A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF ADULT READING MOTIVATION

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to describe the factors that influence young adults’ (aged 18 to 24) reading experiences, reading habits and behavior, and desire to read. Three research questions guided this study: (a) How do young adults between the ages of 18 and 24 describe the factors that influence their reading experiences? (b) How do participants describe the effect of factors on their reading habits and behavior? (c) How do participants describe the effect of factors on their personal desire to read? Participants included young adults between the ages of 18 and 24. Data collection methods included an Adult Reading Motivation Scale, individual interviews, and a focus group interview. Data analysis methods included bracketing, horizontalization, establishing patterns, textural description, structural description, and describing the essence of participants’ experiences. Findings yielded the emerging four themes: (a) The factor of the self in conjunction with reading experiences, (b) The factor of other people in conjunction with reading experiences, (c) The factor of teaching and learning in conjunction with reading experiences, and (d) The factor of forced reading.

Keywords: young adult, intrinsic reading motivation, extrinsic reading motivation
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List of Abbreviations

Accelerated Reader (AR)

ACT (American College Test)

Independent Silent Reading (ISR)

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

Self-determination Theory (SDT)

Survey of Public Participation in the Arts (SPPA)

Sustained Silent Reading (SSR)
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Reading motivation among adults is an important area of literacy in need of further research (Cassidy, Valadez, Garrett, & Barrera, 2010; Schutte & Malouff, 2007). Furthermore, adult reading motivation is an area in need of ongoing research so that educators and interested individuals can stay abreast of the factors that influence adult reading habits and behaviors, particularly during this digital age (Nadelson et al., 2013). With recent results of the Survey of Public Participation in the Arts indicating a drop in reading rates among adults, it is time for researchers and educators to explore this dimension of reading motivation (Office of Research and Analysis, National Endowment for the Arts, 2013). Educators need to understand the factors that influence the reading experiences of young adults as well as the influence of those factors on their reading habits, reading behavior, and desire to read.

Background

Once a valued pastime, the modern age has replaced reading with many other options for the passing of time: television, movies, video games, the Internet, social media, and other similar options. Often, reading is viewed as a necessity or a means to an end. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the primary purpose of the teaching of reading in the United States was for individuals to be able to read their Bibles; as the nation grew and technology advanced, however, and with the rise of World War II, the need for American soldiers to comprehend pertinent reading materials shifted that purpose to the comprehension of content-area texts (Vogt & Shearer, 2007). As such, effective literacy instruction involves the teaching of both skills and strategies. Skills enable one to read and pronounce text, and strategies enable one to comprehend the text being read (Heilman, Blair, & Rupley, 2002). In addition to the foundations of phonics, fluency, phonemic awareness, vocabulary, and comprehension, another critical
element of literacy instruction involves that of motivation (Gambrell, Morrow, & Pressley, 2007). It is the motivation to read that drives individuals to read.

The motivation to read may be internal, external, or both. Internal motivation to read is defined by Schiefele, Schaffner, Möller, and Wigfield (2012) “as the willingness to read because that activity is satisfying or rewarding in its own right,” (p. 429) while external motivation to read is tied to a factor outside the activity of reading itself or what the text has to offer the reader (Schiefele et al., 2012). Furthermore, debate exists concerning the long-term negative impact of external rewards on intrinsic motivation with research indicating a long-term negative effect of the use of tangible rewards on intrinsic motivation despite a short-term positive influence of rewards on reading motivation (Chen & Wu, 2010; Deci, Knoester, & Ryan, 1999). Various studies have explored the impact of internal and external motivation on student behavior.

For example, a correlational study involving children in grades three through six indicated that students initially gravitate toward those activities they find intrinsically rewarding; and although external rewards may be used to gain or sustain students’ interest in an activity, they should be used sparingly over time lest they become counter-productive (Gurland & Glowacky, 2011). In fact, a study of third grade students found either no reward or the reward of a book motivated students to read more so than “token” rewards (Marinak & Gambrell, 2008). Regarding middle school students, incentives offered in conjunction with the Accelerated Reader program promoted neither an intrinsic desire to read nor a love of reading (Huang, 2011; Smith & Westberg, 2011). Furthermore, high school students indicated that the use of Accelerated Reader (which includes external rewards/incentives) actually proved counter-productive in building students’ intrinsic motivation to read (Thompson, Madhuri, & Taylor, 2008). These studies explore students across lower, middle, and upper grades.
Current research pertaining to adult literacy focuses on low literacy (Binder & Lee, 2012; Jacobson, 2011; Johnson & Frank, 2013), adult literacy learners (Bossaller & Budd, 2009; Compton-Lilly, 2009; Jacobson, 2011), English language learners (Huang, 2013), new readers (Bossaller & Budd, 2009; National Research Council, 2012), and adult reading preferences and habits (Mellard, Patterson, & Prewett, 2007; Mokhtari, Reichard, & Gardner, 2009; Schutte & Malouff, 2007; Summers, 2013). A study of adult readers identified four dimensions of adult reading motivation: “reading as part of the self,” “reading efficacy,” “reading for recognition,” and “reading to do well in other realms” (Schutte & Malouff, 2007, p. 469). Other than this particular finding in this study that purposed to develop a scale for adult reading motivation, there are few recent studies that pertain to adult literacy and motivation.

An analysis of the “What’s Hot, What’s Not in Literacy” surveys from 1997 - 2012 reported adolescent literacy to be the “hottest topic over a ten-year period” (Cassidy & Ortlieb, 2013, p. 22). In fact, in a 2010 survey of literacy leaders, 100% of respondents rated adult literacy as “not hot” in current research with at least 75% of respondents indicating that it should be (Cassidy et al., 2010). Furthermore, motivation was rated as “cold” by 75% of respondents, and at least 75% indicated that it should be “hot” in research (Cassidy et al., 2010). Moreover, Schutte and Malouff (2007) address the lack of research in “adult reading motivation and individual differences in this motivation” (p. 470) upon publication of their Adult Reading Motivation Scale. They state that “the dimensions of reading motivation that influence adults remain to be empirically explored” (Schutte & Malouff, 2007, p. 471).

Since this development of the Adult Reading Motivation Scale in 2007 and research pertaining to the reading habits of college students in 2008 and 2009, the focus on adult reading motivation has yet to have been further developed (Jolliffe & Harl, 2008; Mokhtari et al., 2009;
Specifically, a gap in the literature exists regarding young adults and their descriptions of the factors that influence not only their reading experiences but also their reading habits and behavior and desire to read. Therefore, this study aimed to fill that gap in the literature through the use of a phenomenological design that focused on participants between the ages of 18 and 24. Furthermore, the guiding question that led this research was as follows: How do young adults between the ages of 18 and 24 describe the factors that influence their reading experiences?

**Situation to Self**

The skill and practice of reading is intriguing to me. As an independent reader myself as well as a middle school Language Arts teacher for 11 years who has recently obtained her reading specialists’ endorsement, I find the complexities and intricacies involved with reading enjoyment and skill fascinating. I have taught students who struggle with reading, students who are strong readers but do not enjoy reading, and students who are strong readers and enjoy reading. Some individuals enjoy reading but are not good at comprehending what they read. Many mysteries surround the art, skill, and gift of reading.

Personally, I grew up with an intrinsic motivation to read simply for the pleasure of reading. Perhaps this stemmed from being read to as a child; I hold fond memories of my father reading books, such as *The Littlest Angel*, to me at bedtime as well as the excitement of picking out a new book in school or at the library. As I entered junior high and high school, however, I often dreaded the assigned readings for English class; yet due to my desire to complete my work and do well in school, I completed the assigned readings and often realized the enjoyment that came from reading them.
As an adult able to reflect on my own journey and growth as an independent reader, I also understand the impact that extrinsic factors have played on my continued intrinsic motivation to read. For example, I have chosen and continue to choose to read in order to strengthen my relationship with the Lord, to help me excel in work and school-related areas, to better myself and my relationships with others, and to understand what is going on in the world around me. And as a new mother, I have a new inspiration to read, which is to set an example for my son and hopefully to instill in him a love of reading. Due to my own reading experiences that include intrinsically motivated reading as well as extrinsically motivated reading, I understand the role that self-determination can play when choosing to read (Deci & Ryan, 1985).

Because of my own experience (both personal and professional) as well as research I have read, I believe that parents (and often siblings) set the stage for a firm foundation of reading (Heilman et al., 2002). Although I do believe that we are born with certain skill-sets and innate desires, I am also convinced that we are greatly shaped by our surroundings and those around us. A child’s first teacher is his or her mother and father (or other guardian or caregiver), and literacy learning begins with birth (Gambrell et al., 2007). As parents, we carry a great responsibility entrusted by God. My convictions as led by the Holy Spirit lead me to believe that my husband and I not only are responsible for teaching our son about the Lord and His Word (Deuteronomy), but we are also the primary ones responsible for his education (Schultz, 2008).

Understanding how important other adults, older children, and peers are in the lives of children, however, I also realize they can further shape a child’s response to the world around him or her. As children get older, the influence of their peers tends to strengthen (Chen, 2009; Guthrie, Klauda & Ho, 2013; Howard, 2010; Klauda & Wigfield, 2012; Knoester, 2009; Lau, 2009). This is yet another reason why parental involvement and presence are crucial. Although
we are not able to completely shelter our children, we are responsible for setting guidelines and making decisions that affect their lives. For example, in the event a child struggles with reading, the parent must become that child’s number one advocate. Although the home carries the greatest influence, our education is also a large part of childhood and adolescence. As such, I was interested in learning from young adults about their own reading experiences from childhood through adolescence and hearing them describe how those factors shaped their reading habits and desire to read.

In summary, I brought three key philosophical assumptions to this study. First, I anticipated that the role of parents or caregivers would have played a significant role in shaping participants’ reading experiences (Heilman et al., 2002). Along with the role of the caregiver, I expected that early literacy exposure would be paramount in impacting participants’ reading experiences (Gambrell et al., 2007; Heilman et al., 2002). Thirdly, I anticipated a change in reading motivation and reading experiences to occur around the time of adolescence.

Furthermore, this study rested in an ontological assumption that reading experiences were unique to each participant as he or she lived his or her own reality; themes emerged through analysis of the different perspectives of each person (Creswell, 2013). Furthermore, the use of multiple quotes using participants’ actual words aided in describing their different perspectives (Creswell, 2007). Finally, I presented open-ended questions and relied on participants’ views of their reading experiences through a social constructivism framework paradigm (Creswell, 2013).

**Problem Statement**

The problem is a lack of research regarding young adults and their descriptions of the factors that influence their reading experiences and the influence of those factors on their reading habits and behavior and their personal desire to read. In fact, there is a lack of current research
on the topic of adult literacy in general as well as a lack of research regarding adult reading motivation (Cassidy et al., 2010; National Research Council, 2012; Schutte & Malouff; 2007). Furthermore, debate exists regarding the impact of extrinsic motivation on individuals’ intrinsic motivation to read (Chen & Wu, 2010; Deci et al., 1999; Gurland & Glowacky, 2011; Huang, 2011; Marinak & Gambrell, 2008; Smith & Westberg, 2011; Thompson et al., 2008). Providing young adults the opportunity to voice the influence of factors on their reading experiences has offered insight on the topic to aid with motivating individuals to read. Additionally, findings from this study could be used in developing and designing adult reading programs. Because findings from studies reveal that intrinsic reading motivation declines for adolescents and that extrinsic motivation has been shown to stabilize as early as fourth grade, it is important to better understand these factors and their long-term effects on readers as they reach adulthood (Paige, 2011; Pecjak & Kosir, 2008).

How to motivate students to read and the impact of that motivation on students’ reading performance are important in education today. Higher reading performance is linked to students with a higher intrinsic motivation to read (Anmarkrud & Bråten, 2009; Logan, Medford, & Hughes, 2011; Pecjak & Kosir, 2008). Furthermore, it has been shown that high intrinsic motivation paired with low extrinsic motivation is a stronger predictor of academic achievement (Hayenga & Corpus, 2010). Research indicates that extrinsic motivating factors often do not produce long-term intrinsic motivation to read in students (Huang, 2011; Smith & Westberg, 2011). Furthermore, current research links the overuse of external rewards, token rewards, or incentives as having an adverse effect on students’ intrinsic motivation to read (Gurland & Glowacky, 2011; Thompson et al., 2008). In contrast, the absence of rewards and simply
allowing students to read for reading’s sake or rewarding books proved effective for third grade students (Marinak & Gambrell, 2008).

Regarding adult readers, both intrinsic and extrinsic factors motivate adults to read: it depends on reading purpose (Schutte & Malouff, 2007). The current literature addresses lower, middle, and upper level students’ reading motivation as well as dimensions of adult reading motivation and “the relationships between functions of reading and adults’ reading interest” (Chen, 2009, p. 115; Schutte & Malouff, 2007). Qualitative research addressing the factors that influence the reading experiences of young adults is lacking. Important to note is that a recent survey regarding reading habits and attitudes of adults in England revealed that 76% of participants reported that reading improves their life and makes them feel good (Booktrust, 2013). Furthermore, findings indicated that individuals under the age of 30 (particularly men) are more likely to prefer technology over books (Booktrust, 2013). Continued research regarding young adults and their reading experiences is needed in an effort to reach the population of young adults. Research of this nature could offer significant findings for current educational literacy practices that could aid not only the adult population of readers but also younger generations of readers.

**Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to describe the factors that influence young adults’ (aged 18 to 24) reading experiences, reading habits and behavior, and desire to read. For the purpose of this study, young adult refers to individuals between the ages of 18 and 24. (This age range has been chosen in order to align with the Survey of Public Participation in the Arts conducted by the Census Bureau on behalf of the National Endowment for the Arts and is explained in detail under “Significance of the Study.”) A greater
understanding of the reading experiences of this population of adults will hopefully aid post-
secondary educators with reaching their students; librarians and other individuals as they form
book clubs; and young adults as they reflect on their reading experiences and form new reading
habits. For this study, participants living in a large suburban county in Southwest Tennessee
have described the factors that influence their reading experiences. Because this study sought to
describe the shared experiences of a group of people, a phenomenological study was appropriate
(Creswell, 2013).

**Significance of the Study**

Since “print culture affords irreplaceable forms of focused attention and contemplation
that make complex communications and insights possible” (National Endowment for the Arts,
2004, p. vii), it is vital that parents, educators, and policy makers gain a full understanding of the
many facets of “print culture,” including those factors that influence the reading experiences of
young adults (p. vii). Individuals need to be able to read and comprehend material in order to
achieve their goals, gain an understanding of important topics (medical information, financial
information, for example), succeed in their employment, and generally live a more successful
and contented life (Booktrust, 2013; National Endowment for the Arts, 2008; National Research
Council, 2012). For example, the National Research Council (2012) reported that “adults with
low literacy have lower rates of participation in the labor force and lower earnings when they do
have jobs” (p. 3) when compared to adults with higher literacy. As such, educators must view
literacy instruction with a long-term goal in mind. Since intrinsic motivation has been correlated
with academic achievement and strong reading performance, it is important to understand what
factors motivate readers (Anmarkrud & Bråten, 2009; Logan et al., 2011; Pecjak & Kosir, 2008).
Although infancy is the ideal time to begin print exposure in order to foster a love for reading, an appreciation for books, and a strong linguistic base, too many individuals start kindergarten having missed out on such early building blocks to literacy success (Mol & Bus, 2011). However, the cycle need not repeat itself with younger generations. With research that focuses on young adults and those factors that influence their reading experiences, educators are presented with fresh information and a new platform for reaching older siblings, young mentors, and the next generation of parents so that they may positively impact younger generations in the way of reading. This assessment of young adult reading motivation may prompt other young adults to consider their own reading experiences as well as prompt renewed attitudes toward recreational reading, thus, benefiting not only themselves but also those around them.

Since college students’ required reading often consists of more non-fiction than narrative, the reading of fiction becomes increasingly more voluntary and independent (Mol & Bus, 2011). This population of young adults, therefore, needs to be armed with relevant and pertinent information as reading vies for their time in an ever-growing digital age. With increasing evidence to support a correlation between leisure reading, reading proficiency, and long-term academic success as well as a widening reading gap for those with less print exposure, Mol and Bus (2011) assert that “We need to find ways to motivate these students and their parents to read more as a leisure time activity” (p. 289) in order to help prevent the downward spiral of the Matthew Effect. This “Matthew Effect” describes the phenomenon regarding literacy development in which higher-achieving peers read more than their lower-achieving peers and continue to strengthen their literacy skills while their lower-achieving peers do not improve, with early reading success typically yielding later reading success (Vogt & Shearer, 2007).
Given the quantity of reading that post-secondary students generally are assigned, colleges and universities could benefit from an understanding of young adults’ reading experiences (Jolliffe & Harl, 2008). A greater knowledge of those factors that influence young adults’ reading experiences and their reading engagement could also aid educators in the development of course offerings, curriculum, and syllabi (Jolliffe & Harl, 2008; Mellard et al., 2007). For example, after conducting research on the reading practices of first-year college students at their university, Jolliffe and Harl (2008) recommended the following for helping undergraduate students’ text engagement: model how to make text-to-self connections and text-to-world connections through the use of think-alouds; design curriculum and utilize texts that promote reading engagement; and incorporate the use of technology with assigned reading.

Moreover, the reading habits of individuals are evolving as society and the digital age are constantly changing (Mokhtari et al., 2009). Therefore, educators must keep abreast of ever-changing generations in order to reach their learning needs. Educators can do this through participation in professional development opportunities, such as furthering their own education, attending seminars, being involved with professional learning communities, and reading current research on this population of students (Gambrell et al., 2007; Porche, Pallante, & Snow, 2012; Vogt & Shearer, 2007). Most importantly, educators must familiarize themselves with students’ needs informally through discussions, questionnaires, and surveys, as well as formally by becoming active in the research process themselves as active researchers or serving as committee members alongside active researchers (Gambrell et al., 2007; Shaw, Conti, & Shaw, 2013, Vogt & Shearer, 2007). Only when the educator personally cares about learning the needs of his or her students can he or she understand those needs and begin to meet them in the classroom (DuFour, 2007; Shaw et al., 2013).
Furthermore, research that focuses on the factors that influence the reading experiences of young adults can provide educators with information that could impact the development of adult reading programs. In order to better reach adult learners, adult educators need to be aware of those factors that motivate adult learners (National Research Council, 2012). A greater understanding of the influential factors on the reading experiences of young adults offers educators (as well as adults themselves) insight into a changing student body and rising generation of productive citizens as well as parents who will be better equipped to shape the minds of their children through their examples and teaching (Atkinson, 2009; Chen, 2008; Chen & Lu, 2012; Law, 2008; Protacio, 2012). Since reading offers multiple benefits (personal as well as professional) to the individual and to society, a deeper understanding of young adults’ reading experiences and the factors that influence those reading experiences could aid educators as they develop adult reading programs, develop and promote book clubs, and attempt to reach young adults through other learning environments. Educators should be familiar with current research not only to shape their teaching but also to inform their students. No matter the individual or the goal, it is necessary to be well-informed in order to make healthy choices.

Furthermore, as this study sought to determine the influence of factors on participants’ desire to read, it was anticipated that the results could provide new perspectives on the debate regarding the use of external motivators on intrinsic motivation (Chen & Wu, 2010; Deci et al., 1999; Gurland & Glowacky, 2011; Huang, 2011; Marinak & Gambrell, 2008; Smith & Westberg, 2011; Thompson et al., 2008). Since participants were between the ages of 18 and 24, they were mature enough to reflect on their reading experiences throughout childhood and adolescence and consider the impact of external factors on their intrinsic desire to read. However, results did not provide significant insight regarding the long-term effects of tangible
rewards on reading behavior. Although this information could be helpful in the field of education across all learning levels, elementary through college, it is recommended that future research focus on this area. Educators and parents alike need to be fully informed regarding reading motivation in order to best guide new generations down a pleasurable path of reading that will lead them toward professional and personal success.

In addition to offering opportunities for personal growth and pleasure, reading also offers a sense of fulfillment and contentment to those who read (Booktrust, 2013). Findings from the Booktrust Survey of Reading Habits (2013) in England revealed that those adults who are more frequent readers displayed higher satisfaction and happier lives than those adults who do not read or those adults classified as reluctant readers. Furthermore, “more regular readers . . . are also more likely to feel that the things they do in life are worthwhile” (Booktrust, 2013, p. 37). Current research also indicates that reading a novel positively affects brain connectivity and other brain functions, both short-term and long-term (Berns, Blaine, Prietula, & Pye, 2013). Moreover, reading is credited with having transformative properties, such as helping the reader understand others’ perspectives, increasing cognitive and emotional ability, and encouraging goal setting as well as goal obtainment (Schutte & Malouff, 2006). Personal satisfaction, contentment, and fulfillment not only provide reasons to read but also offer significance behind understanding those factors that motivate young adults to read.

Reading produces personal growth and benefits the community at large. Findings from the 2002 Survey of Public Participation in the Arts revealed a strong correlation between literary reading (reading short stories, novels, plays, and poetry) and involvement in other civic activities, such as performing volunteer and charity work, visiting art museums, attending performing arts events, and attending sporting events (National Endowment for the Arts, 2004).
However, findings also revealed a decline in literary reading, which left many Americans concerned that this continued decline could greatly negatively impact our nation on a large scale as well as individual scales since “readers play a more active and involved role in their communities” (National Endowment for the Arts, 2004, p. vii). Great efforts have been made over the last decade in an attempt to encourage reading and foster a desire to read, including (but not limited to) the provision of books for children from birth through age five, an increased emphasis on reading programs in schools, a special emphasis on adolescent reading, and The Big Read initiative (a national program designed “to restore reading to the center of American culture” by encouraging reading through community-wide reading programs) founded by the National Endowment for the Arts (“About the Big Read,” 2015; Cassidy & Ortlieb, 2013; National Endowment for the Arts, 2008).

Despite the rapidly declining rate of literary readers in the United States as of 2002, the 2008 results of the Survey of Public Participation in the Arts (SPPA) revealed that reading was on the rise (National Endowment for the Arts, 2009). Interestingly, a changing trend had occurred: In 2002, young adults aged 18 to 30 were classified as the group least likely to read literature with the rate of decline occurring among the youngest adults (18 – 24) at “55 percent greater than that of the total adult population” (National Endowment for the Arts, 2004, p. xi). Results of the 2008 survey, however, revealed a surprising transformation among this population of youngest adults: Literary reading had “increased most rapidly among the youngest adults” (National Endowment for the Arts, 2009, p. 4) in sharp contrast to findings from the 2002 survey revealing the steepest decline in literary reading to be among the youngest readers, those aged 18 – 24. Reasons for this transformation could not be explained due to the design of the survey. However, findings from the 2012 survey show yet another decline in literary reading; this
decline actually returned to numbers similar in 2002 with reading rates higher for Americans 65 and older than for any other age group (National Endowment for the Arts, 2013). Again, reasons for the fluctuating rate of reading across age groups cannot be explained from results of this study.

Due to a drastic shift in reading rates among American adults between the ages of 18 and 24 over the last decade and recent findings that 18 to 24-year-olds read the least in the United States and that 18 to 30-year-olds read the least among adults in England, I chose to interview young adults (Booktrust, 2013; National Endowment for the Arts, 2004, 2008, 2013). I decided to align my age range with that of the National Endowment for the Arts at 18 to 24 years of age with the exception of the term young adults to refer to participants rather than youngest adults. As it turned out, the youngest participant in my study was 19 years old, and the oldest participant was 23 years old.

Qualitative research that focuses on reading motivation among young adults is lacking. A phenomenological study among young adults that focused on the factors that influence their reading experiences has offered further insight into the reading trends among young adults in America, as well as provided a voice in addition to the statistics currently in front of us. Understanding those factors that influence the reading experiences among young adults could benefit individuals, families, communities at large, and our Nation as a whole. Ultimately, reading and its promotion are important. Educators must be at the forefront of understanding the multifaceted layers of this phenomenon in order to reach all ages of potential readers.
Research Questions

The central research question that guided this study is as follows:

- How do young adults between the ages of 18 and 24 describe the factors that influence their reading experiences?

Because a phenomenological study focuses on the shared experiences of a group of people, the guiding research question asked participants to describe the factors that influence their reading experiences (Creswell, 2013). The shared experience is narrowed based on participants’ age range and the activity of reading. To better understand the factors that influence the reading experiences of young adults will be to better reach their needs in the classroom, through book clubs, at home, and through other learning and reading communities (Jolliffe & Harl, 2008; Mellard et al., 2007; Mol & Bus, 2011). According to Nadelson et al. (2013), “Given the dynamic nature of text communication, particularly among adults, there is an ongoing need to determine the influences on engagement in reading,” (“Habits and Perceptions of Reading,” para. 5). This guiding question sought to understand those factors that influence reading experiences and the extent of their influence (external, internal, or both).

- How do participants describe the effect of factors on their reading habits and behavior?

Some behaviors are motivated by external factors. Ryan and Deci (2000) define *extrinsic motivation* as “the performance of an activity in order to attain some separable outcome” (p. 71). Additionally, Nadelson et al. (2013) “consider reading habits to represent the behaviors (choice, frequency, durations, etc.) associated with engaging in reading text” (“Habits and Perceptions of Reading,” para. 1). Since this question probed into the effect of motivational factors on reading habits and behavior, it sought to identify what factors produce the behavior of engaged reading
and how: grades, social expectations, religious/spiritual reasons, self-exploration, or other factors. Furthermore, the theory of self-determination “allows for an exploration of the interplay between self-determined and non-self-determined behaviors and processes” (Deci & Ryan, 1985, p. 7). Thus, this research question also sought to understand if this interplay is present for participants.

- How do participants describe the effect of factors on their personal desire to read?

Ryan and Deci (2000) define intrinsic motivation as “doing an activity for the inherent satisfaction of the activity itself” (p. 71). Research reveals that external motivators can have a negative impact on individuals’ intrinsic desire to read (Chen & Wu, 2010; Deci et al., 1999; Gurland & Glowacky, 2011). In fact, it has been suggested that when token rewards are used in an effort to influence reading behavior, those rewards should be related to reading itself in order to better foster the intrinsic desire to read (Marinak & Gambrell, 2008). This question also sought to understand whether or not external factors have had a positive impact on intrinsic reading motivation, and if so, what type of external factors have had a positive effect on readers. Ultimately, this question sought to understand the type of impact internal and external factors have had on participants’ inherent desire to read.

Research Plan

A phenomenological design was chosen for this research plan. The study sought to describe the shared, lived experiences of a group of young adults between the ages of 18 and 24. Van Manen (1990) asserts that “phenomenology aims at gaining a deeper understanding of the nature or meaning of our everyday experiences” and “is keenly interested in the significant world of the human being” (p. 9). Because this research sought to capture the essence of the shared, lived experiences among adult readers, a phenomenological design was appropriate (Creswell,
Since I bracketed out my own experiences, a transcendental approach was applied (Moustakas, 1994). It was necessary for me to explain my own personal reading experiences as well as the influences on those reading experiences (Moustakas, 1994). Surveys, interviews, and focus group interviews served as the means of data collection as well as provided for triangulation, which is vital in naturalistic studies and improves “the probability that findings and interpretations will be found credible” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 305; Moustakas, 1994). I analyzed the data through bracketing, horizontalization, establishing patterns, providing textural descriptions followed by structural descriptions, and finally by describing the essence of participants’ experiences (Creswell, 2013). Due to the lack of qualitative studies on this topic and the lack of voice that quantitative studies offer, I chose a qualitative approach so that participants could describe those factors that influence their personal reading experiences.

**Limitations and Delimitations**

This study was not without some limitations and delimitations. This study was limited due to self-report on the Adult Reading Motivation Scale as well as during interviews and focus groups. Data collection and analysis were delimited due to the choice of research design chosen: transcendental phenomenological. Also, this study was delimited to adults between the ages of 18 and 24 living in a Southwestern county in Tennessee; it was delimited to a Southwestern county in Tennessee due to my residence. I chose to interview participants within this age range due to my own experience in teaching middle school students: This age group reflects the first generation of graduates I taught at the beginning of my teaching career. Also, ample research pertaining to adolescents and reading motivation has been conducted in the last 10 years (Cassidy & Ortlieb, 2013), whereas research pertaining to adults and reading motivation is greatly lacking (Cassidy et al., 2010; Schutte & Malouff, 2007).
Furthermore, two recent studies revealed interesting findings pertaining to this age group and their reading habits: the Survey of Public Participation in the Arts conducted by the Census Bureau on behalf of the National Endowment for the Arts (2013) and the Booktrust Reading Habits Survey (2013). The National Endowment for the Arts revealed a great shift in reading habits among 18 to 30-year-olds, as well as higher reading rates among Americans 65 years and older (2013). Similarly, the Booktrust Reading Habits Survey (2013) conducted in England reports that adults between the ages of 18 and 30 read the least compared to participants in their 60s who read the most. Also, this age group reported a higher interest in technology (TV, DVDs, the Internet, and social media) than in reading books with 64% “agreeing that the internet and computers will replace books in 20 years” (Booktrust, 2013, p. 4). I was interested in this generation of young adult American readers and their descriptions of the factors that influence their reading experiences.

**Definitions**

The following definitions include key terms and are provided for clarity and understanding:

- *Young adult* refers to individuals between the ages of 18 and 24.

- *Intrinsic reading motivation* is defined “as the willingness to read because that activity is satisfying or rewarding in its own right” (Schiefele et al., 2012, p. 429).

- *Extrinsic reading motivation* is tied to a factor outside the activity of reading itself or what the text has to offer the reader (Schiefele et al., 2012, p. 429).
Chapter One has provided an introduction and an overview of the intended study to take place. A clear examination of the background of reading and research pertaining to motivation among various age groups has been provided. The problem with the lack of qualitative research as it pertains to adult reading motivation has been explained, as well as the purpose to fill a gap in the literature relative to young adults and the factors that influence their reading experiences. The significance of this study has been embedded in current research and recent studies with considerations of how this research could impact the field of education, educators, and young adults. The research questions and research plan have been presented as well as the limitations, delimitations, and definitions.
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter serves as an introduction to the theories that framed this study as well as the current literature on the topic of motivation and reading in relation to children, adolescents, and adults. Due to the current research, however, more literature is available as it relates to reading motivation among children and adolescents as opposed to studies with adults as participants. In fact, Cassidy and Ortlieb (2013) reported adolescent literacy as “the hottest topic over a ten-year period” (p. 22) after conducting a data analysis of the “What’s Hot, What’s Not in Literacy” surveys from 1997 – 2012. One of the most recent studies pertaining to adult readers and motivation took place in Australia (Schutte & Malouff, 2007). Specifically, the purpose of that study by Schutte and Malouff was for the development of the Adult Reading Motivation Scale (2007).

In addition to an examination of the study conducted by Schutte and Malouff, further current topics include reading motivation as it relates to internal and external factors (such as home and family influence, social influence, and classroom/instructional practices), reading performance (academic achievement and performance), and self-efficacy. This review of the literature examines those studies conducted on children, adolescents, and adults in regards to intrinsic and extrinsic motivators as well as the impacts of such motivating factors. Since research pertaining to adults and the motivation to read is limited, a broader examination of the research pertaining to adult literacy was conducted, which includes a synthesis of research on adult reading preferences and habits. Two theories of motivation provide structure and context for the theoretical framework for this study: Maslow’s hierarchy of needs and Deci and Ryan’s Self-determination theory.
Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study rests in theories of motivation. The guiding research question sought to discover the reading experiences of young adults; the following questions aimed to discover the motivating factors on those experiences. Therefore, an understanding of motivational theory was necessary in order to best examine and best assess the influence of motivational factors on individuals’ desire to read. More specifically, the researcher had to assess the role external factors play on internal factors and one’s decision to read. Do external factors truly have a negative impact on one’s internal motivation to read? Or, can external factors simply guide and shape one’s internal motivation? Furthermore, an examination of Deci’s Self-determination theory provides insight regarding the role external factors can play on internal motivation (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Maslow’s hierarchy of needs provides a base for other theories of motivation that followed. As such, his theory is examined first.

Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs

Abraham Maslow introduced his theory of human motivation in 1943, which is commonly known as Maslow’s hierarchy of needs. His theory identifies five essential human needs: physiological, safety, love, esteem, and self-actualization (Maslow, 1943). This theory asserts that human motivation is built upon a hierarchy starting with basic (physiological) needs and reaching its pinnacle with self-actualization; however, Maslow also recognized that variations often exist depending on individuals’ personal needs (love needs vs. esteem needs, for example). Maslow stated that, “most behavior is multi-motivated” (Maslow, 1943, p. 390). Furthermore, he recognized that within motivational theory lie great paradoxes that will appear as man’s deeper motivations are examined (p. 394). Such paradoxes include the relationship among intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and human behavior.
Self-Determination Theory

The relationship between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and their influence over human behavior can be examined further within the context of Deci and Ryan’s Self-Determination theory (SDT). SDT posits that motivation stems from three innate psychology needs: autonomy (self-determination), competence, and interpersonal relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Examining motivation from the perspective of why people behave the way they do, Self-determination theory analyzes motivation from a why perspective rather than simply a what perspective (Ryan & Deci, 2000). More specifically, SDT values individuals’ determination to engage in certain behaviors. Therefore, this theory values individuals’ reasons behind their actions in order to encourage factors that will foster intrinsic motivation rather than undermine it (Deci, Vallerand, Pelletier, & Ryan, 1991). Part of this theory asserts the importance that lies in individuals’ choice over the level of control (or amount) they have over their own actions. In the context of reading and through the lens of SDT, perhaps it is not important whether individuals read for intrinsic or extrinsic reasons, but perhaps what is important is why individuals choose to read and that they do choose to read. Adult readers were able to reflect on their reasons for reading and how those reasons are organized intrinsically and extrinsically as they reflected on their reading experiences from past to present as well as those people or things that have influenced and continue to influence those experiences.

Related Literature

This review of the literature began with an examination of reading motivation. Studies examining internal and external factors on motivation to read and their impact on individuals’ reading behaviors have been explored (Chen & Wu, 2010; Corpus, McClintic-Gilbert, & Hayenga, 2009; Hayenga & Corpus, 2010; Lau, 2009; Law, 2008; Marinak & Gambrell, 2008;
Pecjak & Kosir, 2008; Schaffner, Schiefele, & Ulferts, 2013; Schiefele et al., 2012). Also provided is an in-depth review of the empirical literature as it pertains to reading motivation among children, adolescents, and adults. Findings revealed an in-depth examination of adolescent reading motivation that has been conducted over the last 10 years (Cassidy & Ortlieb, 2013). Other areas that have been examined in relation to reading motivation include academic achievement, reading comprehension, curriculum and instruction, the home and the family influence, social influence, gender, and self-efficacy. Finally, an examination of adult literacy was expanded outside the realm of motivation in order to offer a more comprehensive review of the empirical literature that focuses on adults and reading motivation. A gap in the literature pertaining to young adult reading motivation was apparent.

**Internal and External Factors and Reading Motivation**

*Motivation* is “a force or influence that causes someone to do something” (www.m-w.com). Motivation can be internal, external, or both. According to Deci et al. (1991), “intrinsically motivated behaviors are engaged in for their own sake,” while “extrinsically motivated behaviors . . . are instrumental in nature . . . performed not out of interest but because they are believed to be instrumental to some separable consequence” (p. 328). In the area of reading, both internal and external factors motivate individuals to read. Debate and research exist that examine both the short-term and long-term benefits and costs of external motivation on intrinsic motivation. The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to describe the factors that influence young adults’ (aged 18 to 24) reading experiences, reading habits and behavior, and desire to read.

Regarding the intrinsic motivation to read, Schiefele et al. (2012) defined this phenomenon “as the willingness to read because that activity is satisfying or rewarding in its
own right,” while “Extrinsic reading motivation refers to reasons for reading that are external to both the activity of reading and the topic of the text” (p. 429). Their review of the literature on this topic supports intrinsic reading motivation as a positive contributor to both reading behavior and reading competence. Moreover, Schutte and Malouff (2007) asserted that in the area of adult reading motivation, intrinsic motivation and self-regulation perhaps hold a greater influence than external factors. Also important for adults is a sense of self as it relates to reading (Schutte & Malouff, 2007). Results of a study conducted by Chen and Wu (2010) on elementary students and the use of rewards for reading could further support this claim. Results from their study indicated that although tangible rewards indeed influence intrinsic reading motivation in small children, over time tangible rewards could actually negatively impact intrinsic reading motivation. If this is indeed the case, educators need to better understand the role of motivating factors in the lives of adults so that educational and reading programs can be designed to foster and nurture young students’ reading motivation as well as that of young adults.

Various factors affect individuals’ motivation to read. A number of studies exist that examined why individuals choose to read (Applegate & Applegate, 2010; Gurland & Glowacky, 2011; Lau, 2009; Morgan, Fuchs, Compton, Cordray, & Fuchs, 2008). In fact, studies have been conducted to explore the role of intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation on individuals’ reading habits and reasons for reading (Chen & Wu, 2010; Corpus, McClintic-Gilbert, & Hayenga, 2009; Hayenga & Corpus, 2010; Lau, 2009; Marinak & Gambrell, 2008; Pecjak & Kosir, 2008). Across various studies, a review of literature supports that intrinsic motivation is a positive contributor to both reading behavior and reading competence, while extrinsic motivation offers either a small or negative contribution (Law, 2008; Schaffner, Schiefele, & Ulferts, 2013;
Schiefele et al., 2012). Furthermore, separate studies have been conducted in which the participants include children, adolescents, or adults. Fewer studies, however, examine adults’ reading habits, reasons for reading, and their relationship to or impact on reading performance. As such, broader studies that examine adults and literacy will be examined.

**Children and Reading Motivation**

Children can be both intrinsically and extrinsically motivated to read. Concern lies in the potential long-term effects of extrinsic (or token) rewards on intrinsic motivation over time and if motivating young children extrinsically is worth achieving desired results at the potential cost of intrinsic motivation. Initially, young children gravitate toward those activities they find personally appealing and to which they are drawn intrinsically (Gurland & Glowacky, 2011). Through the use of extrinsic motivators (positive reinforcement or negative reinforcement), however, adults can prompt or discourage certain behaviors from children. Younger children are more likely to respond to external motivators to increase their reading behavior than are adolescent students (Corpus et al., 2009; Gurland & Glowacky, 2011). For example, third graders have exhibited higher levels of intrinsic motivation than have seventh graders with lower response to extrinsic rewards over the course of a school year, which raises questions regarding long-term effects of the use of external rewards for reading behavior (Corpus et al., 2009).

A closer examination of the use of external rewards on reading behavior reveals significant findings. For example, third grade students display greater motivation to read when rewarded with a book as opposed to token rewards (Marinak & Gambrell, 2008). Similarly, intangible rewards, such as praise, have been shown to increase both intrinsic and extrinsic reading motivation positively (Chen & Wu, 2010). Therefore, the use of intangible rewards or rewards associated with reading activity proves more effective when it comes to motivating
children to read and sustaining that motivation. This recommendation is based on the premise that extrinsic rewards can de-motivate and negatively impact students’ intrinsic motivation to read.

**Adolescents and Reading Motivation**

Various factors are at work with the power to encourage or discourage adolescent readers. For example, the intrinsic factors of self-concept and value of reading serve as motivators for adolescent readers; if adolescents’ view of reading lessens or their self-concept as a reader is low, their motivation to read will most likely be low (Kelley & Decker, 2009). Unfortunately, adolescent students tend to display lower intrinsic motivation toward academic achievement and school-related tasks than do younger students; and over the course of a school year, seventh graders’ extrinsic and intrinsic motivation declined at a higher rate than that of third graders (Corpus et al., 2009). Moreover, research indicates that adolescent students’ intrinsic motivation to read declines as they reach upper grades (Lau, 2009). Therefore, it should not be surprising that reading programs utilizing extrinsic rewards for reading behavior are not going to prove as effective for adolescent students as for elementary students (Huang, 2011; Smith & Westberg, 2011; Thompson et al., 2008).

Accelerated Reader (AR) is one such popular program that utilizes a point system in conjunction with student performance on multiple choice tests over reading books. Books are assigned grade levels and point values, and students must read books based on these values. Books in the AR system have computerized, multiple-choice quizzes that students must take; points are earned based on the number of answers students get correct. Many schools implement a rewards system in conjunction with points earned, which may result in prizes, such as money,
candy, and pizza parties, for example, in addition to grades that students earn based on performance. Student responses to this program are varied.

Although students who are intrinsically motivated to read report enjoyment regarding external rewards offered in conjunction with the AR point system, students also report numerous negative aspects regarding the program. For example, students who like to read report decreased pleasure in reading due to such a program that adds pressure for obtaining certain points (point values are attached to books) in order to earn grades (Thompson et al., 2008). Moreover, students’ reading choices are limited, often forcing students to choose books they do not enjoy over books they would enjoy reading; being forced to earn a certain number of points also places time constraints on students, leaving little or no time for reading items for pleasure (Huang, 2011; Smith & Westberg, 2011; Thompson et al., 2008). As a result, students are forced to change their reading habits, which can result in decreased intrinsic motivation to read. Consequently, research indicates this particular program that utilizes extrinsic motivation to foster intrinsic reading motivation is actually counter-productive for some students.

In fact, one study followed middle school students in two different districts: one that utilized AR in elementary school, and one that did not. Research indicated that those students who were not active in the AR program continued to read independently more so than their counterparts who did participate in AR (Pavonetti, Brimmer, & Cipielewski, 2002). These results would seem to imply that the use of a reading program that utilizes extrinsic rewards for reading does not nurture an intrinsic desire to read. Ultimately, educators and parents must use wise judgment when attempting to motivate students with the use of incentives: know the individual and choose incentives strategically as well as in conjunction with other methods for fostering a love for reading.
**Adults and Reading Motivation**

Understanding adult readers’ motivation to read will not only be a benefit to the world of adult literacy (developers and administrators of adult literacy programs and librarians, for example), but it also may help provide insight into how to best nurture children and adolescents toward reading in order to develop necessary reading skills as well as a lifelong appreciation for reading. Because reading for enjoyment and reading patterns are associated with adult reading motivation, educators need to gain an awareness of and understanding of these reading patterns and how they are developed (Schutte & Malouff, 2007). Common elements lead to adults’ motivation to read, which stem from childhood and adolescence. For example, parental encouragement, teacher intervention, peer influence, and reading experience have all been identified as factors that influence adult readers’ reading habits and practices, further shaping them into the readers they are as adults and their current motivation to read (Benson, 2010; Booktrust, 2013; Bossaller & Budd, 2009; Johnson & Frank, 2013; Kamhieh et al., 2011;). Adult readers often read for personal enjoyment, which stems from intrinsic motivation, but other factors often also influence their reasons for reading (Chen, 2009; Schutte & Malouff, 2007).

Reading motivation factors can include a combination of factors that are both internal and external in nature (Reading as Part of the Self, Reading Efficacy, Reading for Recognition, and Reading to Do Well in Other Realms). For example, Reading for Recognition and Reading to Do Well in Other Realms both lean toward extrinsic motivation, while Reading as Part of the Self and Reading Efficacy lean toward intrinsic motivation (Schutte & Malouff, 2007). However, each category is neither exclusively intrinsically driven nor extrinsically driven. Furthermore, Reading as Part of the Self includes both the importance of being a reader –
intrinsic – and the importance of “relating to others as a reader” – extrinsic (Schutte & Malouff, 2007, p. 482).

A study of adult Taiwanese readers identified three main motivators for reading: reading for enjoyment, reading for knowledge, and reading for social conversation (Chen, 2009). Reading for social conversation would be classified as extrinsically motivated, and reading for knowledge could be both intrinsically and extrinsically motivated. For example, knowledge gained through reading could be out of personal interest and curiosity, or it could be out of a desire to perform well in a class, on a job, for a hobby, or for social reasons. Also important for adults is a sense of self as it relates to reading (Schutte & Malouff, 2007). Despite some college adult readers’ recognition that recreational reading and reading outside of school is an important activity, they also report choosing other, more favored activities (such as using the Internet and watching television) over recreational reading (Mokhtari et al., 2009). This indicates that adult readers can be extrinsically de-motivated from reading as well as they can be extrinsically motivated to read.

**English Learners and Reading Motivation**

In comparison with peers who speak English as their primary language, English learners are motivated to read for both similar and different reasons (Howard, 2012; Huang, 2013; Protacio, 2012). Research reveals that reading motivation is a multi-layered phenomenon, particularly when it pertains to English learners (Howard, 2012; Huang, 2013; McElvain, 2009; Protacio, 2012). Among adolescent students, Protacio (2012) identified five factors that motivate English learners to read: (a) sociocultural environment (influence of family and friends), (b) integrative orientation (to bond with American friends and learn the American
culture), (c) instrumental motivation (to increase their competence with the English language),
(d) perceived competence, and (e) reading materials.

Family and friends is probably the most influential factor on individuals’ motivation to
read is, regardless of cultural background (Atkinson, 2009; Chen, 2008; Chen & Lu, 2012; Law,
2008; Protacio, 2012). However, Howard (2012) reported that parental expectations are an
integral factor in fostering student motivation to read among English learners. In fact, her
findings indicated that parental expectations are perhaps the most influential factor regarding
reading motivation. In addition to family influence, English learners are motivated to read by
peer recommendations and friendly competition (Howard, 2012; Protacio, 2012). The influence
of friends is related to integrative orientation and instrumental motivation. That is, English-
speaking friends encourage and assist English learners as they learn to read as well as learn a
new culture; likewise, their competence with the English language is strengthened (Protacio,
2012).

Strengthened competence leads to improved self-image. As self-image is improved,
motivation to read increases (Huang, 2013). Specifically, English Language Learners in college
who participated in online reading of texts and e-books experienced an increase in reading
motivation. Moreover, they agreed that reading was important to help them in their future
careers as well as for gaining knowledge. Interestingly, those students who demonstrated the
greatest gains in reading motivation were low-proficiency female students (Huang, 2013).

Regarding reading materials, findings have shown that reading content serves as a tool that
motivates students to read (Howard, 2012; Protacio, 2012). Additionally, reading programs
aimed at motivating students to read yield different results; some programs yield motivation
while others do not (Howard, 2012). Lastly, instruction that combines collaborative
conversations with strategic strategy instruction results in increased motivation to read (McElvain, 2009). Although English learners are motivated to read for many of the same reasons as their English-speaking peers, they are also motivated to read in order to assimilate into their new environments (Howard, 2012; Huang, 2013; McElvain, 2009; Protacio, 2012). Findings support that reading motivation bears certain qualities across cultures (Howard, 2012; Huang, 2013; McElvain, 2009; Protacio, 2012).

**Academic Achievement, Reading Comprehension Performance, and Reading Motivation**

Reading motivation is connected to reading performance and academic achievement. Studies of motivation and reading indicated that students who are more motivated to read exhibit higher academic achievement than those who are not motivated to read; furthermore, students with higher intrinsic motivation exhibit higher reading comprehension (Anmarkrud & Bråten, 2009; Chiu & Chow, 2010; Hayenga & Corpus, 2010; Logan et al., 2011; Schaffner et al., 2013). Moreover, students who recognize reading comprehension as valuable and intrinsically motivating perform better than students who do not; that is, students who do not recognize reading as valuable or interesting tend to be poor readers (Anmarkrud & Bråten, 2009; Pecjak & Kosir, 2008). On the other hand, intrinsic motivation may account for a higher gain in reading comprehension ability in low ability students as opposed to higher ability students (Logan et al., 2011). This would make sense, however, since low ability readers would have higher gains to make than high ability readers: there is a larger gap to “fill.”

When comparing the impact of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, the ratio of intrinsic motivation to extrinsic motivation is a greater predictor of academic achievement than simply the amount of motivation (Hayenga & Corpus, 2010). Therefore, it would seem imperative to nurture students’ intrinsic motivation toward reading. Competition has been shown to have a
negative impact on students’ reading performance/growth (Retelsdorf, Köller, & Möller, 2011). However, other external factors, such as family, society, and the presence of books in the home have been shown to have a positive correlation with reading performance and students’ performance expectations (Chiu & Chow, 2010; Retelsdorf et al., 2011). Furthermore, a study among fifth-graders revealed that reading amount yielded a positive effect of intrinsic motivation on higher order comprehension but a negative effect of extrinsic motivation on higher order comprehension (Schaffner et al., 2013). As such, it is necessary to recognize that while intrinsic motivation greatly impacts students’ reading performance and growth, external factors also impact student performance, be it positively or negatively.

**Curriculum and Instruction and Reading Motivation**

Educators serve to tap into students’ motivation to facilitate learning and to motivate when that motivation is missing. Research has indicated that students’ reading motivation declines over time (Bozack, 2011; Lau, 2009). Since students’ motivation to read often drops after the fourth grade, a number of studies have been conducted that examine adolescent reading habits and interests (Atkinson, 2009; Chen, 2008; Cuevas, Russell, & Irving, 2012; Fisher & Frey, 2012; Kelley & Decker, 2009; Lau, 2009; McTague & Abrams, 2011). Understanding what motivates them to read is essential. Applying those motivations in the context of the learning environment is critical.

Curriculum and instruction (whether at home or at school) and students’ perception of that instruction is significantly related to students’ motivation to read (Lau, 2009). How to interact with text and illustrations is a critical reading strategy that is a part of students’ reading success (McTague & Abrams, 2011). Furthermore, research has revealed that students who engaged in thoughtful literacy were more motivated to read than those who simply engaged in
text-based comprehension (Applegate & Applegate, 2010). This study revealed that the more deeply students must think about the text, the more motivated they are to read the text; essentially, challenge breeds motivation (Applegate & Applegate, 2010). As such, reading curriculum and reading programs must provide opportunities for impacting students’ reading ability, reading motivation, and attitude. Educators need to familiarize themselves with those instructional strategies that have been reported to motivate students to read.

Children tend to gravitate naturally toward those activities they find intrinsically rewarding (Gurland & Glowacky, 2011). Questions remain regarding those factors that make reading intrinsically rewarding for students at a young age and how classroom instructional practices nurture or hinder that motivation. A study in Hong Kong involving Chinese second graders and their parents indicated that participants’ perspectives of classroom instructional practices were more highly correlated with text comprehension than home literacy (Law, 2008). As such, this study indicated that classroom instructional practices are a greater influence on students’ reading proficiency than home literacy and parental support (Law, 2008). Perhaps these results emphasize that parents do not always obtain the necessary tools for meeting their child’s educational needs. These results should stir educators to seek which classroom instructional practices further motivate students to read as well as prompt them to educate and empower parents so that they can help meet their children’s educational needs.

Students need to understand the basics about books and literature (genres, for example) as well as have access to them. After participating in a scaffolded summer reading program, students in grades two through eight displayed improved attitudes toward academic and recreational reading as well as increased self-perception (McTague & Abrams, 2011). This program focused on teaching students about genres, exposing them to the different genres, and
providing them with more access to books of their choice. Not only did this particular summer program improve students’ attitudes toward reading, but it also led to improved reading strategies, improved strategies for book choice, and a widened social circle with whom to share reading experiences (McTague & Abrams, 2011). Regardless of age, there are basic reading skills necessary that help motivate readers. Ultimately, summer reading programs provide conditions that motivate students to read (McGaha & Igo, 2012; McTague & Abrams, 2011). However, these conditions can also be provided throughout the school year and should be provided year-round (McGaha & Igo, 2012).

Book clubs and literature circles also offer opportunities to motivate students to read (McElvain, 2010; Whittingham & Huffman, 2009). Transactional literature circles provide students the opportunity to engage in reading and interact with their peers and their parents about the material they read, which can lead to increased reading motivation (McElvain, 2010). Furthermore, being able to work in a small group on material that is on their reading level reportedly aids not only in comprehension but also in reading enjoyment (McElvain, 2010). Although literature circles take place in the classroom, book clubs take place outside the traditional classroom. However, participation in book clubs provides students the opportunity for improved attitude toward reading, including increased motivation to read (Whittingham & Huffman, 2009). Perhaps it is the social component in both literature circles and book clubs that leads to this increased reading motivation.

Effective instruction requires an effective instructor (Chen, 2008; Fisher & Frey, 2012). Students are more likely to engage in reading when their teachers communicate by modeling that reading is important. For example, Taiwanese students in the ninth and twelfth grades revealed a higher association with being avid readers when various teachers frequently introduced science
and taught literature and art appreciation. Also, twelfth-grade students had a higher association with being avid readers and having numerous teachers who encouraged reading (Chen, 2008). The more teachers who are readers themselves and encourage reading, the more likely students are to catch their appreciation for reading and to be motivated to read. This modeling should be both natural and intentional.

Intentional modeling of reading and writing strategies has been shown to be effective in motivating ninth grade students to read (Fisher & Frey, 2012). In addition to teacher modeling, however, the use of essential questions and book choice is also important for this motivation (Fisher & Frey, 2012; Lapp & Fisher, 2009; McGaha & Igo, 2012). The use of essential questions provokes inquiry; teacher modeling demonstrates the processes of reading, thinking, and writing provided through example; and book choice presents an opportunity for control over learning (Fisher & Frey, 2012). According to a study involving high school male students, curriculum chosen by educators inhibits students’ reading motivation due to its exclusion of topics of student interest (Atkinson, 2009). When older students are challenged to choose a book and then think critically about that book in response to an essential question, they are motivated to read based on personal preference, experience, and challenge. At times, however, student choice is not always possible, and other strategies can be used to increase student motivation.

Another strategy that can motivate students to read is sustained silent reading. Sustained silent reading (SSR) occurs in the classroom when students are allowed a brief period of uninterrupted silent time (15 to 20 minutes) for reading whatever they like (Pilgreen, 2000; Siah & Kwok, 2010). An effective implementation of SSR includes the following eight components: access, appeal, a conducive environment, encouragement, staff training, non-accountability, follow-up activities, and distributed time to read (Pilgreen, 2000). Implementing these methods
demonstrated the vital importance that lies in teacher support and encouragement in implementing a successful SSR program that motivates students toward reading (Lee, 2011). Teacher encouragement, through providing access to books and discussing reading, has been shown to be critical in empowering reluctant readers in their reading success (Lee, 2011). Furthermore, successful SSR programs have shown to yield an increased number in how many students find pleasure in reading, at least during the SSR time (Chua, 2008). When time does not allow for students to choose their own reading, however, independent silent reading (ISR) may be utilized (Cuevas et al., 2012). Furthermore, assessment measures may be assigned in order to increase accountability and comprehension (Cuevas et al., 2012). These practices often are used with older students (Cuevas et al., 2012; Lee, 2011).

One particular study involving SSR and ISR took place among high school students (Cuevas et al., 2012). The study involved three groups: a control group and two treatment groups. The control group did not participate in ISR. The treatment groups participated in ISR as well with the exception of the use of computers in one of those groups. The module group used computers for most of their textbook reading and responding to questions; the textbook group (traditional) read from the textbook and responded to questions on paper. All groups used the same reading materials. High school students who participated in independent silent reading using computer modules displayed higher gains in reading motivation when compared to those students who did not engage in either traditional independent silent reading or traditional independent silent reading (Cuevas et al., 2012). This study revealed the success of not just ISR but particularly the use of ISR in conjunction with technology to motivate adolescent students to read.
Furthermore, electronic books (e-books) can be used in the classroom both to motivate students to read and to engage them in reading (Larson, 2009). E-book tools offer students a quick and convenient way to interact with the text as they highlight, annotate, look up words or key phrases, utilize a built-in dictionary, and activate the text-to-speech function (Larson, 2009; 2010). The use of such tools allows students to personalize their interaction with the text (Larson, 2010). As such, the interactive tools can also motivate struggling readers. For example, primary students utilized the built-in dictionary on the Kindle both to look up definitions of unfamiliar words and how to decode unfamiliar words; additionally, the text-to-speech is used to help with decoding (Larson, 2010). Furthermore, research indicates that primary students are more likely to utilize reading resources such as a thesaurus and/or dictionary when reading by e-book as opposed to a traditional paper book (Wright, Fugett, & Caputa, 2013). Not only can e-books be used to motivate students to read, but they also can motivate students to become more engaged readers through the use of reading resources such as dictionaries and thesauri.

Effective reading engages the reader on both an intellectual and personal level. Therefore, classroom strategies that incorporate choice as well as engaged thinking or higher order thinking were found to be successful in motivating students to read (Atkinson, 2009; Fisher & Frey, 2012; Lapp & Fisher, 2009; McGaha & Igo, 2012). Reading motivation is also encouraged with the presence of a widened social circle with whom to share reading experiences (Fisher & Lapp, 2009; McTague & Abrams, 2011). These tasks can be accomplished through summer reading programs as well as during the regular school year (McGaha & Igo, 2012; McTague & Abrams, 2011). Teaching students the basics of genre and text selection as well as providing reading materials for students also bolsters their reading motivation (McTague & Abrams, 2011). It is also essential that teachers themselves model a personal motivation for
reading as well as model reading and thinking strategies (Chen, 2008; Fisher & Frey, 2012). Not only are classroom practices influential on students’ reading motivation, but the attitude and encouragement of reading behind the teaching is also paramount.

Family/Home Influence and Reading Motivation

Although classroom practice is influential on students’ reading motivation, the home and family also carry significant (and possibly the greatest) influence on individuals’ reading motivation (Atkinson, 2009; Chen, 2008; Chen & Lu, 2012; Law, 2008; Protacio, 2012). Family is the first teacher that can carry on its influence and reading support throughout an individual’s life. This reading support begins as early as the first days of life and may take multiple forms. For example, Klauda and Wigfield (2012) have identified seven categories of reading support: “recommendation of or assistance in selecting reading materials, reading together, general encouragement to read, discussion of particular reading materials, serving as a reading model, provision of reading materials, provision of space or opportunity for reading” (p. 5). Although a study conducted by Law (2008) indicated that home literacy and parental support is not as influential on reading proficiency as classroom instruction, research exists supporting the importance of parental support in establishing and maintaining children’s reading motivation (Chen, 2008; Chen & Lu, 2012; Chiu & Chow, 2010; Howard, 2010; Klauda & Wigfield, 2012).

Research reveals a correlation between parental support and child reading motivation (Klauda & Wigfield, 2012). Students who indicated having a high value for reading also indicated experiencing frequent interaction (sometimes or always) with their parents in reading activities (Siah & Kwok, 2010). Howard (2010) identified “positive early reading experience and adult encouragement to read” (p. 41) as particularly influential on the later reading habits and motivation to read of teenage males. Interestingly, other factors that contributed to later
motivation to read of teenage females included situations where reading was one of few past-time options, or reading represented an opportunity to better oneself (Howard, 2010). Additionally, in more collectivist countries where extended family support is highly valued, the reading gap was lower between students living in one-parent homes and those living in two-parent homes. Regarding family cultural capital, higher family cultural capital correlated with a “higher interest in reading, extrinsic motivation, effort and perseverance, and higher reading achievement” (Chiu & Chow, 2010, p. 579). These results indicate that not only is the support of parents critical but the support of other family members is also important.

Preschool students display an intrinsic motivation to read. A correlation was shown to exist between home literacy and intrinsic reading motivation as defined by persistence and voluntary engagement in reading (Zhou & Salili, 2008). Three home literacy activities identified as predictors of preschoolers’ intrinsic reading motivation include parental modeling of reading behavior, presence of books in the home, and years of character teaching. Of these three home literacy activities, the most powerful predictor is parental modeling of reading behavior (Zhou & Salili, 2008). Parental influence through example cannot be underestimated.

Students who self-identify as avid readers provided insight regarding parental support and their motivation to read (Chen, 2008; Chen & Lu, 2012). Regarding reading frequency and literacy activities, a strong association was shown to exist between Taiwanese ninth grade students being avid readers and having mothers and fathers who read frequently as well as mothers’ frequency of bookstore visits (Chen, 2008). An association was also found between avid adolescent Taiwanese readers and parental literacy support. Female readers indicated an association with father’s education level, mother’s frequency of reading, and the presence of reading materials in the home (specifically Chinese magazines and encyclopedias). Furthermore,
male readers indicated an association with parental literacy support, specifically taking them to bookstores during elementary and junior high years as well as reading with them (Chen & Lu, 2012). Although male and female motivation to read was fostered differently by various home influences, the key is that avid adolescent readers indicated the importance of family influence on their motivation to read.

Parents also positively impact their children’s reading motivation when they read aloud to them (Knoester, 2009; Trelease, 2006). Reading aloud can be reciprocal: Parents can read aloud to their children, and as children get older and develop reading skills, they can read aloud to their parents. Both practices of reading aloud are beneficial for developing and fostering a love for reading and motivation to read (Knoester, 2009). This practice of reading aloud should not stop as children get older, though; parents should still practice reading aloud through students’ middle school years in order to maximize the benefits from it (Knoester, 2009; Trelease, 2006). Reading aloud can also assist readers with comprehension and processing ideas (Benson, 2010). Furthermore, older siblings read to younger siblings and offer reading suggestions, and adolescents’ motivation to read is encouraged as they discuss what they have read within the home (Kamhieh et al., 2011; Knoester, 2009). The home is the child’s first classroom, and parents are the first teachers: As such, home and family influence on reading motivation should not be underestimated nor neglected.

**Social Influence and Reading Motivation**

In addition to family influence and instructional influence, social influence also impacts reading motivation (Chen, 2009; Guthrie et al., 2013; Howard, 2010; Klauda & Wigfield, 2012; Knoester, 2009; Lau, 2009). Associated with achievement, pro-social goals have been identified as affirming motivation. Moreover, a positive correlation was found between students’
dedication to reading and their pro-social goals (Guthrie et al., 2013). Although pro-social goals may refer to students’ desire to follow rules and be cooperative with peers as well as teachers, social motivation may also refer to students’ desire to be accepted by a particular social group (Guthrie et al., 2013; Howard, 2010).

Competition among friends can also motivate students to read (Protacio, 2012). Furthermore, teenagers who are socially motivated to read desire to fit in with a particular social group, recommend reading selections to one another, share their reading choices, and tend to read trendy books. These similar reading experiences aid in solidifying friendships for those who are socially motivated to read (Howard, 2010). Adolescent students often encourage one another to read when they are excited about a certain book or reading material. After having read something of interest or personal significance, students often desire to discuss their readings with peers (Knoester, 2009). In fact, research reveals that in some cases, teenagers would not read if not for the social influence from their friends (Howard, 2010).

When considering the role of gender and social motivation, girls display a higher social motivation for reading than do boys (Howard, 2010; Lau, 2009). However, social motivation to read has been shown to decline for girls over time from the primary grades to upper school while boys’ social motivation remained relatively low throughout school (Lau, 2009). This decline could be a result of students’ general decline in academic and reading motivation as they enter middle and upper grades (Lau, 2009; Paige, 2011; Pecjak & Kosir, 2008). Perhaps this is because the school environment becomes less personal yet more formal, competitive, and evaluative as students reach middle school and high school (Lau, 2009).

Adults also are socially motivated to read (Chen, 2009; Schutte & Malouff, 2007; Summers, 2013). Part of this social motivation is that adults often read for conversational
reasons (Chen, 2009). Furthermore, some adults who read for social reasons tend to read books that have a non-narrative form, such as bestsellers and books on family and health; culture and travel; entertainment and fashion; consumption and investment; and science and technology. In sum, adults who read for social reasons often tend to read non-fiction (Chen, 2009). Regarding gender, however, women have revealed that they read for social engagement more than men do (Summers, 2013). In one particular study, social engagement refers to participation in book clubs, social networking sites (connected with books), and book discussions with friends (Summers, 2013). Regardless of age, individuals may be motivated to read as a result of the social influence around them.

**Gender and Reading Motivation**

A correlation between reading motivation and gender has been shown to exist across cultures (Chen, 2008; Chen & Lu, 2012; Kelley & Decker, 2009; Logan & Johnston, 2009; McGeown, Goodwin, Henderson, & Wright, 2012). Moreover, differences between the genders have been identified regarding reading motivators, self-efficacy and reading, reading preferences, and reading hindrances (Atkinson, 2009; Chen & Lu, 2012; Kelley & Decker, 2009; Logan & Johnston, 2009; McGeown et al., 2012). Furthermore, these differences appear to be present across grades as well as age levels with motivation declining as students get older (Applegate & Applegate, 2011; Chen, 2008; Kelley & Decker, 2009; Lau, 2009). However, it has been suggested that boys’ motives for reading may evolve over time (Bozack, 2011). Further study involving adult readers should be conducted to assess a possible evolution of reading motivation.

When compared to boys, research has indicated that girls tend to have higher reading motivation, higher intrinsic reading motivation, higher social motivation for reading, higher
reading comprehension, higher reading frequency at home, higher frequency of library book check-out, higher reading self-concept, and higher value of reading (Howard, 2010; Kelley & Decker, 2009; Lau, 2009; Logan & Johnston, 2009; McGeown et al., 2012). As such, gender perceptions, the association of intrinsic reading motivation as a feminine attribute, and peer pressure possibly affect reading motivation among students. This association with feminine attributes may also explain why more girls tend to read for pleasure than do boys (Atkinson, 2009; McGeown et al., 2012). These differences lead to further questions regarding the relationship between gender and reading.

Various relationships between gender and reading exist. Girls possess higher intrinsic motivation than boys, which can be attributed to greater efficacy and involvement (McGeown et al., 2012). Findings have revealed, however, that both males and females who engage in thoughtful reading tend to be more motivated to read than those who read for recall (Applegate & Applegate, 2010). Although female middle school students have displayed a slightly higher reading self-concept than males and have indicated having a higher reading value than males as well as reading more frequently at home than males, male and female middle school students have both displayed that self-concept is a slightly higher contributor to their motivation to read than value of reading (Kelley & Decker, 2009).

However, a study involving students in grades two through sixth revealed slightly different findings based on students’ gender and reading ability. When compared to boys, girls who were skilled at text-based comprehension but not higher-order thinking were more motivated to read in terms of overall motivation and value of reading but not self-efficacy. On the other hand, boys and girls who are skilled at both text-based comprehension and higher-order thinking did not indicate a difference in reading motivation (Applegate & Applegate, 2010).
Nonetheless, self-concept and value of reading are associated with reading motivation for both genders (Applegate & Applegate, 2010; Kelley & Decker, 2009). Furthermore, research has indicated that relationships exist between boys’ reading ability and attitude toward reading as well as their reading ability and attitude toward school, but girls did not display similar relationships. Nonetheless, both boys and girls have exhibited a positive correlation between reading ability and reading frequency as well as reading ability and competency beliefs (Logan & Johnston, 2009). Further examination into what motivates young readers and educating parents and teachers may lead to a higher population of readers.

Research suggests that from an early age, boys’ and girls’ reading motivation should be nurtured differently, and this nurturing should continue throughout adolescence (Chen, 2008; Chen & Lu, 2012). A look at adolescent Taiwanese students revealed that female adolescents (in ninth and twelfth grades) are more likely to self-identify as avid readers than their male counterparts (Chen, 2008). Furthermore, a longitudinal study revealed that Taiwanese adolescent males, when compared to females, were more likely to develop into avid readers based on their parents’ interactions with them as opposed to their parents’ own attributes and activities (Chen & Lu, 2012). More specifically, boys need more literacy support from parents than do girls; it is this interactive support (taking them to bookstores, book fairs, shared reading, for example) that is associated with males who developed into avid adolescent readers as opposed to parents’ education level or frequency of reading by themselves. Moreover, this literacy support should continue throughout adolescence. Girls, on the other hand, indicated an association with being an avid reader and father’s education level, mother’s frequency of reading, and the cultural level in the home environment (Chen & Lu, 2012). Despite these differences, however, home environment and parental support both have proven to be influential
regarding the reading motivation of both males and females, not only at young developmental ages but also as they mature into adolescence.

Motivating factors may fluctuate as students reach adolescence. For example, boys who were questioned during a focus group interview stated that providing a variety of reading resources and including student input on reading choices would promote reading motivation. Male adolescents also expressed a greater interest in non-fiction texts as opposed to fiction text (Atkinson, 2009). Therefore, a wider range of genre availability at school could encourage reading. Furthermore, at-home reading is discouraged by conflicting activities, such as athletics. Since it has been suggested that adult influence contributes to student motivation to read, it is important for parents and educators to continue to encourage young people to read throughout their lifetimes (Atkinson, 2009). This is particularly important since boys’ motives for reading may evolve over time (Bozack, 2011).

Research findings have revealed that students often do not associate home reading practices with school reading practices, and therefore may not self-identify as readers or include these types of readings in their definition of “reader” (Atkinson, 2009; Logan & Johnston, 2009). Such home practices may include reading newspapers, magazines, and online reading, for example. Therefore, educators may need to consider expanding their definition of “reader.” Perhaps there are more self-identified readers than educators or readers themselves realize.

**Self-efficacy and Reading Motivation**

Self-efficacy has been linked to motivation. According to Bandura (1995), “Perceived self-efficacy refers to beliefs in one’s capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to manage prospective situations. Efficacy beliefs influence how people think, feel, motivate themselves, and act” (p. 2). Moreover, he asserts that self-efficacy can be influenced
by four main spheres: mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasion, and physiological and emotional states. As such, it is possible that connections among efficacy, reading ability, and reading performance exist. Moreover, much interest exists in the relationship among self-efficacy, motivation, and student performance. If an individual experiences high self-efficacy in reading, for example, it seems he or she will be more motivated to read, which will result in higher reading comprehension and performance than those students with lower self-efficacy.

Results of a study by Anmarkrud and Bråten (2009) involving ninth grade Norwegian students indicated that reading efficacy had “a positive zero-order correlation with comprehension” (p. 255), but contributions were not statistically significant. In this case, efficacy did not prove to be a predictor of comprehension. However, it should be noted that results could have been limited since comprehension was limited to the topic of social studies. In contrast, Solheim (2011) found that the reading efficacy of fifth graders in Norway determined the amount of effort they put into reading activities. Interestingly, reading self-efficacy was shown to be a stronger predictor of student performance on multiple choice questions than listening comprehension for students with low reading self-efficacy as opposed to students with high reading self-efficacy. Moreover, students with high reading self-efficacy performed better on multiple choice and constructed response questions than did students with low reading self-efficacy (Solheim, 2011). However, for female students (grades two through six) skilled in text-based comprehension but not higher-order thinking, overall motivation and value of reading significantly impacted their motivation to read as opposed to self-efficacy, when compared to boys. Equally skilled students did not display a difference, however (Applegate & Applegate, 2010). These findings suggest that reading self-efficacy does serve not only as a
motivator but also as an indicator of reading comprehension and higher level thinking in the context of reading.

Multiple studies indicate positive correlations among reading self-efficacy, motivation, and student performance (Anmarkrud and Bråten, 2009; Applegate & Applegate, 2010; Lau, 2009; Mucherah & Yoder, 2008; Solheim, 2011). These results are not necessarily limited by age or culture. For example, middle school students in Indiana displayed a difference in the role self-efficacy played toward their reading motivation: Eighth graders indicated being more motivated by self-efficacy and challenge, while sixth graders indicated being more motivated by recognition and grades, which are both extrinsic motivators (Mucherah & Yoder, 2008). Furthermore, self-efficacy in reading proved to be a significant predictor of success on the state standardized test followed by the other motivating factors of challenge, aesthetic enjoyment, and social reasons. However, those students who performed most highly on the Indiana state standardized test maintained high self-efficacy, read challenging reading material, and read a variety of reading materials (Mucherah & Yoder, 2008). Likewise, among Chinese students across grade levels (fourth through eleventh grades), reading motivation proved to be influenced by students’ self-efficacy, intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and social motivation (Lau, 2009). It can be said that self-efficacy is a reading motivator across cultures.

Furthermore, self-efficacy in reading impacts not only reading motivation but also students’ approach to study skills. Regarding undergraduate students and study skills, students with high self-efficacy in reading and writing have displayed a positive correlation with the deep and strategic approach to studying as opposed to students with low self-efficacy in reading and writing and this approach to studying (Prat-Sala & Redford, 2010). As such, students with high self-efficacy in reading have a higher possibility of developing a deep and strategic approach to
studying, whereas students with low-efficacy in reading have a higher possibility of developing a surface approach to studying (Prat-Sala & Redford, 2010). Reading self-efficacy has been found to be significant in regards to its impact across educational levels.

**Adult Literacy**

Literacy is a lifelong process that begins at birth and continues throughout one’s lifetime (Benson, 2010). Within those years, educational experience plays a large role on individuals’ literacy. Often, individuals define their own status as readers based on their school reading experiences (Benson, 2010; Bossaller & Budd, 2009; Johnson & Frank, 2013; Kamhieh et al., 2011). As such, understanding adult literacy provides educators with a deeper understanding of how to better shape lower, middle, and upper school curriculum and teaching practices in order to best nurture students toward developing and exercising reading skills and habits for success in life. Adults are able to reflect on their educational reading experiences and assess that impact on their own stance as readers. Current research pertaining to adult literacy examines low literacy adult readers and new adult readers. However, there is a gap in the literature that examines motivating factors among adult readers.

The reading abilities and experiences of children and adolescents have a strong impact on adults’ reading habits and self-perceptions (Benson, 2010; Brenna, 2011; Kamhieh et al., 2011). For example, female Emirati college students who identify themselves as avid readers revealed some common threads related to their reasons for becoming avid readers: parental encouragement, teacher intervention, and peer influence (Kamhieh et al., 2011). Additionally, a student who was an advanced reader and loved reading as a child at the age of six reported a love for reading 20 years later, describing herself as an avid reader (Brenna, 2011). In contrast, one gentleman who struggled with reading comprehension in school continued to label himself as
illiterate throughout adulthood despite accomplishments of obtaining three degrees and teaching college students (Benson, 2010). His reasons stemmed from his self-perceptions of his reading ability in school. As adults mature in their thinking processes, however, they can develop deeper understandings of the means and processes of reading in order to develop as readers themselves.

School literacy experiences do not necessarily align with adult literacy practices in such a way that adults who can read identify themselves as literate (Benson, 2010). It is not only reading, however, that defines literacy. Literate adults are able to comprehend what they read, reflect on it, and utilize higher level processing of the information read and apply it to their lives (Bossaller & Budd, 2009). Low literacy adults and new adult readers need access to effective literacy experiences in order to gain confidence in their reading abilities as well as the skills necessary for comprehending and applying reading material. Literacy also opens many doors for societal participation, which proves important in adulthood.

Adult new readers share common negative past educational experiences; and although they enjoy reading fiction with a group, they expressed feeling uncomfortable with group book discussions. However, new self-construction through literacy nurtured feelings of normalcy and liberation (Bossaller & Budd, 2009). Furthermore, Adult Basic Education students participating in a specialized reading program in Minnesota (the Minnesota Student Achievement in Reading, or STAR, project) indicated an overall increase in improved attitudes and confidence regarding their reading skills; results also indicated improved fluency, spelling, word reading, vocabulary knowledge, and comprehension. Teachers in the program indicated noticing increased student enthusiasm and evidence of student learning as a result of the program (Johnson & Frank, 2013). Purposeful and positive reading experiences can set up new readers for literacy success regardless of age or station in life.
**Adult Reading Preferences and Practices**

In addition to an interest in new adult readers and low literacy readers, research indicates interest in adult reading preferences and practices (Chen, 2009; Jolliffe & Harl, 2008; Summers, 2013). For example, Taiwanese adult readers reported the following reasons for independent reading: knowledge, enjoyment, and social conversation (Chen, 2009). Reading for enjoyment may include reading fiction or non-fiction books of interest (biographies, autobiographies, historical books, and religious or inspirational books, for example). Reading for knowledge has been associated with the reading of “inspiration/religion, consumption/investment, and science/technology books” (Chen, 2009, p. 116). Moreover, reading for social conversation provides motivation to read non-fiction materials (Chen, 2009). These preferences indicate the influence of both internal and external factors on adult reading motivation.

Furthermore, adult reading preferences vary according to gender. Although men were split in their reading preferences for fiction to non-fiction books, a higher number of men (almost double) compared to women indicated a preference for reading non-fiction as well as a preference for books written by male authors (Summers, 2013). On the other hand, when compared to men, women indicated a preference for reading fiction books over non-fiction books. Among women, twice as many women preferred fiction to non-fiction titles and over twice as many women preferred male authors to female authors (Summers, 2013). For both genders, remaining participants did not indicate a difference either way. Also interesting to note is a higher preference for books with male protagonists by both males and females (Summers, 2013). Social engagement in activities, such as book clubs, may be more appealing to women, but reading in relation to social reasons has shown motivating for both genders (Bossaller & Budd, 2009; Summers, 2013). Clearly, topic and purpose provide motivation to read, which can
vary according to gender. In the context of lifelong literacy, these factors should be considered in the context of internal and external reading motivators and in conjunction with child and adolescent literacy as educators and parents look ahead toward the growth of children’s adult literacy.

**Summary**

This chapter has provided an examination of Deci and Ryan’s Self-determination theory as it provides a theoretical framework for this study. Maslow’s Hierarchy of has been discussed as well since it provides a base for Self-determination theory. Also included is a review of the current literature as it pertains to motivation and children’s, adolescent, and adult literacy. Current research spans across cultures, including locations beyond the United States including (but not limited to) Australia, China, Japan, Norway, and the United Arab Emirates (Benson, 2010; Bossaller & Budd, 2009; Brenna, 2011; Chen, 2009; Johnson & Frank, 2013; Kamhieh et al., 2011; Schutte & Malouff, 2007; Solheim, 2011; Summers, 2013). Due to a gap in the literature regarding motivation and adult literacy, however, I expanded my research to a broader scope of adult literacy, including low literacy adult readers, adult new readers, and adult reading preferences and habits (Benson, 2010; Bossaller & Budd, 2009; Brenna, 2011; Chen, 2009; Johnson & Frank, 2013; Kamhieh et al., 2011; Summers, 2013).

Reading as Part of the Self, Reading Efficacy, Reading for Recognition, and Reading to Do Well in Other Realms are all dimensions that have been identified as adult reading motivators based on the recent development of an Adult Reading Motivation Scale (Schutte & Malouff, 2007). These dimensions encompass both internal and external components and provide insight regarding the relationship between reading and Self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Since self-determination theory proposes an interaction between internal and external factors on
individuals’ motivation, it provides a pertinent framework to the purpose of this study in assessing the role of internal and external motivating factors on young adults’ reading experiences. This study has served to examine those motivating factors that influence the reading experiences of the adult reader.
CHAPTER THREE: METHOD

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to describe the factors that influence young adults’ (aged 18 to 24) reading experiences, reading habits and behavior, and their desire to read. This chapter describes the research design chosen and the rationale behind its selection. A description of the researcher’s role is provided. Also discussed include the setting and participants of the study. Furthermore, a description of data collection methods, interview questions, and data analysis is included. The individual interview questions and focus group interview questions have been grounded in the literature with an explanation of their purpose in order to validate them. Finally, the development of trustworthiness and ethical considerations is provided.

Design

This study followed a phenomenological research design. Phenomenology aims to understand an identified phenomenon of interest as experienced by a group of individuals (Creswell, 2013). Furthermore, it aims “to determine what an experience means for the persons who have had” it (Moustakas, 1984, p. 13). Because this study sought to describe the phenomenon of common experiences among young adults (between the ages of 18 and 24) regarding the factors that influence young adults’ reading experiences and the influence of those factors on their reading habits and behaviors as well as their intrinsic desire to read, it fits the goal of phenomenological research (Creswell, 2013). More specifically this study is a transcendental phenomenological study because I first bracketed out my own reading experience, both personal and professional (Moustakas, 1984; van Manen, 2013). Next, I collected data from individuals who are within the same age range (18 to 24). Then, I analyzed the data in order to identify horizontalized statements (Moustakas, 1984). Those horizontalized statements were listed
according to meaning, and the meaning statements were clustered into common themes (Moustakas, 1984). Finally, these themes were used to develop descriptions of the experience under study and ultimately to “convey an overall essence of the experience” (Creswell, 2013, p. 80; Moustakas, 1984).

**Research Questions**

Following are the research questions that guided this research study:

- How do young adults between the ages of 18 and 24 describe the factors that influence their reading experiences?
- How do participants describe the effect of factors on their reading habits and behavior?
- How do participants describe the effect of factors on their personal desire to read?

**Setting**

The setting for this study was a suburban county in Southwest Tennessee. Comprised of seven cities, this county had an estimated population of 940,764 people in 2012 (US Census Bureau). The setting, however, was a secondary factor. My county of residence is home to a large commuter-college as well as 14 other universities and colleges; its location and size make it commuter-friendly for individuals living in bordering counties (including two other states) seeking advanced degrees. Although the setting was a secondary factor in my research, the search for participants in my own county of residence yielded 12 individuals who participated in this study. Local interviews took place at neutral locations, such as a coffee house, restaurants, a library, and near a local University. One individual interview as well as the focus group interview took place at the researcher’s home. Participants either chose a location or agreed to a suggested location when asked for one.
Participants

Participants for this study included young adults between the ages of 19 and 23. I chose to seek individuals between the ages of 18 and 24 in an effort to align my research with the Survey of Public Participation in the Arts (2012). However, I was able to recruit participants who represented each age with the exception of finding an 18-year-old or a 24-year-old. Due to a plethora of research pertaining to adolescent literacy in the last 10 years, adult participants provided fresh findings in the area of reading motivation as it pertains to young adults. This age group also offered a certain level of maturity and experience that the adolescent population does not offer. Upon completion of my data collection, I realized that participants between the ages of 21 and 23 offered a more mature view than those one and two years younger. Regarding sample size, van Manen (2014) argues against seeking a specific number of participants and instead asserts that since phenomenological research seeks out singular themes, then “The researcher keeps collecting data until the analysis no longer reveals anything new or different about the group” (p. 353). Nonetheless, the target sample size was 10 to 15 participants or once data saturation had been reached. According to van Manen (2014), “Data saturation presumes that the researcher is looking for what is characteristic or the same about a social group of people” (p. 353). This study reached saturation of data with 12 participants once no new ideas emerged.

Purposeful sampling was my primary method for identifying participants (Creswell, 2013). Convenience sampling through the use of phone calls, emails, and social media was utilized in an effort to identify participants. Social media proved to be an effective method for communicating my study to others as well as recruiting some of my participants. In some cases, I was able to reach out to individuals via private messages through social media. Once I had identified my first participants, I then utilized snowball sampling in order to identify
“information-rich” participants. Also known as chain sampling, snowball sampling occurs when current participants refer or recruit new participants (Creswell, 2013). I also reached out to local community colleges and libraries in an effort to recruit participants. One library employee was willing to participate herself.

Regarding compensation, when meeting at a local coffee shop or restaurant for individual interviews, I offered to buy participants a drink, snack, or small meal. Furthermore, participants’ names were placed in a drawing for a $25 gift card to various restaurants or retailers in the surrounding area. I originally planned to draw four names; however, since I only had five participants attend the focus group, I also included one consolation prize. Winners were provided a list from which to choose the gift card they preferred and an envelope to address so that I could mail gift cards to participants. After the focus group, I ordered the gift cards and mailed them to the winners. I contacted each participant to inform him or her that the gift card was in the mail.

Table 1

Participant Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>Level of Education</th>
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<td>Female</td>
<td>African American</td>
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<tr>
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Procedures

After submitting my application to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) and while awaiting approval, I conducted two pilot interviews with a 20-year-old male. The first interview included questions I planned to ask during individual interviews, and the second interview included the questions I planned to ask during my focus group interview. Each pilot interview was audio recorded but not transcribed. After each interview, the volunteer and I discussed the quality, effectiveness, and wording of the questions. I was able to reword some questions for clarity. Although some questions seemed to be redundant, I did not remove any questions due to the design of the questions embedded in the literature. Prior to conducting research, approval was gained from the IRB.

Upon approval from IRB (see Appendix A), I began my search for potential participants. In addition to purposeful sampling, convenience sampling, and snowball sampling, I contacted local colleges and libraries regarding permission to recruit participants. I explained to participants the purpose of my research and provided them with a consent form (see Appendix B) and a copy of the Adult Motivation for Reading Scale (see Appendix C). (See Appendix D for permission to reproduce the Adult Motivation for Reading Scale.) However, I also set up a website that contained a copy of my consent form and Adult Motivation for Reading Scale in an effort to reach participants. This way, participants could complete the consent form and reading scale online if they preferred. This was helpful as I attempted to reach participants via social media and phone calls or text messages. They could visit the website for more information about the study. I also made business cards with my contact information, the website, and a brief description of my study. During recruitment, I could hand out these cards, which was more convenient at times than distributing multiples paper copies. I also shared cards with participants
to share with friends whom they thought would make good potential participants for my study. Participants filled out the IRB Consent Form as well as the Adult Motivation for Reading Scale; some participants utilized the website while others filled out the consent form and completed the scale using paper and pen.

Once agreeing to participate and signing the IRB consent form, each participant then completed the Adult Reading Motivation Scale (Schutte & Malouff, 2007), for which I received permission to use prior to recruitment (see Appendix E). In some cases, I directed participants to the website I created with a link to the Adult Reading Motivation Scale (adultreadingsurvey.weebly.com), but some participants filled out the scale in person prior to the individual interview. Upon receipt of the scale, I input results from the Adult Reading Motivation Scale in an Excel spreadsheet for analysis. I created a spreadsheet that calculates and ranks participants’ motivation, which provided me with insight regarding which factors motivate participants to read. This allowed me to assess overall reading motivation as well as general categories of reading motivation in order to help ensure a variety of reading motivations among participants as well as compare scale responses to interview responses. Furthermore, I was able to reach participant variation regarding gender, race, ethnicity, age, level of education, and type of education (home school, private, and public).

The decision of whether or not to complete the scale online or in person was left up to each participant. After calculating reading motivation scores of those participants who completed the scale via my online link, I scheduled individual, face-to-face, semi-structured interviews with participants. Five participants completed the scale online. For the seven participants who preferred not to complete the scale online, I went ahead and scheduled interviews; participants completed the scale in person before the interview began.
Every individual interview was audio recorded. Following each interview, I transcribed them. Saldaña (2013) indicates that “Preparing data for coding gives you a bit more familiarity with the contents and initiates a few basic analytic processes” (p. 17). Personally, typing my own transcriptions provided me with the opportunity to begin those first analytic processes during the transcription process. I created a folder for each participant. In each folder I placed their signed consent form, completed Adult Motivation for Reading Scale, and interview transcription.

Upon analysis and once I reached data saturation after my twelfth individual interview, I contacted the same participants in order to schedule a focus group that would take place face-to-face. I first suggested two days for a focus group to take place; it became clear from the first responses I received that one day was preferred. With those participants who could not attend either of those times, I suggested a third time, which did not work out either. Due to these responses and the lack thereof, I scheduled one focus group with the five participants who could attend. I also audio recorded the focus group and then transcribed it as well. Recordings and transcriptions of all interviews are securely locked in a safe in my home.

**Researcher’s Role**

Reading serves as both a basic life skill and a pleasing pastime for many individuals. Sometimes individuals are motivated to read simply because of an internal drive; sometimes individuals are motivated to read because of external factors; and sometimes individuals are motivated to read due to a combination of both factors. Personally, I would classify myself as a self-motivated reader and as motivated to read due to both internal and external factors. In my early years, however, I would read for pure enjoyment. The external factors of performance and
learning became a bigger factor as I advanced through junior high and high school and into college.

When I became a Language Arts teacher, many of my reading choices were out of necessity due to classroom curriculum or faculty reading, while other reading choices pertained to curriculum or classroom practices. And later, when I began working on my doctorate, my reading choices were shaped by my goal to obtain that degree. As a new mother, I refocused my desire to read and reading choices yet again, which are still constantly changing. As far as pleasure reading, the list of fiction books I desire to read continues to grow as the demands on my life fluctuate. However, as a new mother, my spark of reading for pleasure has been revived as I read to my son and hope to instill a love of reading in him.

I hold a Bachelor of Science degree in Human Development and Learning with a minor in Sociology, a Master in Education, an Education Specialist in Curriculum and Instruction, and a reading specialist endorsement. I taught middle school Language Arts for 11 years; my teaching experience includes sixth, seventh, and eighth grades. It was actually my teaching experiences with struggling readers that sparked my desire to obtain a reading specialist endorsement and shaped my research plan. Teaching a variety of readers combined with my exposure to the topic spurred my interest to discover what factors have influenced and continue to influence the reading experiences of young adults after leaving the structured setting of middle and high school. I interviewed adult participants due to a gap in the literature as well as their experience that provided reliable, rich data for this study.

Undoubtedly, my professional experience greatly shaped how I viewed participants’ experiences as well as my analysis of the data I collected. However, bracketing helped me to begin by setting aside these biases as I listed my assumptions. I believe this helped me to
compare my initial assumptions with my response to the data so that I better analyzed the data
without the risk of having my assumptions dictate my findings. For example, I expected that
participants with a strong desire to read probably had positive reading experiences stemming
from childhood. On the other hand, participants without a strong desire to read might not have
witnessed or experienced much reading or being read to as a child. Furthermore, I assumed that
participants with minimal desire to read perhaps felt forced to read material they did not like
throughout adolescence, which perhaps squelched the desire to read. However, many of these
assumptions were based on statistical data and professional experience. Hearing the stories of
participants as they described their experiences did corroborate some of these assumptions;
however, some of their stories did not quite align with them either. For example, a couple of
participants indicated that they did not enjoy being read to as children, but they have always
enjoyed reading. Another participant who was read to as a child does not enjoy reading now.
This is a reminder that each individual is different, and parents and educators must take that into
account when reaching children.

Since I conducted a phenomenological study, I interviewed participants using open-ended
questions I developed myself (Moustakas, 1994). Interviews were also semi-structured.
Although I did a great deal of listening, I also provided clarification or prompted conversations
further as necessary. Since interviews were semi-structured, I asked participants further
questions about their own particular experiences during the interviews. If participants did not
have much information to share on a particular question, I presented related questions in line
with previous research or my own teaching experiences for the sake of sparking conversation or
participant memories. For example, if a participant had difficulty recalling reading experiences
from childhood or adolescence, I asked about Accelerated Reader: Do you recall participating in
Accelerated Reader in elementary school? What did you think about the program? Did the incentives encourage you to read? This semi-structured approach with open-ended questions helped to encourage specific responses and to ignite memories from participants as they shared their reading experiences.

**Data Collection**

Triangulation of data is critical in qualitative research in order to establish validity and credibility of findings and interpretations (Creswell, 2013; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Because triangulation improves “the probability that findings and interpretations will be found credible” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 305), it is necessary to triangulate data collection methods. Therefore, three methods of data collection were used in this study. In order to help me identify the reading motivations of participants, I first used a reading motivation scale: the Adult Reading Motivation Scale developed by Schutte and Malouff (2007). This scale not only provided a general picture of the overall reading motivations of each participant, but it also provided me a tool for verifying and comparing participants’ responses that were provided during the individual interviews.

Although I began my research with the Adult Reading Motivation Scale, individual and focus group interviews served as the primary method of data collection (Moustakas, 1984). I recorded each interview, took field notes, and transcribed each interview. I transcribed the interviews myself. I conducted a focus group interview once saturation of data was met from the individual interviews. Due to the availability of the participants after having suggested three separate days to meet, I scheduled one focus group with five participants. Krueger and Casey (2009) indicate that “focus groups are typically composed of 5 to 10 people” (p. 6). As it turned out, the participants in the focus group offered a good mix of genders, ethnicities, educational
backgrounds, and reading interests. The focus group allowed participants to reflect on the initial individual interview and provided further insight or answers that they arrived at upon reflection of the individual interview. It also offered an interactive environment and the opportunity to collaborate with peers who might further their own thought processes and reflections on the topic (Kruger & Casey, 2009). As anticipated, responses provided during the focus group further confirmed data that was collected during the individual interviews.

**Adult Motivation for Reading Scale**

The initial method of data collection was a reading scale. I used the Adult Motivation for Reading Scale developed and validated by Schutte and Malouff in 2005 and published in 2007. I contacted Nicola Schutte for permission to use the scale during development of my proposal, and she granted permission for me to use it for my study (see Appendix E). The Adult Motivation for Reading Scale accounts for four factors of reading motivation of adults: Reading as Part of the Self, Reading Efficacy, Reading for Recognition, and Reading to Do Well in Other Realms (2007). “An internal consistency analysis of the 21 items comprising the total reading motivation scale found a Cronbach’s alpha of .85” (Schutte & Malouff, 2007, p. 479). Currently, this is the only scale available to assess reading motivation among adults.

I created a Google Docs document using the Adult Motivation for Reading Scale. I carefully typed the statements word-for-word and took measures to ensure that my re-creation of the scale in digital form reflected the questions exactly. I was then able to link the document to my social media account, where I asked friends and family to complete the scale in an effort to help me work out any issues with the Google document as well as provide me the opportunity to practice analyzing results of the scale. This proved very beneficial as I was able to edit and revise the document as well as practice transferring the information from Google Docs into my
Excel spreadsheet for analysis. I also realized that in order to reach a broader range of potential participants, I would need to link the scale to a separate website. On this website I also provided a description of my study and its purpose and later uploaded my consent form (after receiving IRB approval) as well. The use of Google Docs and the website provided me the opportunity to offer potential participants convenient access to familiarize themselves with my study, agree to the study, and complete the reading scale. Five participants utilized the website to complete the reading scale. The other seven participants communicated a preference to complete the scale in person. Participants were allowed to complete the scale according to their preference; however, all participants were required to sign a hard copy of the consent form whether or not they agreed to it online.

**Individual Interviews**

Semi-structured interviews (individual and focus group) served as the primary method of data collection. Semi-structured, individual interviews took place at neutral, mutually agreed upon locations (I suggested a restaurant, coffee shop, or local library) between the researcher and the participants and lasted on average around 30 minutes; the shortest interview lasted a little over 15 minutes and the longest interview lasted almost an hour. Length of interviews depended on how the conversation flowed and on how much information the participants wanted to share. As indicated by Moustakas (1984), it is the long interview that is the typical method used in phenomenological research to collect data. Furthermore, the one-on-one interviews provided participants the opportunity to answer questions about their personal reading experiences without potentially being swayed by other participants’ opinions or comments (Creswell, 2013; Krueger & Casey, 2009).
Each interview began with ice-breakers and social conversation in order to create a relaxed atmosphere and climate in which the “participant [felt] comfortable and [responded] honestly and comprehensively” (Moustakas, 1984, p. 114). I began by asking them to tell me about themselves: Did you grow up here? Where did you go to school? Are you currently in school? Where? Have you declared a major? I also shared some personal information about myself in an effort to create a comfortable environment and prevent my looking like an authority figure. However, I did avoid sharing my experiences in relation to the study in order to avoid minimizing “the bracketing that is essential to construct the meaning of participants in a phenomenology” (Creswell, 2013, p. 175). Then, I began asking my interview questions. Question one also served as an icebreaker question to help bridge and focus the interview. However, it also proved beneficial in helping me better understand participants early in the interview process. During the interviews, I took brief field notes. With permission from each participant, each interview was audiotaped and transcribed. I transcribed the interviews myself. Field notes and transcriptions are securely locked in a safe in my home, to which only my husband and I know the combination.

Table 2

Open-ended Interview Questions

1. How would you describe yourself as a reader?

2. What are your reading habits? (for example, reading before bed, reading more than one book at a time, reading to help you accomplish a task or goal)

3. What types of materials do you read? (for example, magazines, religious material, novels, fiction, online material)
4. Describe your reading experiences as a child. Which people, places, and stories significantly impacted those experiences? (for example, parents, grandparents, a caretaker or babysitter, older siblings, bedtime stories, trips to the library or book store, going to reading time) How did they make you feel about reading?

5. Describe your reading experiences as a teenager (during middle school and high school). Who and what impacted those experiences? (For example, teachers, school assignments, book clubs, Bible studies) How did they make you feel about reading?

6. Describe your reading experiences after high school. Who (authority figures and peers, for example) and what have significantly impacted those reading experiences?

7. Would you describe your motivation to read as internal, external, or both? Explain.

8. What are the factors that currently influence your motivation to read?

9. How have the influences on your reading experiences affected your reading habits and behavior?

10. How have the influences on your reading experiences affected your desire to read?

Question one sought to understand what type of reader the participant is and how he or she views himself or herself as a reader. The purpose of this question was to guide the participant toward self-reflection in order to prepare him/her for the remaining interview questions. Furthermore, question two sought to understand participants’ reading habits, while question three sought to understand what types of materials the participants’ read, which both help to shape and to define what kind of reader the individual is. As participants reflected on their reading habits and behaviors and their desire to read as well as what type of reader they consider themselves, they were prompted to realize the factors that motivate them to read as well as which experiences have shaped the readers they have become. With these questions
answered, I was able to achieve the over-arching goal, which was, of course, to answer the three research questions of this study.

The foundational aim of phenomenology framed questions four through six, which sought to understand the participants’ reading experiences (Creswell, 2013; Moustakas, 1994). According to Moustakas (1994), the aim of phenomenology “is to determine what an experience means for the persons who have had the experience and are able to provide a comprehensive description of it” (p. 13). Since participants were between the ages of 19 and 23, I developed three questions in order to separate their reading experiences into different life stages: childhood (question four), adolescence (question five), and post high school (question six). Furthermore, current research on reading motivation has revealed that various life experiences greatly impact individuals’ reading habits and behavior and motivation to read, including the family and home, friends, society, teachers, and classroom instruction (Atkinson, 2009; Chen, 2008; Chen, 2009; Chen & Lu, 2012; Chiu & Chow, 2010; Fisher & Frey, 2012; Guthrie et al., 2013; Howard, 2010; Klauda & Wigfield, 2012; Knoester, 2009; Lapp & Fisher, 2009; Larson, 2009; Lau, 2009; Law, 2008; McElvain, 2010; McGaha & Igo, 2012; McTague & Abrams, 2011; Pilgreen, 2000; Protacio, 2012; Schutte & Malouff, 2007; Siah & Kwok, 2010; Summers, 2013; Whittingham & Huffman, 2009; Wright et al., 2013). Therefore, it was paramount to examine participants’ reading motivation in light of their reading experiences.

Question seven transitioned the interview questions from a focus on reading experiences to those factors that influence their reading motivation. Specifically, question seven directly asked the participant to describe his or her reading motivations as internal, external, or both. Although research has revealed an overall and long-term negative impact of external factors on individuals’ internal desire to read, these questions presented and analyzed through the lens of a
phenomenological design revealed a slightly greater depth of impact that external factors can have on one’s reading motivation (Chen & Wu, 2010; Corpus et al., 2009; Hayenga & Corpus, 2010; Lau, 2009; Law, 2008; Marinak & Gambrell, 2008; Pecjak & Kosir, 2008; Schaffner et al., 2013; Schiefele et al., 2012). Specifically, questions eight, nine, and ten asked participants to consider those factors that have influenced their motivation to read, reading habits and behavior, and desire to read. By provoking the participant to consider and to explain his or her motivations for reading, I was able to better understand if participants are motivated to read intrinsically, extrinsically, or both and how those factors have influenced their reading habits and behavior and desire to read (Deci et al., 1991; Schiefele et al., 2012).

**Focus Group Interview**

Focus group interviews provide participants with an opportunity for interaction, which can yield rich information (Creswell, 2013; Krueger & Casey, 2009). Once saturation was met from 12 semi-structured interviews and redundancy occurred, I began contacting participants to schedule a focus group interview. I first suggested two days and times to meet. Once I had enough participants who could meet on one day, I began scheduling a focus group. I then suggested a third time to meet with those participants who could not attend either of the first two days, but those participants were not available to meet on that day either. Based on the availability of the participants, I scheduled one focus group with five participants in attendance. Although I had hoped to have at least eight participants present (if not all), with the option of scheduling two separate focus groups, participants’ schedules did not allow for this. Since Krueger and Casey (2009) indicate that “the ideal size of a focus group for most noncommercial products is five to eight participants” (p. 67), I was comfortable with that number. I was also pleased with the dynamics represented in the focus group: There were a variety of genders,
ethnicities, educational backgrounds, and reading experiences and interests represented. Results from the focus group further confirmed the findings from the individual interviews.

Table 3

Focus Group Interview Questions

1. What does reading offer in your everyday life?

2. What does reading offer to achieve your long-term goals?

3. What social or societal factors have influenced your reading experiences? (social media, movies, family, friends or peers, mentors, church, or politics, for example)

4. What influence has school or work had on your reading experiences? (This may include assigned or unassigned reading).

5. How have external factors (family, friends, social media, school, work, a movie you liked that was based on a book) influenced your desire to read?

6. Can you recall an instance when you read something because of an external factor/extrinsic motivation (school, a project, for example) and the result was that you were motivated to read other materials (related or not related to that particular reading material)? If so, please describe.

7. What factors have had the greatest impact on your reading experiences?

8. What factors hinder your reading experiences?

9. Have we left out anything?

Although the focus group questions served to answer all three research questions posed in this study, the common theme of external factors is present. Questions one and two began an examination of the role reading plays in participants’ lives. Questions three and four emphasize
the role of external factors on reading behavior while questions five and six explore the role of
external factors on the desire to read. These questions also were framed by the results that led to
the development of Schutte and Malouff’s Adult Reading Motivation Scale (2007). The results
of their research led to the identification of four areas of reading motivation among adults:
reading as part of the self, reading avoidance versus reading efficacy, reading for recognition,
and reading to do well in other realms (Schutte & Malouff, 2007). Since I
first means of data collection, it was important to tie in my interview questions with the scale.

Question one served both as an icebreaker question as well as a starter question to begin
the interview. The goal was to prompt participants to consider the role reading plays in their
lives, which began to reveal those factors that influence their reading experiences (Chen, 2009;
Schutte & Malouff, 2007). Then, question two transitioned participants from thinking generally
about the role reading plays in their lives to considering specifically how reading aids in their
achievement of long-term goals (Chen, 2009; Schutte & Malouff, 2007). This question also
encouraged the participants to consider the specific factors that influence their reading
motivation as well as how much reading may actually influence their daily lives.

Question three served to examine the role that societal factors play on participants’
reading experiences. Research affirms that pro-social goals influence individuals’ reading
experiences (Guthrie et al., 2013; Howard, 2010). Competition as well as the desire to belong to
and connect with social groups encourages individuals toward reading (Guthrie et al., 2013;
Howard, 2010; Protacio, 2012). Furthermore, pro-social goals include the need to discuss
readings with peers as they relate to personal challenges and victories (Knoester, 2009). As
such, social engagement and conversational reasons are factors than often motivate adults to read
(Chen, 2009; Summers, 2013). Considering the role of society on their reading experiences
began a more specific examination of the external and internal factors that motivate participants to read. It is in this realm that Ryan and Deci’s Self-determination theory begins to be revealed and perhaps realized: One may read to please others or to perform well in school or at work, but the individual ultimately makes the decision to do so. Therefore, question four examined the influence of school and work on participants’ reading experiences. Schutte and Malouff (2007) identified “reading for recognition” and “reading to do well in other realms” as two of four motivating categories among adults; this includes areas related to school and work with goals of acknowledgement from others and achievement in other realms.

Next, question five transitioned from a closer examination of the outside influences on reading experiences to the connection those external factors may have had with participants’ desire to read. Considering the existing research that reveals a negative impact of extrinsic motivation on intrinsic motivation, I designed this question to further examine this finding (Law, 2008; Schaffner et al., 2013; Schiefele et al., 2012). Despite the numerous quantitative studies conducted on the topic, this qualitative study sought to hear from young adults who were able to reflect on their own experiences and offer a new voice on an old debate. Similarly, question six was designed to determine participants’ experiences that involved the desire to read being sparked by an external factor.

The purpose of questions seven and eight was to answer my guiding research question, which sought to describe the factors that influence young adults’ reading experiences. Since influencing factors can either encourage or discourage reading experiences, these questions serve to explore each of those factors (Mokhtari et al., 2009). Finally, question nine served as a concluding question. Participants were offered the opportunity to share any final thoughts before the focus group ended.
Data Analysis

Data analysis in phenomenology involves the epoché, the reduction, and the synthesis (Moustakas, 1984). Epoché is also referred to as bracketing and refers to “putting into brackets the various assumptions that might stand in the way from opening up access to . . . the living meaning of an experience” (Moustakas, 1984; van Manen, 2014, p. 215). Reduction includes horizontalization, which leads to textural and structural descriptions of the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1984). Finally, the synthesis of textural and structural descriptions leads to a description of participants’ experience. I followed these steps as I analyzed the data collected for my study. Let it also be noted that no data analysis software was utilized in this study. In reference to the use of computer programs for theme analysis, van Manen (2014) cautions that “analyzing” thematic meanings of a phenomenon (a lived experience) is a complex and creative process of insightful invention, discovery, and disclosure. Grasping and formulating a thematic understanding is not a rule-bound process but a free act of “seeing” meaning that is driven by the epoché and the reduction. (p. 320)

Bracketing

First, I bracketed out my own experience, also called the epoché (van Manen, 2014). Van Manen (2014) defines bracketing as “parenthesizing, putting into brackets the various assumptions that might stand in the way from opening up access to the . . . living meaning of a phenomenon” (p. 215). Furthermore, Moustakas (1994) states that it is through the epoché that “we set aside our prejudgments, biases, and preconceived ideas about things” (p. 85), and he explains the importance of differentiating one’s knowledge gained through a scientific base and that which is the everyday attitude. The challenge was setting aside my knowledge gained
through the examination of previous research and viewing each participant’s experience with a fresh mind.

Through journaling, I described my own experiences with reading and listed any presuppositions I had regarding reading so that I could focus on the experiences of my participants (Moustakas, 1994; van Manen, 1985). This included journaling about professional experience and knowledge gained as a reading teacher as well as my personal reading experiences. These steps included completing the Adult Reading Motivation Scale myself as well as responding to both my interview questions and focus group questions on paper. Significant to the epoché was considering every quality to have equal value (Moustakas, 1984).

**Horizontalization**

Horizontalization is a critical aspect of data analysis in phenomenology. This is the process of reflecting on the data and identifying significant statements. First of all, in order to organize my data, I created a folder for each participant to hold his or her signed consent form, Adult Motivation for Reading Scale, and transcribed interview. My first step in data analysis was to input participants’ responses on the Adult Reading Motivation Scale into Excel for calculations and record totals for each dimension on each participant’s completed scale. This took place either prior to or after each interview, depending on when each participant chose to complete the Adult Reading Motivation Scale. For participants who completed the scale via the online link, I recorded scores prior to the individual interview. For participants who completed the scale in person at the beginning of the interview, I recorded their scores after the interview.

After each interview, I transcribed them myself, which allowed me to begin the “basic analytic process” (Saldaña, 2013, p. 17). According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), “Data analysis must begin with the very first data collection” (p. 242). As such, data analysis started with the
first completed Adult Motivation for Reading Scale and continued throughout the entire data collection process until the final transcription of the focus group interview. Furthermore, Saldaña (2013) encourages the following for researchers interviewing multiple participants:

. . . it may help to code one participant’s data first, then progress to the second participant’s data. You might find that the second data set will influence and affect your recording of the first participant’s data, and the consequent coding of the remaining participants’ data. (p. 22)

I found this to be the case as I analyzed each successive interview. As I transcribed each interview, I made notes on post-it notes regarding words, phrases, or descriptions that I thought might be significant. I then placed those post-it notes on the appropriate folder.

Next, I read through transcriptions from the interviews to identify significant statements (Moustakas, 1994; van Manen, 2014). Saldaña (2013) encourages the use of pre-coding, or “circling, highlighting, bolding, underlining, or coloring rich or significant participant quotes or passages that strike you” (p. 19). Personally, I found this method to be extremely helpful in becoming familiar with significant information shared by participants as I culled through their interviews for significant statements. I used notes I took during the transcription process as a reference point during data analysis. As I read through transcripts, I utilized In Vivo coding, which Saldaña (2013) explains as “a word or short phrase from the actual language found in the qualitative record” (p. 91). This method was particularly helpful to me as a beginning researcher. According to Saldaña (2013), In Vivo coding is particularly appropriate “for beginning qualitative researchers learning how to code data” (p. 91).

Being a visual person, I also used highlighters for color coding as I read through the interview transcripts. This made it easier for me to find detailed quotes containing significant
statements as I read through the transcripts. I also made notes in the margins of the transcripts. It was helpful for me to write significant statements on post-it notes and place those post-it notes on the front of that participant’s folder. Throughout the analysis process, I read through the transcripts and my notes, which helped me to compile a list of significant statements. I read through transcripts following their compilation and in between interviews. Once saturation of data was met, I read through each transcript again. During the focus group interview, it was apparent that participants’ stories and discussions further corroborated my findings from the individual interviews. Following the focus group, I transcribed that interview and followed the same method of analysis.

Moustakas (1984) explains that the importance of horizontalization lies in considering each statement (or horizon) as equally significant and equally valuable to the topic and question. I compiled a list of significant statements in order to identify and delete overlapping statements (Moustakas, 1984). Personally, I did not choose to utilize any data analysis software in fear that I would be too focused on the software rather than the data. Saldaña (2013) states, “There is something about manipulating qualitative data on paper and writing codes in pencil that give you more control over and ownership of the work” (p. 26). Choosing not to use software but rather to code the data myself did provide me with a sense of control and ownership to which Saldaña refers. Once again, the practice of triangulation due to multiple sources aided in building validity, which is critically important (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Moustakas, 1994).

Themes

As I explored themes for this study, I also employed van Manen’s (2014) methods of treating the transcripts “as sources of meaning at the level of the whole story; at the level of the separate paragraph; and at the level of the sentence, phrase, expression, or single word” (p. 320).
After I identified significant statements, I then established patterns as I categorized the data and identified similarities in participants’ answers from the significant statements. This process allowed me to delimit horizons and identify themes (Moustakas, 1994; van Manen, 2014). Through my interpretation of these significant statements, I clustered “these meanings into a series of organized themes” (Saldaña, 2013, p. 176). As themes started to emerge, I continued to read through the transcriptions to further verify my analysis and to elaborate “on the themes through rich written descriptions” (Saldaña, 2013, p. 176). This led me to identify themes and sub-themes (Moustakas, 1984). Saldaña (2013) states,

> When you search for patterns in coded data to categorize them, understand that sometimes you may group things together not just because they are exactly alike or very much alike, but because they might also have something in common – even if, paradoxically, that commonality exists of differences. (p. 6)

I found this pattern to occur as I organized themes and sub-themes. For example, participants’ descriptions of factors influencing their reading habits and desire to read were often intertwined, reflecting the role that external and internal motivating factors can have on one another. For example, although personal growth was often stated as a reason for reading, the role of other people often was present as well, such as in the form of friends or mentors who suggest reading material or hold an individual accountable in their reading.

Finally, as I struggled to form the themes into words, I developed phrases, in line with Saldaña’s (2013) explanation of a theme as “an extended phrase or sentence that identifies what a unit of data is about and/or what it means” (p. 175). Since I conducted a transcendental phenomenological study, I chose to identify themes at the manifest level, which he defines as “directly observable in the information,” as opposed to the latent level, which he defines as
“underlying the phenomenon” (Saldaña, 2013, p. 175). Since this study was transcendental, identifying themes as the latent level was appropriate.

**Textural and Structural Descriptions**

After I identified themes, I then developed textural descriptions using the significant statements and quotes to describe what the participants experienced (Moustakas, 1994; van Manen, 2014). The use of quotes proved fundamental in allowing the voices of the participants to be heard. These are their stories to tell; I simply worked to find those commonalities among their stories (Saldaña, 2013). Structural descriptions followed as I used the significant statements and themes to describe how the participants experienced reading motivation (Moustakas, 1994). In sum, textural descriptions focus on the what, and structural descriptions focus on the how (Moustakas, 1994).

**The Essence**

Finally, I described the essence of the participants’ experience (Moustakas, 1994). The essence refers to what is common or universal for participants sharing the experience (Moustakas, 1984). Essential to the description of the essence is to integrate the “textural and structural descriptions into a unified statement” (Moustakas, 1984, p. 100). The essence identified what participants shared regarding their reading experiences and the influential factors on those experiences.

**Trustworthiness**

Lincoln and Guba (1985) explain trustworthiness as that factor which grants value to a research study and evokes attention from readers. They identify four elements for establishing trustworthiness in qualitative studies: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. In addition to identifying these four elements, Lincoln and Guba (1985) have
also offered criteria for establishing each of these elements. Here I explain each of these factors of trustworthiness as well as how I met the criteria for establishing trustworthiness in my study.

**Credibility**

Credibility refers to how accurately reality is described, which is important for establishing truth value (Guba, 1981; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In order to establish credibility, I utilized triangulation of data, peer review, and member checks (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Triangulation of data was critical for building credibility of interpretations and findings in this phenomenological study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Therefore, I used three forms of data collection: the Adult Reading Motivation Scale, individual interviews, and a focus group interview.

Also, the use of peer review (peer debriefing) is important and useful in building credibility as the debriefing served to keep me honest (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). With peer review, a peer de-briefer questions the researcher regarding methods, meanings, and interpretations (Creswell, 2013; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Since this is research conducted for the purpose of obtaining a doctoral degree, I have worked under the guidance of a dissertation committee consisting of a chairperson, two other committee members who serve as readers, and a research consultant. They have provided peer review as this study has undergone multiple revisions.

Through member checking, I offered participants the opportunity to either read a copy of the transcript of their interviews or a copy of chapter four in which they are quoted. In some cases, I received verification from participants regarding my explanation of and use of quotes from transcripts. I also shared the emerging themes with participants and requested any feedback or questions they had regarding my findings. Throughout the interview process itself, I
sought clarification of certain reading experiences in an effort to accurately portray participants’ stories. These practices have provided credibility of findings as participants were encouraged to scrutinize the construction of my report, providing confirmation unless corrections, amendments, or extensions were needed (Creswell, 2013; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). No corrections, amendments, or extensions were provided by the participants.

**Dependability**

Likened to reliability, dependability is associated with consistency and stability (Guba, 1981). The importance of dependability lies in its relationship with consistency (Guba, 1981; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Triangulation of data has served to establish dependability as well as credibility. Again, the use of the Adult Reading Motivation Scale, individual interviews, and the focus group interview served for triangulation of data. Guba (1981) emphasizes the importance of overlapping methods for also strengthening stability, so I utilized both individual interviews and a focus group interview. During the focus group interview and upon transcription and analysis, it was clear that information shared during the focus group further corroborated information shared during the individual interviews. Furthermore, an audit trail of interview recordings, transcriptions, and data analysis notes (handwritten as well as in an Excel spreadsheet) also aided with establishing dependability (Guba, 1981).

**Transferability**

Transferability refers to the extent to which the reader can transfer the information provided by the researcher to other settings (Creswell, 2013). In order to ensure transferability, I have used thick, rich description by providing specific details regarding the procedures used throughout this study and quotes regarding participants’ survey, interview, and focus group responses (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Similarly, a thorough description of the context of my study
aids the reader with transferability. Because details are essential when providing this type of rich description, I have used action verbs and carefully chosen modifiers.

**Confirmability**

Confirmability aids with establishing the value of the data and is likened to objectivity in quantitative research (Creswell, 2013; Guba, 1981). Triangulation of data aids with establishing confirmability with the aim to focus on participants and avoid researcher bias (Guba, 1981). To aid with avoiding researcher bias, I bracketed my own reading experiences through journaling as well as completed the Adult Motivation Reading Scale and interview questions myself (Moustakas, 1984; van Manen, 2014). I have also kept an audit trail during data collection and data analysis (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The goal of confirmability is to produce findings that are “investigator-free” (Guba, 1981, p. 83). Therefore, I have provided ample participant quotes in an effort to achieve confirmability in the findings and discussion.

**Ethical Considerations**

Ethical considerations prove paramount in any research. Critical regarding ethical considerations is first to obtain Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval; the IRB purposes to protect the rights of human participants in research studies. As such, IRB approval is mandatory. No recruitment or data collection was collected until I received official IRB approval. Furthermore, the use of multiple participants provided a more clear view of the phenomenon under study. In order to gain participant support, I explained that they were participating in a study as well as explained the purpose of my research (Creswell, 2013). Also, I have assigned pseudonyms to all participants and their counties or cities of residence in order to protect their privacy and ensure confidentiality. Moreover, the data are kept secure. I have locked surveys,
transcriptions of individual interviews and the focus group interview, and audio files in a safe to ensure security and maintain confidentiality.

Finally, it is important to take measures to avoid being an authority figure so that participants will be more comfortable in providing authentic answers. By meeting in a neutral, casual setting for interviews, dressing professionally yet casually, and being personable, I was able to create a comfortable climate for participants and avoid coming across authoritatively (van Manen, 2014). Furthermore, engaging in a conversational interview greatly aided with maintaining a more relaxed setting and avoiding being an authority figure (van Manen, 2014). All of these steps helped to ensure an ethical foundation for my study.

Summary

Chapter Three has examined the research methods taken as I sought to describe the reading experiences of young adults. I have reviewed my three research questions and provided a description of my setting, participants, and procedures for carrying out this transcendental phenomenological study. A meticulous look at my proposed plan for data collection has included an examination of each phase of research (Adult Reading Motivation Scale, individual interviews, and focus group interviews) as well as a description of the development of my interview questions. Next, I included a full description of my data analysis procedures followed by a description of the steps I took to ensure trustworthiness. Key to the development of this chapter was writing it so that another researcher could replicate my plan.
CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

This chapter serves to present a description of each participant and the results of this transcendental phenomenological study. A participant portrait is provided for each of the 12 individuals who agreed to participate in this study. Pseudonyms have been assigned in order to protect the anonymity of each participant. Results include two tables depicting the results on the Adult Motivation for Reading Scale; table four presents each participant’s scores organized according to gender and age, while table five presents averages of participants’ scores according to gender.

Findings are organized according to themes that emerged from this study. Four themes emerged: (a) The factor of the self in conjunction with reading experiences, (b) The factor of other people in conjunction with reading experiences, (c) The factor of teaching and learning in conjunction with reading experiences, and (d) The factor of forced reading. In review, the purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to describe the factors that influence young adults’ (aged 18 to 24) reading experiences, reading habits and behavior, and desire to read. Data collection included a motivation to read scale, individual interviews, and a focus group interview. This study was guided by the following questions:

- How do young adults between the ages of 18 and 24 describe the factors that influence their reading experiences?
- How do participants describe the effect of factors on their reading habits and behavior?
- How do participants describe the effect of factors on their personal desire to read?
 Participants

Bethany

With short dark hair and deep eyes beneath her glasses, Bethany is a 22-year-old newlywed. She is of Caucasian and Asian descent. She holds a high school diploma, which she earned through a homeschool education. She is the youngest of four children. At the tender age of 12, she moved with her parents overseas for the purpose of ministry work; at the age of 18, she returned to a small suburb of Endurance, the city where she spent the first 12 years of her life. Bethany then had to adjust to a life of employment. She chose to work full-time rather than obtain a college degree. Four years later she was promoted to manager by the same employer for whom she first worked. Although she had to read a great deal of material in preparation for her new position, she is typically motivated to read mostly by her own enjoyment of reading and a desire to escape. Bethany explained that reading is a form of escapism for her: “I leave this world and I kind of almost jump into the other world, and I become immersed to it. I find that one character that I’m reading about, and I become that character.”

Stephen

A bit stocky in build with short dark hair and glasses, Stephen presented himself as confident and self-assured. He is a 22-year-old Caucasian. He grew up in Endurance and attended a local public elementary and middle school. After middle school, however, he completed his high school education at a small private school. At the time of our interview, he was less than a year removed from his college graduation. He attended a nearby university, which is located about an hour’s drive from Endurance. He majored in theological studies with a minor in photo journalism. Although he currently works as a sales representative, he desires to practice photography and eventually attend graduate school to further his studies in theology.
Stephen, too, is a newlywed. Although he does not profess to be an avid reader, Stephen prefers to read items of personal interest and is turned off by the notion of being forced to read something: “If it interests me, I’ll read it.”

Christopher

Tall and slender, Christopher presents himself enthusiastically with a memorable smile. He is a fair-skinned Caucasian and 22 years old. Due to his father’s job, Christopher and his family moved around a few times; and he has lived in three large cities in the United States. His family returned to Endurance when he was about 12 or 13 years old. He was homeschooled and is currently working toward his Bachelor’s degree in Japanese, with graduation in the very near future. His passion for his major, the Japanese people, and his desire to become fluent in Japanese is more than apparent as he shares his story of how he came to major in Japanese. He longs to move to Japan and work as an English teacher. He is motivated to read by his passion for Japan and the Japanese people and to learn to read the language fluently so that he can live successfully in Japan. Christopher shared the following:

It really hit me last year how important reading is. It really hit me. And the reason for that is, when I was in Japan, I realized if I can’t read there’s no way for me to live in this society. There’s no way for me to function . . . I can’t survive if I can’t read.

Christopher also spoke on the importance of connecting with reading material: “If you don’t connect with the material at the outset, you can’t get started – especially for my personality.” He then expounded on his need to read in community with others:

I’m the type of personality that wants to share critical information once I find it . . . If I can’t bounce off other people, I can’t move forward; so reading alone, unless I’m very interested in the material, I feel like I have no one to share it with, and there’s no point.
Lauren

The oldest sibling in her family, Lauren is a 19-year-old African-American college student enrolled in a community college and majoring in early childhood education. She enthusiastically exclaimed that she has always wanted to be a teacher. Lauren grew up in Endurance and attended three different public schools before transferring to a private school in eighth grade, from which she graduated high school. Lauren explained that she was “adopted out” as a teenager, and her adoptive mother forced her to read for 30 minutes a day, twice a day. Although being forced to read often turns young people away from reading, in Lauren’s case she found herself enjoying it when she found authors she liked in her adoptive father’s home library: “I guess if I was never sat down and made to read I wouldn’t have. I, of course, wouldn’t have found the author that I like . . . I had to read, and so I would much rather read.” She admitted that reading a lot in her younger years better prepared her for college and the pace of reading required of college students:

If I wouldn’t have read so much I wouldn’t have picked up the speed that I have when it comes to reading . . . So, I think reading as much as I would read kind of gave me – helped my ability to read and, you know, when you read, you find a lot of different words that you didn’t know, and you learn the meaning of them.

Finally, she shared that she loves reading to other people.

Samuel

Soft-spoken with a mellow voice, Samuel is a 21-year-old African-American who is dual enrolled in a local community college as well as a local university. This is so that he can attend ROTC for the Air Force as well as work toward a degree in Physical Education. Samuel also grew up in Endurance. He attended public school through middle school. He then attended a
private high school, and he graduated from that same school. At the outset of the interview, Samuel admitted with a smile: “If it is a requirement to pass a class, I will read.” He also shared the negative effect that being forced to read had on him: “I hate to be forced to do a lot of stuff, so being forced to read turned me off from it.” Dreaming of flying airplanes, he is willing to read more news articles and current events at the recommendations of his ROTC instructors. His motivations to read are driven greatly by his desire to succeed or accomplish a goal.

**Grayson**

Of average height and medium build, Grayson is a 22-year-old Caucasian student at a local technical college. Although he started out at a local university, he decided switching schools would better fit his needs. After obtaining an Associate’s degree and a job, however, he does hope to transfer credits toward a Bachelor’s degree. He is majoring in business, and he shared with me how he enjoys working with numbers. In fact, he spoke of how he has always been more of a hands-on learner and would rather be active than sitting down and reading a book. For Grayson, reading serves to help him accomplish his goals. Based on the results of his Adult Motivation for Reading Scale and what he shared during his interview, he is confident in his reading abilities, but he would rather someone show him how to do something than read about it. “Preferably, I like for somebody to show me what I need to do and after seeing it once or twice or maybe three times or whatever, I can mimic what needs to be done and keep doing it.”

**Kaitlyn**

Quiet and soft-spoken, Kaitlyn is 22 years old and identifies herself as a Pacific Islander. She is married, a new mother to a 3-month-old daughter, and a college graduate who majored in Sport and Leisure Management. She shared with me how she hated reading as a child, and she
has no recollections of anyone reading to her in the home when she was a small child. Her only
memories of reading are negative. Due to her reading score on the ACT, she was required to
take a reading comprehension course her first semester of college. This class improved her
comprehension and reading speed, which she attributes to her current desire to read. She shared
the following: “Since my score was so low – my score for reading – I took that reading course
my freshman year of college, and that helped me with it. Like, it helped with my comprehension
and helped me enjoy reading.” She testifies that she is glad she had to take the course: “I was
embarrassed taking that class, but it really helped, and I’m glad I was forced to because if it was
my choice, I wouldn’t have taken it.” Kaitlyn also shared that she “started reading more in
college to improve” her vocabulary. Furthermore, she will read books based on
recommendations from others in order to have something in common with them and something
to discuss. Finally, she has reached a point in her life where she is prone to read current events
for the sake of being an informed citizen. Kaitlyn recognizes the value reading offers when it
comes to being knowledgeable and being able to carry on an informed conversation with others.

Ajay

Friendly yet somewhat quiet, Ajay is a 19-year-old male from Saudi Arabia. He came to
the United States as an English as a Second Language student at the age of 17. Interestingly,
Ajay converted from Islam to Christianity during his first six months in the United States, and he
shared that this change in beliefs has also affected the way he views his responsibilities as a
student: “... after I decided to follow Jesus, I know that I have to read because I’m honoring
God with reading – with, like, doing good in school so the teachers will know that I’m
Christian.” He confessed his general dislike for reading and explained that the culture of reading
is different in Saudi Arabia than in the United States. According to Ajay, reading is greatly tied
in with religious studies as opposed to being a pass-time activity or means of enjoyment. Even though he prefers to read in English, he shared that the difficulty of reading in English discourages him further from wanting to read. Ultimately, he prefers “playing video games and just being on my phone” during his free time.

**Emily**

Direct and willing to share, Emily is an Asian female who is a 19-year-old college freshman. She attended private schools as a child, was home schooled during the fourth and fifth grades and then completed middle school and high school at a large private school (all in Endurance). When asked to describe herself as a reader, she responded: “I think my reading skills are decent; they’re average. I mean, they’re definitely better than average because of the education I’ve received.” She also recognized the value in reading and the value of learning, although she readily stated that she “does hate the school system” and “being tested over it” (*it* referring to assigned reading materials). Furthermore, she later shared the following in regards to assigned reading: “There’s just a point where there’s so much – it’s not fun anymore. That’s also what I hate about academics – it takes away that . . . there’s good and bad. No one’s going to read if we’re not in academics.” By *academics* she was referring to school and education. In this context, she was referring to the nature of external factors that school offers in motivating individuals to read.

**Penelope**

Reserved yet well-spoken, Penelope is a 20-year-old Caucasian female who is majoring in Spanish and Portuguese. She is a sophomore in college. Having attended a local community college for the last two years, she will be transferring to a local university in the fall. Penelope shared that she does not read simply for pleasure in regards to reading fiction and stories, but she
does read for personal growth and development. Her father holds her accountable on a regular basis, and she takes note of his example. As others recommend biographies or autobiographies that she believes she can relate to, she said she will find time to read them as well. Personal relevance is the key for Penelope when it comes to her motivation to read: “I’m more interested in stuff that has to do with, ‘How is this going to relate to me?’ as opposed to, like, fiction stuff for fun.”

Thomas

A Hispanic male of the age of 21, Thomas is a junior in college majoring in accounting. Thomas was born in the Western United States and lived there until his family moved to Endurance when he was 10 years old. He has always attended public schools. He shared that as a small child he did not want his mother to read or to speak to him in Spanish; rather, he wanted her to read to him in English so that he could learn the language in order to make friends at school. Thomas shared, “I didn’t want to read Spanish or do anything in Spanish. I wanted to learn English so I could have friends in school.” He recalls that during adolescence video games and television were a big influence on his motivation to read: “I didn’t really read that much. Um, I watched more TV and played more video games than actually reading. So that was a big influence.”

Currently, his personal desire to read is rooted in items of personal interest, like technology, or for personal growth or discipleship. He also enjoys buying books for his 2-year-old nephew and reading to him. I found this interesting since Thomas does not read for pleasure himself, so I asked him why he makes it a point to buy his nephew books and read to him. He responded, “just to spend quality time with him, really – just to build a relationship with him.” He admitted that he did not think of it on his own, but rather he got the idea from his girlfriend
who does the same thing with her niece. Thomas stated, “So, I decided to try it out, and it’s wonderful.”

Abigail

Abigail is a library associate at a local community library. She is Caucasian, 23 years old, and a graduate of a local private college. She has a Bachelor’s of Art degree and clearly has a passion for both art and reading. She did not grow up in Endurance; she grew up in the Southern United States and moved to Endurance to attend college. Abigail attended public school from kindergarten through high school. Abigail’s goal is to attend graduate school in the Southwest for a Masters in Information Technology and Library Science so that she can work in museums. She explained that her stress level currently influences her motivation to read: “It’s like a break from what I’m thinking about. It makes me, just, consider something else.”

Reading is a personal activity for Abigail. She further discussed her thoughts on recreational reading: “I think it’s about creating an ambience . . . and creating a scenario and an environment . . . it’s like meditating, but it’s like distracted meditating.”

Results

As part of this study, the first step in data collection was for participants to complete the Adult Motivation for Reading Scale. The Adult Motivation for Reading Scale was developed by Schutte and Malouff (2007) in conjunction with part of a study they conducted in order to investigate the dimensions of adult reading motivation. Their findings identified four dimensions of adult reading motivation as reflected in their scale: Reading as Part of the Self, Reading Efficacy, Reading for Recognition, and Reading to Do Well in Other Realms. I created an Excel spreadsheet for calculating and ranking each participant’s scores. Prior to interviews as well as during analysis, I compared participants’ survey results against their interview responses.
and the significant statements I identified. I also examined the scales item-by-item for those statements that participants marked “strongly agree” and “strongly disagree” as I compared them to comments made during the interview. The Adult Motivation for Reading Scale presents 21 statements regarding motivations for reading, and participants rated each statement using a Likert scale: 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neither agree or disagree, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree. Scores indicate participants’ general motivations for reading. The following is a table of the results of participants’ scores.

Table 4

*Participants’ Scores on Adult Motivation for Reading Scale*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Total Score</th>
<th>Reading as Part of the Self</th>
<th>Reading Efficacy</th>
<th>Reading for Recognition</th>
<th>Reading to Do Well in Other Realms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lauren</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2.62</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emily</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penelope</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2.76</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bethany</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>2.95</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaitlyn</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>2.86</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abigail</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>3.52</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>3.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ajay</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samuel</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>2.71</td>
<td>2.38</td>
<td>2.83</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>3.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>2.95</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christopher</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grayson</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>3.83</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stephen</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>2.71</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I also calculated averages of participants’ scores according to gender for comparative purposes.

Table 5

Average of Scores on Adult Motivation for Reading Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension of Reading Motivation</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Overall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Score</td>
<td>3.03</td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td>2.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading as Part of the Self</td>
<td>3.35</td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td>3.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Efficacy</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>3.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading for Recognition</td>
<td>2.22</td>
<td>2.56</td>
<td>2.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading to Do Well in Other Realms</td>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>2.96</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Theme One: The Factor of the Self in Conjunction with Reading Experiences**

In their development of the Adult Motivation for Reading Scale, Schutte and Malouff (2007) identified Reading as Part of the Self as one of four dimensions of reading motivation. According to their findings, Reading as Part of the Self reflects “reading as part of identity” and partly defines “the person as a ‘reader’ in relation to the social world” (Schutte & Malouff, p. 479). The theme of the self in conjunction with reading experiences that arose from this research, however, reflects those reading experiences described by participants that offer motivation based on personal gain, personal goals, or personal interests. In other words, participants expressed personal factors that motivate (or have motivated) them to read as a result of their reading experiences. Furthermore, three sub-themes emerged in relation to the self in conjunction with reading experiences: improved literacy skills; goal attainment; and personal interest, relevance, and connection.

**Improved literacy skills.** Research has shown that reading yields improved literacy skills, including rate of reading and growth in vocabulary (Logan et al., 2011). Furthermore, the more individuals read, the more developed their reading strategies and skills become (Gambrell et al., 2007). When discussing their reading experiences, some participants commented on an
increased desire to read as reading improved their reading skills, vocabulary, and knowledge. Grayson, for example, recalled part of his motivation to read as an adolescent was to improve his vocabulary: “some of it [reading] was just for me to learn new words and expand my vocabulary a little bit.” Kaitlyn also chose to read more in order to expand her vocabulary. She shared the following, “I also started reading more in college to improve my vocabulary because I had horrible vocabulary . . . I noticed when I do read, I can pick up vocabulary.” Furthermore, Lauren also recognized the value that reading offers in expanding her vocabulary and stated, when you read, you find a lot of different words that you didn’t know, and you learn the meaning of them . . . I would read [Little House on the Prairie], and I would find a lot of words I didn’t know, and I would look up the meaning of that word.

When asked about her motivation to read, Emily also noted that “your vocabulary expands” as she shared her desire to “become smarter” through reading.

Participants not only recognized the value reading offers for vocabulary development, though. Improved reading skills and rate of reading were also noted as beneficial results from their reading experiences. In addition to helping expand her vocabulary, Lauren noted on two different occasions how reading improved her rate of reading. She stated that, “It improved my reading skill; like, I read a lot faster.” At the end of the interview, she wanted to expound on this and shared how reading in high school helped prepare her for college:

If I wouldn’t have read so much, I wouldn’t have picked up the speed that I have when it comes to reading . . . I would have seen college material and been so intimidated . . . So, I think reading as much as I would read kind of gave me – helped my ability to read . . . I guess it helped my speed and my ability to read for when I got into college and had to read – you know – 30 pages a night for college work.
Emily also commented on the long-term benefits of assigned textbook reading: “My main goal with reading, I think, is to actually improve my reading ability and become smarter . . . when you read more, you become a faster reader . . . you improve.” Penelope, however, recognized the value reading offers with a more broad view of learning in general:

I liked learning . . . As a kid learning something new, you want to learn it until you know what it is. Like for me, learning Spanish now, I want to learn until I’m fluent. So I guess reading would be kind of the same because it’s something you’re going to have to do for the rest of your life. You have to know how to read.

Perhaps Emily summed it up best when she stated that “Reading is really valuable.” Throughout the course of Emily’s interview, it was clear that she recognizes the value that reading offers in terms of gaining knowledge as well as reading to do well in school. In sum, participants discussed the value that reading offers in terms of gaining knowledge and improving literacy skills.

**Goal attainment.** In addition to reading for gained knowledge and improved reading skills, participants also recognized the factor of goal attainment in conjunction with their reading experiences. I have chosen to differentiate goal attainment from improved reading skills and gained knowledge. As I reflected on participants’ stories, goal attainment emerged as a goal separate from reading itself. This is similar to the dimension of Reading to Do Well in Other Realms on Schutte and Malouff’s Adult Motivation for Reading Scale (2007), which “has the theme of using reading to achieve in areas other than reading” (p. 482). This sub-theme reflects the desire of participants to obtain a goal and the use of reading to obtain those goals.

There is no getting away from the fact that reading is a necessity for any student, whether it is for a student in the classroom or for a student of life. Whether they consider themselves avid
readers or not, participants shared that as students they would read material for school. Penelope even commented that reading is “something you’re going to have to do for the rest of your life” and when commenting on her external drive to read, she said, “School, definitely – can’t get by school without reading the material, for sure.” When asked about his motivation to read in high school, Thomas stated, “I’d say I only read when I had to, like in class or something”; and later he said, “I would read it if I needed to get a good grade on it.” Grayson also shared that his current motivation to read is “more external because of me having to read for classes.” Abigail, who loves to read, referred to her reading motivation during college: “I never read anything for fun in college. I just didn’t have time.” She also referred to the amount of textbook reading for classes as well as essay writing and art projects that consumed her time.

Furthermore, when asked to describe himself as a reader, Samuel went so far as to say, “If it is a requirement to pass a class, I will read.” However, now that he is in ROTC and working toward a career in the Air Force, Samuel did share the following: “Now I’m trying to get into news because of the Air Force. They tell you [that] you should start liking news more, so I’m trying to start getting into that.” A large part of his motivation to read hinges on his ultimate desire for goal attainment, which is to advance in the Air Force.

Similarly, Christopher’s desire to speak Japanese fluently presses him to read so that he can achieve that goal. When asked about the factors that currently motivate him to read, he provided the following response:

Wanting to live well in Japan; wanting to do well; not just wanting to survive, but to live and to function in the society; not to just always be asking questions, but to live by observation. I want to learn on my own and not just always be asking questions. I would
never say asking questions is a bad thing – no – but in the Japanese culture, they learn by observation.

Christopher longs to live in Japan one day and serve as a language teacher. For him, reading is his primary tool for accomplishing his goal to live well in Japan. Similarly, Ajay recently finished a year and half as an English language learner but shared his dislike for reading: “I don’t like reading . . . It’s like it’s wasting my time. Even if, like, I know it’s really going to help me to improve my English – like reading books – but I feel like it’s wasting time for me.” Later he also explained that “there’s no point” to read in his native language since he is already fluent in Arabic. He then admitted, though, that “reading in English . . . it’s going to help me more.” Since he hopes to attend college in the United States (following his language study), he was referring to his need to become fluent in English in order to perform well in school.

At the time of the interview, Stephen was nine months removed from school and made the statement, “I’m still kind of coming out of this [feeling of], ‘thank goodness I don’t have to read anymore.’” However, he did share that he is at a place where he wants to start reading materials that pertain to his major because, “I want to stay sharp, but at the same time, I want to go to grad school, so I want to keep up-to-date.” His motivation to eventually go to graduate school does motivate him to read in order to reach that goal. And with Bethany, at the time of our interview, she had just been promoted to manager and was facing a lot of technical reading in preparation for training. Although it would not be her choice of reading materials, looking forward to a promotion and desiring to do well was enough to motivate her to read her manual and training materials. These participants communicated the common need for reading in order to obtain certain goals, such as performing well in school or for career advancement.
**Personal interest, relevance, and connection.** Throughout the interview process, it seemed that most participants associated “reading” with “reading novels.” I found myself clarifying throughout the interview process to think of reading as “reading in general” and to include magazines, social media, and other potential sources when they shared their reading experiences. This helped provide a more holistic view of the types of materials they spend reading. Not surprisingly, it became commonplace to hear participants share that one of the biggest factors on their reading experiences pertains to items of interest or personal relevance. For Stephen, this became the main theme throughout his interview. He shared that, as a child, his reading experiences were “more about things that I could relate to.” For example, he shared that he enjoyed reading Spiderman and the Harry Potter series because he could relate to the main characters. Grayson recalled the only book he particularly liked in high school and was motivated to read; when I asked him what it was about that particular book, one of the things he said was, “It just caught my attention because I could relate to how it was in my high school.” Both of these young men specifically connected reading motivation at a younger age with being able to relate to the material in some way. Penelope also shared a similar view. When asked about the factors that have influenced her desire to read, she said, “I’m more interested in stuff that has to do with, ‘How is this going to relate to me?’” Furthermore, when I asked Stephen about what is currently influencing his reading experiences, he said it is about whether or not he finds something interesting or if it pertains to something he is involved in. He summed up his response by saying, “I mean, it’s just, if it interests me.” At the end of the interview, he also shared that part of the factors that influence his desire to read over time is “developing interests.” Likewise, Samuel shared how his motivation to read is mostly external, and then he noted, “But every now and then, if I see
something that’s interesting, I’ll read. Like, if there’s a comic out or an article, I’ll read about that. Like, I love reading sports stuff now.” Lauren even commented, “If I don’t find it interesting, then I don’t want to read it. I will read it; I just don’t want to read it.” And for Thomas, he is particularly interested in technology, and he shared the following:

I’d say technology definitely sparked my interest . . . when I was a kid, I was like, “Oh, how does this work? What’s coming out next?” So that’s definitely been something that I’ve always been interested in and [has] affected my reading because I’d want to know more about it.

In addition to technology, though, Thomas shared that he does read for personal growth as well as discipleship.

For many participants, personal relevance and connecting with the material or a character are similar in what they offer during the reading experience. At the beginning of our interview, Bethany shared the following:

I use it for escapism. And when I read, I kind of – I mean – it’s escapism. I leave this world, and I kind of almost jump into the other world, and I become immersed to it. I find that one character that I’m reading about, and I become that character.

Additionally, Stephen shared that he likes reading “anything where I can become attached to a character.” He said Peter Parker and Harry Potter were two of those characters with whom he could relate, and therefore he enjoyed reading those books and comic books. Furthermore, Christopher commented on character attachment: “If there is no character, you feel like, ‘Where do I stand? Where am I in this story?’” He later shared that during his language study, if he focused on the characters of Manga rather than the language barrier, he could reconnect with the material, which reignited his love for the Japanese language:
I just wanted to, like, rest. I felt so stressed. I couldn’t connect. But somehow, when I absorbed myself in a Manga, not even thinking about language study, I knew that in English what these characters were trying to say was something like a conversation, and I knew that from my childhood, these were characters you could relate to if you just get the language; you can cross that barrier and connect to them in the same way as English.

For Christopher, character attachment and goal attainment are actually interrelated. By connecting with the characters, he is able to engage in his language study, which helps with his goal attainment as well.

Lauren also talked about the role of character attachment when describing her reading experiences:

When I read a book, I get so involved in the book that I feel like I’m a part of that family. So, when I’m done, I’m like, “Now I’m not with so-and-so anymore” because I’m done with that book . . . I just want to read it over so I can be involved with that family again.

Kaitlyn talked about how the novels she reads can affect her behavior, so she has been more selective in what she reads lately: “I try to relate to her – like her character because . . . I admire her character.” In essence, participants communicated the importance of personal relevance and connection in conjunction with their reading experiences.

In summary, participants’ stories revealed the significance that the self plays in their reading experiences. The value in their reading experiences offered a variety of opportunities for self-growth that have been organized into three sub-themes: improved literacy skills; goal attainment; and personal interest, relevance, and connection. Participants expressed that reading aids with improved vocabulary, increased reading rate, and overall gained knowledge.

Furthermore, it was apparent that participants view reading as a necessary skill that leads to goal
attainment across various settings, such as school and career advancement. Finally, participants communicated the importance that lies in reading material that is personally relevant, interesting, or easy to connect with in some way. These three factors all convey the importance of the self in conjunction with reading experiences.

**Theme Two: The Factor of Other People in Conjunction with Reading Experiences**

In addition to the self, the role of others in participants’ reading experiences revealed itself as a significant finding from this study. Likewise, previous research has revealed a positive correlation with early book exposure, being read to from an early age, and having access to books to higher reading motivation (Atkinson, 2009; Chen, 2008; Chen & Lu, 2012; Klauda & Wigfield, 2012; Law, 2008; Protacio, 2012). It is critical to recognize the role that parents, siblings, and other caregivers have in making sure children are engaged in these types of reading experiences at an early age. Furthermore, previous research indicates that individuals across age groups read for social reasons (Chen, 2009; Guthrie et al., 2013; Howard, 2010; Knoester, 2009; Lau, 2009; Summers, 2013). For adults, reading for social reasons can include reading for conversational reasons as well as social engagement (Chen, 2009; Summers, 2013). This study yielded similar findings. The factor of other people in conjunction with reading experiences has been divided into two sub-themes: home influence and early exposure, and reading and the social connection.

**Home influence and early exposure.** One factor repeatedly discussed during this study involved that of the home and early exposure to books and reading. Some participants recalled being read to while others did not. Most participants recalled an early exposure to books, whether it was through home libraries, a public library, or school. These experiences are also
connected with another person in some way or another. For about half of the participants, they made reference to either their mother or father, or both.

Emily has a strong recollection of the factor her parents have played on her reading experiences and referred to them both as “avid readers.” She particularly made mention of her mother: “My mom taught me to read when I was young . . . she taught me the importance of reading . . . My mom’s pushed a lot of high-end literature in us since we were little.” She also made reference to their home library: “My mom always has a bookshelf – like, we have a library in our house, and it’s huge.” Interestingly, however, she also shared that she did not really like listening to stories when she was little but that she preferred to read on her own. Abigail, who also loves to read for pleasure, commented that she did not like to be read to. For her, reading was a “special occasion” that was part of her bed time routine:

The bed had to be perfectly made, and I had to be in it, and the lights had to be on – this night light . . . but mostly every night my mom got me this humongous flashlight – like a camping flashlight – and she would take a piece of the shelf and put it in my bed, and I’d sit and read to myself . . . the next night, it was, like, the next part of the shelf. That was just my thing.

In Abigail’s case, the reading experience itself was the factor that influenced her reading experiences as a child. She recalls always being exposed to books and stated that “reading was, like, a big deal.” Furthermore, she mentioned that her mother would play audio books, which she also remembered as a positive experience.

Bethany also loves reading for pleasure, and she, too, made reference to a home library. In fact, she made reference to multiple home libraries:
One of the things that I always loved doing was, my siblings always had bigger libraries than I did in their rooms, and so I would always go in there and be like, “okay, I want to find the oldest book I can – the one that has the torn up binding; the one that has signatures in it, date stamps;” and I’d go in there and try to find those. And, so, I found a lot of older books that way through my siblings.

Bethany also talked about having two library cards by the time she was six years old, so she was immersed in book exposure and reading throughout her childhood. She also recalled fond memories of being read to: “My mom made it a point everyday while we were being homeschooled, she would set aside lunch time . . . and she would read to us while we were eating.” Her mother was not the only one who read to her, though. When she was about eight years old, one of her older sisters read *The Hobbit* out loud to her over the span of one summer. “That was fun,” she recalled. At the end of the interview she shared, “from the younger years, I would definitely say it was very, very effective because I still have that desire to read . . . there’s a lot of memories that go with books and reading,” and perhaps most significant, “memories of being with family.” For these three young ladies, the factor of home influence and early exposure to books and reading were important in shaping positive reading experiences for them.

At the beginning of my interview with Lauren, she shared that she has always wanted to be a teacher. At the end of the interview, she shared that she loves reading to people. One of her earliest reading experiences involved a public library. She recalled memories of walking to the local library after school with one of her brothers: “We would set up a kid’s corner with kids our age, and we would have books piled high. We would grab books and we’d read them. We would spend all day at the library.” Furthermore, she did not recall being read to as much as she recalled reading to her siblings: “I would be the one reading to my siblings. We really didn’t
have anybody reading to us; it was really me reading to them.” She is the oldest. Referring to her adoptive family, she shared the following: “I grew up around reading. They read everything. They’re always reading.” It was her adoptive mother who imposed on her the rule of reading twice a day for 30 minutes a day. And, it was this imposition that led her to a newfound respect for and enjoyment of reading as she discovered one of her favorite authors and genres.

For Thomas, his early reading experiences are unique to the other participants in that he grew up in a non-English speaking home but attended an English-speaking school. He recalls his mother reading a particular book to him in Spanish every night. He even shared, “She still has the book today, and she still will quote it to me.” Thomas, however, wanted to learn English once he started going to school so that he could make friends. The language barrier was an influence on his reading experiences as a child: “I didn’t want to read Spanish or do anything in Spanish; I wanted to learn English so I could have friends in school.” Despite his resistance, however, his mother could not teach him English; and she continued to talk to and read to him in Spanish. Thomas acquiesced: “I didn’t really have a choice.”

Christopher recalled his mother teaching him how to read. Christopher also remembered certain books and characters, such as Peter Rabbit, Benjamin Button, Aesop’s Fables, and The Chronicles of Narnia. Although he remembered his mother teaching him how to read, he did not remember much about her reading to him: “The farthest back I can go is a book that was about pronunciation of three-letter words . . . and mom would just make me read that over and over, and I hated it.” However, he did recall his sister reading a novel to him when he was in high school. “I remember visits to the library,” he said, and then he shared about a rewards system set up through the library. Although he couldn’t remember exactly how it was set up, he did talk about how exciting the incentives were:
A kid would just dream about that! Like, “Wow! If I could just complete this short term goal, I could read this book that’s so easy!” But, you don’t realize the books they’re giving you, they’re like – I don’t know – it’s a little bit higher level reading. It’s not necessarily simple. It looks fun on the outside, but when you get into it . . . you have to understand the situation-type books.

Neither Penelope nor Kaitlyn have memories of being read to by their parents. When asked about her reading experiences as a child, Penelope shared certain authors and books that she remembered, such as Dr. Seuss and The Chronicles of Narnia. She also stated, “I don’t remember my parents reading to me at all.” She said that her mom did work at the daycare she attended, but “she didn’t teach me, but another lady was, like, always reading to me and teaching me when I was in pre-school, kindergarten, and all that.” In response to the same question, Kaitlyn immediately responded, “I hated reading.” She also added, “I just remember never liking it. I don’t even remember my parents ever reading to me, so that might have to do with it.” The youngest of three with two older brothers, she said that her brothers did not read to her either; nor does she recall visits to the library. Kaitlyn said, “The only time I was ever really read to was school.”

Although Penelope did not recall being read to by her parents at a younger age, she did share that her father is the one who currently holds her accountable in her reading experiences. She also reflected on the example he sets for reading:

My dad really loves to read. Like, I wake up every morning, and my dad’s in there reading . . . and in his spare time, he reads all the time. My mom, on the other hand, is not like a big reader. And, so, I think I take after my mom as far as reading goes.
She credited his example as helping her to see the value in reading. Most participants’ reading experiences are grounded in early exposure to books and reading with the important role parents played (and continue to play) in their reading experiences.

**Reading and the social connection.** The social connection that reading provides offers motivation for adolescents and adults (Chen, 2009; Guthrie et al., 2013; Howard, 2010; Knoester, 2009; Lau, 2009). For some participants, this connection provides a common ground and a way to connect with others. For other participants, this connection offers an opportunity for personal growth through discipleship, mentorship, or accountability. For the purposes of this study, I have included the factor of personal growth in conjunction with discipleship, mentorship, and accountability with social connection since the personal growth reflected here includes involvement from a second (or third) party.

Bethany shared about one of her friends in particular who currently has more time to read than she does; as such, she often recommends certain books to Bethany. “She has recommended other fictional types of books – science fiction especially. Um, and I’ve enjoyed those, but that’s more of a . . . I’m enjoying them because I’m also finding a ‘common-ground-get-to-know-you.’” In this case, she would not necessarily read these certain books on her own, but she is willing to read them for the connection it provides her with her friend. Kaitlyn had similar reasons for reading. Kaitlyn recalled choosing to read in high school because of her close friend: “She was, like, a big reader, and I think that was one reason I wanted to get into reading was to have another thing in common with her.” When discussing factors that currently influence her reading habits, she referred to one book that she wouldn’t typically read or enjoy on her own, but she read it because her sister-in-law recommended it:
My sister-in-law reads a lot of different books that I . . . wouldn’t necessarily pick up and start reading. One book . . . she really liked it, so . . . I started reading that so we could talk about it.

Emily also made reference to a long-time friend of hers: “[We] always like to talk about literature . . . we always talk about books that we like, and we recommend to each other.”

When considering the influential factor that others have played regarding her reading experiences, Emily also credited a particular high school teacher who made specific recommendations on items that interested her. Additionally, Kaitlyn made reference to a high school teacher who encouraged her to read:

My reading started picking up then because our English teacher – I would talk to her about different books . . . and she kind of got me interested in a few books when she learned what I was interested in. And, so, I guess that’s when my reading started.

Emily, however, also made mention of her parents in regards to who influences her reading experiences:

And then we can go back to my mom and dad. My mom always has a bookshelf . . . we have a library in our house, and it’s huge . . . If I’m like, “Mom, do you have any good books?” she can throw five at me. So, she always has a ton.

Penelope shared about the influence her father continues to have on her reading experiences: “I read, like, books that my father recommends to me that’s he’s read.” She said that his accountability also influences her desire to read: “Since [my dad] is accountable with me . . . it does give me, like, the desire to read at least the materials that he gives me to read.”

Thomas referred to reading certain books for personal growth as recommended to him by a mentor in his life: “[My mentor] gave me that [book] because I had some questions for him.
It’s a good book for answering those questions.” He also mentioned the factor of “pouring into someone else” as motivating him to read, although he did not go into further detail. At the end of our interview, Thomas wanted to share the following in regards to factors that influence his reading habits and desire to read “I have a little nephew now, and so I’m reading to him more.” When I asked him why he reads to his nephew, he shared the following: “just to spend quality time with him, really – just to build a relationship with him.” He also said, “I decided to try it out, and it’s wonderful.” Moreover, Lauren said, “I love reading to people,” and then she shared about an experience she once had volunteering to read to a class of special education students.

The social connection reading provides emerged as an influential factor on participants’ reading experiences so much so that I brought it up during the focus group interview. When I made reference to the participants having found themselves at a place in their lives where they now can carry an influence on others’ reading experiences, they all agreed. Not only did participants reveal the importance that others have had on their own reading experiences, but they also shared that they have an important role in others’ reading experiences. It was interesting to hear their stories develop from childhood and the role that others have played on their reading experiences to the present day and the role they now play on others’ reading experiences. Whether under one of the sub-themes of home influence and early exposure or reading and the social connection, the theme of others in conjunction with reading experiences became evident.

**Theme Three: The Factor of Teaching and Learning in Conjunction with Reading Experiences**

The approach to teaching impacts students’ learning. According to findings by Lau (2009), a connection exists between student reading motivation and their perceptions of
classroom instruction. Findings from this study further support this. As they reflected on their reading experiences, participants shared that they would read assigned material in order to perform well in school. When asked more specifically about their reading motivation, they shared various teaching methods that motivated them to read. Penelope recalled her eighth grade teacher’s approach to reading in the classroom:

She would read out loud to us, she would ask us to read in class, and she would give us materials to make sure that we did . . . this teacher made sure that we did everything we were supposed to do and made it a bit more interesting.

Although she did not recall specific teaching methods this teacher used, Penelope shared that having the example of her teacher reading aloud provided clarity and helped to change her perspective. Referring to her ninth and tenth grade teacher, Penelope said, “She required us to read more stuff at home, but she was also one of those who did a lot of explaining in class, too – like, took time out of class to make sure we understood.” For Penelope, the importance of example and explanation from her teacher positively influenced her reading experiences during adolescence.

In Thomas’ case, he was motivated by a particular high school English teacher who incorporated the use of technology with reading. He recalls having weekly quizzes on their reading material: “I really was interested in the technology she was using, so I, like, read the stuff and tried to do better.” Although he could not recall the program she used, he explained how it worked:

We all took a quiz at the same time, but we had, like, a little button that we would press – like, it was either A, B, C, or D . . . and it would tell you the answer immediately . . . and how many people got it wrong and how many people got it right . . . That was just fun.
Thomas’s passion for technology brought a new dimension to his reading experiences that year when his teacher was able to incorporate the two. For Abigail, she was in a gifted program and had the same high school English teacher for freshman and sophomore year. She shared the following:

What was cool about the way gifted English my freshman and sophomore year of high school – the way it was structured – is that we pretty much had like 15 texts that were presented to us, and we got to choose what we read – as a class.

Also unique to her experience was that she and her classmates had been in school together most of their lives, which provided a rich reading experience as they collaborated to choose their own reading material.

Stephen also spoke on the importance of choice in reading materials and reading motivation. In reference to the use of Accelerated Reader in elementary and middle school, he said, “That worked okay, you know, having a list to choose from, but it’s a matter of having a list that interested me.” He then compared his reading motivation in middle school to that in high school. Specifically, he referred to the approach his eleventh-grade English teacher took: “I wasn’t reading anything because there wasn’t a choice. We had an older male teacher who said, ‘You read this book. You read this book. You read this book. This is when you read them.’” He compared this approach to that of open book reports his senior year: “My senior year, we had a lot of open book reports, where it’s like, ‘you pick a book, I will approve it, and then you write a report about it.’” He attributed this approach to an increase in reading motivation his senior year since it provided him the opportunity of choice and to explore an author he had been interested in.
For Bethany, however, she recalled the negative influence assignments such as book reports had on her reading experiences:

I think a negative influence for me, was, like, if you had the easier books . . . if you got those easier books, and they’re more enjoyable in your free time, and then they have you butcher them in book reports and stuff like that, and tear that little bit that you enjoyed apart.

Thomas, Grayson, and Abigail also reflected on the negative influence assigned reading had on their reading experiences due to the lack of relatability to the material or to the characters. Abigail, for example, made the statement that “there are a lot of issues, too, in school, where you read books that you don’t relate to. Especially when you’re young, there are not enough texts in the system about adolescents or growing up.” Participants shared similar feelings regarding their reading experiences in conjunction with teaching and learning, including teacher presentation, teacher explanation, assignments, and type of reading material. The factor of assigned reading will be examined in more detail under a separate theme, the factor of forced reading. For the purposes of this study, assigned reading falls under the category of forced reading.

**Theme Four: The Factor of Forced Reading in Conjunction with Reading Experiences**

Throughout the interview process, forced reading is a topic that came up multiple times, often when participants were asked about their reading experiences during adolescence. Although participants often used the phrase “forced reading” to refer to assigned reading in school, the theme of “forced reading” branches out beyond assigned reading. Due to the nature of this being a phenomenological study, it was important to use their wording which showed up repeatedly throughout interviews: forced reading. Forced reading will include assigned reading, but it will also include the practice of being forced to read in general (by parents and in the
home) as well as one experience when a participant was forced to take a reading comprehension class. These experiences are clarified as they are presented throughout this section with context as well as participant quotes.

Interestingly, participants revealed both positive and negative results of forced reading on their reading habits and reading desire. For Samuel and Stephen, for example, being forced to read in school offered negative experiences. Samuel testified to the negative impact of forced reading on his reading habits and desire to read. For Samuel, he was forced to read in school as well as at home:

> When I was younger, I was forced to read a lot, and so, that did turn me off from reading, and I, like, shut down from it . . . So being forced – I hate to be forced to do a lot of stuff – so being forced to read turned me off from it.

He even shared how he developed the ability to “pretend read” at home around the time he reached adolescence; he would stare at the pages and move his fingers across the page: “I got real good at pretending to read.” He simply found it boring. He also explained that after high school, though, his reading desire increased since “I could read whatever I wanted to read.” He had shared at an earlier point in the interview that when he was younger, he actually liked reading, “because I got to choose what I read . . . I read whatever I wanted, so I enjoyed it.”

Stephen shared a similar viewpoint. When explaining his motivation to read as internal, Stephen explained, “If I read, it’s because I want to, it’s not because someone says, ‘Hey, you need to read this.’ If I’m actually forced to read, that makes it more difficult and less likely for me to actually do it.” At the end of the interview, Stephen brought this up again and further expounded that being forced to read something in high school made him not want to read it because he “always liked to be the one to choose what I was reading.” In college, however, he
had a newfound respect for his professors and the work they invested in preparing for class, which compelled him to complete his reading assignments. However, he shared that this “actually had a negative influence on [my reading habits] because it made it harder to read for me . . . I felt like I wasn’t doing it for my own benefit, I was doing it out of respect.” So, for Stephen, he views reading as a personal activity over which he wants control. For both Samuel and Stephen, the element of control and reading choices were important to them in relation to their reading motivation. Furthermore, when I asked Grayson if forced reading had a negative impact on his reading experiences, he responded in the following way:

Somewhat . . . if I already had the concept of what we needed to learn or whatever, I didn’t really feel the need to read it. But if I didn’t understand the concept, I would actually take the time to read bits and pieces and jot down some notes.

The issue of forced reading in school as a negative influence on reading experiences and reading motivation became a point of discussion during the focus group. Thomas and Grayson shared the view that forced reading evokes feelings of “I don’t want to do this ever again.” Abigail, however, considered other factors behind forced reading that could be the underlying issue. She stated the following: “There are a lot of issues, too, in school where you read books that you don’t relate to; especially when you’re young, and there are not enough texts in the system about adolescents or growing up.” This point transitioned the conversation so that Thomas and Grayson recalled books they were forced to read that they did enjoy, however, because they could relate to either a character or the situation and setting of the book.

Bethany, however, shared a different reason for her dislike of forced reading as a teenager:
I still had a really strong desire to read, and I loved reading, but I was forced to read in school. And, the worst part was I was forced to read books I had already read and loved, and – first of all – I’m not a person who likes to re-read books . . . I read them so thoroughly the first time through that I usually remember everything, so if I go back and re-read it, it almost destroys the ending for me . . . plus, there are so many books in the world, that – you know – why would I keep re-reading one when there might be another one out there?

Emily also brought up forced reading. She is another young lady who testified to the enjoyment reading brings her. When discussing her reading experiences during adolescence, Emily shared the following: “I don’t like forced reading. Maybe that’s why I don’t like textbooks. But at the same time, I do like forced reading in a sense, because the material we are learning is – it is valuable.” When asked if forced reading had a negative impact on the way she feels about reading, though, she said no. When she was later asked to describe her motivation to read as internal, external, or both, she noted: “I like with textbooks that I’m forced to read, because – you know – when you read more, you become a faster reader.” For Penelope, she recalled a particular teacher whose classroom approach with forced reading helped motivate her to read: “The fact that she didn’t make us read everything outside of class – like, didn’t completely force us to do everything on our own helped me to like it better, I think.”

Although forced reading can lead to negative reading experiences, it is possible that forced reading can lead to positive reading experiences, too. Lauren’s experience is one important example of this. In her case, forced reading actually led her to an author that she loves. This author then led her to a genre that she loves. During adolescence, her mother made
her read 30 minutes a day, twice a day. As a result, she discovered an author of suspense she loved, which led her to search for other suspense authors. She shared the following:

I guess if I was never sat down and made to read, I would have – I, of course – wouldn’t have found the author that I like . . . before, I didn’t like to read . . . but now I had to read, and, so, now I would much rather read.

Stephen’s experience of open book reports in school led to a similar outcome. Since he was allowed to choose what he completed his book report on, he had an opportunity to read books by an author he had been interested in exploring. As a result, he discovered that he enjoyed that author and his books.

Kaitlyn’s experience is a little different yet very worthy of discussion. Her reading experience is similar to other participants in that she did not like forced reading. However, she did recall being forced to read *The Diary of Anne Frank* in middle school but liking it: “I didn’t want to [read it], but once I started reading it, I liked it.” What is crucial about Kaitlyn’s reading experience, though, involves a reading course she was forced to take her freshman year of college due to her low score on the reading component of the ACT: “Since my score was so low – my score for reading – I took that reading course my freshman year of college, and that helped me with it. Like, it helped with my comprehension and helped me enjoy reading.” She shared further, “I was embarrassed taking that class, but it really helped, and I’m glad I was forced to, because if it was my choice, I wouldn’t have taken it.” Participants were divided in their overall feelings of the impact forced reading had on their desire to read. However, it is important to note that “forced reading” can (and sometimes does) provide positive reading experiences that can lead to increased reading motivation.
Summary

This chapter has focused on the 12 young adults who kindly shared the stories of their reading experiences. Participant portraits were provided followed by a description of the four themes that emerged from their stories. Triangulation of data in this transcendental phenomenological study consisted of the Adult Motivation for Reading Scale, 12 individual interviews, and a focus group interview at which five of the 12 participants attended. Careful analysis with the use of In Vivo coding, repeated readings of interview transcripts, and my intuition identified significant statements from the stories of 12 young adults regarding the factors that influenced their reading experiences. Through further examination, four overall themes emerged reflecting the influences on participants’ reading experiences: (a) The factor of the self, (b) The factor of other people, (c) The factor of teaching and learning, and (d) The factor of forced reading. Multiple quotes have been included in order to allow their voices to be heard as they shared their lived experience.
CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to describe the factors that influence young adults’ (aged 18 to 24) reading experiences, reading habits and behavior, and desire to read. Chapter One provided a detailed description of that purpose and its relevance. While Chapter Four presented the findings of this study, Chapter Five presents a discussion of those findings, including an examination of their implications. Furthermore, a brief look at the limitations of this study is provided. Finally, I provide recommendations for future research at the end of this chapter in the hopes that future researchers will delve deeper into the reading motivations of young adults.

Summary of Findings

As a result of careful analysis including sub-coding, In Vivo coding, horizontalization, and clustering of meaning, four themes emerged regarding the factors that influence young adults’ reading experiences, reading habits and behavior, and desire to read (Moustakas, 1994; Saldaña, 2013). Although each of the 12 young adults depicted in this study came from different families, attended different schools, and offered a variety of reading experiences, similarities arose that communicate the essence of their shared lived experience (Moustakas, 1994). Van Manen (2014) conveys “lived experience” as “life as we live it” (p. 39). For the participants of this study, the reading experiences as they have lived them and continue to live them include the factor of the self, the factor of others, the factor of teaching and learning, and the factor of forced reading.

The factor of the self reflects participants’ reading experiences in relation to the self. As defined by Schutte and Malouff (2007), the dimension of reading as part of the self reflects “that reading is an essential part of the self, or reading as part of identity” (p. 477). This element is
reflected in participants’ desire to read for improved reading skills, goal attainment, and personal growth, relevance, or connection. Participants shared that in some cases, they specifically read in order to improve their literacy skills, including rate of reading and vocabulary development. In reflecting on participants’ stories, I chose to differentiate between reading for improved literacy and reading for goal attainment. Goal attainment included factors apart from the actual act of reading and with reading viewed as a tool for goal attainment.

For example, participants all agreed on the importance of reading for school. Thomas, Stephen, Grayson, and Samuel all made reference to reading if they had to for school, such as an assignment or in order to pass a class. Lauren also shared that although she loves reading something she likes, she dreads reading for American Literature or her history class: “I . . . dread reading it . . . if I don’t find it interesting, then I don’t want to read it. I will read it; I just don’t want to read it.” Furthermore, Christopher shared his desire to read in order to improve his language skills and become fluent in Japanese, which is directly tied to his desire to live well in Japan one day: “I can’t survive if I can’t read.” And regarding reading for career advancement, Bethany shared that she was motivated to read for a promotion at work; Samuel has recently made new reading choices as he prepares for a potential career in the Air Force; and Stephen shared his current motivation to read in an effort to prepare for graduate school. Finally, Emily is motivated not only toward pleasure reading and reading to do well in school but also toward learning and becoming smarter in general. All of these factors pertain to reading for goal attainment.

Reading as it relates to personal relevance and connection also fell within the factor of the self in conjunction with reading. This refers to the motivation to read in order to connect with a story or character, and the role that character attachment plays for many participants in
their reading experiences. Furthermore, personal relevance shapes many individuals’ reading experiences. Stephen referred to reading material as it relates to photography or theology, and Penelope made reference to reading biographies or autobiographies of individuals with whom she can relate. Thomas made reference to reading material as it relates to technology, simply due to his personal interest in it, as well as reading materials for personal growth. Ajay and Penelope also shared the importance of reading for personal growth. Whether reading for improved literacy skills, goal attainment, or personal relevance and growth, participants all shared the common factor of the self in conjunction with their reading experiences.

In addition to the self, participants also shared stories of reading as it relates to others. The home influence and early exposure rests in the role others play or have played in participants’ reading experiences. Being read to, being provided books and access to books, and being held accountable in their reading are all examples that led to this theme. For many participants, the role of others began early in their lives. Bethany, Emily, and Abigail all made reference to book exposure at an early age through home libraries; Abigail even had her own home library that her mother set up for her. When she was a teenager, Lauren found one of her favorite authors as she searched for a book to read in her adoptive father’s home library. Bethany and Christopher both recalled library visits. Penelope shared about the example of her father reading as well as his continued role of holding her accountable in her current reading experiences. She shared the following:

I remember my dad explaining to me as a kid that he was kind of the same as me, that he just read for school . . . as he got older, it became more of . . . a fun thing for him to do.

He just enjoys it.
For Kaitlyn, she recalled a certain teacher who reached out to help her find authors she would enjoy reading. Now that she is married, though, she credited her sister-in-law and mother-in-law as being those who suggest books to read:

    My family, like, they never recommended books to me or even really read to me . . .
    when I was younger. But, now my mother-in-law and my sister-in-law – they’re always reading and always recommending books to me, and that’s really got me into reading.

Kaitlyn shared that experience during the focus group in agreement with Bethany after Bethany shared the following:

    I know family influences a lot, whether it’s when you’re young – and they’re reading to you as you grow older – or when you hit that level where you can read yourself and share the same books, and you can actually talk about it afterwards, too, because you both have your own understandings.

For Thomas, he accepts recommended reading from a mentor, but he also reads to his nephew. He shared, “I like to read to my nephew sometimes . . . to bond with him, and so he can get a better understanding of words and reading.” Grayson could relate his experience of reading with his nephew to help him with homework: “I’ll have to read it to him, and read it slowly to make sure he understands what’s going on and what he’s doing wrong, and how he actually needs to read it.” Through sharing their own experiences during the focus group, participants shared not only how others have influenced their reading experiences but also how they are now influencing others’ reading experiences.

    The factor of teaching and learning emerged in the context of approaches to teaching. Thomas recalled a time in high school when he was motivated to read because his teacher incorporated technology with reading and learning in the classroom. Abigail was in a gifted
program, and in high school, her English teacher allowed the class to choose the books they would read. Penelope reflected on the teaching style of two of her teachers as a motivator. She shared that her eighth grade teacher often incorporated reading aloud in the classroom, which helped to break up the material into assigned reading and assisted reading. The example of reading was beneficial to her. Penelope also spoke on the influence that the practice of her middle school teacher and high school teacher of actually explaining assigned reading had on her reading experiences: “It’s hard if you’re at home, forced to read something and it’s not that interesting or you just don’t get the point, but the teacher explains it to you in class, then it changes everything for you.”

Finally, the factor of forced reading was weaved throughout participants’ reading experiences. I chose not to include forced reading with methods of teaching and learning for two reasons. First of all, I do not view assigned reading or forced reading as an actual method of teaching. Rather, I view it as more of a tool and a skill that is required for learning to occur. Second of all, not all participants’ experiences with forced reading were in conjunction with the classroom. As such, forced reading is presented in this study in generality, although it does include assigned reading. For some participants, forced reading did refer to assigned reading in school. For Lauren in particular, though, it was her mother who forced her to read. Her experience ended up being a positive one toward reading, however, since she discovered a favored author through being forced to read. And for Kaitlyn, she was actually forced to take a reading comprehension class that aided with her comprehension and led to her enjoyment of reading. Participants’ experiences of being forced to read actually led to varied outcomes, some being negative and some being positive.
In summary, findings from this study on young adult reading motivation revealed four themes. The factor of the self in conjunction with reading experiences includes three sub-themes: improved literacy skills; goal attainment; and personal interest, relevance, and connection. The factor of others in conjunction with reading experiences includes two sub-themes: home influence and early exposure, and reading and the social connection. The third theme is the factor of teaching and learning in conjunction with reading experiences, and the fourth theme is the factor of forced reading in conjunction with reading experiences. Although these themes reflect the essence of participants’ reading experiences, it is important to remember that each person is an individual as we consider the implications of these findings.

Discussion

This discussion considers the findings from this study in relationship to the theoretical framework and empirical literature as presented in Chapter Two. The purpose of this discussion is threefold. First, the findings from this study and how they affirm Deci and Ryan’s Self-determination theory is examined. Next, a comparison of findings from this study and previously conducted empirical research is provided. Finally, new findings that emerged from this study are presented.

Theoretical Framework

Findings from this transcendental phenomenological study affirm the importance of both intrinsic and extrinsic motivators working together as individuals are motivated to read. Self-determination theory allows for the importance of both internal and external factors that point individuals toward the choices they make and the actions they take (Deci et al., 1991). All of the participants in this study attested to the role that external factors play toward their individual reading motivation in an effort to achieve a goal other than for the sake of reading itself. As
Penelope stated, “[you] can’t get by school without reading the material, [that’s] for sure.”

Stephen also shared, “I spent so long – particularly in college – having to read, and just having this need for it, because . . . without it, you’ll fail.” For example, participants shared that they would complete reading assignments in order to perform well in school, complete required training for work, or to maintain common ground with other people in their lives. When asked about the influence of factors on their reading desire and reading habits, two participants attested to the difficulty of separating those two factors. Thomas states, “I can’t separate those two dancers in my life,” while Abigail said, “I think mine definitely walk together.”

**Empirical Literature**

Findings from this study corroborate other studies that reflect the importance of the role of the home and early exposure to reading and books on reading motivation (Atkinson, 2009; Chen, 2008; Chen & Lu, 2012; Gambrell et al., 2007; Law, 2008; Protacio, 2012). One recent study made note of this significance in their findings: “parents are the main influence in developing reading habits” (Mansor, Rasul, Rauf, & Koh, 2013, p. 361). In reflecting on the influences of their early reading experiences, many participants referred to the role their parents played in reading to them, setting an example of reading, and providing an environment with a home library. All of these activities communicate the value of reading. Penelope shared the importance that her father’s continual example and accountability have in influencing her reading motivation. Likewise, Emily made reference to her mother’s home library and her own practice of going to her mother for suggested books to read. These findings further support existing research affirming the need for parental support in not only establishing but also maintaining their children’s motivation to read (Chen, 2008; Chen & Lu, 2012; Chiu & Chow, 2010; Howard, 2010; Klauda & Wigfield, 2012).
Participants also made reference to the experience of being read aloud to, either in the home or at school. Current research supports the practice of reading to children in the home as important components of early literacy for fostering reading comprehension skills and reading motivation (Howard, 2010; Klauda & Wigfield, 2012). Bethany associates positive memories with being read aloud to by both her mother and her sister. For Penelope, having her eighth grade teacher read aloud portions of texts in class provided clarification and aided with her comprehension of the material. Her testimony further supports findings that encourage the use of teacher read alouds for enhanced teaching and learning in the classroom (Fisher & Frey, 2012; Gambrell et al., 2007).

Previous research on reading motivation indicates that adolescents and adults often read for social reasons (Chen, 2009; Guthrie et al., 2013; Howard, 2010; Knoester, 2009; Lau, 2009; Schutte & Malouff, 2007; Summers, 2013). As participants reflected on the factors currently influencing their motivation to read, many of them made reference to pro-social goals. As Kaitlyn reflected on her reading experiences in high school, she recalled reading books that her best friend recommended in order “to have another thing in common with her.” Bethany shared a similar experience: One of her good friends makes book recommendations, and Bethany explained that she enjoys reading them for what they offer for “finding a common ground” with her friend. Thomas also shared that his mentor often recommends books, which he will read as part of his discipleship group. These findings corroborate earlier findings that indicate social motivation and reading play a role in solidifying relationships (Howard, 2010).

Findings from a different study revealed the importance for socially motivated readers to discuss readings with peers (Knoester, 2009). Christopher shared how important it is to him to have someone with whom he can “bounce off” ideas and information he gains from reading.
Additionally, Kaitlyn shared that she often reads material such as current events in order to enrich her conversations with others. Both of their testimonies corroborate earlier studies indicating that adults often read for conversational purposes (Chen, 2009). Similarly, Stephen (a newlywed with different reading interests from his spouse) admitted that he would like to get back into reading so that he can enjoy reading with his wife; his struggle, however, is finding material that appeals to both of them. He stated that, “it’s not for her. I want to read for myself.” Nonetheless, he recognized it as a tool for finding common ground and a way to relate to her when he said, “Part of it is to enjoy it with her” (Schutte & Malouff, 2007). Findings from this study also corroborate other studies that found females are more likely to read for social reasons than are males (Howard 2010; Lau, 2009).

Furthermore, previous studies have revealed that adults often read for personal enjoyment, to gain knowledge, and to do well in other areas (Chen, 2009; Duncan, 2009; Schutte & Malouff, 2007). One of the sub-themes that emerged from this study pertains to reading for goal attainment. Participants revealed various goals for reading: to perform well in school, to complete job training for work, to become fluent in a different language, to improve reading skills and vocabulary, and to better equip themselves for potential job opportunities. Emily, Grayson, Kaitlyn, Samuel, and Thomas recognized the need to read for gained knowledge and to be well informed. Bethany, Samuel, Abigail, Emily, Lauren, and Kaitlyn shared that they read for personal enjoyment. Reading for enjoyment reflects the dimension of Reading as Part of the Self as reflected in the Adult Motivation for Reading Scale (Schutte & Malouff, 2007).

Extensions to the Literature

One of the themes that emerged from this study and is unique to this study is the factor of forced reading in conjunction with reading experiences and reading motivation. The term forced
reading emerged from participants’ word choices and descriptions of being forced (or made) to read by someone else, either by a parent or by a teacher. Although previous studies on effective reading practices have encouraged teachers to offer students the opportunity of book choice based on personal interest and relevance (possibly viewed as an alternate to forced reading), the term forced reading is lacking in the literature (Fisher & Frey, 2012; Lapp & Fisher, 2009; McGaha & Igo, 2012; McTague & Abrams, 2011). Experiences of forced reading varied among participants.

Stephen and Samuel both shared that they disliked forced reading, and Samuel went so far as to say that it had a negative effect on his reading habits and desire to read. As part of the discussion during the focus group, all five members agreed that forced reading in school often provides negative reading experiences for young students, particularly during adolescence. Abigail attributed these negative reading experiences to students’ being forced to read books they can’t relate to as well as to a lack of “texts in the system about adolescence or growing up.” Then, Thomas and Grayson shared that being forced to read texts that they ended up relating to, however, actually resulted in positive reading experiences; the element of relatability made the difference for them in enjoying forced reading or not. In contrast, Lauren shared that being forced to read by her mother essentially led to her enjoyment of reading because she found an author that she likes. Interestingly, Emily shared mixed feelings about forced reading; she said that although she dislikes it in a way, she also likes it for the value it offers in gained knowledge. Forced reading had various effects on participants’ reading experiences.

In addition to introducing the term forced reading into the literature on literacy and reading motivation, this study extends the literature in other ways. Previous studies involving adult literacy have been conducted on adult reading preferences and habits, adult new readers,
struggling adult readers, and reading comprehension among adults (Chen, 2009; Johnson & Frank, 2013; Jolliffe & Harl, 2008; Summers, 2013). This study has served to extend the literature in the area of adult literacy by providing a voice to young adults aged 18 to 24 and focusing on their reading experiences. Because of this study, participants in this age group were given a voice to share their reading experiences from childhood through young adulthood as well as what factors influence their reading experiences, reading habits and behavior, and desire to read. Short-term and long-term factors on reading motivation were discussed as well as their influence on participants’ current reading habits and desire to read. This age group offered a fresh voice and new findings regarding implications for stakeholders and future recommended research.

**Implications**

The purpose of this study was to describe young adults’ reading experiences. This study was designed in hopes of gleaning information about reading motivation among a population that has been relatively overlooked in the literature. The young adults who participated in this study were able to reflect back on their reading experiences and offer insight regarding those factors that influence reading motivation. They revealed findings that are helpful for parents, caregivers, and educators. Most of all, we are all reminded of the role that we each carry for encouraging one another towards learning and growth.

**Parents and Caregivers**

The home is the first classroom a child has, and parents and caregivers are their first instructors. One theme that emerged from this study pertains to early exposure to books and reading, further corroborating previous studies on reading motivation (Atkinson, 2009; Chen, 2008; Chen & Lu, 2012; Gambrell et al., 2007; Law, 2008; Mansor et al., 2013; Protacio, 2012).
The significance of the role of parents and the home on individuals’ motivation to read cannot be ignored. Although two participants (Emily and Abigail) who are self-professed pleasure readers shared that as children they did not prefer to be read to, they both did attest to the role their parents’ played in communicating the value of reading to them. During the focus group interview, Abigail shared that rather than read to her, her mother provided books and a fun environment for reading. She did state, though, in reference to her bedtime reading ritual: “I think I grew to like it because I had to.” Even though her mother did not read to her, she did provide a nurturing reading environment and encouraged her to read. Parents are responsible for instilling the value of reading in their children.

Thomas, a 21-year-old male, shared that his mother still quotes to him from a book she read to him when he was a small child. Today, Thomas takes the time to read to his 2-year-old nephew in order to build a relationship with him as well as help him better understand words and reading. Penelope, a 20-year-old female, spoke of the significance that lies in her father’s example as well as the accountability he continues to provide regarding her current reading habits. Parents and caregivers are strongly encouraged to be that example for their own children (grandchildren, nephews, nieces, etc.) as a means of instilling an appreciation for the value that reading offers as well as a way for bonding to occur. During the focus group, I asked the participants what they thought parents and adults could do in order to reach children as readers at a young age, Grayson replied, “read with them.” Abigail also suggested the use of audio books as another method for reading with children. And Bethany added, “Let them see you reading.” Parents need to take actions that communicate to their children that reading is valuable and that it can also be enjoyable.
Educators

Two themes that emerged include the factor of forced reading and the factor of personal relevance or interest in conjunction with participants’ reading experiences. With this in mind, educators are encouraged to offer students choice in the classroom. For many students (such as Kaitlyn), they will need teacher guidance and assistance in finding material that is suited to their developing interests. This is when the teacher needs to be informed and needs to utilize other resources (such as the school librarian) in an effort to reach students on a personal level.

Heilman et al. (2002) stated that “an effective teacher of reading must orchestrate the materials based on learner needs” (p. 397). This statement also applies to teachers outside the discipline of reading. Students should be provided choice when appropriate as the instructor provides guidance and feedback. Choice within limits provides educators an opportunity to guide student learning within the boundaries of learning objectives while it also offers students a sense of autonomy over their learning (Atkinson, 2009; Chen, 2009; Gambrell et al., 2007).

That point leads to another important factor that revolves around teachers and the classroom. As such, educators must be reminded of the power they truly have when it comes to reaching students and guiding them toward or away from reading. A positive correlation has been found between student motivation to read and the presence of teacher encouragement to read (De Naeghel et al., 2014; Fisher & Frey, 2012; Lee, 2011). Students are in classrooms for the purpose of learning. Instructors must also remember how critical it is to model reading and writing strategies (Fisher & Frey, 2012). Students need teachers who will encourage autonomous learning through provided structure; these practices in the classroom correlate with enhanced intrinsic reading motivation and reading enjoyment among students (De Naeghel et al., 2014).
Although this may sound obvious or redundant, it is critical for teachers to remember the important role they have of teaching students as opposed to simply disseminating information. Likewise, rather than simply assigning reading, teachers need to encourage students through assisted learning, modeling of reading skills and strategies, and aiding students in finding reading materials that fit their interests and needs (Fisher & Frey, 2012; Lee, 2011). These needs may require professional development that aids content area teachers (middle school, high school, and college level) in modeling reading strategies. Educators and stakeholders are encouraged to consider these findings as they design teacher training, in-service programs, and classroom curriculum.

Although educators in the college setting are challenged in some of the same ways that K-12 educators are, their population of students is expected to enter college with certain skill sets and carry a greater responsibility for their own learning. Specifically regarding young adult students, educators in the college setting are encouraged to reach students in different ways, such as helping them take control over their own learning and reading experiences. For example, they could administer Schutte and Malouff’s Adult Reading Motivation Scale (2007) to freshman students in an effort to better understand and reach these students’ needs early in their college experiences. Perhaps advisors could utilize this information in an effort to guide students in understanding their own reading motivations and aligning those with their short-term and long-term goals.

This practice could aid students with goal attainment as well as reaching a certain level of self-determination in reaching their goals. Students could then complete the scale at the end of freshman year for comparison purposes. With a tangible guide to gauge their reading motivation, perhaps students could be empowered to take control over their reading and learning
experiences. As young adults, they are learning how to be adults in many ways; and being guided to take control over their own learning in the classroom can be an empowering step toward gained independence and furthered autonomy. In summary, educators across all levels are challenged and encouraged to help reach their students, regardless of age or station in life.

**Limitations**

Limitations within research are to be expected, which this transcendental phenomenological study has. Each form of data collection required self-report, which includes the potential for lack of information or limited knowledge due to social desirability. Also, since part of the interview process was asking participants to reflect on reading experiences from childhood through adolescence and current day, there is the likelihood that some experiences are forgotten or not remembered accurately. Throughout the interview process, I noticed participant interpretations of certain questions varied; as such, I did provide clarification where necessary, but this still could have lent itself to variation within responses. Furthermore, as a former educator with a reading endorsement and despite bracketing my own experience, my expertise could have shaped my understandings of the research.

Finally, limited transferability is a factor. Due to the nature of phenomenological research methods, this study included only 12 participants. Although I sought maximum variation among participants, their stories remain unique to them in a county brimming with diversity. As such, it might be difficult to transfer findings from these participants’ stories to participants in other settings. Although transferability is limited, generalizability is not a factor in qualitative research. Consider the use of generalizability in terms of empirical research. Van Manen (2014) states:
Phenomenology is a form of inquiry that does not yield generalizations in the usual empirical sense. The only generalization allowed in phenomenological inquiry is “never generalize” . . . Phenomenological examples . . . may be considered singular generalizations that make it possible to recognize what is universal about a phenomenon (p. 352).

**Recommendations for Future Research**

Although ample research focusing on reading motivation among children and adolescence has been conducted, a gap still exists regarding young adults and reading motivation. Future research in the area of reading motivation as it pertains to young adults will provide further insight into a population of readers that has otherwise been overlooked in the research when compared to children and adolescents. In my own research, I noticed that those participants who have already graduated from college or are close to graduation (ages 21 to 23) offered a certain level of insight when compared to their younger counterparts. This possibly could be due to differing levels of life experience and maturity. In their development of the Adult Motivation for Reading Scale, Schutte and Malouff (2007) noted: “The dimension of Reading as Part of the Self may reflect adults’ longer experience and the opportunity to integrate important aspects of themselves as readers more fully into a self-schema” (pp. 482 - 483). Furthermore, it seems that college students are so inundated with such a great amount of required reading for school that little time for personal reading exists. As such, future research that focuses on young adults aged 21 and older, as well as research that focuses on young adults who have already graduated from or are not attending college, might offer insight on a deeper, more reflective level that is perhaps less affected by the presence of assigned reading that accompanies being a college student.
Since this research aimed for maximum diversity among participants, it is also recommended that future research studies focus on more narrow populations of young adults in order to understand their experiences more deeply. For example, a study focusing on young adults who participated in a particular reading program or reading group could yield beneficial findings pertaining to a specific program. For example, one study could focus on incoming freshman required to take a reading comprehension course, like Kaitlyn. Students could complete the Adult Motivation for Reading Scale at the beginning and end of the course; then, they could be interviewed about any possible changes in motivation. Furthermore, research that focuses on each gender separately could yield more specific themes as they pertain to each gender. Questions should be written based on the current research that reveals gender differences in relation to reading and reading motivation, such as gender and reading for social reasons.

Research utilizing the Adult Motivation for Reading Scale is also recommended. Interview questions could be designed to reflect the four dimensions of adult reading motivation (Reading as Part of the Self, Reading Efficacy, Reading for Recognition, and Reading to Do Well in Other Realms). Then, focus groups could be organized based on participants’ responses on the Adult Motivation for Reading Scale. This would allow the researcher to probe deeper in discussing those factors as reflected in each motivational dimension. By gathering participants who score similarly in the Reading Efficacy dimension, for example, they will have even greater common ground that could yield a rich discussion regarding their reading motivation as they relate to their self-perceptions of their reading ability (Schaffner et al., 2013).

A longitudinal study utilizing the Adult Motivation for Reading Scale could yield potentially beneficial results when administered to incoming freshman at the beginning of a fall
semester and at the end of the following spring semester (or a pre-determined number of earned credit hours). A correlational study comparing level of motivation and college level could offer further insight regarding young adult reading motivation. Comparing incoming freshman responses to graduating senior responses might also offer interesting findings regarding the impact of assigned reading on overall reading motivation among young adults. Studies that aim to better understand the effect various factors have on reading motivation among young adults is important for reaching this population of readers.

It is recommended that future research investigate further the effects of forced reading on reading habits and reading desire with a comparison of gender. Due to the theme of forced reading in conjunction with reading experiences that arose during this research, a study utilizing the Adult Motivation for Reading Scale in conjunction with the role of forced reading on reading experiences or reading motivation is also recommended. The phenomenon of study could be the role that forced reading and choice in reading play on student motivation to read. A similar study utilizing the Adolescent Motivation to Read Profile could be conducted among adolescents (Pitcher et al., 2007). A mixed-methods study also could be conducted. Perhaps participants could complete the reading motivation surveys before and after undergoing an assignment or project involving choice within reading. Another option could include one group who is assigned a specific reading assignment and another group who is given a choice. Before and after responses on the reading survey could be compared as well as responses between groups. Gender comparisons are also recommended. Studies of this nature could provide insight regarding forced reading in the classroom and alternate reading programs that incorporate student book choice in the classroom.
Future research that examines the relationship between developing interests and evolvement of reading motivation would build upon previous research indicating that reading motives among adolescent males might evolve over time (Bozack, 2011). During our interview, Stephen made reference to “developing interests” in conjunction with reading motivation. Longitudinal studies could examine the potential evolution of reading motivation and developing interests among participants in upper school, college, or both. Furthermore, educators could conduct comparative studies that examine differences across gender, socio-economic status, and reading abilities or levels. Future research that focuses on developing interests and their potential effect on reading motivation could offer further insight in the area of reading motivation as educators develop curriculum and implement best teaching practices.

Future research examining student engagement and research-based practices that utilize fiction and non-fiction texts is highly encouraged. Results from the What’s Hot in Literacy survey for 2015 revealed that 100% of respondents agreed that informational and non-fiction texts should be hot in the literature and that 50% of respondents agreed that motivation and engagement should be hot in the literature (Cassidy & Grote-Garcia, 2014). Although this study did not focus on the role that fiction and non-fiction texts play on reading motivation, this topic did arise during the focus group interview. Participants agreed that the use of fiction text is critical in teaching students of all ages. Grayson stated that “If you try to weigh down children with books about just pure information, then they’re just going to lose interest in reading.” Additionally, Bethany said, “[Fiction] lets people explore . . . the impossibilities of the actual world . . . it makes their imagination really explore different places.” Then, regarding the role of fiction during adolescence, Abigail said, “It’s especially important to have fiction, though, because I think you have so many things thrown at you . . . if you don’t have something that is
not the reality . . . you’re going to be a mess.” Furthermore, Bethany poignantly shared the following:

I think part of the important part of fiction books is that when kids are reading, it’s evoking emotion, and emotion is what ingrains the memory into the head. When it’s just information, it just goes in one ear and out the other.

Due to these comments and the current interest in informational and non-fiction texts, future research must assess and examine the role of fiction and non-fiction on student reading motivation.

Although this study has aimed to help fill a gap in the literature regarding young adults and their reading experiences, reading habits and behavior, and desire to read, there is still a need for future research in the area of adult literacy and reading motivation. Ongoing research that focuses on young adults is important for following reading trends among young readers. This population of adults may even offer insight for reaching younger generations of readers. Stakeholders are encouraged to seriously consider these suggestions for future research.

**Summary**

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to describe the factors that influence young adults’ (aged 18 to 24) reading experiences, reading habits and behavior, and desire to read. This phenomenological study that focused on the stories of young adults was necessary in helping to fill a gap in the literature where young adults have been neglected. Analysis of data that was collected through the use of the Adult Motivation for Reading scale, individual interviews, and a focus group interview revealed four themes among the 12 participants who volunteered to be a part of this important study. Although motivation is a construct not to be completely understood, hearing the stories of 12 young adults has offered
significant findings regarding their reading experiences. The four themes that emerged revealed the following four factors that played a significant role in conjunction with participants’ reading experiences: (a) the factor of the self, (b) the factor of others, (c) the factor of teaching and learning, and (d) the factor of forced reading.

The value behind conducting a phenomenological study is that phenomenology seeks to understand a common, lived experience (Creswell, 2013). Van Manen (2014) asserts that “Phenomenology is the way of access to the world as we experience it prereflectively” (p. 28). He further explains prereflective experience as “the ordinary experience that we live in and that we live through for most, if not all, of our day-to-day existence” (p. 28). The value here is that phenomenology places emphasis on the people who partake in such a study, which reminds us of the individuals living the experience rather than focusing on the experience itself. As educators, it is critically important to remember that each student in every classroom is an individual. I believe this study has done that very thing. Too often educators get caught up in scores and reading levels, and students are often left behind along with their reading levels. I believe this is perhaps part of why so much emphasis in reading motivation research has been placed on adolescence: Students are nearing graduation, and educators are trying to raise reading levels prior to graduation. That is also part of why this study that focused on young adults was important. Young adults should not be forgotten, nor can they be neglected. Neglecting this population of readers and non-readers is not a choice if we as a Nation desire for future generations to achieve their goals, attain gainful employment, be overall knowledgeable and active citizens, and generally live more successful and contented lives (Booktrust, 2013; National Endowment for the Arts, 2008; National Research Council, 2012).
Interesting to note is that three of these four themes somehow involve the impact of other people on participants’ reading experiences. This is an important reminder that each of us can play a part in enhancing someone else’s reading experiences. Each person who reads this manuscript is encouraged to consider the reading experiences you can offer someone else, whether you are a parent, an educator, an aunt or uncle, a mentor, or a friend. Let us consider a comment that Abigail made in reference to the role that other people play in our reading experiences: “Whether they’re good or bad, they’re going to influence you to probably read something in some way or another.” Each of us should strive to influence others toward positive reading experiences. As we read, we can share gained information, we can share the experience of reading itself, or we can set an example of reading. Ponder Thomas’s desire to “pour into other people” as he experiences his own personal and spiritual growth through reading; often the materials he reads have been recommended by a mentor. Reading can offer us the chance to grow, and as we grow, we can then nurture others as we foster their experiences. Never forget that even though the person is more important than the experience, it is those experiences that enliven the person.
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K=75071586&S=R&D=euh&EbscoContent=dGJyMMvI7ESeqLA40dvuOLCmr0yep7JS
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Appendix A: Institutional Review Board Approval Letter

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

January 29, 2015

Audra R. Blyseth
IRB Approval 2062.012915: A Phenomenological Study of Adult Reading Motivation

Dear Audra,

We are pleased to inform you that your above study has been approved by the Liberty IRB. This approval is extended to you for one year from the date provided above with your protocol number. If data collection proceeds past one year, or if you make changes in the methodology as it pertains to human subjects, you must submit an appropriate update form to the IRB. The forms for these cases were attached to your approval email.

Thank you for your cooperation with the IRB, and we wish you well with your research project.

Sincerely,

Fernando Garzon, Psy.D.
Professor, IRB Chair
Counseling

(434) 592-4054

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

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Appendix B: Institutional Review Board Consent Form

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board has approved this document for use from 1/29/15 to 1/28/16
Protocol # 2062.012915

CONSENT FORM
A Phenomenology of Adult Reading Motivation
Audra R. Blyseh
Liberty University
School of Education

You are invited to be in a research study of young adults and the factors that influence their reading experiences as well as the impact those factors have on their reading habits/behavior and desire to read. You were selected as a possible participant because you fit the age range between 18 and 24 and have shown an interest in this study. I ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

This study is being conducted by Audra R. Blyseh, a doctoral candidate in the School of Education at Liberty University.

Background Information:

The purpose of this study is to describe the factors that influence young adults' (aged 18 to 24) reading experiences, reading habits/behavior, and desire to read.

Procedures:

If you agree to be in this study, I would ask you to do the following things: First, I ask that you complete the Adult Motivation for Reading Scale, which consists of 21 statements, which you will rate based on a scale of 1 to 5. Next, I will ask that you participate in a one-on-one interview with me and allow me to audio-record that interview; this interview should last at least 45 minutes to an hour, or longer, depending on how much information you have to share with me. Third, I will ask that you participate in a focus group interview with other participants. The focus group interview will also be recorded and should last approximately one to two hours, depending on how much participants share during the group discussion.

Risks and Benefits of being in the Study:

The risk involved with this research is minimal; it is no greater than involved with every day activities.

There are no direct benefits to participants.

The benefits of this study to society include the following: a greater understanding of reading motivation among young adults will provide educators insight into their own educational practices. Libraries and similar organizations may be able to utilize the information in the formation of book clubs or other activities to engage readers, for example.

Compensation:

You will receive the opportunity for your name to be placed in a drawing for a gift card of $25 to a local restaurant or retailer of your choice. Early withdrawal from the study will result in your name not being included in the drawing.
Confidentiality:

The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report I might publish, I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. All participants will be assigned a pseudonym and any identifying information (such as school affiliation) will also be assigned a pseudonym. Research records will be stored securely in a safe in the researcher's home and only the researcher and her spouse will have access to the records. Once the three-year retention period has passed, paper records will be shred and thrown away. Recorded interviews will be erased. I cannot assure that any information shared during a focus group interview will not be shared by other participants or that participants will maintain the subject's confidentiality and privacy.

How to Withdraw from Study:
If at any time you decide to withdraw from this study, please contact me via phone (901-486-4588) or email (arblyseth@liberty.edu) to let me know you will no longer be participating in the study. If you choose to withdraw, I will shred and throw away any paperwork pertaining to your Adult Motivation for Reading Scale as well as erase and delete any audio recordings that have taken place.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free to answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

Contacts and Questions:

The researcher conducting this study is Audra R. Blyseth. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you are encouraged to contact her through email at arblyseth@liberty.edu or phone at 901-486-4588. Her advisor is Dr. Gina Thomason and can be reached through email at gthomason@liberty.edu.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, you are encouraged to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Suite 1837, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at irb@liberty.edu.

You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.

Statement of Consent:

I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

☐ I understand that all interviews will be audio-recorded, and I consent to having interviews with my participation audio-recorded.

Signature: _______________________________ Date: ______________

Signature of Investigator: ______________________ Date: ______________
Appendix C: Adult Motivation for Reading Scale

**Adult Motivation for Reading Scale**

Developed by Nicola Schutte and John Malouff  
Reproduced with Permission

Following are statements about reading. For each statement, please decide what is most true for you and write a number next to the statement using the following scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Your Rating</th>
<th>Item</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>___</td>
<td>1. If a book or article is interesting, I don’t care how hard it is to read.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___</td>
<td>2. Without reading, my life would not be the same.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___</td>
<td>3. My friends sometimes are surprised at how much I read.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___</td>
<td>4. My friends and I like to exchange books or articles we particularly enjoy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___</td>
<td>5. It is very important to me to spend time reading.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___</td>
<td>6. In comparison to other activities, reading is important to me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___</td>
<td>7. If I am going to need information from material I read, I finish the reading well in advance of when I must know the material.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___</td>
<td>8. Work performance or university grades are an indicator of the effectiveness of my reading.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___</td>
<td>9. I set a good model for others through reading.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___</td>
<td>10. I read rapidly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___</td>
<td>11. Reading helps make my life meaningful.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
12. It is important to me to get compliments for the knowledge I gather from reading.

13. I like others to question me on what I read so that I can show off my knowledge.

14. I don’t like reading technical material.

15. It is important to me to have others remark on how much I read.

16. I like hard, challenging books or articles.

17. I don’t like reading material with difficult vocabulary.

18. I do all the expected reading for work or university courses.

19. I am confident I can understand difficult books or articles.

20. I am a good reader.

21. I read to improve my work or university performance.
Appendix D: Permission to Reproduce Adult Motivation for Reading Scale

RE: Doctoral Student Seeking Permission
Nicola Schutte [nschutte@une.edu.au]

You replied on 7/1/2015 3:24 PM.

Sent: Tuesday, June 30, 2015 6:31 PM
To: Blyseth, Audra Rashea

Thank you for your message. Congratulations on almost having completed your PhD. You are welcome to attach the scale as an appendix.

Kind regards, Nicola Schutte

From: Blyseth, Audra Rashea [mailto:arblyseth@liberty.edu]
Sent: Wednesday, 1 July 2015 5:40 AM
To: Nicola Schutte; John Malouff
Subject: Doctoral Student Seeking Permission

Dr. Schutte and Dr. Malouff,

I am writing in regards to your Adult Motivation for Reading Scale. Last year, you granted me permission to use your scale in my doctoral study on young adult reading motivation. I want to again express my gratitude. I have completed my research and will be defending my dissertation next week on July 9.

After my defense is over, I will be required to publish my dissertation. I am now requesting permission to include your Adult Reading Motivation Scale as an Appendix in my published dissertation. Your names will appear on the scale itself, and I have referenced you multiple times throughout my paper.

I would like to request permission now so that I will be prepared to move forward with next steps following my defense next week.

Again, my deepest gratitude as I could not have completed my study without the use of your scale!

Audra R. Blyseth
Appendix E: Permission for Use of Adult Reading Motivation Scale

RE: Doctoral Student Seeking Advice

Nicola Schutte <nschutte@une.edu.au>

Tue 6/10/2014 7:46 PM
Inbox
To: Blyseth, Audra Rashea <arbleyseth@liberty.edu>

Yes, there is only the one reading motivation measure we developed.

All the best, Nicola Schutte

From: Blyseth, Audra Rashea [mailto:arbleyseth@liberty.edu]
Sent: Wednesday, 11 June 2014 5:32 AM
To: Nicola Schutte
Subject: FW: Doctoral Student Seeking Advice

Dr. Shutte,

I meant the Adult Reading Motivation Scale not Questionnaire.

I believe this is the one you mean, I just want to make sure since it is the only one with which I am familiar.

Audra R. Blyseth

From: Blyseth, Audra Rashea
Sent: Tuesday, June 10, 2014 12:59 PM
To: Nicola Schutte
Subject: RE: Doctoral Student Seeking Advice

Thank you, Dr. Schutte, for the feedback. This is helpful.

Are you referring to the Adult Reading Motivation Questionnaire you and Dr. Malouff developed and published in 2007?

I would like to request permission to use that one as well.

Audra R. Blyseth

From: Nicola Schutte <nschutte@une.edu.au>
Sent: Monday, June 9, 2014 6:44 PM
To: Blyseth, Audra Rashea
Subject: RE: Doctoral Student Seeking Advice

Thanks for your message. Your project sounds very interesting. Regarding change in reading motivation, if you use a
Appendix F: Semi-structured Interview Questions

Begin each interview by asking participants to tell you about themselves: Did you grow up here? Where did you go to school? Are you currently in college? Where? Have you declared a major? Do you work? What is your current occupation? After he/she responds to each question, answer the question yourself. Next, transition into the interview questions:

1. How would you describe yourself as a reader?
2. What are your reading habits? (for example, reading before bed, reading more than one book at a time, reading to help you accomplish a task or goal)
3. What types of materials do you read? (for example, magazines, religious material, novels, fiction, online material)
4. Describe your reading experiences as a child. Which people, places, and stories significantly impacted those experiences? (for example, parents, grandparents, a caretaker or babysitter, older siblings, bedtime stories, trips to the library or book store, going to reading time) How did they make you feel about reading?
5. Describe your reading experiences as a teenager (during middle school and high school). Who and what impacted those experiences? (For example, teachers, school assignments, book clubs, Bible studies) How did they make you feel about reading?
6. Describe your reading experiences after high school. Who (authority figures and peers, for example) and what have significantly impacted your reading experiences?
7. Would you describe your motivation to read as internal, external, or both? Explain.
8. What are the factors that currently influence your motivation to read?
9. How have the influences on your reading experiences affected your reading habits/behavior?
10. How have the influences on your reading experiences affected your desire to read?
Appendix G: Semi-structured Interview Questions

1. How important is reading in your everyday life?

2. How important is reading to achieve your long-term goals?

3. What social or societal factors have influenced your reading experiences? (social media, movies, family, friends or peers, mentors, church, or politics, for example)

4. What influence has school or work had on your reading experiences? (This may include assigned or unassigned reading).

5. How have external factors (family, friends, social media, school, work, a movie you liked that was based on a book) influenced your desire to read?

6. Can you recall an instance when you read something because of an external factor/extrinsic motivation (school, a project, for example) and the result was that you were motivated to read other materials (related or not related to that particular reading material)? If so, please describe.

7. What factors have had the greatest impact on your reading experiences?

8. What factors hinder your reading experiences?

9. Have we left out anything?