A STUDY OF PARENTAL READING ATTITUDE AND SELECTED SCHOOL LIFE VARIABLES AS PREDICTORS OF THE READING ATTITUDE AND READING ACHIEVEMENT OF GRADE EIGHT STUDENTS

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By

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Abstract

This study sought to investigate the relationship between selected school-life variables: parental reading attitude and the reading attitude and reading achievement of the grade eight student.

The subjects of this study were one hundred and forty students from an urban and a rural school in Central Newfoundland. All students completed the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test (Canadian edition), Level E, Form 1, the Estes Attitude Scale for reading and the School-Life scale. The parent sample completed the Parent Attitude Scale, an instrument designed by the investigator to assess parental attitude toward reading.

After the data were collected, the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was used to determine the significance of the relationship between the dependent and independent variables of the study. Correlation coefficients were calculated for the total group of subjects and for males and females separately.

At the .05 level of confidence, statistically significant correlations were found between many of the variables of this study. The correlation between reading attitude and reading achievement in this study supports the theory that attitude toward reading and reading achievement are directly related. Another variable that was found to be significantly associated with the students' reading achievement was the reading attitude of

the parent or guardian. It was found that significant correlations existed between the reading attitude of the maternal and paternal parent or guardian and the reading achievement of both the male and female student. With regard to reading attitude, it was found that the reading attitude of the paternal parent significantly correlated with the female students' reading attitude, while the maternal reading attitude was significantly associated with the reading attitude of the male students. Correlations between maternal reading attitude and the female students' reading attitude and between paternal reading attitude and the reading attitude of the male student were not significant at the .05 level of confidence.

The school life variables found to be significantly related to the reading attitude of both sexes were the students' perceptions of their identity, opportunity and quality of school life. A positive relationship was also found between the reading attitude of the female students and their perceptions of their status. A significant inverse relationship existed between quality of school life and reading attitude when the total group was analyzed. Only the students' perceptions of their opportunities were significantly associated with the reading achievement of the total population of students. When analyzed by sex group, none of the school life variables significantly correlated with the students'

reading achievement. Students' perceptions of their teachers did not significantly correlate with either the students' reading attitude or reading achievement when analyzed by sex group. However, a positive association did exist between reading attitude and students' perceptions of their teachers when the total population was assessed.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Today's educators are convinced that attitude toward reading and reading achievement are interrelated. Ransbury's (1973) data provide support for this contention. In a related study she found that fifth and sixth grade students attribute their attitudes toward reading primarily to their ability to read; that is, the greater their achievement in reading, the more positive their attitudes toward reading became. Bond and Tinker (1973) believe that successful readers tend to form positive attitudes.

This widespread acknowledgement of the relationship between reading attitude and achievement has led many educators to try to determine which factors contribute to the development of positive attitudes toward reading and reading achievement. Askov and Fishbach (1973) studied the attitude of both sexes in relation to reading achievement. They reported that in both grades one and three the mean attitude scores for girls were significantly higher than for boys, before and after removing the effects of achievement. Somewhat similarly, Hansen (1969) contended that girls had a significantly more positive reading attitude than boys and read a

significantly greater number of books. However, Denny and Weintraub (1966) found few differences regarding attitudes toward reading based on the sex of the child. Elliott (1983) reported that "sex was not a determinant of differences in reading comprehension for grade three pupils. However, by grade six, there was a strong relationship between sex and reading, in favour of girls" (p. 61).

Another factor that has long been associated with reading attitude and achievement is the socioeconomic class of the learner. Barton (1963) concluded from his study that the single most important factor influencing reading achievement at school is socioeconomic class. Feldman and Weiner (1964), on the other hand, reported a negligible relationship between socioeconomic status and attitude toward reading.

It has also been asserted by some educators that the higher a child's intellectual level, the more positive is his or her attitude toward reading. However, the few research studies available do not seem to support this position. A study of fourth graders by Hansen (1969) indicated that intelligence is not a valid predictor of reading attitude. Hansen also studied the impact of the home literacy environment on attitudes toward reading. He found that the attitudes of fourth graders toward reading was positively correlated with the extent of parental involvement in the child's reading activities. It was

also suggested that it wasn't necessary for parents to be avid readers, provided they valued reading and gave encouragement to the child. Torrey (1969) maintained that neither high verbal ability nor cultural stimulation in the direction of reading is necessary in learning to read. John, the subject of Torrey's study, was not read to at home nor were his parents readers. John apparently learned to read by reading the everyday print in his immediate environment (i.e., words found in television commercials and labels of cans). Clark (1976) agreed with Torrey on the importance of everyday print in learning to read when she said:

> Although these early reading experiences for some of the children were in books from which they had enjoyed stories, for some of the children the print in their immediate environment played an important role. This was particularly true of the boys who showed interest in sign-posts, car names, captions on television and names on products at the supermarket. (p. 51)

Ramsey (1962) conducted a study to determine which factors help to determine a good or poor reader. He found good and poor readers to be clearly different in terms of sex, level of intelligence, and length of time in attendance at their present school. Distinct differences were also found in the number of books owned and read, adequacy of time to read, and reasons for reading. Sauls (cited in Langford and Allen, 1983) also found "a positive relationship between the number of books read and the

students' reading comprehension and attitude toward reading" (p. 194).

Rowell (1972), in his investigation of factors related to change in attitude toward reading, found statistically significant relationships in four areas. These were between change in attitude toward reading and achievement in (a) recognition of words in isolation, (b) level of comprehension, (c) recognition of letter sounds, and (d) syllabication. Significant relationships were not found between change in attitude toward reading and sex, socioeconomic status, and age.

Walberg and Tsai (1985) conducted a study to examine specific correlates of reading attitude and achievement. They concluded that the strongest correlates of reading achievement were reading attitude, stimulus materials in the home environment, the use of English in the home, and kindergarten attendance. They further stated that "children with more highly educated parents had higher achievement and attitude scores" (p. 165). Reading attitudes, though less predictable than achievement, are significantly correlated with achievement, dictionary use, spare-time reading, home environment and stimulus materials, the use of English in the home, and kindergarten attendance.

A review of the literature, therefore, reveals that there are many factors which may play a significant role

in the development of positive attitudes toward reading and reading achievement.

The Problem

For the past two decades, educators have tried to identify factors that influence cognitive achievement and affective attitudes toward school. A review of the literature reveals that the factors more closely connected with learning fall into three categories: (a) student aptitude, (b) instruction, and (c) environmental factors. Student aptitude includes factors such as student age, ability, and motivation; instruction includes the amount and quality of instruction; environmental factors, which include the psychological environments of the home, school, and peer group pressure outside the school; and exposure to mass media, particularly television (Walberg and Tsai, 1985)..

A study of the research conducted in the area of reading attitude and achievement revealed many studies and observations concerned with the nature of the relationship between these variables and parental reading attitude. Evidence is presented in the literature that the reading attitude of the student is directly related to the parents' attitude toward reading. Filangieri (1979), in support of this contention, stated:

> The attitudes children have when they enter school are usually those which are acquired at home from their parents. The parental role in forming attitudes in their children can play an important part in their development in school. Children tend to reflect their parents' ideas. (p. 5)

Betts (1976), in support of Filangieri, contended:

> There are attitudes that take a learner to reading, and there are attitudes that defeat the learner. These attitudes are learned in the home, in the school, and in activities with peers. As a consequence, learners are prisoners of attitudes that interfere with or facilitate their abilities to cope with reading--study situations. (p. 45)

Educators have also been concerned with the extent to which educational institutions meet the needs of individual students. Apparently, it seems that when needs are met, a person tends to be well-adjusted; conversely, when needs are not met, a person tends to be maladjusted. There are numerous citations in the literature pertaining to studies of student attitudes towards both themselves and various aspects of school life. Some of these studies focus on the development of these attitudes, but most are concerned with effects on achievement and/or commitment to school. Williams and Batten (1981) stated that "motivation and ability have always been part of the achievement equation, and student attitudes to school, teachers or courses, have been built into these models in attempts to capture the motivational components of achievement" (p. 1).

The thrust of this argument is that students who are happier, more enthusiastic, more engaged in life in school

are likely to learn more and perform better on achievement tests. However, as Epstein and McPartland (1976) point out, little, if any systematic study has been conducted into the aspects of school life that evoke these feelings. Instead, positive attitudes to school have been considered important only for their association with academic success.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between (1) quality of school life, (2) parental reading attitude, and (3) the students' perceptions of their status, identity, teachers, and opportunity on the reading attitude and reading achievement of grade eight students. To determine the relationship between these variables, a number of hypotheses were tested.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were examined to determine if a significant positive correlation existed between the dependent and independent variables of this study.

1. A positive correlation exists between the reading attitude of the student and his/her reading achievement.

2. A positive correlation exists between both the reading attitude and reading achievement of the student, and the reading attitude of the parent or guardian.

3. A positive correlation exists between the quality of school life, and the reading attitude and reading achievement of the student.

4. A positive correlation exists between the perceived status of the student, and his her reading attitude and reading achievement.

5. A positive correlation exists between the perceived identity of the student, and his/her reading attitude and reading achievement.

6. A positive correlation exists between the students' perceptions of their teachers, and their reading attitude and reading achievement.

7. A positive correlation exists between the perceived opportunity of the student, and his/her reading attitude and reading achievement.

Significance of the Study

Since attitudes are representative of one's value system, it would appear reasonable to assume that one's attitudinal structure plays a part in determining which activities one chooses to participate in and the extent to which that participation is both positive and constructive. If this indeed be the case, then a

student's attitude towards school life should influence his or her interest and effort in using the institution for the purpose of self advancement.

The problem of dissatisfaction with school life among children is of theoretical and practical significance to educators. At the theoretical level, dissatisfaction with school becomes part of a broader area of inquiry which aims at an understanding of the student's functioning in an educational setting. At a practical level, the question of why children like or dislike school is directly related to the immediate problems of school dropouts, grouping procedures, planning for the exceptional child, and so on. One possible explanation for dissatisfaction with school is that low scholastic achievement is a concomitant of dissatisfaction with the institution. Thus, one would expect to find heightened dissatisfaction among students of low ability or those who are unable to cope adequately with scholastic material, and the reversal for students of high or moderate ability (Jackson and Getzels, 1959). However, as Jackson and Lahaderne (1967) indicate, "Educational research has not yet provided a confirmation of this logically compelling expectation" (p. 15).

Epstein and McPartland (1976), writing on the importance of positive reactions to school life contended that

> Student reactions to school are indicators of the quality of school life. Positive reactions to school may increase the likelihood that students will stay in school, develop lasting commitment to learning, and use the institution to advantage. (p. 27)

It has also been asserted by different writers (e.g. Childrey [1981], Sutton [1964]) that the attitudes that a student acquires toward reading and his reading achievement are to a degree influenced by his or her immediate family. Negley (1980), in support of this contention, stated that

> A child's attitude will influence the manner with which each new task is approached. It will often influence whether a student is successful or unsuccessful. Parental attitude will definitely influence the child's. When you, the parent, show interest in your child's achievement, the youngster will be stimulated to achieve. When you show that you value reading and learning, your child will acquire a similar value. When you demonstrate enthusiasm for school and learning, your enthusiasm will be contagious. (p. 6)

Accordingly, it would seem that a student's attitude toward reading would influence his or her achievement in reading.

It was felt by the investigator that if the findings of this study substantiated the hypotheses being tested, then other studies could be initiated to determine how to change the aspects of school life that evoke negative feelings and to evaluate these changes as they affect reading attitude and reading achievement. If a significant positive correlation is deemed to exist between parental reading attitude and the reading attitude

and reading achievement of the student, it then becomes apparent that if teachers are to improve the reading attitudes and achievement of their students, they must engage the assistance of the parents. Teachers will have to impress upon parents the impact of their attitude toward reading on the reading attitude and reading achievement of their children.

At the time of this study, empirical research on the effect of quality of school life and parental reading attitude on student attitude toward reading and achievement in reading is limited. Nevertheless, a chain of convictions and implied assumptions can be obtained from the literature which connects these variables. At no stage, however, in the chain of argument is there sufficient empirical evidence to justify these convictions. McMillan (1980), writing on the importance of positive attitudes and the need for research into attitude development, felt that

> Student attitude development can be considered a "basic skill", because it is a prerequisite to effective cognitive learning and positive mental health. However, there has been relatively little research of casual factors of attitudes. There is a need for basic research in this area to better specify the conditions that promote positive attitudes. (p. 240)

It is this paucity of research on the causal factors affecting reading attitude and the impact of parental reading attitude and the quality of school life on these attitudes and reading achievement that stimulated the investigator's desire to conduct this study.

Operational Definitions

This section contains a brief description, operationally defined, of each of the variables used in the study.

Reading Achievement. Reading achievement refers to the measure of a child's ability to perform those skills necessary for him to carry out the process of reading. For the purpose of the present study, the skill areas were vocabulary and comprehension. To measure their reading achievement, the students in this study completed the two subtests of the Canadian edition of the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Tests, Level E, Form 1.

Student Reading Attitude. Student reading attitude refers to scores obtained by the students on the Estes Attitude Scale for reading. The score is a quantitative reflection of each student's feelings toward reading. Backman and Secord (1964) define "attitude" as "certain regularities of an individual's feelings, thoughts and predispositions to act towards some aspect of the environment" (p. 97).

Parental Reading Attitude. Parental reading attitude refers to scores obtained by the parents or guardians on the Parent Attitude Scale. This score is a reflection of how each parent or guardian feels about reading.

Quality of School Life. Quality of school life refers to scores obtained by the students on the School

Life scale. The School Life instrument measures the students' feelings about their school environment.

Identity. Identity refers to scores obtained by the students on the identity items of the School Life scale. Identity refers to the "inward experience of being able to symbolize for oneself an answer to the question, 'Who am I?' . . . in relation to the larger society" (Williams and Batten, 1981: 16). It is the development of self-awareness in relation to the larger society.

Perceptions of Teachers. Perceptions of teachers refers to scores obtained by the students on the items dealing with student perceptions of their teachers on the School Life scale. It involves the perceptions of students toward their teachers with regard to fair and just treatment of students, providing assistance with school work, and overall concern for their education.

Opportunity. Opportunity refers to scores obtained by the students on the opportunity domain items of the School Life scale. Opportunity involves the relevance of schooling, feelings of security in being confident of fair treatment, and feelings of adequacy in coping with assigned tasks (Williams and Batten, 1981).

Limitations and Assumptions of the Study

The investigator claims validity only to the population from which the sample was drawn, although he

realizes the possibility that similar schools in the same geographic region might display somewhat similar results.

The assumption has been made that all instruments used in the study were valid, and that all respondents gave answers which were representative of their true feelings.

In addition, since the analysis of the data is based on correlational relationships, it is, therefore, not possible to infer causal connections.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter summarizes some of the theoretical background and research findings which relate to reading attitudes and achievement. It is divided into four segments, as follows: attitude theory, reading attitudes and achievement, the impact of parental reading attitudes on student reading attitudes and achievement, and the quality of school life.

Attitudinal Theory

In 1935, Allport termed attitude "the most distinctive and indispensable concept in contemporary American social psychology" (Simbardo and Ebbesen, 1969:1). Since this landmark survey and analysis of attitudes by Allport, theorists continue to find the concept of attitude important. One possible reason for the popularity of the attitude concept is that social psychologists have assumed that attitudes have something to do with social behavior. Cohen (cited in Thomas, 1971) stated,

> Most of the investigators whose work we have examined make the broad psychological assumption that since attitudes are evaluative predispositions, they have consequences for the way people act toward others, for the programs they actually undertake, and for the manner in which they carry them out. Thus attitudes are

> always seen as precursors of behavior, as determinants of how a person will actually behave in his daily affairs. (p. 135)

Despite the popularity of the concept of attitude, no single definition can be found to satisfy all those who study attitudes. This, according to Green (1977), is largely a consequence of the broadness of the term, which permits various definitions reflecting the theoretical point of view of each student of attitudes. Allport (cited in McMillan, 1980) defined attitude as "a mental and neural state of readiness to respond that is organized through experience and which exerts a directive and/or dynamic influence on behavior" (p. 216).

In summarizing major ideas in attitude theory, Triandis (1971) stressed that there are three components of any attitude: cognitive, affective, and behavioral. According to Triandis "an attitude is an idea charged with emotion which predisposes a class of actions to a particular class of social situations" (p. 2).

McMillan (1980), after analyzing many definitions of attitudes, contends that a certain degree of commonality is apparent in most of them. According to McMillan (1980), most researchers agree that "attitudes are learned predispositions that influence behavior; they vary in intensity, must be inferred from some type of behavior, are usually consistent over time with similar situations, and are almost always complex in their compositions" (p. 216).

Using these agreed-upon characteristics, McMillan (1980) contended that "an attitude refers to a set of evaluative beliefs, emotions, and behaviors, which predisposes a tendency to act in a particular way toward an object in a class of social situations" (p. 218).

An examination of attitude research reveals many current conceptualizations of the origin and development of attitudes. Allport (cited in Warren and Jahoda, 1973) identified four conditions for the formation of attitudes:

> the integration of numerous specific responses within an organized structure; the differentiation of more specific action patterns and conceptual systems from primordial, nonspecific attitudes of approach and withdrawal; trauma, involving a compulsive organization of the mental field following a single intense emotional experience; and the adoption of attitudes by imitation of parents, teachers, or peers. (p. 29)

Katz and Statland (cited in Koch, 1958) exhibit what might be called a functional approach to the study of attitude formation. Their major premise is that attitudes develop in the process of the organism fulfilling some need. These authors argue that the affective component of attitudes serves as the avenue through which attitudes are acquired. A similar view is held by Staats (cited in Fishbein, 1967), who holds that an attitude is an emotional response to a stimulus that is usually of social significance. Other aspects of attitudes, namely the cognitive and the behavioral components receive less consideration.

Allport (cited in Triandis, 1971) stated that

> the majority of attitudes held by a person are acquired from talking with his family and friends. Although these attitudes are not intense, other people are nevertheless the sources of information for so many of our attitudes. (pp. 101-102)

In social psychological theory, it has long been recognized that an individual's membership groups have an important influence on the values and attitudes he holds. Siegel and Siegel (1957) conducted an investigation of the relationship between reference groups, membership groups, and attitude change. The results of their study imply that the individual's social group exerts an influence on his attitude, modifying them in the direction of conformity to the group norm. They also state that individuals tend to associate themselves with those who have similar attitudes.

Attempts at influencing and changing attitudes are a part of everyday living. In our western culture, the total socialization process of which schooling is a fundamental part includes a continuing process of attitude change and formation. Zimbardo and Ebbesen (1970) have outlined some of the variables found to be of significance for changing attitudes. Among these variables are: (a) the characteristics of the source of the communication, primarily his credibility, expertise, and trustworthiness; (b) the communication itself, the relevance of the arguments and content of the communication; and (c) the characteristics of the audience, which include such

variables as intelligence, personality traits, and motivational level.

Triandis (1971) contends that we form and develop attitudes "to understand the world around us, to protect our self-esteem, to adjust in a complex world, and to express our fundamental values" (p. 101). These attitudes, however, can be changed. Triandis (1971) said that

> Attitude change can occur by first changing the cognitive component (for example, with new information), the affective component (for example, by pleasant or unpleasant experiences in the presence of the attitude object) or the behavioral component (for example, by norm change, or the legal imposition of behavioral changes). It can change also by forcing a person to act or by presenting him with "fait accompli". (p. 143)

Triandis (1971) stated that when we analyze the attitude change process we must consider

> the effect of who says what, how, to whom, and with what effect. The who concerns the source of a message. The what is the message itself. The how is the channel in which the message is delivered, and the effect may include changes in attention, comprehension, yielding, retention, or action. (p. 145)

Brown (1965) contends that the human mind strives toward consistent relationships and that attitudes will change in an attempt to restore a state of balance to a disrupted cognitive organization. The idea of consistency implies that individuals expect certain ideas, feelings, or actions to be related to or follow from others.

Bloom (1976) employed the concept of classical learning to attitude formation and change. The basic

paradigm of classical learning is that a temporal association of two objects or events causes behavior spontaneously elicited by one stimulus to be elicited by the other. According to Bloom (1976), a student's feelings toward various subjects are established over many years during which the student either succeeds or fails in mastering the subject. The notion is that as students experience pleasure, pride, and other positive emotions after achievement, this positive affect will be paired or associated with the subject. Bloom (1976) provided evidence to illustrate that math students in the top and bottom fifth of their class academically develop attitudes that are congruent with their perception of their math ability.

Operant learning, another method of attitude formation and change, "depends for its effect on the operation of reinforcements or rewards" (Green, 1977: 123). The belief is that if a person performs an act that is rewarding in itself or is followed by a verbal or material reward, the act is likely to be repeated. According to Insko (cited in McMillan, 1980), if pupils say how much they enjoyed their reading, then a teacher can affect attitude toward reading by reinforcing this positive response.

Another method of attitude development is modeling. This approach contends that if a person "is admired, respected, and perceived as having good intentions, that

person can influence another's behavior vicariously" (McMillan, 1980: 227). Triandis (1971) summarizes research that indicates the extent to which one person can influence another. Triandis (1971) contends that,

> If the source is viewed as competent (people who have knowledge, ability, skill, expertness), attractive (physical aspects, clothes, demographic characteristics, friendliness, pleasantness), powerful (distribution of rewards and punishments), and credible (trustworthy intentions), he or she is most likely to be influential. The audience, depending upon their needs, will incorporate and use information related by persons with these characteristics. (McMillan, 1980: 226)

A number of theories have been proposed that incorporate some variation of the theme that inconsistency among cognitive elements is unpleasant to the subject and that certain individuals will naturally attempt to reduce these inconsistencies. Festinger proposed a theory of cognitive dissonance in 1957. The theory states that dissonance (i.e., cognitive inconsistency) exists whenever one cognitive element conflicts with (is dissonant with) another cognitive element. The magnitude of the dissonance is a function of two things, namely "the importance of the elements and the weighted proportion of the elements that are in a dissonant relationship" (Kiesler, Collins and Miller, 1969: 194). Festinger (cited in Kiesler, Collins and Miller, 1969) lists, as follows, three theoretical ways of reducing dissonance:

1. The person may change a cognitive element related to his behavior.

2. The person may change a cognitive element related to his environment.

3. The third way a person may reduce dissonance is to add new cognitive elements to one cluster or the other or both. (pp. 197-198)

Heider (cited in Kiesler, Collins and Miller, 1969) argued that if a person P likes another person O and likes an object X, there will be a tendency for P to like X. Heider's theory is concerned with the relationship among three things: the perceiver, another person, and some object. A balanced state of affairs occurs when all three links are positive (everybody likes everybody else) or when there are two negative links. If, however, only one of the three or all three links are negative, the system is said to be unbalanced. When this happens, there will be a tendency to change some of these links in the direction of balance. This imbalance can be resolved by the following four points:

1. conforming with the associate's judgments,

2. rejecting the associate as less competent than he had been though to be,

3. underrecalling the extent of the disagreement,

4. devaluating the importance of the topics under discussion. (Triandis, 1971: 70)

Abelson and Rosenberg (cited in Kiesler, Collins and Miller, 1969) criticize Heider's theory on the following three grounds. They argue that:

1. The Heiderian model generates no systematic research program.

2. Heider's model deals mainly with interpersonal perception, whereas they want to extend the model to all cognitive processes in which the objects cognized are of affective significance to the cognizer.

3. The model has not been extended beyond the P-O-X triad to parallel the complexities of structure found in real cognitive process. (p. 171)

Another major contributor to attitude theory development was Hovland. His theoretical orientation is concisely summarized in his belief that the "Formation of the attitude problem in terms of behavior theory ... requires interest to be focused on the intervening symbolic processes that mediate the acquisition, differentiation, and the extinction of attitudinal responses" (Greenwald, Brock, and Ostrom, 1968: 25).

Much of Hovland's work with regard to attitude change was done with Sherif. The central contention of Sherif and Hovland's theory is that judgmental principles are central to an understanding of the organization of attitudes and the circumstances under which they can be changed. The theory, according to Kiesler, Collins, and Miller (1969), views attitude change as a two-stage process.

> First, one makes a judgment about the position of the persuasive communication relative to one's own position. Attitude change occurs after this categorization or judgment. The amount of attitude change depends on the judged discrepancy between the communication and the respondent's own position. (p. 240)

In the social judgment theory, the most extreme positions to which the subject has ever been exposed function as two anchors, and the geometric mean of all the positions he has been exposed to function as the neutral point for making judgments about attitude statements. The position that is most acceptable to an individual plus other acceptable positions constitute the individual's latitude of acceptance. The position that is most objectionable to an individual plus other objectionable positions define his latitude of rejection. The remaining positions define his latitude of noncommitment (Triandis, 1971). Sherif and Hovland (cited in Kiesler, Collins, and Miller, 1969) present several propositions which presumably are consequences of the judgmental effects of the theory. They are as follows:

1. When persuasive attempts fall within his latitude of acceptance, an individual's opinion changes.

2. When they fall within his latitude of rejection he does not change his opinion.

3. As discrepancy between the respondent's own stand and the position advocated by the communication increases, there will be greater opinion change provided that the advocated stand does not fall within the latitude of rejection.

4. For communications which advocate positions within the latitude of rejection, increased discrepancy produces less opinion change. Thus, some point presumably close to the boundary between the latitude of noncommitment and the latitude of rejection defines the inflection point

> in the curvilinear function relating discrepancy to opinion change. (p. 248)

Kiesler, Collins, and Miller (1969) contend that one of the major criticisms of the social judgment theory is that the ratings are influenced by the judge's own attitude.

In summary, there are two major or general conceptions of attitude current in the literature. While both of these conceptions of attitude have certain elements in common (e.g., both assumed a stimulus-response framework), they differ in the kinds of inferences their proponents would derive from the behavior referent or responses. These two conceptions are: (a) probability conceptions and (b) latent process conceptions.

The probability concept implies that

> attitudinal responses are more or less consistent. That is, a series of responses toward a given attitudinal stimulus is likely to show some degree of organization, structure, or predictability... The attitude then, is an inferred property of the responses, namely their consistency. (Thomas, 1971: 317)

The latent process conception

> begins with the fact of response consistency, but goes a step beyond and postulates the operation of some hidden or hypothetical variable, functioning within the behaving individual, which shapes, acts upon, or mediates the observable behavior. That is, the observable organization of behavior is said to be due to or can be explained by the action of some mediating latent variable. The attitude, then, is not the manifest responses themselves, or their probability, but an intervening variable operating between stimulus and responses and inferred from the overt behavior. (Thomas, 1971: 317)

Reading Attitudes and Achievement

The importance of attitude in the acquisition of reading skills has received a great deal of attention. This mushrooming of interest in the affective dimensions of reading can be attributed to the assumption that attitudes toward reading influence achievement in reading. Koe (1975), in his discussion of the importance of attitude in reading, asserted that, "If we want the teaching of reading to count, negative attitudes toward this potent skill must be changed" (p. 342), while Wilson and Hall (cited in Schofield, 1980) stated that a positive attitude is "essential for successful mastery of the written page" (p. 1).

Smith and Johnson (1980) contended that children with the necessary reading abilities, but with little or no desire to use them are as deprived as the child without the ability to read. Therefore, teachers have the dual responsibility of developing in their students both reading abilities and positive attitudes toward reading. They went on to maintain that no one can learn to value reading without having many satisfying reading experiences, and that "no one can become a facile reader without valuing reading enough to spend many hours learning and strengthening the requisite skills" (p. 354).

Burns and Roe (cited in Langord and Allen, 1983), in agreement with the views of others regarding the importance of a positive attitude, stated that children

with positive attitudes toward reading will expend more effort in the reading process than will children with negative attitudes. They also said that there exists an interrelationship between attitude and achievement; that is, "good attitudes, or feelings, about reading enhances reading achievement and good achievement enhances better feelings about reading" (p. 194).

Houck (1983) also expressed the concern that attitude must be considered along with the development of reading skills when she said, "If we teach a child to read, yet develop not the taste for reading, all of our teaching is for naught. We shall have produced a nation of 'illiterates'--those who know how to read, but do not read" (p. 30). She went on to say that for the reading disabled adolescent who has spent many years labouring over the reading task, a negative attitude may make his attempts to read an "in-class only" activity. This attitude, therefore, further reduces the likelihood that reading will become an efficient tool, not to mention an enjoyable activity.

Hubbard and Salt (1975) also emphasized the importance of attitude in reading, while pointing to a recent widening of interest from the more specifically perceptual factors to the social factors, which are also associated with the complex process of learning to read. They suggested that the "failure of children, often intelligent children, to develop reading attitudes and/or

reading skills at appropriate levels throughout their school careers" (p. 64) may be related to the marked discontinuities between the warm emotional experiences of informal prereading at home and the beginnings of learning to read at school.

Agin (1975), in her overview of research, also stressed the importance of attitudes while acknowledging the general agreement among writers in the field that "teachers are the main difference in the reading process" (p. 372). She went on to maintain that "the attitude of the teacher is the main ingredient...[in] getting children to read" (p. 372). Artley (1975) in support of Agin's conviction regarding the importance of the teacher in the promotion of a positive attitude toward reading stated that

> teachers who sense the importance of reading as a vital force in the development of young people, who see reading as the most important activity that they carry on during the day, and who are able to convey that conviction through their enthusiasm and creative teaching, produce children who are likely to enjoy reading and hence be efficient readers. (p. 31)

Allington (1980), in his study of the amount of reading, orally or silently, actually assigned during classroom reading instruction, reported that "poor readers do not complete equivalent amounts of reading in context generally, and have few opportunities to practice silent reading behaviors particularly" (p. 874). He went on to maintain that since one must read to improve reading abilities, this deficit may be a contributing factor in

poor readers' underachievement. Allington also contended that poor readers were likely to be interrupted following an error and more often had their attention directed to graphic and phonic characteristics of the misread word. Good readers, on the other hand, were interrupted far less often and when interrupted the student was directed to syntactic or semantic information. Allington further stated that if we are to help poor readers overcome their reading difficulties we will have to encourage them "to read larger quantities of material" (p. 875). He also suggested that teachers "use techniques such as sustained silent reading, echoic reading, read-along, or rereading to provide the poorer reader with the opportunity to develop and refine reading abilities" (p. 875).

Holdaway (1979) pointed out that schools seem to spend a great deal of time teaching literacy skills, but leave little time for children to practice those skills. Rather than relying solely on direct instruction in reading, he proposed a developmental approach to literacy, one with an environment rich in literary activities as well as classroom library corners stocked with large supplies of books. To develop and promote voluntary reading, children would be given frequent opportunities to use such areas, to read for recreation, and to practise the skills learned from direct instruction.

McDermott (1977) studied the importance of social relations between teachers and children in the development

of learning environments in classrooms. From this study, McDermott discovered that poor readers spent less time reading than good readers and differential interaction patterns existed between the teacher and the different ability groups. These differences in interaction seemed to favor the good readers. Evidence also suggests that the "efficacy of varying pedagogical styles and ways of learning to read depends on the social relations established with different children in different classrooms' (p. 210). McDermott concluded that the successful acquisition of literacy depends on the achievement of trusting relations between the student and the teacher. For example, when students and teachers are unable to understand each other, children will spend most of their instructional time on relational battles rather than on learning tasks.

Gumperz and Hernandez-Chavez (1972), in accord with the views of McDermott, noted that good readers were provided with fewer corrections when errors occurred than were poor readers. In addition, the errors of the poor readers were often treated out of the context in which they occurred, with the teacher emphasizing phonic characteristics of the misread word. In contrast, good readers' errors were more often analyzed in the context in which they occurred with the teacher commenting on the syntactic or semantic appropriateness of the miscue.

Heath (1983) tells of how children from two culturally different communities came to use language, and how their teachers learned to understand their ways and to bring these ways into the classroom. Heath contended that the different ways that children learned to use language were dependent on the ways in which each community structured their families, defined the roles that community members could assume, and played out their concepts of childhood that guided child socialization. Townspeople children, for instance, came to school with the skills of labeling, naming features, and providing narratives on items out of context. In addition, their home life has also given them extensive exposure to stories and situations in which they and adults manipulate environments imaginatively and talk about the effects of changing one aspect of a context while holding others constant. Roadville and Trackton children, on the other hand, are given few opportunities for extended narratives and manipulating features of an event or item. Summaries of the language socialization of the children in the three groups studied indicated that "it is the kind of talk not the quantity of talk that sets townspeople children on their way in school" (p. 352). Heath concluded her study by contending that if we are to achieve our goal of having children learn language and be successful in school, the boundaries between classrooms and communities must be

eliminated. Teachers, to achieve this goal, must link language and schooling to life at home, school, and work.

Harste, Woodward and Burke (1984) said that "the focus of language in use is meaning" (p. 205) and that instructional activities should not isolate the systems of language for formal study. Instead, instructional activities should be a natural and functional part of the children's development of reading and writing abilities. They further stated that "Teachers have a responsibility to introduce children to a wide variety of written language contexts as they provide children opportunities to expand, discover, and explore their world" (p. 205).

Mathewson (1976), in his model of the function of attitude in the reading process, focused on five components: attitude, motivation, attention, comprehension and acceptance. He posited attitude as the central construct. In this model, motivation and attitude work together to create the condition in which the child attends to and performs the cognitive processes necessary to comprehend the material. He states that if "attitude is favourable and the motivations are appropriate, comprehension works at peak efficiency. If, however, attitude is unfavourable or if motivation is inappropriate, or not present, comprehension becomes inefficient" (p. 655).

David (cited in Turned and Alexander, 1980) investigated research that had been carried out on student

attitudes toward reading. From this research, she concluded that "good comprehension is related to (positive) good attitudes toward reading. Poor comprehension is related to poor attitudes" (p. 31). She further stated that

> Socioeconomic status and race do not appear to be significantly related to student attitudes toward reading. What parents do in the home seem to affect attitude more than do such factors as father's occupation, socioeconomic status of the family, educational level of parents or the number of books in the home. (pp. 3-4)

The empirical evidence to support the growing conviction that attitudes to reading significantly affect achievement in reading is sparse, but generally positive. Groff (1962) investigated the attitudes toward reading of 305 sixth grade children. As hypothesized, he found significant correlations between attitudes toward content of material and critical reading scores in respective content areas. In addition, a significant relationship was found between general reading ability and attitude toward reading as a school activity with correlations ranging from +.30 to +.45.

Nielson (1978) investigated student attitudes toward reading and reading related concepts to determine the effects of grade level, reading achievement, sex, race, and social status upon reading attitudes. The findings of her study indicated that significant difference existed with the attitudes toward reading among the three ability groups under investigation. The mean attitude score for

those students whose achievement was at least one year above their present grade level placement was significantly more positive than the mean attitude scores of those students whose achievement was at or below their present grade level. The results of this study also revealed that girls had a significantly more positive attitude toward reading than boys and that a relationship existed between attitude and social status.

Cramer (1980), in his attempts to determine if there were any observable relationships among mental imagery, reading comprehension, and reading attitude selected at random 124 eleventh and twelfth grade students at two high schools in Wisconsin. From this study, Cramer concluded that "there was a positive correlation between [the] subjects', comprehension scores and their reading attitude scores" (p. 138). The study also revealed that a significant relationship existed between reading attitude and mental imagery. However, a significant correlation did not exist between reading comprehension and mental imagery.

Lewis (1980), in his study of the relationship between attitude toward reading and reading success sampled 149 third, fourth, and fifth grade pupils in southern Minnesota. From his study, Lewis concluded that, "attitude toward reading...had a statistically significant relationship with reading success. However, the low

magnitude of the correlation (.17 [p < .05]) limits the practical significance of the finding" (p. 261).

Hall (1978) conducted a study of 300 fifth grade pupils to study relationships among attitudes toward reading, reading achievement, socioeconomic status, and sex. Based on the study, it appeared that attitudes and achievement in reading are highly correlated: when ability improves, attitudes often improve; when attitudes improve, ability often improves. However, neither sex nor social class was a reliable indicator of how students feel about reading.

Elliott (1983), in her investigation of the relationship between reading achievement and attitudes towards reading concluded that, "attitudes affect reading in grades three and six" (p. 61). She also maintained that the effects of attitude upon certain student achievement categories were negligible. "It was found that attitudes did not affect comprehension for the high achievement reading students in grades three and six" (p. 61).

Further empirical support for a positive relationship between attitude and achievement is given by Fredericks (1980). He investigated third and fourth grade student attitudes toward reading and its effect upon student achievement in reading. The major findings of this study indicated that "attitudes toward reading...was significantly related to achievement in reading; however,

gender did not affect the reading attitude scores of students within the same reading achievement level" (p. 9).

Dechant and Smith (1977) summarized the views of many authorities in the field of language arts when they stated that lack of interest in reading may be an important cause of reading failure. They went on to say that there is a marked relationship between ability and interest defined as positive attitudes towards objects or classes of objects. "High interest in a subject tends to be associated with high ability in that subject and low interest with low ability" (p. 179).

Rye (1983), in accord with views of Dechant and Smith, stated that

> as with attitude to content it does not seem unreasonable to infer that attitude to reading as an activity will influence the willingness of the pupils to interrogate the text. Children who dislike reading as an activity will likely avoid it as much as possible, and when expected to do it in school will apply minimal effort. In the majority of such cases one suspects that memories of past failure coupled with fear of future humiliation may induce prejudicial attitudes. (p. 15)

Therefore, one would anticipate that more able readers would have more favourable attitudes to reading than less able readers.

Impact of Parental Reading Attitudes on Student Reading Attitudes and Achievement

The importance of parental involvement in the reading process has been supported by research as well as by the personal experiences of reading teachers. The underlying message given in this research is that it is essential that parents support their children's learning experiences if their children are to reach their fullest potential as students and readers.

The International Reading Association has dealt with the question of parents and their role in reading on numerous occasions. For instance, The Reading Teacher, in April, 1954, devoted its entire issue to the topic of "Parents and the Reading Program". In this issue, Grayum cites several studies which demonstrate that positive or negative parental attitudes toward reading affect children's reading achievement. She maintained that parents can aid their children's reading achievement by (a) making reading an essential part of home life, (b) providing pleasant and satisfying experiences with reading, and (c) placing a high value on reading in their own lives. Jett-Simpson (cited in Monson and McClenathan, 1979) supported Grayum when she said:

> Parents are the most important resource for developing readiness for formal reading instruction. Parents can establish an attitude toward reading by giving books an important place in their daily lives as well as in the lives of their children. Fathers and mothers who sit down regularly to read magazines,

> newspapers, and books communicate to their children that reading is valuable and esteemed. Because of the strong emotional ties between parents and children, children usually emulate their parents. (p. 81)

Clay (1976) in her study of five to seven year olds, contended that children from homes in which reading was valued performed better on reading tasks than children from the same geographical area but from homes which placed less emphasis on reading.

The importance of the parent in reading was also recognized in a study conducted by Artley (1975). Artley asked 100 education majors if anyone besides their teachers contributed to their interest and ability in reading; the overwhelming response was the parents and family. On the basis of his work Artley recommended that parents be made "full-fledged partners in the education process" (p. 31) through information on the school reading program and suggestions of supplemental home activities.

Although the school's primary duty is to teach children the fundamental skills of reading, the love of reading or the development of a positive attitude toward reading cannot be taught in the same manner. According to Bruinsma (1978),

> Love, of any kind, is learned through example. In this regard the home, not the school, plays the central role in fostering the love of reading in children. Teachers can tell their students a million times that reading is an important activity, but if children never see that this is true in the lives of model adults then it becomes just so much hot air. If fathers and mothers never read to their children and never show any interest in reading

> themselves, then there is small likelihood that a child will believe that reading is a really important activity. If, however, the home does establish a love and respect for reading in the child, the school receives a "ready" child and has a marvelous foundation on which to build reading skills. The positive desire to learn to read that a child develops in the home will greatly aid him in persevering in the often difficult task of learning and fundamental reading skills. (p. 33)

Almy, (cited in Ziller, 1964), stated that "the parents of the more successful readers provided a better model for success in reading; that is, the parents of more successful readers were more frequent users of books and were fond of words" (p. 584).

Negley (1980) felt that the development of a positive attitude toward reading should begin in the moment the child is able to think and that it is the role of the parent to aid the child in the development of such an important trait. He went on to say that a child's attitude will influence the manner in which each new task is approached and whether or not a student is successful. Parental attitude he said will definitely influence the child's. When the parent shows interest in their child's achievements, the child will be stimulated to learn. When that parent demonstrates a personal value of reading and learning, his or her child will acquire a similar value.

Sutton (1964), in her discussion of the attitudes of young children toward reading also emphasized the importance of the attitudes of parents when she stated the following:

> Children often reflect the attitudes of their parents toward reading, as well as toward other school activities. A first grade child who was having trouble with reading told his teacher that "reading is a waste of time". Later, the boy's mother disclosed that she herself never had time to read... For her, as for her son, reading was at the bottom of the list of worthwhile things to do. (p. 240)

Children (1981), in accord with the view of Sutton, felt that,

> The role of reading in the adult world is reflected by the parent. Beginning readers who see their parents read start out with more positive attitudes toward reading. By [the] teen years other influences compete in the developing value system. Teens are attempting to assert their individuality, yet parents are still among the most influential adult role models available. During this period in reluctant readers' lives the reading that takes place in the home is important. (p. 14).

O'Rourke (1979) claimed that during the early primary school years, parental influence is often confined to encouraging reading through book purchases and library memberships. However, towards the end of primary school, reading interests of boys and girls tend to drift apart and peer group rather than parental influence tends to affect reading choices. With increase in peer group influence there is reason to believe that the extent of the relationship between home environment and leisure reading may decrease still further. The results of the O'Rourke study showed that "parents who scored high on a measurement of quantitative reading habits did not have ninth grade children who scored high enough to demonstrate a positive relationship" (p. 340).

Smith and Johnson (1980), while acknowledging the importance of the parent in the development of a child's attitude toward reading, went on to maintain that parents who try too hard and too soon to shape their children's attitudes may be as detrimental to the achievement of the goal they desire as are parents who are indifferent or who, in rare cases, are actually scornful of people who "waste their time reading" (p. 356). Parents of children who wish to develop their children's attitude can best do so by making use of the community and, on occasion, the school library so that their children can see that reading is not just something that they have to do to get through school. Smith (1978) says that

> Children need adults as models. They will endeavour to learn and understand anything that adults do--provided they see adults enjoying doing it. If meaningful written language exists in the child's world, and is visibly used with satisfaction, then the child will strive to master its mystery; that is the true nature of childhood. (p. 182)

Durkin (1966), in her research on reading readiness, suggests that children who learn to read early and develop the habit of leisure reading tend to have parents who themselves read. Mothers of early readers she claimed read more often than the average adult. Durkin provided evidence which indicated that reading readiness in children was clearly associated with their having been read to routinely as preschoolers. Durkin also maintained that relatively few parents set out to teach their child to read; instead, they provided a stimulating environment

and responded to requests for help. Clark (1976) and Snow (1983), in accord with the views of Durkin, claimed that parents are instrumental in producing early readers when they respond to a child's words and utterances. It also includes supplying answers or requesting clarification of the child's questions. Clark (1976) further agreed with Durkin when she stated that children who learn to read early and develop the habit of leisure reading tend to have parents who themselves read. Teale (1978) in his review of research on early readers contended that

> the studies of early readers demonstrate that a positive environment for learning to read is one in which a parent or sibling or other significant person in the child's life responds to the child's attempts to make sense of the printed word. (p. 930)

Teale found that most of the parents responded to the child's reading needs in ways common to everyday living. The parents read to their children and read certain stories over and over again.

Holdaway (1982) stated that children who are already reading and writing when they enter school, or who are so ready to learn that they take literacy in their stride, have had a pleasurable introduction to the processes of literacy. Some of their satisfactions for several years have centered around their excited attempts to read, write, and spell. Almost always they are familiar with a wide range of favorite books which they constantly ask people to read to them.

Freshour (1972) also felt that reading needs to be given a high priority in the home if children are to develop a positive attitude toward reading. If children see their parents reading, they themselves come to see reading as important and a form of entertainment. He further maintained that the parent can be a strong, positive influence upon his or her child. However, "a parent is a parent--not a teacher" (p. 516), and should refrain from attempts at instruction in phonics. Instead,

> A parent should make activities with his child enjoyable, not long and difficult. The child should never be forced if he is not in the mood, and in all relationships, the child should be granted the right to fail, to have his successes praised, and to be treated with respect. (p. 516)

Parents, by performing these activities, will perform their most vital role in reading, which is the promotion of a positive attitude toward the subject.

Ransbury (1973) stated that the influence of parents is perceived by teachers, parents and children as greatly affecting the child's reading attitude. However, in contrast to the perceived strong effect of parental influence, teacher influence is perceived by all groups as an inconsequential factor contributing to reading attitude development. She went on to say that the school is the place where one learns to read, but the impetus to want to read is provided in the home. Pikulski (1974), in support of the idea that the desire to learn to read is provided in the home, stated that "Children usually model

themselves after their parents; therefore, parents would do well to provide a good model by reading themselves. It is not uncommon to find that the parents of children with reading problems do very little reading themselves" (p. 897).

Kahn (1974), in her review of factors related to achievement in reading acknowledged the importance of attitude in reading when she asserted that "a negative attitude toward reading is a primary factor associated with the lack of achievement in reading" (p. 3). She went on to maintain that the "example of parents especially [the] attitude of the mother toward the value of reading and education" (p. 3) was also a significant factor in determining reading achievement. Morrison (1978), in accord with Kahn on the importance of parental attitude, contends that "in many respects, parental involvement regardless of the kind of children the parent is dealing with, is a matter of attitude. Just as in any endeavour, without a positive attitude it runs the risk of failure" (p. 186).

Lamb (1980), in his discussion of ways to involve the parents in the reading process, also acknowledged the importance of attitude and the importance of the parent in developing an attitude that is conducive to reading development. Lamb felt that teachers should "explain to parents that reading is a skill that requires a good student attitude" (pp. 16-17). He went on to state that

the child must first think he can perform the task before he attempts it and that the parent can build the child's confidence through praise and encouragement. Lamb also recommended that the parent set an example for their children by reading themselves, for the child may want to read the same materials, much as they would with the same books that the teacher brings to class. Greaney (1986), in agreement with Lamb, concluded that,

> Parents have an important contribution to make, both to the development of reading skills and encouraging the leisure reading habit. This they can do by introducing the child to the printed word, by creating an environment which helps to foster reading by providing opportunity, space, materials, encouragement, and example. (p. 817)

Negley (1980), in his article "See, Hear and Do: Building a Positive Attitude", gave further support for the idea that the impetus in learning to read begins in the home. He contends that "children are not born wanting to read" (p. 8). Motivation for reading begins at home and it is the responsibility of the parent to nurture within the child a desire to learn how to read. He went on to maintain that the development of a motivation for reading is dependent upon a number of aspects, one of which is "the general attitude of family members concerning the importance of reading" (p. 8). Glazer (1980), in support of the view of others on the importance of the parent in the development of a positive attitude toward reading, stated that "Reading habits are established early by parents who value books and encourage

their children to read. Research indicates that these same parents who read themselves set examples for their children" (p. 3).

Upon examination of the above literature, there seems to be a relationship between student attitude and achievement and parental reading attitude. The consensus in the literature is that a very strong positive relationship exists between the reading attitudes of the students and those of their parents, and that these attitudes are a significant positive correlate of reading achievement. An important point to keep in mind, however, is that there exists virtually no research on the significance of this relationship. Before the educational enterprise can capitalize on this knowledge, further empirical research is needed to identify possible cause-and-effect relationships.

Quality of School Life

The study of attitudes toward school life, and the possible educational significance of such attitudes, is well-documented in the literature pertaining to schools (i.e., Jackson and Lahaderne [1967], Jackson [1968], Martin [1985]). The importance of student attitude toward school life was indicated in the results of a study conducted by Dusewicz (1972). Dusewicz reported that student attitude toward school was a consistent

significant predictor in all three achievement areas studied (i.e., reading, language and arithmetic).

A recurrent theme in the literature about schools is that schools differ along some global dimension variously identified as climate, feel or tone. Halpin (1966) said that "anyone who visits more than a few schools notes quickly how schools differ from each other in their feel" (p. 131). Kelley (1980), in accord with Halpin, contended that "some schools are cheerful and hum with excitement and purpose. Others seem to lack enthusiasm. Some classrooms are alive with expectancy. Others appear moribund" (p. 1).

Jancks, Smith, Acland, Bane, Cohen and Gintes (1972) said:

> Some schools are dull, depressing, even terrifying places, while others are lively, comfortable, and reassuring...such differences are enormously important and eliminating these differences...would do a great deal to make the quality of children's (and teacher's) lives more equal. Since children are in school for a fifth of their lives, this would be a significant accomplishment. (p. 256)

Pope (1985) also recognized the importance of school climate when he said "that regardless of the age, size and location of the school in order for the school to be effective, a safe, orderly, encouraging student climate must prevail" (p. 5). Students who are not taught in an "enriched school environment", that is, where self-appraisals and external appraisals judged them as

adequate, did not develop a general sense of adequacy. Pope contended that

> achievement is as much a function of how students are treated personally as it is what they are taught. Feelings are essential to learning. Again, one of the major variables in Mastery Learning is the extent to which positive student feelings towards the teachers correlate with their being more actively engaged in what the teacher wishes them to do. (p. 6)

The differences from school to school, according to Kelley (1980), center upon the principal's ability to build a supportive, challenging, and positive school climate. Schools which achieve an environment of high expectations and generous assistance attain high levels of student performances. By contrast, schools with low or declining levels of student achievement are characterized by "complacency and acceptance of things as they are; no one 'rocks the boat', and there is an apparent unwillingness to attend to problems which might upset the calm or the good staff relations" (Brookover and Lezotte, cited in Kelley, 1980: 4).

Brookover and Lezotte (cited in Kelley, 1980) reported that "the one factor which seems to explain most school-to-school and pupil-to-pupil differences in achievement is the sense of futility" (p. 34). As described by Lezotte (cited in Kelley, 1980), this sense of futility explains "more than 50 percent of the variance in achievement between schools...and is highly related to teacher expectations and student perceptions of those expectations" (p. 34).

Research into student attitudes to life in schools is reasonably well represented in the literature, though not by what one would call major studies focusing specifically on the issue. Jackson (1968), Silberman (1971) and Martin (1985) provide intensive reviews of student evaluations of life in school, life in classrooms, teachers, peers, school subjects, extracurricular activities and so on.

Jackson (1968) in his book, Life in Classrooms, reviewed literature on students' feelings about school. After analyzing the research of Tenebaum (1944), Sister Josephina (1959), Leipold (1957) and others, Jackson stated that "there is reason to believe that 20 percent may be a conservative estimate of the proportion who privately dislike school" (p. 54). He further stated that student "reactions to school life are considerably varied. Students tend to like some aspects of school and dislike others. Moreover, ...even the more satisfied students have their complaints, and the least satisfied their pleasures" (p. 60).

In his review of the relationship between scholastic success and positive attitudes toward school, Jackson (1968) contended that "the relationship between attitudes and scholastic achievement, if it exists at all, is not nearly as easy to demonstrate as common sense would lead us to believe it might be" (p. 80). In an attempt to relate the general attitude toward school to achievement in school, Jackson and Lahaderne (1967) studied a

population of sixth-graders and found no significant correlation between these two variables. They contend that several conditions might account for this lack of a significant positive correlation between attitudes toward school and scholastic achievement. One possibility is that student attitudes are not powerful enough to affect behavior. Also, instead of either loving or hating school students feel somewhat neutral about their classroom experience. In addition, parents and teachers may behave in ways that effectively weaken whatever natural connection might exist between attitudes toward school and achievement.

Martin (1985), in his study of "Student Views on Schooling in Newfoundland and Labrador", agreed with Jackson when he contended that "slightly less than one quarter of the number of students who expressed a liking for school made the effort to write about a dislike for it" (p. 136). Martin also found that

> High school students often have contrasting orientations toward school. For some students school is seen to be "great", and for others "school stinks" and "is a waste of time". In between these two extremes there is a multitude of sometimes stable but often changing student attitudes toward school. (p. 161)

Among the reasons given by students for their positive orientations toward school are: (a) the view that school gives them an opportunity to make new friends and to be with old friends, (b) the availability of extra-curricular activities in the school, (c) the view that school

prepares one for post-secondary education, the job market and to live in society and (d) the attributes of their teachers. Students themselves, according to Martin, have noted "the importance of positive orientations toward schooling in contributing to self-development and to academic achievement" (p. 163).

Martin (1982) contended that "getting along with their teachers is a salient part of the school experiences of many high school students in Newfoundland and Labrador" (p. 19). Martin stated that

> A grade 10 boy claimed that the main reason for his positive attitude toward school is that he "can get along with the teachers". When students and teachers "get along well", according to one grade 11 girl, it "helps the students to enjoy school more". Another grade 11 girl pointed to the fact of feeling "more comfortable in school" when there is "a good teacher-to-student relationship". The result, according to this respondent, is that students "will be able to do better work". (p. 23)

Davidson and Lang (1960) reported that the children's perceptions of the teachers' feelings toward them correlated positively with their self-perception. Also, the more positive the children's perceptions to their teachers' feelings, the better were their academic achievement and behavior in class as rated by the teachers.

Flanders, Morrison and Brode (1968), in their investigation of changes in pupil attitudes during the school year, concluded "that positive perceptions of pupils toward their teachers and their class activities

decrease sometime during the first four months of the school year" (p. 337). They also contended that in classrooms where teachers provided less praise and encouragement there was a greater loss of positive attitudes toward school than in classrooms with teachers who provide more praise and encouragement. Somewhat similarly, Purky (1970), in his book Self-Concept and School Achievement, maintained that there are six factors (e.g., challenge, freedom, respect, warmth, control, and success) which seemed particularly important in creating a classroom atmosphere that is conducive to developing positive attitudes in the child, to self, to school and to the teacher.

Glick (1970) investigated the relationship between the degree of friendship involvement and (1) popularity or (2) status within the group on school attitudes. From this investigation of sixth graders' attitudes toward school and interpersonal conditions in the classrooms, he concluded that attitudes toward school were not related to the extent of friendship involvement, but that a positive relationship did exist between status and school attitudes. Pupils who are granted positions of status and influence within the group are characterized by relatively favourable orientations toward school. Their "influence on the group is positive...and probably functions by providing an example or model to which other pupils aspire" (p. 22).

In the literature pertaining to satisfaction and success, Jackson and Lahaderne (1967) contend that successful people appear to be satisfied when questioned about the conditions surrounding their achievements. In educational terms, students who are performing well in school are expected to express contentment and satisfaction when asked to describe their school life, while those who are doing poorly are expected to express an attitude of discontentment. At present, however, educational research has yet to provide a confirmation of a significant statistical correlation between success and satisfaction.

In summary, in the literature relating to reading it is commonly contended that attitude towards reading influence achievement in reading and that parental reading attitude affects the reading attitude and achievement of the student. Furthermore, there is evidence in the literature to suggest that certain school life factors, such as amount and quality of instruction and student perceptions of their status and teachers, will affect pupils' reading attitude and achievement. Walberg and Tsai (1985), in their study of correlates of reading attitude and achievement, summarized the views of the many language arts authorities when they contended that "the major influences flow from aptitudes, instruction, and the psychological environment of learning" (p. 160).

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter presents a description of the procedures used in the study. It describes the locale of the study, the samples, the testing instruments, the method of data collection, the administering and scoring of tests, and the analysis of the data.

Locale of the Study

This study was conducted in an urban and a rural school located in Central Newfoundland. School A, a central high school, had an enrollment of 336 students and a teaching staff of 17. The school had two heterogeneously grouped classes of grade eight students. All of the students were bussed to the school from several outlying villages.

The other school, B, had an enrollment of 460 students and a teaching staff of 26. This junior high school had four heterogeneously grouped classes of grade eight students. The students, with the exception of a few, lived in the town. The students of both schools came from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds.

The Samples

Student Sample. The students selected to participate in this study included the total population of grade eight students attending schools A and B (N = 160). However, because of sickness and other reasons, twenty students did not participate in the study.

All of the student participants completed the Canadian edition of the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Tests, Survey E, Form 1, the Estes Attitude Scale for reading, and the School Life scale.

Parent Sample. The parent sample for the study included both the male and female parent or guardian of each student who participated in the study. All of the parents were asked to complete an instrument designed by the investigator to assess parental attitude toward reading.

The Instruments

The instruments used in this study include the Estes Attitude Scale, the School Life scale, a scale developed by the investigator to assess parental attitudes toward reading, and a reading achievement test. A description of each instrument is given in the following four sections.

Estes Attitude Scale. To ascertain the student's attitude toward reading, a summated rated or Likert scale developed by Estes (1971) was used. Summated rated refers

to the summation of the values of each student's responses on the scale to yield a quantitative representation of his or her attitude toward reading (Estes, 1971). This scale consists of twenty statements about reading. The students were asked to read each statement and respond by marking with a check (✓) the appropriate box on the answer sheet. Reliability of the scale for the grade eight student was .96 (Estes, 1971: 137). A copy of the scale is included in Appendix A.

Dulin and Chester (1974) concluded from their validation study that the Estes Scale can "safely be used in future research as a criterion measure of high school students' attitudes towards books and reading" (p. 59). They contended that the Estes is a very powerful instrument for the measuring of levels of positive attitude towards books and reading. Summers (1980), in accord with the findings of Dulin and Chester (1974), stated that the Estes Scale "is useful in obtaining a global reactive assessment of school-oriented attitude toward reading in intermediate grades" (p. 42).

Reading Achievement Test. To obtain a measure of the student's reading achievement, the Canadian edition of the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Tests, Survey E, Form 1 was used. This standardized test contains two subtests designed to measure the student's reading achievement. The two subtests were vocabulary and comprehension. The combined results of the two subtests yielded a single score for

each child called "reading achievement". The reliability of the test for the grade eight level is .87 for both vocabulary and comprehension (Teacher's Manual, Gates-MacGinitie Reading Tests, 1980: 58).

Rationale

This instrument was chosen over alternative tests because of its high reliability and the positive comments of educators who had critiqued the instrument. In addition, the test can be group administered thereby providing the investigator with the opportunity to assess the reading achievement of a large number of students at a given time.

Stahl (1985) in his critique of the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Tests stated that, "It is a reliable instrument that does the many things it is designed to do well ... provided that the user is aware of its limits, the Gates-MacGinitie can be highly recommended for school and clinic use" (pp. 317-318). The Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test, however, was criticized in the Seventh Mental Measurements Yearbook (Buros, 1972) by Burke who remarked,

> Though there is a teacher's manual for each level and a technical manual for the entire test, the authors do not present their view of the reading process or their rationale for the focus of the test. Such information must be surmised from the material itself. (p. 1080)

School Life. To measure the student's feelings toward his or her school life, a scale developed by the

Australian Council for Educational Research was used. This scale, constructed by the factor analytic techniques consisted of seventy-one statements about school life. The students were asked to read each statement carefully and respond by placing a check (✓) in the square representing the answer which best describes how they felt. The School Life instrument consists of items that dealt with general affect, negative affect, and the four domains of school life: status, identity, opportunity and teachers. Using the four-point response scale (e.g., Definitely Agree, Mostly Agree, Mostly Disagree, and Definitely Disagree) it was possible to obtain a quantitative reflection of each student's feelings about his or her school life. Technical data on reliability and validity coefficients of the different domains of the scale is as follows: General Affect .84 and .92, respectively; Negative Affect .76 and .87, respectively; Status .91 and .95, respectively; Identity .9=79 and .89, respectively; Teachers .83 and .91, respectively; Opportunity .79 and .89, respectively. A copy of the scale is included in Appendix B.

Parent Attitude Scale. This instrument was designed by the investigator to ascertain the parents' attitude toward reading. The respondents were asked to respond to each statement on the scale by putting a check (✓) in the appropriate box. The first step taken in developing the scale was the selection of statements reflecting

situations that would indicate how parents feel toward reading. Those considered to be most appropriate by a group of educators and parents were chosen to be used in the construction of the scale. This summated rated or Likert scale contains twenty statements about reading. Since the investigator could not improve upon certain items in the Estes, items 9, 12, 17, 19 and 20 were copied directly from it. Items 1, 6, 11 and 13 are slight variations of items used in the Estes Scale. Reliability of the instrument was computed by the split-half method. Reliability coefficient for the scale is .82 and this was considered acceptable for its intended use. A copy of the scale is included in Appendix C.

Method of Data Collection

Instruments measuring reading achievement, attitude toward reading, quality of school life, and student perceptions of their status, identity, opportunity, and teachers, were administered during the week of March 10 to 14, 1986. The primary purpose of this testing was to ascertain the significance of the relationship between the dependent and the independent variables of the study.

Following the student testing sessions, the parents or guardians of each of the students were asked to complete the Parent Attitude Scale. This scale was delivered to the parents or guardians by the students and

returned to the investigator on or before March 17, 1986. To insure a maximum number of returns, the principals of each school wrote a letter explaining the nature of the study, which was attached to each scale for assessing parental attitude toward reading. The student instruments were group administered during specially scheduled sessions during the school day, with one scheduled session for each class.

Administering and Scoring Tests

The testing session began with the students completing the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Tests. The Gates was administered in accordance with the guidelines given in the Teacher's Manual. After the students had completed the test, they were scored by the investigator. To determine the total raw score, the measure of reading achievement used in this study, the investigator combined the raw score for the Vocabulary and Comprehension Test. The two subtests of the test took approximately 90 minutes to administer.

After a short recess, the students began the School Life scale. Depending on how the students responded to each statement about school life, they were given a numerical value of 1, 2, 3, or 4; four being the most positive and one the most negative. The student's total score was considered a quantitative reflection of each

student's feelings about his or her school life. To assess the students' perceptions of their status, identity, opportunity and teachers, the investigator categorized the items on the School Life scale into one of these domains.

Following the completion of the School Life scale, the students began the Estes Attitude Scale for reading. After the students had completed the scale, they were hand-scored by the investigator. Depending on how the students responded to each statement, they were given a numerical value of 1, 2, 3 or 4; four being the most positive and one the most negative. Theoretically, the possible range of scores was 20 to 80. The students' score is a quantitative reflection of his or her reading attitude. The Parent Attitude Scale for reading was scored in a similar manner. Parents, depending on how they responded to each item on the scale, were given a numerical value ranging from 1 to 4. The parents' total score, a summation of the values, is a quantitative reflection of their attitude toward reading.

Analysis of the Data

The analysis of the obtained data relied upon testing a set of hypotheses. The respondent group was analyzed as a total group and as two subgroups (i.e., males and

females). A total of seven hypotheses were generated and tested.

After the collection and scoring of the data, preliminary descriptive statistics were calculated for each item. Following the calculation of the descriptive statistics, crosstabulations of the responses on the School Life, Estes and Parent Attitude Scale with sex were made. The statistical procedure used to analyze the relationship between all combinations of dependent and independent variables tested in the hypotheses was the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. Since the hypotheses were directional, a one=tailed test of significance was used.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter is divided into two sections. In the first section, the specific findings of the study are analyzed in relation to each hypothesis. The second section is a general discussion of these findings.

Analysis Using Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficients

Hypothesis 1: A positive correlation exists between the reading attitude of the student and his/her reading achievement.

In Tables 1, 2, and 3, the correlation coefficients for Hypothesis 1 variables are presented. The hypothesis was accepted, since the correlation between reading attitude and reading achievement was significant at the .05 level of confidence. A correlation of .28 was found for the total population, while correlations of .49 and .29 were calculated for male and female students, respectively. This finding provides further support for the contention of Bettelheim and Zelan (1981) that, "A child's attitude toward reading is of such importance that, more often than not, it determines his scholastic fate" (p. 25). Elliott (1983) also found a strong

interrelationship between reading attitude and reading achievement among students in grades three and six.

Hypothesis 2: A positive correlation exists between both the reading attitude and reading achievement of the student, and the reading attitude of the parent or guardian.

The findings for Hypothesis 2 are presented in Tables 1, 2, and 3. In Table 1, the relationship between reading attitude and reading achievement of the total student population, and the reading attitude of the maternal parent was found to be significant. The correlation coefficient for the relationship between the reading attitude of the maternal parent and the reading attitude of the student was .41 ($p = .000$). The correlation coefficient for the maternal reading attitude and the reading achievement of the student was .24 ($p = .008$). Table 1 also presents the correlation coefficients for reading attitude, reading achievement and the reading attitude of the paternal parent or guardian. The correlation for the students' reading attitude and the reading attitude of the paternal parent or guardian was .18 ($p = .039$). The correlation for reading achievement and paternal reading attitude was .40 ($p = .000$).

Table 2 presents the correlations between the reading attitude of the maternal parent or guardian and the reading attitude and reading achievement of the male

Table 1

Correlation Coefficients for Reading Attitude, Reading Achievement, Maternal Reading Attitude and Paternal Reading Attitude for All Students

Variables	Reading Attitude		Reading Achievement	
	Correlation Coefficients	P-Level	Correlation Coefficients	P-Level
Reading Attitude	1.00		.28	.000
Reading Achievement	.28	.000	1.00	
Maternal Reading Attitude	.41	.000	.24	.008
Paternal Reading Attitude	.18	.039	.40	.000

Table 2

Correlation Coefficients for Reading Attitude, Reading Achievement, Maternal Reading Attitude and Paternal Reading Attitude for All Male Students

Variables	Reading Attitude		Reading Achievement	
	Correlation Coefficients	P-Level	Correlation Coefficients	P-Level
Reading Attitude	1.00		.49	.000
Reading Achievement	.49	.000	1.00	
Maternal Reading Attitude	.33	.011	.37	.005
Paternal Reading Attitude	.23	.063	.29	.026

students. An analysis of these correlations indicate a significant positive relationship in each instance. The correlation between maternal reading attitude and student reading attitude was .35 (p = .011), while the correlation between maternal reading attitude and reading achievement was .37 (p = .005). The correlation between student reading attitude and the reading attitude of the paternal parent or guardian was .23. However, the level of significance (p = .063) was above the acceptable level of .05. A significant positive relationship did, however, exist between the student's reading achievement and the paternal reading attitude, with a correlation of .29 (p = .026).

In Table 3, the correlation indicates a significant positive relationship between paternal reading attitude and female student's reading attitude with a correlation of .31 (p = .16). Also, a significant relationship exists between paternal reading attitude and the female students' reading achievement with a correlation of .45 (p = .001). A significant positive relationship was also found between the attitude of the maternal parent or guardian and the reading achievement of the female student with a correlation of .30 (p. .016). However, the correlation between maternal reading attitude and student reading attitude (.14 [p = .160]) was not significant at the .05 level of confidence.

Table 3

Correlation Coefficients for Reading Attitude, Reading Achievement, Maternal Reading Attitude and Paternal Reading Attitude for Female Students

Variables	Reading Attitude		Reading Achievement	
	Correlation Coefficients	P-Level	Correlation Coefficients	P-Level
Reading Attitude	1.00		.29	.008
Reading Achievement	.29	.008	1.00	
Maternal Reading Attitude	.14	.160	.30	.016
Paternal Reading Attitude	.31	.016	.45	.001

Hypothesis 3: A positive correlation exists between the quality of school life, and the reading attitude and reading achievement of the student.

In response to the assumption stated in Hypothesis 3, the results of the correlational analysis indicated that the correlation between reading attitude and quality of school life for the total population was -.28 ($p = .000$). The correlation between quality of school life and reading achievement was .12 ($p = .074$). Since the acceptable level of significance for this study was .05, the hypothesis was rejected. When analyzed by gender, the correlation between quality of school life and reading achievement for the male student was .06 ($p = .321$). However, a significant positive relationship did exist between quality of school life and reading attitude, with a correlation of .27 ($p = .010$). A significant positive relationship also existed between quality of school life and the reading attitude of the female student with a correlation of .35 ($p = .002$). The correlation between quality of school life and the reading achievement of the female student, however, was not significant at the .05 level of confidence (-.02 [$p = .431$]).

Hypothesis 4: A positive correlation exists between the perceived status of the student, and his/her reading attitude and reading achievement.

Tables 4, 5 and 6 present the correlations for Hypothesis 4 variables. This hypothesis was rejected. However, an acceptable positive correlation did exist for the total population between the reading attitude of the student and his or her perceived status (.17 [p = .024]). The correlation between reading achievement and the perceived status of the student was .04 (p = .304). When analyzed by gender, the correlations between perceived status and reading attitude, and perceived status and reading achievement for the male students were .11 (p = .168) and .11 (p = .170), respectively. However, a significant positive relationship existed between status and reading attitude with a correlation of .26 (p = .017) for the female population. A significant relationship did not exist between status and reading achievement.

Hypothesis 5: A positive correlation exists between the perceived identity of the student, and his/her reading attitude and reading achievement.

In tables 4, 5 and 6, the correlation coefficients for Hypothesis 5 variables are presented. The hypothesis was rejected in each instance since the correlations

between identity and reading attitude and identity and reading achievement for the total population were not significant at the .05 level of confidence. A significant relationship did exist between the perceived identity of the male student and his reading attitude with a correlation of .22 (p = .031). However, a significant positive relationship did not exist between perceived identity and the male students' reading achievement (-0.03 [p = .401]). Also, a significant positive correlation did exist between the perceived identity of the female student and her reading attitude (.3196 [p = .004]). However, a significant positive relationship did not exist between identity and reading achievement (see Table 6).

Hypothesis 6: A positive correlation exists between the students' perceptions of their teachers, and their reading attitude and reading achievement.

The findings for Hypothesis 6 are presented in Tables 4, 5 and 6. The correlations that appear in Table 4 indicate a significant relationship between the students' perceptions of their teachers and their reading attitude with a correlation of .22 (p = .005). However, a significant positive relationship did not exist between the students' perceptions of their teachers and their reading achievement (-0.1191). When analyzed by gender, the correlations between perceptions of teachers and

reading attitude, and perceptions of teachers and reading achievement were not significant at the .05 level of confidence for either gender (see Tables 5 and 6).

Hypothesis 7: A positive correlation exists between the perceived opportunity of the student, and his/her reading attitude and reading achievement.

Table 4 presents the correlation coefficients for reading attitude, reading achievement and the perceived opportunity of the student. An analysis of the table indicates that the correlation between the perceived opportunity and reading attitude of the total student population is .08 ($p = .179$). The correlation for reading achievement and perceived opportunity is .16 ($p = .034$). As indicated in Table 5, a significant positive relationship did exist between the perceived opportunity of the male student and his reading attitude with a correlation of .27 ($p = .010$). However, the correlation between perceived opportunity of the male student and his reading achievement was not significant at the .05 level of significance. In addition, a significant positive relationship did not exist between perceived opportunity of the female student and her reading achievement. However, a significant relationship did exist between opportunity and reading attitude with a correlation of .32 (see Table 6).

Table 4

Correlations Between Quality of School Life, Status, Opportunity, Identity, Teachers and the Reading Attitude and Reading Achievement for All Students

Variables	Reading Attitude		Reading Achievement	
	Correlation Coefficients	P-Level	Correlation Coefficients	P-Level
QSL Total	-0.28	.000	.12	.074
Status	.17	.024	.04	.304
Identity	-0.02	.400	.04	.304
Opportunity	.08	.179	.16	.034
Teachers	.22	.005	-0.12	.080

General Discussion of Findings

The positive association between reading attitude and reading achievement found statistically in this study accords with the findings of Fredericks (1980) that attitude toward reading is significantly related to achievement in reading. As indicated in Tables 1, 2 and 3, a significant positive correlation was found between reading attitude and reading achievement. The findings indicate that the correlations between reading attitude and reading achievement were significant at the .05 level of confidence when the total group and the two subgroups, males and females were analyzed.

The findings in respect to the impact of parental reading attitude on the reading attitude and reading achievement of the student offer direct support for the unsubstantiated but commonly expressed conviction that parental reading attitude and student reading attitude and reading achievement are related. Information contained in Tables 1, 2 and 3 indicate the significance of this relationship. When the total group was analyzed, a significant positive correlation was found between the reading attitude and reading achievement of the student population and the reading attitude of both the maternal and paternal parent or guardian. When the student sample was analyzed by gender it was found that both the maternal and paternal reading attitude was positively correlated with the reading achievement of the male student at the

.05 level of confidence. However, only the reading attitude of the maternal parent or guardian was significantly correlated with the reading attitude of the male student. Paternal reading attitude and the reading attitude of the male student were not positively correlated at the .05 level of confidence. In contrast, it was found that the correlation between the reading attitude of the female student and the reading attitude of the maternal parent or guardian was not significant. However, the correlation between the reading attitude of the paternal parent or guardian and female students' reading attitude was significant. As with the male student, both the maternal and the paternal reading attitude were significantly correlated at the .05 level of confidence with the reading achievement of the female student.

Contrary to expectations, the results of the correlational analysis, significant at the .05 level, revealed that a significant positive relationship did not exist between many of the school life variables and the students' reading attitude and achievement. As indicated in Tables 4, 5 and 6, it was only the students' perception of their opportunity that correlated significantly with the reading achievement of the student (Table 4). However, a significant positive relationship did exist between many of the school life variables and reading attitude. Table 4 presents the correlation coefficients

between the school life variables and the reading attitude of the student, irrespective of gender. As indicated, a significant positive correlation was found between the students' reading attitude and the students' perceptions of their status and teachers. None of the other variables were positively correlated at the acceptable level of significance with reading attitude. A significant inverse relationship, however, was found to exist between quality of school life and the students' reading attitude. When the male subgroup was analyzed, a significant positive relationship was found between the students' perception of their opportunity, identity and quality of school life with the students' reading attitude. None of the correlation coefficients between the school life variables and reading achievement were significant (Table 5). Similar findings were also found when the female population was analyzed.

As indicated in Table 6, none of the school life variables correlated significantly with the female students' reading achievement. Correlation coefficients, however, between the reading attitude of the female student and her perceptions of her status, opportunity, identity and quality of school life were significant at the .05 level of confidence. Students' perceptions of their teachers did not significantly correlate with the reading achievement or reading attitude of either the male or female student.

Table 5

Correlations Between Quality of School Life, Status, Opportunity, Identity, Teachers and the Reading Attitude and Reading Achievement for Male Students

Variables	Reading Attitude		Reading Achievement	
	Correlation Coefficients	P-Level	Correlation Coefficients	P-Level
QSL Total	.27	.010	.06	.321
Status	.11	.168	.11	.170
Identity	.22	.031	-0.03	.401
Opportunity	.27	.031	.15	.107
Teachers	.11	.176	-0.06	.294

Table 6

Correlations Between Quality of School Life, Status, Opportunity, Identity, Teachers and the Reading Attitude and Reading Achievement for Female Students

Variables	Reading Attitude		Reading Achievement	
	Correlation Coefficients	P-Level	Correlation Coefficients	P-Level
QSL Total	.35	.002	-0.02	.431
Status	.26	.017	-0.04	.380
Identity	.32	.004	-0.01	.470
Opportunity	.32	.004	.02	.242
Teachers	.15	.108	-0.13	.154

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter summarizes the findings of the study, draws conclusions based on the analyses of the data, states implications related to these findings and makes recommendations regarding future research in this area.

Summary of Findings

The data gathered during this investigation were analyzed through use of the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. Correlation coefficients were calculated between each variable to illustrate the measure of association between them. A level of .05 was designated as the criterion level at which to accept or reject the hypotheses. From the results of the statistical analysis of the accumulated data, the following findings may be reported.

Relationship Between Reading Attitude and Reading Achievement

Using Pearson product-moment correlational analysis, a correlation coefficient of .28 was obtained between the reading attitude of the student and his or her reading achievement, when the total group was analyzed. This correlation was significant at the .05 level of

confidence. When the association between reading attitude and achievement was analyzed for only male students, a correlation coefficient of .49 was found which was significant at the .05 level of confidence. A similar finding was also found when the female students were analyzed with a correlational coefficient of .29. Therefore, a positive association was found between reading attitude and reading achievement for the total group and when divided by sex (see Tables 1, 2 and 3).

Relationship Between Parental Reading Attitude and Student Reading Attitude and Achievement

Statistical analysis of the hypotheses related to the impact of the reading attitude of the parent or guardian on the students' reading achievement and reading attitude indicated that a significant positive association existed between these variables. When parental reading attitude was correlated with the students' reading achievement and reading attitude, correlation coefficients of .24 and .41, respectively, were found between maternal reading attitude and the reading achievement and reading attitude of the students. Correlations of .40 and .18, respectively, were found between the reading attitude of the paternal parent or guardian and the students' reading achievement and reading attitude. All correlations were significant at the .05 level of confidence. When an analysis was made between these variables on the basis of gender, a

significant positive correlation was found between the reading achievement of both the male and female students and the reading attitude of the maternal and paternal parent or guardian. With regard to the reading attitude of the student, a significant positive association was found between the reading attitude of the paternal parent and the reading attitude of the female student, while a positive association existed between the maternal parents' reading attitude and the reading attitude of the male student. A summary of these findings is given in Tables 1, 2 and 3.

Relationship Between School Life Variables and Reading Attitude and Reading Achievement

Information obtained from the correlational analysis of the school life variables and the students' reading attitude and reading achievement indicate that a significant positive association did not exist between many of these variables. The results of the analyses indicate that a significant positive correlation was found between the students' reading attitude and their perceptions of their status and teachers when the total group was analyzed. A significant inverse correlation existed between quality of school life and reading attitude (Table 4). When the findings were analyzed by sex, a significant positive association was found between the reading attitude of both the male and female students

and their perceptions of their opportunity, identity and quality of school life. In addition, a significant positive relationship was also found between the reading attitude of the female student and her perceptions of her status. The only variable to be positively associated with the students' reading achievement was their perception of their opportunity. Student perceptions of their teachers did not significantly correlate with either the students' reading attitude or reading achievement, when analyzed by gender.

Conclusions

Based upon the evidence gathered during this study, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. There exists a significant positive correlation between reading achievement and attitude toward reading for this sample of grade eight students. For these children, at least, attitude to reading and achievement in reading were related.

2. The evidence suggested that the reading attitude of both the maternal and paternal parent or guardian was positively related to the reading achievement of the student.

3. A substantial positive relationship was indicated between both the maternal and paternal reading attitude and the reading attitude of the student when the total

population was assessed. When assessment was made by gender, a positive association was found between the reading attitude of the maternal parent or guardian and the reading attitude of the male student. The reading attitude of the female student was significantly related to the reading attitude of the paternal parent or guardian.

4. Evidence suggested that the students' perceptions of their teachers did not significantly correlate with either reading attitude or reading achievement when analyzed by gender group. A significant positive association did exist between the students' perceptions of their teachers and their reading attitude when the total group was analyzed.

5. Female students' perceptions of their status, identity, opportunity and quality of school life were found to be positively associated, at the .05 criterion level, with their reading attitude.

6. A significant positive relationship was indicated between the reading attitude of the male student and his perceptions of his opportunity, identity and quality of school life.

7. The relationship between students' perceptions of their opportunity and reading achievement was significant for the total group. However, it became negligible when the total group was divided by gender. None of the other school life variables were positively associated with

reading achievement for the total group and for males or females.

8. A significant inverse relationship (i.e., r = -.28) existed between the students' perceptions of their quality of school life and their reading attitude, when the total group was analyzed.

Implications for Instruction

Since attitude toward reading is apparently associated with reading achievement, successful reading experiences must be planned to develop and maintain positive attitudes toward reading. Teachers can play a vital role in this development. For instance, they can regulate student access to books and provide opportunities for reading. By doing this, teachers will ensure that children are provided the opportunity to handle reading materials and are given some sort of encouragement or obligation to read. Our aim as teachers should be to develop in our students reading habits and attitudes that will persist outside the classroom. Turner and Alexander (1980), in their discussion of practices for improving reading attitudes, stated that attitude toward reading can be improved when teachers do the following:

1. Help students feel better about themselves, more positive about reading.

2. Help students feel a need for books and reading in their present future lives.

3. Help students find vital and personally important purposes for reading.

4. Help students to spark their own curiosity and find important ways to "do something" with some of their reading. (p. 23)

Betts (1976) claimed that the teacher can develop a positive attitude toward classroom reading tasks if he or she will create lessons that take into consideration the personal needs, aspirations, and attitudes of the students concerned. Furthermore, it would be a positive instructional strategy for teachers to focus on the students' areas of greatest knowledge, make certain that the students' skills are equal to the reading task, that they display a high regard for reading, and make the students aware of their successes.

Holdaway (1980) contended that "reading aloud to children should be a prominent part of the reading programme at every level, but particularly in the beginning years great patience and ingenuity should be used to introduce children to books". (p. 205). Reed (1985), in accord with the views of Holdaway, stated that "Reading aloud is motivational. The teacher who reads aloud to students is a model who embodies the fact that reading can be fun". (p. 372). Reed also said that the best way to motivate teenagers to read is to allow them to read books based on their needs, interests, and abilities.

Fader, Duggins, Finn and McNeil (1976) suggest that teachers motivate students to read by surrounding them with paperbacks, newspapers, and magazines. The modest amount of research that exists on this technique suggests that surrounding unmotivated, poor readers with paperbound books can turn them into motivated readers with a more positive attitude toward reading.

Langford and Allen (1983) stated that an Uninterrupted Sustained Silent Reading program incorporates attributes that are quite valuable for the development of favorable attitudes and increased achievement in reading. Among these attributes are: a specific time set aside for reading at regular intervals; a wide variety of reading materials available; provision of a role model; a pleasant, relaxed atmosphere; encouragement to read by adults; and the opportunity to share information about books read.

Kemper (cited in Langford and Allen, 1983) believes that teachers can play a vital role in the promotion of favorable attitudes toward reading. Kemper suggests that teachers "plan reading activities which students like; use materials related to children's interests and needs; provide for recreational reading; and demonstrate a personal value for reading by practicing it orally and/or silently" (p. 195). Teale, Hiebert and Chittenden (1987) contend that "Teachers reading aloud is the single most

important early activity for fostering comprehension" (p. 775).

The findings of this study also provide support for the conviction that parental reading attitude influences the reading attitude and reading achievement of the student. One of the most valuable services, according to Negley (1980), that parents can provide for their children as they grow older is a continued concern and willingness to help their children with their reading progress. Parents who place a high value on reading in their own lives and guide their children's reading interests and activities will promote a positive attitude towards reading in their children. Glazer (1980) contended that,

> Whatever activities you (the parent) choose for your children will have tremendous power in determining whether your youngsters develop strong language foundations and positive attitudes toward reading and lifelong reading habits. Positive reading attitudes result from playing follow the leader. At home, you are the leader. (p. 10)

It is often assumed that when students of low academic ability are questioned about their school life they will express an attitude of discontent, while those of moderate and high academic ability would express more positive orientations toward school. However, the findings of this study failed to differentiate between satisfied and dissatisfied students through the indices of reading achievement. One possible reason for this unexpected lack of relationship between success and satisfaction is that the intensity of student attitudes

toward their school life is not sufficiently powerful enough to affect behavior. Another possibility is that parents and teachers behave in ways that effectively weaken whatever positive correlation might exist between attitude towards school and reading achievement. Most students, for example, are required to complete minimal curricular objectives whether they want to or not. Therefore, teachers, parents and general classroom conditions may counteract the impact on achievement of differences in student attitudes. Despite this lack of association between reading achievement and the school life variables of this study, an analysis of perceptions by students of the quality of their school life remains an area of importance. Student perceptions of their school life, for instance, should provide educators with a means of

> looking at the social environment that the school provides for its students; thinking about the aims of the school, its particular emphasis on ethos, and the extent to which this is recognized and accepted by students; and looking at the structures of the school and their effectiveness in terms of student experience. (Williams and Batten, 1979: 7)

Consideration should also be given to student perceptions of their school life for its impact on reading attitudes. The findings of this study indicated that a significant positive relationship existed between many of the selected school life variables and the reading attitude of the student. Since reading attitude and reading achievement are interrelated, it would appear

logical that more attention be focused on this area of study.

Recommendations for Future Research

The following recommendations are proposed as suggestions for future research in this area.

1. A study should be conducted to investigate the effect a teacher has on the reading attitude and reading achievement of students in his/her classroom.

Schofield (1980) conducted a study to ascertain teacher-pupil relationships with regard to reading attitude and achievement. The findings of his study

> indicated that high achievement and high attitude in teachers were positively associated with high achievement and high attitudes in pupils; in the low achievement and low attitude teachers, achievement was low, but attitudes were more favorable than those expressed by the pupils of middle achievement and middle attitude teachers. (p. 111)

2. The research design should be replicated with a population from a different grade to ascertain if reading attitude and reading achievement would be affected in a similar manner by the same selected school life variables and parental reading attitude.

3. An investigation be conducted into the effect of the Uninterrupted Sustained Silent Reading program on student attitudes toward reading and reading achievement.

Hicks (1983) investigated the effects of Sustained Silent Reading on the reading achievement of a class of

grade six pupils. In his conclusions, Hicks (1983) contended that,

> Although these scores do not show enough of a difference to demonstrate that sustained silent reading does aid reading achievement, the students did appear to be helped by the program. Their reading skills improved and many of them came to find reading an enjoyable pastime. (pp. 27-28)

Hicks (1983) further maintained that the study would have to be carried on for several years with a larger population to determine the impact of a sustained silent reading program on reading achievement and attitude towards reading.

4. Research should be conducted in the identification of the most beneficial methods and techniques (i.e., oral reading to their children) that parents could use to promote more positive attitudes in their children toward reading.

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APPENDIX A

Appendix A

ESTES ATTITUDE SCALE **ID #:** _____

What is your sex? 1. [ ] Male 2. [ ] Female

Instructions to student:

Each item on the next three pages says something about reading. After reading each item carefully, indicate your response by checking (✓) the answer which best describes how you feel. Your answers will be kept secret. No one else will see them.

Below is a sample item and response:

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
1. I wish school lasted all year instead of nine months.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[✓]

The student strongly disagreed and checked (✓) the appropriate box.

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
1. Reading is for learning but not for enjoyment.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
2. Money spent on books is well spent.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
3. There is nothing to be gained from reading books.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
4. Books are a bore.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
5. Reading is a good way to spend spare time.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
6. Sharing books in class is a waste of time.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
7. Reading turns me on.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
8. Reading is only for grade grubbers.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
9. Books aren't usually good enough to finish.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
10. Reading is rewarding to me.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
11. Reading becomes boring after about an hour.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
12. Most books are too long and dull.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
13. Free reading doesn't teach anything.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
14. There should be more time for free reading during the school day.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
15. There are many books which I hope to read.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
16. Books should not be read except for class requirements.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
17. Reading is something I can do without.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
18. A certain amount of summer vacation should be set aside for reading.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
19. Books make good presents.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
20. Reading is dull.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

APPENDIX B

Appendix B

SCHOOL LIFE ID #: _____

What is your sex? 1. [ ] Male 2. [ ] Female

Instructions to student:

Each item on the next seven pages says that School Is A Place Where some particular thing happens to you or your feel a particular way. I want you to say whether you Definitely Agree, Mostly Agree, Mostly Disagree, or Definitely Disagree with the items.

Please read each item carefully and check the answer which best describes how you feel. Don't forget that you have to put "School Is A Place Where..." in front of each item for it to make sense, e.g., "School Is A Place Where I really like to go" (item 11).

All the answers you give are confidential.

	DEFINITELY AGREE	MOSTLY AGREE	MOSTLY DISAGREE	DEFINITELY DISAGREE
1. I have good friends.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
2. People know they can depend on me.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
3. I know how to cope with the work.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
4. Teachers are genuinely interested in what I do.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

	DEFINITELY AGREE	MOSTLY AGREE	MOSTLY DISAGREE	DEFINITELY DISAGREE
5. I have learned how to find whatever information I need.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
6. I am thought of as a person who matters.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
7. I feel bored.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
8. I act in a responsible way.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
9. Teachers are fair and just.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
10. I know what my strengths and weaknesses are.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
11. I really like to go.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
12. Teachers take a personal interest in helping me with my school work.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
13. I feel I belong.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
14. Mixing with other people helps me to understand myself.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
15. Teachers recognize any extra effort I make in my work.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

	DEFINITELY AGREE	MOSTLY AGREE	MOSTLY DISAGREE	DEFINITELY DISAGREE
16. I have learned things that will be useful to me.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
17. I feel important.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
18. I learn to get along with other people.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
19. Teachers help me to do my best.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
20. People have confidence in me.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
21. Teachers treat me fairly in class.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
22. I try to do what is expected of me.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
23. I feel proud to be a student.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
24. I like to do extra work in the subjects that interest me.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
25. People come to me for help.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
26. Teachers encourage me to express my opinions.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

	DEFINITELY AGREE	MOSTLY AGREE	MOSTLY DISAGREE	DEFINITELY DISAGREE
27. I feel lonely.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
28. Learning is easy for me.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
29. I am interested in the work we do in class.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
30. I can learn whatever I need to know.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
31. I feel successful.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
32. Other students are very friendly.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
33. I like to learn new things.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
34. I feel restless.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
35. I know that people think a lot of me.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
36. I feel I have become a worthwhile person.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
37. Teachers take notice of me in class.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
38. Teachers give me the marks I deserve.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

	DEFINITELY AGREE	MOSTLY AGREE	MOSTLY DISAGREE	DEFINITELY DISAGREE
39. I feel I am a reliable person.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
40. I feel proud of myself.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
41. People look up to me.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
42. I am trusted to work on my own.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
43. I feel depressed.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
44. I know I can reach a satisfactory standard in my work.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
45. Other students accept me as I am.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
46. I feel good about things.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
47. I know the sorts of things I can do well.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
48. I can talk to teachers about the way they mark my work.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
49. I get excited about things.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
50. I learn a lot about myself.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
51. Teachers listen to what I say.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

	DEFINITELY AGREE	MOSTLY AGREE	MOSTLY DISAGREE	DEFINITELY DISAGREE
52. I feel happy.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
53. I try to look after the interests of other students.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
54. I an known by a lot of people.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
55. I find that learning is a lot of fun.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
56. I get enjoyment from being there.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
57. I have learned to see other people's points of view.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
58. Other students listen to what I say.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
59. I feel confident.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
60. I get satisfaction from the school work I do.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
61. I feel that things go my way.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
62. Teachers are friendly to me in class.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

	DEFINITELY AGREE	MOSTLY AGREE	MOSTLY DISAGREE	DEFINITELY DISAGREE
63. I get to know myself better.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
64. I am treated with respect.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
65. I know I can do well enough to be successful.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
66. I get upset.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
67. I can question the things that teachers say about my work.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
68. I can learn what I need to get by in life.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
69. I feel great.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
70. I have learned to accept other people.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
71. Teachers treat all students equally.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

APPENDIX C

Appendix B

PARENT ATTITUDE SCALE **ID #:** _____

What is your sex? 1. [ ] Male 2. [ ] Female

Instructions to student:

Each item on the next three pages says something about reading. After reading each item carefully, indicate your response by checking (✓) the answer which best describes how you feel. I want you to say whether you Definitely Agree, Mostly Agree, Mostly Disagree, or Definitely Disagree with the items. Your answer will be kept confidential.

Below is a sample item and response:

	DEFINITELY AGREE	MOSTLY AGREE	MOSTLY DISAGREE	DEFINITELY DISAGREE
1. I wish school lasted all year instead of nine months.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[✓]

The person definitely disagreed with the sentence and checked (✓) the appropriate box.

	DEFINITELY AGREE	MOSTLY AGREE	MOSTLY DISAGREE	DEFINITELY DISAGREE
1. Books make good gifts.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
2. If I had the money, I would purchase books for my children to read at home.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
3. As a rule, I would rather watch TV than read.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
4. I often read to my children when they were young.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
5. Reading is a waste of time.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
6. Reading is a good way to spend leisure time.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
7. I wish there was more time for me to read.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
8. I encourage my children to borrow books from the school or public library.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
9. Most books are too long and dull.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
10. When I have free time, I often read a book.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
11. Money spent on books is wasted.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

	DEFINITELY AGREE	MOSTLY AGREE	MOSTLY DISAGREE	DEFINITELY DISAGREE
12. Reading is for learning but not for enjoyment.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
13. There are many books that I would like to read.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
14. I enjoy reading a great deal.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
15. Being able to read is essential to everyday living.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
16. I encourage my children to read at home.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
17. Reading becomes boring after about an hour.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
18. I often talk to my children about books they have read.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
19. There is nothing to be gained from reading books.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
20. Reading is something I can do without.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]