment on an individual's reading self-efficacy and subsequent reading frequency is unknown. This gap in the literature and subsequent hypotheses were addressed with the following research questions:

1. Do retrospective early childhood informal home literacy practices (literacy activities, parent involvement, and literacy resources) relate to (a) reading attitudes and (b) reading frequency in young adulthood?
2. Do concurrent (a) reading attitudes and (b) reading frequency relate to literacy levels in young adulthood?
3. Do retrospective early childhood informal home literacy practices (literacy activities, parent involvement, and literacy resources) relate to literacy levels?

It is reasonable to expect a higher frequency of reported informal home literacy practices in early childhood will correlate with more positive reading attitudes and higher levels of reading frequency in young adulthood especially when compared with those who report lower frequencies of informal home literacy practices (Martini & Sénéchal, 2012; Sullivan et al., 2007). Regardless of reported past informal literacy practices, it is expected that the target sample will report low levels of voluntary reading frequency based upon the literature demonstrating a decline in voluntary reading rates in young adults which should also result in lower literacy levels (Pryor et al., 2007). However, it is

also expected that individuals who report higher levels of informal home literacy practices should also have higher literacy levels (Acheson, Wells, & MacDonald, 2008).

Chapter Four

METHODS

Sample

The sample consisted of 140 18-29-year old undergraduate and graduate students attending classes within the College of Education, Heath, and Human Sciences of a major university in the South East United States. Professors teaching a number of undergraduate and graduate classes agreed to allow the researcher to visit their classes prior to the start of the class time, explain the purpose of the study briefly, and then ask the students attending the class to take the survey on a laptop or mobile device at a later time. Participating classes across the two semesters included three 100-level courses, five 200-level courses with twelve sections, three 300-level courses with four sections, three 400-level courses, and three 500-level courses. Recruitment was done from 25 class sections across two semesters with a total of 575 students enrolled in the first semester and 468 students enrolled in the second semester for a total of 1,043 students. As many of the classes from which participants were recruited were within the same department, it is expected that the actual total number of recruited participants is lower due to the potential for students to be enrolled in multiple classes within the same department in any given semester.

In total, 336 individuals viewed the survey with 192 participants beginning the survey and 52 participants dropping out. This brings the completion rate to 72.92 percent and 140 participants in total. A majority of the participants were White (n = 126, 90%),

female (*n* = 130, 92.9%) sophomore undergraduate students (*n* = 40, 28.6%) with 62.2 percent of participants reporting an annual family income above $65,000. Over half (*n* = 83, 59.3%) of participants reported the highest level of education they expected to complete as a Master's degree. Detailed descriptive statistics on the demographics of participants can be found in Table 4.1.

For the selection of primary caregiver, 83 percent (*n* = 117) of participants reported their mother and 15 percent (*n* = 22) their father. The reports for other primary caregiver were more varied with grandmother, sibling, other caregiver, and not applicable (i.e. single parent) chosen by participants in addition to mother and father. Six percent of participants chose “Not Applicable” for their other primary caregiver, which was an option provided for participants who may have only had one primary caregiver. A majority of participants reported both of their primary caregiver's education as a Bachelor's degree at 34.3 percent (*n* = 48) and 37.1 percent (*n* = 52) respectively. More information about the descriptive statistics on the reported primary caregivers and their education levels can be found in the Appendix.

Measures and Procedures

Demographics

Demographic information was collected from participants including age, sex, race, ethnicity, year in college, family income, marital status, the number of children residing with them, and highest level of education of each caregiver as well as their own expectations of future educational attainment (Burgess, Hect, & Lonigan, 2002). Age, sex, family income, and marital status items asked participants to indicate their answer

Table 4.1. Demographic data for all participants (*n* = 140).

	n	**percent**
Sex		
Male	9	6.4
Female	130	92.9
Prefer Not to Say	1	0.7
Age		
18	7	5.0
19	38	27.1
20	30	21.4
21	23	16.4
22	21	15.0
23	9	6.4
24	4	2.9
25	2	1.4
28	1	0.7
29	4	2.9
Race		
White	126	90.0
Black or African-American	4	2.9
Asian	3	2.1
Other	6	4.3
Hispanic, Latino/a/x, or Spanish Origin		
Yes	9	6.4
No	131	93.6
Year in College		
First-Year Undergraduate	13	9.3
Sophomore Undergraduate	40	28.6
Junior Undergraduate	36	25.7
Senior Undergraduate	34	24.3
Graduate Student	16	11.4
Annual Family Income		
Less than $9.999	6	4.3
$10,000 to $24,999	3	2.1
$25,000 to $39,999	11	7.9
$40,000 to $64,999	26	18.6
$65,000 to $89,999	20	14.3
$90,000 to $124,999	34	24.3
Above $125,000	33	23.6

Note: Other race = American Indian or Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, and Multi-Racial

from a drop-down menu of options with age options ranging from 18 to 29; sex options as male, female, or other; family income options as $0-$9,999, $10,000-$24,999, $25,000-$39,999, $40,000-$64,999, $65,000-$89,999, $90,000-$124,999 or More than $125,000, and marital status options as single or never married, married, separated, divorced, or widowed. For the item about the number of children, participants were given 0 to 6 as well as more than 6 as options. Participants were asked to choose their race based on the following options with the ability to choose as many as applied: White, Black or African-American, Asian, American Indian or Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, and Other. Participants were asked to select their ethnicity from the following options: Hispanic or Latino, Not Hispanic or Latino. For the item asking about the year in college, participants were asked to select from 1st year undergraduate, sophomore, junior, senior, or graduate student. For the item on highest level of education for each caregiver, participants were first asked to choose their primary caregiver (i.e. mother, father, grandmother, grandfather, aunt, uncle, or sibling) and then select the current level of education of their primary caregiver from the following options: Grade 8 or less, some high school, high school diploma, some college, 2-year degree, Bachelor's degree, Master's degree, Advanced degree. The item on educational attainment asked "What is the highest level of education you expect to obtain?" with the following options: some college, Bachelor's degree, Master's degree, Doctorate, law degree, and medical degree (Burgess et al., 2002).

Leisure Activities

Leisure activities were measured using a total of eight items. The two items related to reading activities were based on the report by Pryor et al. (2007) which asked "During your last year in high school, how much time did you spend in a typical week doing the following activities?" with "reading for pleasure" as an item (Pryor et al., 2007, p. 125). The question was modified to "In a typical week, how often do you ... ?" with "read for enjoyment" and "read for school" as the two reading items with responses on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = less than 1 hour per week, 2 = 1-3 hours per week, 3 = 4-6 hours per week, 4 = 7-10 hours per week, 5 = more than 10 hours per week). No indication of reliability was provided for these measures in the original study. The remaining five items were “write for enjoyment”, “write for school”, “watch television”, “use your computer / tablet” and “use your phone”. The same 5-point Likert scale was used for all seven items. The final item on leisure activities and reading attitudes asked participants to report the last three books they remember reading for enjoyment.

Reading Attitudes

Reading attitudes were measured using three items**.** These three items were derived from a study done by Strommen & Mates (2004) to determine the reading attitudes of sixth and ninth graders. The specific questions that inspired the two items on reading attitudes were “Do you think it’s important to be a reader? Why or why not?” and “Do you think people need to be able to read well? Why or why not?” (Strommen & Mates, 2004). The three following statements will be provided along with instructions asking participants to choose the degree of agreement or disagreement for each on a 6-

point Likert scale: “It is important to be a reader”, “People need to be able to read well”, and "People need to be able to write well". Then, a follow-up question to each statement asked participants to explain why they agreed or disagreed with each statement. The survey provided a blank that allowed participants to type in their answers.

Retrospective Informal Home Literacy

Informal home literacy was measured using a scale consisting of 12 items covered under three constructs: literacy activities, parent involvement, and literacy resources with five items about literacy activities, five items about parent involvement, and two items about literacy resources. The instructions for this measure asked participants to answer the questions based on what they remember doing while they were in early elementary school. The items on literacy activities asked five questions, for example "How often were you read to by a parent or family member?" with participants indicating their responses on a 6-point Likert scale (i.e. 1 = daily, 2 = every other day, 3 = weekly, 4 = twice a month, 5 = monthly, 6 = never) (Burgess et al., 2002; Wiescholek, Hilkenmeier, Greiner, & Buhi, 2018). For items on parent involvement, five statements were provided, such as "My parents encouraged me to read", and participants were asked to indicate their responses on a 6-point Likert scale from 1 as strongly agree to 6 as strongly disagree (Martini & Sénéchal, 2012). There were two items on literacy resources, with the first asking about the number of books in the home and the second asking if there was a computer in the home. For the number of books, participants were asked to indicate their answer on a 5-point Likert scale (i.e. 1 = 0-10, 2 = 11-25, 3 = 26-50, 4 = 50-100, 5 =

More than 100) (Sullivan et al., 2011). For the item about the computer in the home, participants were given the option as yes or no which was coded as 1 for yes and 0 for no.

Literacy Levels

Literacy levels were measured using the print exposure Author Recognition Test (Acheson et al., 2008). This measure, originally called the Adult's Author Checklist, was developed by Stanovich & Cunningham (1992) and then adapted by Sénéchal, LeFevre, Thomas, and Daley (1996) with 20 additional "foils" (i.e., fake author's names) (Stanovich & Cunningham, 1992, p.54) and 10 author's names changed to Canadian authors for the purpose of their study. Acheson et al. (2008) found that the original checklist, which primarily included popular authors from the 1980's was unfamiliar to college students at the time of their study. Due to this, they modified the checklist to include author's names that would have moderate familiarity, pilot testing multiple versions of the measure on a total of 105 participants (Acheson et al., 2008). The final list included 65 author's names and 65 foils including 15 of the author's names from the original checklist (Acheson et al., 2008). For the sake of brevity, 20 of the author's names from the Author Recognition Test were removed for a total of 45 author's names. The 20 author's names removed from the final measure used in this study had a selection rate smaller than 15 (Acheson et al., 2008). Both Stanovich & Cunningham (1992) and Sénéchal et al. (1996) obtained the foils for each of their checklists by collecting the names of editorial board members from peer-reviewed journals. As the participants in this study will be primarily Child & Family Studies or Education majors, they may be familiar with some of the foils which could potentially skew the results. Due to this, the

20 foils used for this measure were collected using an online random name generator. With the 45 author's names and the 20 foils, the total number of items for selection was 65. Neither Stanovich & Cunningham (1992) or Acheson et al. (2008) provided a reliability coefficient for the measures they created while Sénéchal et al. (1996) provided a Spearman-Brown reliability coefficient of .95 for the measure used in their specific study.

Measures on print exposure where participants were asked to identify the names of books and authors they recognized were initially developed to avoid social desirability biases and subjective interpretations on self-report questionnaires (Acheson et al., 2008; Mol & Bus, 2011; Sénéchal et al., 1998; Stanovich & Cunningham, 1992). Furthermore, print exposure checklists help to distinguish between frequent leisure readers from infrequent leisure readers with higher effect sizes than self-report questionnaires, essentially acting as a measure of literacy levels (Mol & Bus, 2011; Sénéchal et al., 1996). The Author Recognition Test in particular instructed participants to indicate which authors' names they recognize from the list given (Acheson et al., 2008). According to Sénéchal and LeFevre (2014), informing participants of the presence of foils contained within the measure helped to reduce the number of guesses a participant made. Each participant's overall score was calculated by awarding one point for every author's name selected and subtracting one point for every foil selected (Acheson et al., 2008). Therefore, the highest possible score any participant could receive on the print exposure measure was 45 with the lowest score as -20.

Data Analysis

Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) 26 for Windows was utilized to conduct all statistical analyses. Relationships between the demographic variables and the dependent variables being studied were inspected to determine which, if any, should have been entered as control variables. All data was tested for normality, outliers, and missing values. Cronbach's alpha analyses were conducted to inspect each variable's reliability and a factor analysis was completed to further explain correlations and test for underlying factors. A series of regression analyses were completed with informal literacy as the independent variable and young adult leisure activities, reading attitudes, and young adult literacy levels as separate dependent variables.

Chapter Five

RESULTS

Initial Analysis

Spearman's bivariate correlations were run to determine any correlations between the reported demographics and the variables being studied. The only significant correlations found were between specific retrospective informal home literacy items and demographic characteristics. The two informal home literacy items related to literacy resources (i.e. whether or not there was a computer in the home and the number of books in the home) as well as the item "How often did your primary caregiver take / arrange to take you to a museum?" were significantly correlated with a number of demographic characteristics. Specifically, annual family income and the marital status of the participant were significantly correlated (rs = .230, .390 respectively; ps = 0.01) with whether or not there was a computer in the home. The number of books in the home was significantly correlated with annual family income and the primary caregiver's reported education (r = .246, .319; p = 0.01). In addition, how often the primary caregiver took or arranged to take the participant to a museum was significantly correlated (rs = .274, .284 respectively; ps = 0.01) with both of the primary caregiver's reported level of education. However, these three informal home literacy items did not significantly correlate with any dependent variables being studied.

A Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin measure of sampling adequacy (KMO) was run to test the validity of the measures and to determine if a factor analysis was needed. The resulting

KMO statistic for the items measuring leisure frequency was a value of .536 (p = .000) indicating that a factor analysis should yield adequate results. The measures on reading attitudes and informal home literacy practices both indicated that a factor analysis should generate moderately satisfactory results (*KMO* = .634, p = .000; *KMO* = .697, p = .000). According to the subsequent exploratory factor analyses, all of the variables with one exception had good communalities (i.e. "Did you have a computer in the home?"; rs > .5). Four of the seven variables measuring the frequency of leisure activities accounted for 79.9 percent of the total variance. The resulting rotated component matrix revealed high correlations (rs > .8) for all variables with one exception (i.e. "During a typical week, how often do you watch television?"). This same item also showed weak correlations (rs < .5) across other variables which indicated that the variable should be dropped from further analysis. For the measure on reading attitudes, one of the three variables accounted for 59.9 percent of the total variance. The correlation revealed weak overall correlations across the three items (rs < .5) which indicated that all three variables should be removed from further analysis. For the 23 items measuring informal home literacy, six variables explained 64.3 percent of the total variance. The rotated component matrix revealed that two items showed the strongest correlations (rs > .8) and should be focused on in further analyses (i.e. "How often did you read for fun?" and "How often did you see your other Primary Caregiver read?").

A reliability analysis was run on each set of measures to determine the Cronbach's alpha for each. For the three items measuring reading attitudes, a questionable level of reliability was found (Cronbach's α = .664) which was to be

expected as the three items asked participants to share their general thoughts on reading and writing rather than how they specifically view their own ability to read and write. The 23 items measuring retrospective informal home literacy had a good level of reliability and internal consistency (Cronbach's α = .833). Finally, the seven items measuring the frequency of leisure activities had a poor level of reliability (Cronbach's α = .504) as is expected as the items have little consistency between one another.

Spearman's bivariate correlations and subsequent regression analyses for each research question are described in parts. The research questions have been restated below:

1. Do retrospective early childhood informal home literacy practices (literacy activities, parent involvement, and literacy resources) relate to (a) reading attitudes and (b) reading frequency in young adulthood?
2. Do concurrent (a) reading attitudes and (b) reading frequency relate to literacy levels in young adulthood?
3. Do retrospective early childhood informal home literacy practices (literacy activities, parent involvement, and literacy resources) relate to literacy levels?

Informal Home Literacy Practices and Reading Attitudes

Prior to running any analysis to answer the first part of the first research question, the three items measuring reading attitudes were combined to form an overall reading attitude variable which will be referred to as "combined reading attitudes". Spearman's bivariate correlations were run for the combined reading attitudes and retrospective informal home literacy items. Significant correlations (*r*s = .234, .249 respectively; *p*s <

0.01) were found between the combined reading attitudes variable and two separate informal home literacy items (i.e. "How often were you read to by your Primary Caregiver?" and "How often did you read for fun?"). These bivariate correlations revealed that participants with higher overall reading attitudes in young adulthood retrospectively reported being read to more often by their primary caregiver and reportedly read more often for fun during their early childhood.

As multiple independent variables showed correlation, a linear stepwise regression was run with combined reading attitudes as the dependent variable and the two informal home literacy items as the independent variables (i.e. " How often were you read to by your Primary Caregiver?" and "How often did you read for fun?"). The results show that how often participants reported reading for fun in their early childhood only accounts for 3.8% of the variation in participant's reading attitudes ($r^2 = .031$; $p < .001$), which leaves a large amount of unexplained variance as the model excluded the second variable. There was a positive relationship ($\beta = .307$; $p < .001$) between the two variables which indicated that the more often participant's reported reading as a child, the higher reading attitudes they reported having in young adulthood.

Informal Home Literacy Practices and Reading Frequency

The second part of the first research questions looks into the relationship between the reported retrospective informal home literacy practices and how often participants reported reading for enjoyment. Descriptive statistics of each participants reported leisure frequencies can be found in Table 5.1. Spearman's bivariate correlations were run for the retrospective informal home literacy items and the item measuring reading frequency (i.e.

Table 5.1. Descriptive statistics of reported leisure frequencies (*n* = 140).

During a typical week how often did you…	**#**	**%**
Read for enjoyment		
Less than 1 hr per week	86	61.4
1-3 hrs per week	34	24.3
4-6 hrs per week	12	8.6
7-10 hrs per week	5	3.6
More than 10 hrs per week	3	2.1
Read for school		
Less than 1 hr per week	9	6.4
1-3 hrs per week	44	31.4
4-6 hrs per week	66	47.1
7-10 hrs per week	13	9.3
More than 10 hrs per week	7	5.0
Write for enjoyment		
Less than 1 hr per week	106	75.7
1-3 hrs per week	27	19.3
4-6 hrs per week	5	3.6
7-10 hrs per week	2	1.4
More than 10 hrs per week	0	0.0
Write for school		
Less than 1 hr per week	6	4.3
1-3 hrs per week	46	32.9
4-6 hrs per week	60	42.9
7-10 hrs per week	20	14.3
More than 10 hrs per week	8	5.7
Watch TV		
Less than 1 hr per week	18	12.9
1-3 hrs per week	47	33.6
4-6 hrs per week	34	24.3
7-10 hrs per week	26	18.6
More than 10 hrs per week	15	10.7
Use computer or tablet		
Less than 1 hr per week	0	0.0
1-3 hrs per week	8	5.7
4-6 hrs per week	20	14.3
7-10 hrs per week	45	32.1
More than 10 hrs per week	66	47.1
Use phone		
Less than 1 hr per week	1	0.7
1-3 hrs per week	4	2.9
4-6 hrs per week	17	12.1
7-10 hrs per week	28	20.0
More than 10 hrs per week	90	64.3

"In a typical week, how often do you read for enjoyment?"). Due to the lack of variability in the reported reading frequencies (i.e. 61.4% reading for enjoyment for less than one hour per week), two categories were created to handle the disparity. Those who read for enjoyment less than one hour per week were categorized as "non-readers" and those who read for enjoyment for more than one hour per week as "readers". The only item that showed significant correlation ($r = .314$; $p < .001$) was the item on retrospective informal home literacy asking "How often did you read for fun?". This correlation indicated that participants who reported reading more frequently as a young adult also retrospectively reported reading more frequently for pleasure during their early childhood.

A binary logistic regression was run for the item on reading frequency in young adulthood as the dependent variable (i.e. reader or non-reader) and the item on retrospective informal home literacy as the independent variable, which was used as a predictor of reader or non-reader status in young adulthood. The logistic regression model was statistically significant ($p = .006$) with each categorical increase in retrospective reading frequency, participants were 1.5 times more likely to be considered "readers" (i.e. having reported reading for more than one hour per week) in young adulthood ($r^2 = .102$, $exp(B) = 1.5$). The model explained 10.2 percent of the variance in the relationship between readership (i.e. participant reading for more than one hour per week) in young adulthood and reading frequency in early childhood.

Reading Attitudes and Literacy Levels

To answer the first part of the second question, the relationship between the combined reading attitude score and the final print exposure score was analyzed. As mentioned previously, literacy levels were measured using the print exposure measure and the final print exposure scores were calculated by adding the total number of author's names selected by participants and subtracting the total number of foils selected by participants (Acheson et al., 2008). Therefore, the highest score a participant could obtain was 45 with the lowest score as -20, assuming a participant only selected foils. Selection rates for the print exposure measure can be found in the Appendix. Results demonstrate that the young adults surveyed in this study have relatively low literacy levels (M = 11.49; SD = 5.98; $Range$ = 33). Spearman's bivariate correlation was run for the combined reading attitudes and the final print exposure scores and a significant correlation (r = .204; $p < 0.05$) was found between the two variables. This correlation showed that participants who reported higher reading attitudes were also more likely to have higher final print exposure scores. A simple linear regression was run based on the significant correlational relationship and the results showed that the print exposure scores explained 2.7 percent of the variance to a not quite significant degree (r^2 = .027; β = .414; p = .056)

Reading Attitudes: Book Choice

In conjunction with the questions on reading attitudes, one of the survey questions asked participants to list the three most recent books they read to determine if those with

higher reading attitudes also listed recently read books. Each book selected was assigned a number and each participant had three numbers assigned based on their selections. Thirty percent of responses were either blank or indicated that they could not remember the most recent books read with one participant stating, “I don’t remember, it was at least 4 years ago”. The remaining responses were categorized into genres and associated with author names if not provided in their response. Genres were determined by searching through Good Reads by book title and assigning the most used genre for each. Each book genre was also assigned a number with each participant having three numbers assigned based on their choice of book. Similar to how each book title was assigned a genre, the original publishing year was indicated as well. Descriptive statistics for book genres, book authors, and years reported books were published were found by running a multiple response analysis. A crosstabulation multiple response analysis was also conducted with combined reading attitudes and book choice. The reported book choices were recoded with no book title provided as 0 and any book title provided as 1. Results indicate that of those participants with the highest reported reading attitudes (i.e. 18), 63.1 percent provided book titles. However, across nearly all reported reading attitudes, more participants provided book titles than did not.

The results indicated that 64.4 percent of the book titles provided were fiction with 9.4 percent as young adult fiction, 7.3 percent as romance, 6.6 percent as fiction fantasy, and 5.5 percent as historical fiction. Of the 35.6 percent of non-fiction book titles, 7.6 percent were non-fiction Christianity, 3.4 percent were self-help, and 3.4 percent were non-fiction memoir. Descriptive statistics for book genres can be found in

the Appendix. The most frequently occurring book titles among those provided were "Love Does" by Bob Goff, followed by "Everybody Does" by Bob Goff, and then "Becoming" by Michelle Obama and "Girl, Wash Your Face" by Rachel Hollis. Among those book titles chosen, the most frequently occurring authors were J.K. Rowling, Bob Goff, Anna Todd, Suzanne Collins, and John Green. Seventy-six percent of book titles chosen were originally published between 2005 and 2019.

Reading Frequency and Literacy Levels

The second part of the second research questions looked into the relationship between how often participants reported reading for fun in young adulthood and the literacy levels determined through the final print exposure scores. Spearman's bivariate correlations were run between all items on leisure frequency (e.g. "In a typical week, how often do you use your phone?") and the final print exposure scores. The only item that significantly correlated ($r = .335$; $p < .001$) with the final print exposure scores was the item on reading frequency (i.e. "In a typical week, how often do you read for enjoyment?"). This correlation showed that participants who reported reading with higher frequency in young adulthood were more likely to also show higher literacy levels in their final print exposure scores.

A simple linear regression was run with the final print exposure scores as the dependent variable and the item on reading frequency as the independent variable. Results indicated that reading frequency accounts for 8.4 percent of variance to a statistically significant degree ($r^2 = .084$; $p = .001$). A positive relationship was found

between the two values (β = .291; p = .001) which indicated that with higher levels of reading frequency reported, higher print exposure scores would follow.

Informal Home Literacy Practices and Literacy Levels

The last research question looked into the relationship between the reported retrospective home literacy practices and the final print exposure scores. Spearman's bivariate correlation was run for all items of informal home literacy practices and the final print exposure scores along with demographic statistics. A significant correlation was found between final print exposure scores and year in college (r = .195; p < .05). Due to this, a partial correlation was run with year in college as the control variable and a significant correlation (r = .379; p < .001) was found between a single informal home literacy item (i.e. "How often did you read for fun?") and the final print exposure scores. This correlation showed that participants who retrospectively reported reading for fun when they were children were more likely to have higher final print exposure scores.

A simple linear regression was run with the final print exposure scores as the dependent variable and the informal home literacy item as the independent variable (i.e. "How often did you read for fun?"). The results show that how often participants reported reading for fun in their early childhood accounts for 11.3 percent of the variation in participant's final print exposure scores (r^2 = .113; p < .001). A statistically significant positive relationship (β = 1.3; p < .001) was found between the print exposure variable and how often participants indicated they read for fun in their early childhood. This means that the more often participant's retrospectively reported reading as a child, the higher print exposure scores they reportedly had in young adulthood.

Chapter Six

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to determine whether the current reading habits, motivations, and attitudes of young adults might be related to their own retrospective memories of informal home literacy practices done during their early elementary school years. While the influence of retrospective self-reports is unknown, it is clear that one's perceptions about behavior greatly influences whether or not one chooses to perform the behavior in the future (Bandura, 1981; Bandura & Schunk, 1982). In addition, an individual's reading self-efficacy is shaped over time influenced by each personal experience with reading, beliefs about reading, and the social norms around reading (Cockroft & Atkinson, 2017; McKenna, 2001; McKenna et al., 2012; Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997). Caregivers act as models of reading behavior not only teaching children about reading but helping to shape their beliefs about reading and their identity as readers (Bandura, 1977; Edwards, 2007; Lim, Bong, & Woo, 2015; Martini & Sénéchal, 2012; McKenna, 2001). Despite these formative experiences, young adults are choosing to watch television and complete other leisure activities rather than read for enjoyment (Sullivan et al., 2007). This may be due to peer groups showing a greater interest in other activities, a lack of access to relatable books, too many negative experiences with reading in early childhood, or something else entirely.

Do you read?

Research shows that Americans spend less of their leisure time reading with the lowest amounts found among young adults, of which nearly half reported not reading any books for pleasure at all (Sullivan et al., 2007). Additionally, there is a general belief that the reason young adults no longer read is partially due to their poor home literacy environments as children (Sikora, Evans, & Kelly, 2019) while others believe that young adults may have low levels of reading self-efficacy that causes them to choose activities other than reading (Cockroft & Atkinson, 2017). This current study confirmed the infrequency with which young adults read for pleasure and revealed a strong correlation between young adult pleasure reading frequency and retrospective informal home literacy practice items (i.e. "How often did you read for fun?" and "How often were you read to by your Primary Caregiver?"). This suggested link may indicate that the reading habits established during early elementary school influence later outcomes (Bingham et al., 2016; Martini & Sénéchal, 2012; Segal & Martin-Chang, 2018; Sénéchal & LeFevre, 2014). Strong correlations were also found between young adult reading attitudes (e.g. “People need to be able to read well”) and two retrospective informal home literacy practice items (i.e. "How often did you read for fun?" and "How often were you read to by your Primary Caregiver?"). This link suggests a connection between reading attitudes in young adulthood and the reading practices established in early elementary school or, perhaps, the ways in which home literacy practices are remembered (Bandura, 1977; Garces-Bascal & Yeo, 2017; Henk et al., 2013).

Research indicates that, on average, young adults spend only 7-10 minutes per day reading for enjoyment in contrast to the two hours per day watching television (Sullivan et al., 2007). This study confirmed this with participants reporting spending more time watching television, using their computers, and using their phone than reading for enjoyment. The overall literacy levels of participants were relatively low with a correlation between literacy levels and reading frequency; those who reported reading for enjoyment with greater frequency also had higher literacy levels and higher reading attitudes. However, even those with higher literacy levels did not report reading for enjoyment with the same levels of frequency as watching television or using their phones. Because participants also reported higher levels of reading for school and writing for school, it is possible they may feel that they do not have the time or are too tired to read for enjoyment once they have completed their school assignments. This can be seen in one participant's response to their agreement on the importance of being a reader when they said, "I think reading for pleasure is a great hobby, but work or school may not allow for that. I read well, but I don't get to practice it in any way other than with school." One study found that 34 percent of first-year college students spend more than 16 hours per week on class-related assignments (Sullivan et al., 2007) while another study reported only six percent of first-year college students spending more than 16 hours per week studying or completing homework (Pryor et al., 2007).

What do you remember reading?

The home literacy environment has been shown to be an influencing factor on the development of literacy acquisition for children prior to their entrance into formal

schooling (Bingham et al., 2016; Martini & Sénéchal, 2012; Segal & Martin-Chang, 2018). There have been questions about the effects of the home literacy environment after middle childhood as it may no longer be an influencing factor on what children read for enjoyment (Samuelson et al., 2007; Sénéchal & LeFevre, 2014). In addition, the reading habits of children may become solidified sometime between fourth and eighth grade, making the study of its influence in young adulthood unnecessary (Garces-Bascal & Yeo, 2017). The current study showed the influence of retrospective reports of informal home literacy (i.e. "How often did you read for fun?") in part with its correlation with young adult literacy levels. This link may suggest that the reading habits established in early elementary school influence literacy levels in young adulthood (Mol & Bus, 2011). The reported memories of retrospective home literacy practices may be related to how young adults currently view their own reading self-efficacy. If participants remember reading often either alone or with their primary caregivers in their childhood, then they may be more likely to view themselves as a reader in young adulthood which could result in higher frequencies of reading for pleasure. This would then be as a result of strong levels of self-efficacy towards their ability to read and their ability to read despite any difficulties they may encounter (Bandura, 1982). However, the sphere of influence may be wider than the two primary caregivers with teachers, siblings, and peers as perhaps greater models of behavior than the primary caregivers alone (Bandura, 1982; McKenna, 2001). This would be especially true if participants held their teachers, siblings, and peers in greater esteem than their primary caregivers (Bandura, 1977; McKenna, 2001).

What do you read?

Despite instructions in the print exposure measure indicating the presence of fake author's names (i.e. foils) among the list of real author's names, a large number of participants selected foils (see Appendix) contrary to what was found in previous studies utilizing the print exposure measure (Acheson et al., 2008; Sénéchal et al., 1998; Stanovich & Cunningham, 1992). More participants selected the fake author name of J.K. Lowe (*n* = 22; 15.1%) than chose Ralph Ellison (*n* = 20; 13.7%) or Gabriel Garcia Marquez (*n* = 12; 8.2%). This may be due to the fact that, based on the titles indicated in the recently read book item (i.e. "Name the three most recent books you read for enjoyment."), the participants in this study were reading books in different genres as well as books that were published more recently. Considering that young adults are more likely to choose books that they can connect with on a personal and emotional level, this may partially explain why nine percent (*n* = 41) of the book titles provided were from the young adult fiction genre and 76 percent of the book titles chosen by participants were originally published after 2005 (Howard, 2011; Strommen & Mates, 2004; Wilhelm, 2016). With only four point one percent (*n* = 18) of the book titles provided categorized within the genre of fiction classics, young adults may not choose classics as their first choice as they may have a difficult time connecting to the characters, were frustrated with trying to read them, or were forced to read many of these authors for school (Becnel & Moeller, 2015; Strommen & Mates, 2004; Wilhelm, 2016). These negative experiences with fiction classics could cause young adults to avoid future encounters with those types

of books, thereby causing them to have lower levels of reading self-efficacy for more difficult, canonical books (Bandura 1982).

Are you a reader?

Those who read for pleasure gain more than simply academic success as they are more likely to engage in their community, attend plays and art shows, vote, and exercise (Sullivan et al., 2007). However, participants in this current study indicated conflicting opinions between the value of reading in general and their identity as a reader. Only two point one percent (n = 3) of participants disagreed at all with the statement "People need to be able to read well" with 80 percent (n = 112) strongly agreeing. In contrast, eight point five percent (n = 12) of participants disagreed at all with the statement "It is important to be a reader" with 42.1 percent (n = 59) strongly agreeing. One participant wrote that “literacy is essential for success” in response to the first reading attitude item (i.e. “People need to be able to read well”) but in the next question (i.e. “It is important to be a reader”) wrote that “you don’t have to read books for pleasure to be smart or literate”. Participants seemed to place more value on the ability to write well than being a reader. Four point two percent (n = 6) of participants indicated they disagreed at any level (i.e. "People need to be able to write well") with 49.3 percent (n = 69) strongly agreeing. One participant wrote "In most jobs, writing is important and a main mode of communication in the professional world". Similarly, employers have indicated writing well as the number one basic skill deemed very important in their consideration of hiring college graduates (Sullivan et al., 2007).

This dichotomy between reading well and being a reader was further explained by two other participants who said, “Reading isn't for everyone, it is important to be able to read but not necessarily to be a ‘reader’” and “Reading well and being a reader are not the same thing. Being a reader is more about reading for fun. Which is not necessary to succeed in life”. This may indicate that one’s identity as a reader may be a stronger indicator of an individual’s reading self-efficacy which could further influence literacy levels and reported reading frequency (Bandura, 1982). However, these responses are not indicative of all responses provided by participants as many participants reported the importance of reading well as well as being a reader. One participant said, "I think reading is a wonderful thing. It encourages, inspires, and teaches just to name a few. I wish I had or made the time to do this more often. It is an amazing escape and makes me calm."

Limitations

The results are not generalizable outside of the majority of participants who were primarily single, white female undergraduate students with relatively high annual family incomes and with majors within the College of Education, Health, and Human Sciences. The retrospective nature of this study was reliant on participants’ memories of early childhood and could have been heavily influenced by their own perceptions. Future studies should look further into the influence of perception on retrospective self-reports of home literacy practices and reading self-efficacy in addition to the overall influence of home literacy practices on young adult readership, if any. The authors used in the print exposure measure may not be an accurate measure to what authors young adults are

currently reading. This brings into question whether researchers have been accurately measuring young adult literacy levels if they are only asking young adults to indicate which author's names they recognize from a list primarily made up of classic authors. Researchers may want to update the print exposure measure for young adults in future studies to provide a more accurate indication of young adult literacy levels. In addition, if potential participants saw that the study was about reading, they may have been opted out of participating before beginning if they considered themselves to be "non-readers" and therefore not interested or considered their participation in the survey to be inapplicable.

Implications

The results of this study indicate a relationship between how often participants remembered reading for pleasure in their childhood and how often they read for pleasure now in young adulthood. This could be a result, at least in part, of participants own perceptions of their reading frequency based on their already established perceived reading self-efficacy (Bandura, 1982; McKenna, 2001). How an individual's reading self-efficacy is formed is influenced by various factors including their own personal experiences with reading, their beliefs about reading, and the social norms around reading and books (McKenna, 2001). Specifically, the social norms around reading could have a larger influence on the establishment of an individual's reading self-efficacy than the other two factors. When measuring both formal and informal home literacy practices, a large variety of print materials are considered in addition to books including newspapers, recipes, labels on food items and movies, mail, street signs, greeting cards, and more (Martini & Sénéchal, 2012). However, measures of reading and literacy levels for young

adults and adults are largely limited to books and, in some infrequent cases, magazines (Acheson et al., 2008; Mol & Bus, 2011; Sénéchal et al., 1996; Sénéchal et al., 1998; Sénéchal and LeFevre, 2014; Stanovich & Cunningham, 1992). Considering the high frequencies with which young adults are reportedly using their phones, tablets, and computers the notion of what can be "read" and therefore, what one has to read in order to be considered a "reader" might need to be expanded to a less restrictive definition. Perhaps the reason many young adults are reluctant to consider themselves to be "readers" is because they are not reading classic fiction but instead mystery novels or self-help books. Furthermore, what young adults may be reading is not books at all but instead they are listening to audio books, reading news articles online, watching international movies with subtitles, reading the captions on Instagram posts, reading and writing texts to and from their friends, responding to subreddits, and more. Throughout the literature, there is a prevailing idea that young adults are not reading but, contrary to this, it seems that they are reading but not what is expected and in the medium that is expected.

This brings into question not only how young adult literacy levels are being measured but also how young adults are being taught about literature from both their home and school environments. Teachers and caregivers may be excluding students from self-identifying as readers due to as inadvertent gatekeeping by elevating reading to an elite status of achievement. Students may then see reading and the status of being a reader as unattainable and not worth the effort (Bandura, 1982). This may be especially true if students are being taught about literature from the perspective of classic fiction which

may seem irrelevant to their daily lives and experiences. In order for reading and the status of being a reader to be more attainable, then caregivers and teachers alike need to be less restrictive and judgmental about what it takes to be a reader. If one can attain the status of a reader by reading blog posts, tumblr posts, twitter feeds, and subreddits then students' reading self-efficacy may rise while their own self-doubts about their ability to be a reader may decrease (Bandura, 1982). Additionally, if these same students are then met with what may be considered a challenge or a difficulty such as reading a modern play, a young adult novel, or a graphic novel they may persist through these challenges rather than completely abandoning them altogether (Bandura, 1982). Expanding the definition of what it takes to be considered a reader may in fact remove the barriers that so many students have against reading which could then be a gateway into increasing students' reading self-efficacy and their overall readership.

Conclusion

Retrospective reports of informal home literacy practices in early elementary school, specifically how often parents read to children and how often children remember reading for enjoyment, are related to current young adult outcomes including self-reported reading attitudes, reading frequency, and literacy levels in young adulthood. This may indicate a connection between the home literacy environment in early elementary school and reading habits in young adulthood, or at least the perceptions of an individual's memories of the home literacy environment. While participants in this study did report low levels of reading for enjoyment, consistent with the literature, there were correlations between young adult literacy levels and how often young adults reported

reading for enjoyment as well as the reported reading attitudes. Despite this, more participants reported at least one book that they read recently than no books at all with a wide variety in the genres reportedly being read. Additionally, participants openly discussed the importance of both reading well and being a reader; however, a number of participants wrote that they did not believe that it was necessary to be a reader in order to be successful.

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APPENDIX

Descriptive statistics of participant selection (n = 140) of primary caregivers.

	n	percent
Primary Caregiver		
Mother	117	83.6
Father	22	15.7
Uncle	1	0.7
Primary Caregiver's Education		
High School	14	10.0
Some College	22	15.7
Trade or Vocational or Technical	6	4.3
Associate's Degree	15	10.7
Bachelor's Degree	48	34.3
Master's Degree	25	17.9
Professional Degree	5	3.6
Doctorate	5	3.6
Other Primary Caregiver		
Mother	23	16.4
Father	103	73.6
Grandmother	4	2.9
Sibling	1	0.7
Other Caregiver	2	1.4
Not Applicable	7	5.0
Other Primary Caregiver's Education		
Grade 8 or Less	2	1.4
High School	17	12.1
Some College	12	8.6
Trade or Vocational or Technical	8	5.7
Associate's Degree	6	4.3
Bachelor's Degree	52	37.1
Master's Degree	20	14.3
Professional Degree	6	4.3
Doctorate	8	5.7
Not Applicable	7	5.0

Note: Not Applicable was an option provided for those participants who only had one primary caregiver (i.e. a single parent).

Names and selection rates (n = 140) of real authors used on Print Exposure Measure.

Author Name	Selection Rate		Author Name	Selection Rate	
	#	%		#	%
Maya Angelou	88	60.3	Wally Lamb	0	0
Isaac Asimov	7	4.8	Harper Lee	97	66.4
Jackie Collins	10	6.8	Jack London	23	15.8
Margaret Atwood	56	38.4	Gabriel Garcia Marquez	12	8.2
Ann Beattie	1	0.7	Anne McCaffrey	6	4.1
Samuel Beckett	11	7.5	Vladimir Nabakov	13	8.9
T.C. Boyle	9	6.2	Joyce Carol Oates	8	5.5
Ray Bradbury	51	34.9	George Orwell	72	49.3
Willie Cather	2	1.4	James Patterson	87	59.6
Tom Clancy	46	31.5	Ayn Rand	15	10.3
T.S. Elliott	81	55.5	Salmon Rushdie	2	1.4
Ralph Ellison	20	13.7	Toni Morrison	23	15.8
William Faulkner	75	51.4	Sidney Sheldon	0	0
Stephen King	124	84.9	Danielle Steele	23	15.8
Judith Krantz	3	2.1	J.R.R. Tolkien	84	57.5
Robert Lundlum	3	2.1	Alice Walker	19	13.0
James Michener	0	0	J.D. Salinger	44	30.1
F. Scott Fitzgerald	128	87.7	Jane Smiley	2	1.4
Sue Grafton	10	6.8	Kurt Vonnegut	31	21.2
John Grisham	53	36.3	E.B. White	61	41.8
Ernest Hemingway	119	81.5	Thomas Wolfe	24	16.4
John Irving	44	30.1	Virginia Woolf	69	47.3
James Joyce	16	11.0			

Names and selection rates (n = 140) of foils used on Print Exposure Measure.

Author Name	Selection Rate		Author Name	Selection Rate	
	#	%		#	%
Cory Stevenson	1	0.7	Bryant Henry	1	0.7
Diane Dixson	3	2.1	J.K. Lowe	22	15.1
Andrea Cross	4	2.7	Loretta Hogan	1	0.7
Barry Ford	1	0.7	Marie Cole	5	3.4
Louise Tran	2	1.4	Terri Cortez	0	0
R. H. Wells	26	17.8	Samantha Stewart	4	2.7
Horace Gross	2	1.4	Angel Figueroa	0	0
Alan Jackson	13	8.9	Norma Hudson	1	0.7
Juana Alvarez	4	2.7	T.B. Johnson	3	2.1
Lana Abbott	9	6.2	Garry Rogers	3	2.1

Descriptive statistics of book genres gathered from participants' specific book choices.

Book Genre	**#**	**%**
Fiction	2	0.5
Animals	3	0.7
Christian	4	0.9
Classics	18	4.1
Contemporary	9	2.1
Fantasy	29	6.6
Historical Fiction	24	5.5
Horror	5	1.1
Mystery	18	4.1
Philosophy	1	0.2
Romance	32	7.3
Science Fiction	8	1.8
Thriller	3	0.7
Young Adult	41	9.4
Non-Fiction	1	0.2
Biography	5	1.1
Business	2	0.5
Christianity	33	7.6
Education	3	0.7
Feminism	2	0.5
Health	2	0.5
Humor	3	0.7
Memoir	15	3.4
Parenting	1	0.2
Philosophy	1	0.2
Poetry	2	0.5
Politics	3	0.7
Psychology	8	1.8
Relationships	1	0.2
Religion	7	1.6
Science	3	0.7
Self-Help	16	3.7
Sociology	1	0.2
No Book Choice	131	30.0

VITA

Rachel Hope Guy was born in New Jersey and raised in Florida. After graduating with a Bachelor's Degree in English and Geography from Florida State University in 2010, she lived and worked abroad in the Czech Republic for nearly four years. In December 2019, she will graduate from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville with a Master's Degree in Child & Family Studies as well as two graduate certificates in Grief, Loss, and Trauma from the Educational Psychology & Counseling Department and in International Children, Youth, & Families from the Child & Family Studies Department.