DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THIRD, FOURTH, AND FIFTH GRADE STUDENTS’ ATTITUDES TOWARD READING IN RELATION TO COMMUNITY SIZE

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ABSTRACT

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There are many factors that affect reading attitude, such as gender, ethnicity, reading ability, and home and school environment, but there is not much research on the role of community size in reading attitude. This study answered the question: “Are there differences between third, fourth, and fifth grade students’ attitudes toward reading in relation to community size?” Two sub-questions were considered: (1) Does community size affect reading attitude scores? and (2) Does the grade level of third, fourth, and fifth grade affect reading attitude scores? These questions were examined in relation to (a) academic reading, (b) recreational reading, (c) total attitude, and (d) additional questions.

This study used the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (McKenna & Kear, 1990) to survey 179 students. The survey was given to 12 classrooms. Two third grade, two fourth grade, and two fifth grade classes from a small city school and a rural school participated in this study. This research design also included three unfinished sentences to which the students responded to collect qualitative data as well. The primary results were derived from a t-Test of Independent Samples and an ANOVA. The t-Test showed that there was no significant difference between the rural and small city school students in the area of reading attitude. Analysis demonstrated that there was a significant difference found in the grade levels. As the grade level increased the reading attitudes decreased. The conclusions that were drawn were that while community size did not affect reading attitude, grade level does in that students in higher grades had significantly lower reading attitude. Educators and parents need to be aware of this and work on promoting positive reading attitudes because this is an indicator of future reading attitude and reading ability.
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CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

Students’ attitude towards reading is a primary indicator of future reading attitudes and reading abilities. McKenna and Kear (1990) state, “The emotional response to reading...is the primary reason most readers read, and probably the primary reason most nonreaders do not read” (p. 626). A positive reading attitude has many implications for students. Students with a positive attitude toward reading are more likely to engage in reading and practice reading more often, which will lead to better reading ability. Although these students may have the ability to read well, they may choose not to read at all if they do not enjoy reading (McKenna, Kear, & Ellsworth, 1995). The majority of the literature on reading attitude is in agreement that reading attitude tends to decline as students progress through school (Alexander & Filler, 1975, Askov & Fischbach, 1973, McKenna et al., 1995, Parker & Paradis, 1986, Smith, 1990). This is a concern because as students progress through school, independent reading and reading for academic purposes become a requirement to succeed. If students have a positive attitude towards reading, it is a positive indicator of success during higher education. With reading attitude in childhood setting the stage for future reading attitudes and abilities, it is of great interest to see if differences arise when looking at students who attend and live in school districts and communities of different makeup and sizes.

Purpose of the Study

Two school districts sit side by side. They are, from an outsider’s perspective, about the same. The mean family income in district A is $33,783, while the mean income in district B is $44,837, slightly higher. However, there are a few distinct differences—reading scores on the Ohio Achievement Test is the first. District A’s reading scores are
73% for third grade, 83.1% for fourth grade, and 65.7% for fifth grade based on the 2008-2009 school year report card. District B’s reading scores are 83.5% for third grade, 84.1% for fourth grade, and 76.7% for fifth grade based on the 2008-2009 school year report card. Third and fifth grade scores are quite different from each other in comparison to the two different districts. Also, they have a large difference in percentage of students on free and reduced lunch—72.86% for district A, and 36% for district B. The other distinction, not readily visible to an outsider, is that district A is a small city district, and district B is a rural or small town district. While district A’s city is not large, with a population of 27,844, and district B is a small town with a population of 935, the test scores suggest that perhaps there is something distinctly different in the small city district in comparison to the small town district. With what is known about the correlation between reading ability and reading attitude, perhaps the difference is in reading attitude among students in the two districts.

Given these data, the purpose of this study was to examine whether there were differences between third, fourth, and fifth grade students’ attitudes toward reading in relation to community size? The central topic was divided into two questions: (1) Does community size affect reading attitude scores? and (2) Does the grade level of third, fourth, and fifth grade affect reading attitude scores? These questions were examined in relation to (a) academic reading, (b) recreational reading, (c) total attitude, and (d) additional questions. While the greater part of the literature on reading attitude suggests that attitude declines as students progress through school, there is little research to show how community size affects reading attitudes. With the lack of research on community size and its effects on reading attitude, this study examined if reading attitude was a
This study included an examination of third, fourth, and fifth students’ attitudes toward reading using the *Elementary Reading Attitude Survey* (see Appendix A). The focus was to compare and evaluate the results of the findings among the grades and how the extent to which reading attitudes fluctuate across grade levels. This survey was given to students in a small city school and a rural or small town school, to detect any differences in the community size as well. Similarities and differences in both community size and grade level will be discussed based on the findings of this study.

This study utilized four classes of third, fourth, and fifth grade students who participated in the survey, making 12 classes in total. Six classes were from the small city school and six were from the rural school. The methods of this study are described in detail in chapter three.

**Definition of Terms**

Because people do not always define things in the same way using the same philosophical background, the following terms are defined in accordance to their use in this study.

1. **Attitude**: “a learned predisposition to respond in a consistently favorable or unfavorable manner with respect to a given object” (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975, p. 6)
2. **Reading Attitude**: “a system of feelings related to reading which causes the learner to approach or avoid a reading situation” (Alexander & Filler, 1997, p. 1)
3. **Mixed-Methods Research Design**: “a research design that combines both qualitative and quantitative research designs and data.” (Mertler, 2009, p. 245)
4. **Likert scale**: “statements provided on surveys or questionnaires to respondents
where individuals are asked to respond on an agree-disagree continuum.”  
(Mertler, 2009, p. 244)

5. **Likert-Type Scale:** “scale similar to Likert scale, but where something other than extent of agreement is being measured” (Mertler, 2009, p. 244)

6. **Convenience Sampling:** “A non-probability sample of research participants or subjects selected not for their representativeness but for their accessibility or handiness, as when university researchers use their own students.” (A Dictionary of Psychology, 2009)

**Limitations**

The data for this study were gathered from a confidential survey. This limits the study to only view differences in small city and rural schools and recreational, academic, and overall reading attitudes between the two different schools. The third, fourth, and fifth grade levels are also being compared in these categories. This study does not consider gender, ethnicity, reading ability, or teacher influence. Research shows that these are also major factors in reading attitudes but this study is not attempting to compete with that research. It is simply examining community size, purposes of reading, and grade level.

The schools used for the purpose of this study were selected using convenience sampling. The researcher was able to survey students in a small city school and a rural school. The two school districts are in the same county, with the small city school district being in the largest city and the rural school being in the smallest town within the selected county. The state standardized test scores have shown to be lower in the small
city school than the scores from the rural school. This study examined whether reading attitude played a significant part in the difference between the two sets of scores.

Summary

In summary, this study addressed the two research questions: (1) Does community size effect students’ attitude toward reading? and (2) Does the grade level (i.e., third, fourth, and fifth grade) affect reading attitude scores? These questions were examined in relation to (a) academic reading, (b) recreational reading, (c) total attitude, and (d) additional questions. This study is important because of the lack of prior research in the area of community size in relation to elementary school students’ reading attitudes. Fluctuation in students’ attitude toward reading as they progress through school was examined as well. While there are a few limitations there is valuable information that is gained from this study. Reading attitudes are a predictor of reading ability and future reading attitudes. Becoming a life-long learner and reader is a primary goal of many educators. Educators can use the information gathered from this study to improve their students’ opportunity in becoming life-long learners and readers.
CHAPTER II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Reading attitude is the focus of this study. The affects of grade level and community size are examined in regards to academic reading, recreational reading, and total reading attitude of third, fourth, and fifth grade students. Two main sections frame this chapter: the first is the theoretical orientation for the study and the second is the significant historical research. The first section will include the major theoretical ideas, including the reading attitude factors and the models regarding reading attitude. This section discusses decreasing recreational and academic reading attitude as students’ progress through school (Askov & Fischbach, 1973; Alexander & Filler, 1975; McKenna et al., 1995; Parker & Paradis, 1986; Smith, 1990), two major models of reading attitude, the Mathewson model and the McKenna model, and several factors that may contribute to reading attitudes. Related theories and studies regarding reading attitudes will be explored, as well as the implications and findings of the research. The second section reviews six significant historical studies on the topic of reading attitude, presented in chronological order. They include the following studies: Askov and Fischbach (1973), Shapiro (1980), Parker and Paradis (1986), McKenna, Kear, and Ellsworth (1989), Smith (1990), and Logan and Johnston (2009).

Theoretical Orientation for the Study

Attitude, and more specifically reading attitude, is the emphasis of this study. To arrive at a common understating, Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) defined attitude as, “a learned predisposition to respond in a consistently favorable or unfavorable manner with respect to a given object” (p. 6). Declaring attitude as a learned predisposition suggests that attitude can change over time to a more positive or more negative attitude, if given
the right circumstances. It also suggests that a continuum of attitudes exist from favorable to unfavorable; it is not simply one or another (McKenna, et al, 1995).

More specifically, reading attitude has been defined by Alexander and Filler (1997) as, “a system of feelings related to reading which causes the learner to approach or avoid a reading situation” (p. 934), or by Smith (1990) as, “a state of mind, accompanied by feelings and emotions, that makes reading more or less probable” (p. 215). Both of these reading attitude definitions assume that the more positive the attitude towards reading, the more likely one will engage in reading activities. Positive attitudes have also been found to be associated with higher reading achievement (McKenna, et al., 1995). According to Smith, “Education professionals widely believed that the development of positive attitudes toward reading in the formative years of schooling will create individuals who are life-long readers” (p. 215). When a student has above average reading ability, but chooses not to read, it is generally known as aliteracy. Students who fall into this category of choosing not to read will most likely read only when necessary. Because they may not enjoy it, they may have issues with comprehension (McKenna, et al.).

Factors That May Affect Reading Attitude

Numerous studies have been conducted to measure children’s attitudes towards reading, and they have found that there are many factors that can play a role in the development of reading attitudes (Alexander & Filler, 1975; Askov & Fischbach, 1973; Logan & Johnston, 2009; McKenna et al., 1995; Parker & Paradis, 1986; Sainsbury & Schagen, 2004; Shapiro, 1980; Smith, 1990; Whittingham & Huffman, 2009). The factors that are listed are all based on correlational data, which does not suggest a cause and
effect relationship. Also, the factors discussed do not function independently of themselves. They all play a part in the reading attitude maturity of the learner and his/her environment (Alexander & Filler; Askov & Fischbach; Logan & Johnston; McKenna et al.; Parker & Paradis; Sainsbury & Schagen; Shapiro; Smith; Whittingham & Huffman).

**Increasing Grade Level**

Many studies have found that as students progress through school, their reading attitude decreases (McKenna, Kear, & Ellsworth, 1995; Sainsbury & Schagen, 2004; Whittingham & Huffman, 2009). Sainsbury and Schagen found that participants in fourth grade had a more positive reading attitude than participants in sixth grade. They also found that this might be because of the choice of reading material at home, where older children have an increased interest in newspapers and magazines. While there were more gains in reading ability, there was a decline in the level of adult and other support reported when reading at home (Sainsbury & Schagen). In the research study by McKenna et al., it was found that reading attitude in first grade was generally positive and by sixth grade it was generally negative. This was found to be true in both academic and recreational reading with a slight educationally significant decline each year (McKenna et al.).

**Gender**

A consistent finding among researchers is that gender has been shown to play a role in reading attitude. These findings show that on average girls have better attitudes toward reading than boys (Askov & Fischbach, 1973; Logan & Johnston, 2009; McKenna et al., 1995; Parker & Paradis, 1986; Sainsbury & Schagen, 2004; Shapiro, 1980; Smith, 1990; Swalander & Taube, 2007). According to Logan and Johnston, “Girls had better reading
ability, read more frequently and had a more positive attitude to reading and school compared with boys” (p. 207). As students progress through school, the gap widens between recreational and academic reading attitudes of boys and girls, with girls having a consistently more positive attitude (McKenna et al.). These statements are complex because, since girls tend to have a higher reading ability than boys, it could be the reading ability that is the factor rather than the gender. According to Shapiro, “men and boys view reading as a feminine activity and this attitude exerts some influence on a boy’s reading ability” (p. 255). It may be that societal beliefs tend to guide girls toward having a more positive reading attitude which in turn supports an ability advantage over the boys, which then again leads to a more positive attitude. Boys are often expected to be involved in more energetic activities than in passive activities such as reading, and the opposite is usually true for girls (Alexander & Filler, 1975; Askov & Fischbach; Logan & Johnston; McKenna, et al.; Parker & Paradis; Shapiro).

**Reading Ability and Achievement**

Research also shows that reading ability is a factor that can predict reading attitude (Alexander & Filler, 1975; Askov & Fischbach, 1973; McKenna et al., 1995; Sainsbury & Schagen, 2004). According to McKenna et al., “…it is natural to predict that poorer readers, who have reason to expect frustrating outcomes, will tend to harbor more negative attitudes than better readers” (p. 941). A favorable reading attitude can be associated with a student who is able to read with little trouble and does not have many comprehension difficulties (Askov & Fischbach). According to McKenna et al., “the McKenna model suggests that a reader’s history of success or frustration plays a central role in shaping attitude” (p. 945). Reading attitude can also increase as ability increases.
As reading becomes less complicated and more enjoyable, it is likely that the attitude will become more positive (Alexander & Filler). Achievement in reading has been shown to be a factor as well. If students do well in reading at school, then they are more likely to have positive reading attitudes additionally (Askov & Fischbach).

Environment

According to Alexander and Filler (1975), “interests, attitudes, and points of view of the individual have their origin in the environment” (p. 7). This supports the idea that parental involvement and home environment play a part in the foundation of reading attitude. If reading is seen as a positive way to spend time and it is encouraged at home, it is more likely that the students will have positive attitude towards reading. The opposite is true; if reading is not encouraged and is seen as a poor way to spend time, then the student’s attitude is more likely to be negative. It has been found that it is not necessary for parents to be avid readers as long as they are encouraging and promoting reading as an important and positive way to spend time (Alexander & Filler; Klauda, 2009; Sainsbury & Schagen, 2004). According to Klauda, “Frequent interactions with others in reading activities, exposure to positive beliefs and encouragement to read, and others’ provision of physical environments to reading are indeed associated with a more positive orientation about reading and greater reading frequency” (p. 343).

Teacher and Classroom Environment

The teacher and the classroom atmosphere may also have an effect on reading attitudes. A teacher’s attitude can promote either a positive or negative classroom atmosphere. Also, when a teacher holds higher expectations for his or her students, it is likely that the students will perform on a higher level. This is also true for reading
attitudes. A teacher who does not have high expectations for his or her students to be enjoying reading is more likely to influence the students’ attitude toward reading in a negative way. The opposite can be true for a teacher who holds high expectations for positive reading attitudes (Alexander & Filler, 1975). Some believe that reading instruction can have an effect on attitude but there is little research to confirm that. There have not been any significant findings between basal instruction and whole language reading instruction (McKenna et. al, 1995).

**Ethnicity**

According to McKenna et al. (1995), “If a child’s cultural environment encourages, models, and reinforces reading, more positive attitudes should result” (p. 941). There has been very little research that has examined the relationship between ethnicity and reading attitude. However, it has been found that African Americans tended to have a more negative attitude than Whites or Hispanics. Their study also showed that there was no significant difference until the fourth grade (McKenna et al.).

**Increased Choice**

Another factor that may affect reading attitude is that as students get older they have more options for free time activities. These new options will contend with reading and this could cause attitude to decline. Other enjoyable activities may contribute to a decrease in attitude because they are now competing with reading time. As they get into the higher grades, they have the opportunity to participate in more extra-curricular activities that may take a more important role in their lives. Sports, music, art club, or a variety of other groups are made available as students get older. Students who find reading to be pleasurable will be likely to find some of the other recreational activities to
be more pleasurable as they are presented as options (McKenna et al., 1995).

The factors that may affect reading attitude are abundant. Many studies have shown consistent findings with the previously stated factors. It is important to keep in mind that these factors are working together with each other. All of the factors combine together to create an overall attitude (Alexander & Filler, 1975; Askov & Fischbach, 1973; Logan & Johnston, 2009; McKenna et al., 1995; Parker & Paradis, 1986; Sainsbury & Schagen, 2004; Shapiro, 1980; Smith, 1990; Whittingham & Huffman, 2009). Models of reading attitude may help to illustrate how these factors work together to construct an ever-changing attitude towards reading.

Models of Reading Attitude

Mathewson Model of Reading Attitude

According to McKenna et al (1995), the Mathewson model of reading attitude is a model “in which attitude is one of a set of factors influencing an individual’s intention to read and in which the results of a given reading encounter are fed back to influence attitude” (p. 937). This model identifies two major concepts that are referred to as “cornerstone concepts” and “persuasive communications.” The cornerstone concepts include personal values, goals, and self-concepts. Persuasive communications include a central route, such as when a teacher or parent really touts reading, and the peripheral route, such as when a book has an attractive cover. Based on this model, both of these major concepts influence attitudes toward reading. This model illustrates that attitude toward reading is made up of current feelings about reading, action, and beliefs. The individual reader’s emotional state and external factors are also seen as factors that play into a student’s intention to read or to keep reading. All of these factors circle back
around into the major cornerstone concepts (McKenna et al.).

**McKenna Model of Reading Attitude**

McKenna et al. (1995) state that the three principal factors influencing attitudinal change toward reading are, “(a) beliefs about the outcomes of reading in light of the judged desirability of those outcomes, (b) beliefs about the expectations of others in light of one’s motivation to conform to those expectations, and (c) the outcomes of specific incidents of reading” (p. 938). Social structure and environment is at the peak of this model and affects the beliefs and the intention to read. The beliefs that one holds affect personal rules that are reliant on the thoughts of others, nature of expectations, purposes for reading, and possible conflicts among expectations. The attitude toward reading is reliant upon the strength of attitude, personal purpose for reading, and the importance to a certain reading activity. The intention to read is dependent on the availability of materials, help, interest, time, environment, physiological state, and the nature of the text as seen by the reader. All of these beliefs and intentions impact the decision to read or to keep reading. Metacognitive state, decoding sub processes, cognitive state, and text representation all link together and effect the decision to read or to keep reading as well (McKenna et al.).

These two models are used to provide a framework for how all of the factors are able to integrate with each other to illustrate the connections between the reader, the reader’s environment, and the text. The significant studies that have been conducted throughout the last 30 years will also offer some explanations that help to show that the factors have been found to be significant several times.
Significant Historical Research

*Reading Attitude and Achievement: Askov and Fischbach (1973)*

Eunice Askov and Thomas Fischbach conducted the first major study on reading attitude during the 1968-1969 school year. Askov and Fischbach (1973) state that “research in reading has not explored some basic questions about attitudes such as the relationship between pupil attitudes and reading achievement or the change in attitudes toward reading over time” (p. 1). The reason that this area of reading research had not been studied much is most likely because there had not been a valid and reliable instrument to measure reading attitudes (Askov & Fischbach).

When developing the instrument used for this study, it was ideal that reading and writing was not required to complete the survey because it was being given to elementary students. It was also preferred that the instrument would be able to engage students and not clearly give the purpose of the survey away so that more honest answers would be given by the students. Administering the survey to a large group, or a whole classroom, was favored also. Keeping all of these requirements in mind, Askov and Fischbach developed a survey that allowed students to select activities through the use of pictures. Using the pictures to select a preference made it possible for a student to take the survey if they were not yet able to read or write. Students were to choose between 30 different pairs of recreational activities. Just 18 of the 30 pairs included reading as a choice. This was done so that it was not as obvious that the intent was to measure reading attitude. A score of 18 was the highest, which indicated the most positive attitude towards reading, and zero was the lowest score that indicated the most negative attitude toward reading. The name of the instrument is titled *The Primary Pupil Reading Attitude Inventory*
According to Askov and Fischbach (1973), the aim of this study was to answer three questions, “a.) Is the attitude toward recreational reading related to achievement, and grade placement? b.) Does attitude toward recreational reading change over the summer vacation? c.) Is change in attitude, if any, related to achievement, sex, and grade placement?” (p. 2). The positive relationship between attitude and achievement was what Askov and Fischbach established to be the most fascinating finding. They found that students that have a higher reading ability and higher achievement in their reading scores tend to have a more positive attitude towards reading. They were not as surprised by the other findings. It was found that in this particular study girls had a more positive attitude toward reading than boys. They also found that attitude did not alter much due to the grade that students were in school. Since this was the first time that the study was being implemented, it is important to know that the generalizations should not be used to characterize the entire population of elementary students and their attitudes toward reading. However, it does raise some questions and give a glimpse into the attitudes of the sample of students that were involved in the study (Askov & Fischbach).

Teacher’s Gender and Reading Attitude: Shapiro (1980)

This study examined the role of the teachers’ gender on reading attitude. Since the majority of primary teachers are female, the scarcity of male role models in the primary grades could be affecting boys’ reading attitudes. Shapiro (1980) states that, “men and boys view reading as a feminine activity and this attitude exerts some influences on a boy’s reading ability” (p. 255). This could be caused by the lack of male teachers in the primary grades (Shapiro).
Four male second grade teachers and four female second grade teachers and their classrooms were used in this study. Random sampling could not be achieved since there was a shortage of male teachers in this grade. A total of 141 children participated in this study. Of the 141 students, there were 76 boys (32 in the male classroom and 44 in the female classroom) and 65 girls (31 in the male classroom and 34 in the female classroom) (Shapiro, 1980).

The instrument that was used was the *Survey of School Attitudes*, or the SSA. The teacher read the 15 reading questions aloud to the students in a 20-minute block of time. Happy, sad, or neutral faces were the options from which students had to choose. This instrument was given as a pretest at the beginning of the year and again as a posttest at the end of the year and the results were compared. This was done because there was no way to control the gender of the teacher that the students had during first grade (Shapiro, 1980).

Results from this test found that girls scored higher than boys, which means they have a more positive reading attitude overall. It was also found that all students, girls and boys, in the male classrooms had significantly better reading attitudes than those students in the female classrooms. This does support the hypothesis that male teachers can be good reading role models for boys. However, there is no definite explanation for why the girls have a more positive reading attitude. Shapiro suggests that students who are exposed to a male teacher, for the first time, want to please them. This could be because having a male teacher may be new to them and so they are eager to please (Shapiro, 1990).
**Attitudes Toward Reading in the Early Grades: Parker and Paradis (1986)**

In the mid 1980s, Parker and Paradis (1986) found that there was not much research conducted on reading attitudes in the elementary grades. There had been research that investigated the development of attitudes in fourth, fifth, and sixth grades, but not much had been done as far as research in grades one through grade three. They decided to conduct a study that examined reading attitude from grade one through grade six. According to Parker and Paradis, the aim of the study was to answer three central questions, “1. Do attitudes change as children progress from grade one through grade three and from grade four through grade six? 2. Do attitudes differ between boys and girls in the primary grades or boys and girls in the intermediate grades? 3. Do sex by grade interactions occur for reading attitudes in the primary or intermediate grades?” (p. 313).

The subjects in this study were from a community of 25,000 with seven elementary schools. Four classrooms were randomly selected at each grade level from one to six. Students from each of the classrooms were then randomly selected so that there were 114 primary grade students (first grade through third grade) and 120 intermediate students (fourth through sixth grade) (Parker & Paradis, 1986).

The instrument that was used in this study was the *Heathington Primary Scale* for grades 1-3 and the *Heathington Intermediate Scale* for grades 4-6. The primary scale consists of 20 questions read to the student. The student has an answer sheet with 20 rows of five faces that show different feelings from very sad to very happy. This scale has a face in the middle that is neutral. There is no reading or writing involved because the students having the questions read to them, then chose the feeling from a picture of a face. A score of 100 is the most positive score a student can receive and a score of 20 is
the most negative attitude score that a student can receive based on their answers to the survey. Each question starts with “How do you feel…” According to Alexander and Filler, “Certain groupings of questions can be considered diagnostic” (p. 29). They suggest that the groupings are as follows, “free reading in the classroom, organized reading in the classroom, reading at the library, reading at home, other recreational reading, and general reading” (p. 29). Each question is targeted for a particular group of questions and the questions are specifically labeled for the teacher as to what group they belong to. The intermediate scale requires that the student read and respond to 24 statements. They can choose from five options from very positive to very negative with a neutral response in the middle. The intermediate scale has the same diagnostic categories as the primary scale. A score of 120 represents the most positive reading attitude score where a score of 24 represented the most negative reading score (Alexander & Filler).

Parker and Paradis found that there were no significant differences in the attitude scores from the students in grades one through three. However, they did find significant differences in fourth through sixth grade. The majority of the difference was from grades four and five, and then it stabilized from fifth and sixth grade. They found that recreational reading attitudes significantly increased from grade four to grade five and then there was no significant difference from grade five to grade six. Recreational reading attitudes showed more of an incline than classroom related reading attitudes from grade four to grade five. Their study also showed a significant difference in reading attitude between girls and boys in each grade. Each grade showed a more positive reading attitude from girls than from boys. They were very clear to caution educators to not over generalize this finding to all students.
McKenna, Kear, and Ellsworth conducted their extensive study in 1989 and then reported on their findings in 1995. This investigation reexamined reading attitudes with what they stated was an improved instrument. The purpose of their study was to answer three main questions. According to McKenna et al. (1995) the three questions were, “What are the overall developmental trends in recreational and academic reading attitude across the elementary grades? What is the developmental relationship between recreational and academic reading attitude, on the one hand, and (a) reading ability, (b) gender, and (c) ethnicity, on the other? What effects on reading attitude can be ascribed to the use of basal reading materials?” (p. 942).

This study began by sending letters to state and local council presidents of the International Reading Association to explain the study and ask for help by taking on the role of liaison among the participating schools or to find someone that would be willing to do so. After that was established, there were 229 schools from 38 states that agreed to participate. All together there were 18,185 students that took part in the study from grades one through six. Community size was a factor that was considered when selecting which schools should participate. The schools that participated were divided up among different community sizes from city populations of 250,000 to city populations of less than 25,000. The students that participated were distributed proportionately to represent the national distribution in terms of gender, and ethnicity also (McKenna et al., 1995).

The instrument that was used for this study was the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey, or the ERAS (McKenna & Kear, 1990). This instrument uses the picture character of the comic strip cat Garfield to represent feelings about 20 statements of
reading attitudes. Garfield was chosen as the character because it was found to be the most recognizable character according to a survey from elementary age students and teachers (McKenna & Kear). Ten of the statements are based on recreational reading and the other 10 are based on academic reading. Each statement has four choices from the happiest Garfield to the very upset Garfield and they all begin with the words “How do you feel…” The instrument uses pictures so that it is more appealing to the students. Also, this instrument does not require students to read or write to comment on statements about their feelings. An even number of options was selected so that there was not a middle option that allowed a response of no opinion. Four options were chosen as a good number because research findings have shown that short-term memory development often prevents young children from considering more than five options. The range of scores for this instrument are from 40 representing the most positive attitude and 10 being the most negative attitudes based on the responses (McKenna et al., 1995).

The classroom teachers gave all these surveys in group settings in late January of 1989. Explanation was provided to the students before they began the survey so that they were aware that there was no correct answer for the statements, and the teacher read each number and the statement out loud two times. After the students were finished and before the surveys were to be turned over for evaluation, the teachers classified each student’s gender, ethnicity, reading ability, and how much of their reading instruction was from a basal reader (McKenna et al., 1995).

The findings of overall developmental trends in recreational and academic reading attitudes were significant. The biggest drop in recreational reading attitude was from fourth to fifth grade, and the smallest drop was from second to third, and there were not
any increases in attitude from grades one through six. Academic reading attitude showed even more drops in reading attitude. They dropped consistently with the exception of third to fourth grade being a slightly smaller decrease in positive attitude toward academic reading compared to the other grades. So, in general, according to McKenna et al. (1995), “attitude toward reading both as pastime and as a school-related undertaking was observed to grow increasingly negative as students passed from first to sixth grade” (p. 945). The attitudes in first grade for both academic and recreational attitudes were closest to the slightly smiling Garfield and by sixth grade they were more towards the middle of slightly smiling to slightly frowning. Though this may not seem to be an alarmingly large decrease throughout the grades it is still considered educationally significant (McKenna et al.).

According to McKenna et al. (1995), the findings also suggest “frustration plays a central role in shaping attitude” (p. 945). This is based on the results that showed more positive attitudes from students labeled as having high reading abilities and negative attitudes from students that were labeled as having lower reading abilities (McKenna et al.).

Gender was also shown to play a significant role in recreational and academic reading attitudes. Girls tended to have more positive reading attitudes than boys. In regards to recreational reading, as the students got older the differences were more apparent. For the academic reading attitudes the results still showed that girls were more positive than boys, but the differences stayed consistent through the grades. When commenting on how gender and reading ability factored in together McKenna et al. stated that, “The gender effect apparently cannot be accounted for by ability” (p. 949)
Ethnicity did not show a significant difference in recreational reading attitudes. Academic reading attitudes, on the other hand, showed that African American students had a more negative attitude than Whites attitudes throughout the grades. Hispanic students tended to have a more positive attitude in first grade, but by sixth grade the differences in attitude disappeared (McKenna et al., 1995).

The use of basal readers during reading instruction was also calculated. McKenna et al. (1995) found that, “The extent of a teacher’s reliance on basal readers does not appear to be meaningfully related to recreational or academic reading attitude” (p. 952). The trends that were seen also did not account for how reading was being taught in previous years for the students that were completing the survey (McKenna et al.).

Reading Attitude Development to Adulthood: Smith (1990)

In the late 1980s, Smith (1990) engaged in a longitudinal study that examined reading attitude development from childhood through adulthood. The studies that have been done regarding adult reading attitudes compared to children’s reading attitudes have all been cross-sectional studies. Cross-sectional studies do not follow the same subjects over a period of time; they simply study several age groups of people and make comparisons. This is one of the first studies that attempt to follow the same children into adulthood and make comparisons in regards to reading attitudes over the years. Smith (1990) states that the purpose of this study was to answer the following question, “Are the childhood measures of reading attitude used by Kreitlow predictive of adult reading attitude as assessed by the ASRA?” (p. 217). If childhood reading attitudes were proven to predict adult reading attitudes, then this study would provide evidence for promoting
the importance of positive reading attitudes as a child (Smith).

According to Smith (1990), “Eighty-four adults (31 men and 53 women) ranging in age from 35 to 44 (M age = 39.4) participated in this study” (p. 216). Everyone who participated was White and middle-class with a wide variety of occupations and educational backgrounds. All of the people that participated in Smith’s study also participated in a study when they were children, which was conducted by Kreitlow in 1962 and 1966. Kreitlow’s study was done with 1,596 students from Wisconsin that was examining many different educational topics, with reading attitude being one of the focuses. Smith was able to locate 409 of the students in 1989 and 84 of them agreed to participate (Smith).

The instrument that was used in this study was the Adult Survey of Reading Attitudes, or the ASRA. Smith (1990) adapted this instrument from a children’s reading attitude assessment that was developed by Wallbrown, Brown, and Engin in 1977. The ASRA contains 40 survey questions and the answers are based on a 5-point, Likert scale that has answers ranging from strong agreement to strong disagreement. The questions were adapted from the children’s assessment so that they would better apply to adult reading situations. Academic reading may not be applicable, whereas reading for an occupation may be more relevant to an adult. Another example of how the questions were adapted was how, “Reading is one of my best subjects” changed to “Reading is one of my favorite activities.” According to Smith, “Forty items were grouped around five factors: (a) reading activity and enjoyment; (b) reading anxiety and difficulty, (c) reading modes, (d) social reinforcement, and (e) a new factor, tutoring, which is concerned with assisting others in reading” (Smith, p. 216).
The results of Smith’s (1990) study showed that attitudes in the ninth through twelfth grades are a better predictor of adult attitudes than are the reading attitudes that are in place during grades one through six. Females were found to have a significantly more positive reading attitude than males. Another one of the findings is that reading attitudes of the children and older adults remained stable, suggesting that reading attitude remains stable over the lifespan. Students who did not attend college showed the least positive attitudes toward reading and the older adult group displayed the most positive reading attitudes. Adults who were in higher status occupations that require more reading were more likely to have a more positive attitude. These same adults also had more education than some of the other adults, which was also shown to have a more positive effect on reading attitude (Smith).

**Gender Differences in Reading Attitude: Logan and Johnston (2009)**

According to Logan and Johnston (2009), “The aim of this study was to investigate gender differences in the relationship between reading ability, frequency of reading and attitudes and beliefs relating to reading in school” (p. 199). There were 232 participants from eight different elementary schools that took part in this study. More specifically, 117 boys and 115 girls from sixth and seventh grades participated (Logan & Johnston).

To categorize students based on reading ability, there was a reading comprehension test given before the reading attitude questionnaire on the same day. The questionnaire was made up of two open-ended response questions of “How often do you read at home?” and “Do you borrow books from the library to read for fun?” These two questions were followed by 14 questions that allowed students to respond using a five-point Likert scale. According to Logan and Johnston, (2009), the questions on the
questionnaire were based on four factors, “attitude to school, attitude to reading, contemporary beliefs, and peer and teacher support” (p. 205). The questionnaire was read aloud so that if students had a low reading ability they could also hear the questions being read aloud (Logan & Johnston).

According to Logan and Johnston (2009), the results of the study found that “Girls were significantly better at reading, girls reported reading significantly more often than boys, girls also reported borrowing books from the library more often than boys” (p. 204). Although the results of this study were significant, the differences were relatively small.

Summary

This purpose of this chapter was to review what the educational literature has to say about reading attitude. The theoretical orientation for the study demonstrated that grade level, gender, reading ability and achievement, environment, ethnicity, and teacher and classroom influence are the factors that influence attitude toward reading. Most of the factors that were discussed have been verified by each of the studies that are described later in detail. Each study supports the idea that reading ability has an impact on reading attitude. Reading attitudes also decrease throughout the primary grades but seem to stay constant later in life. Also, girls tend to have a more positive attitude toward reading than boys, and there are several different hypotheses about why these factors play such a role in reading attitudes. This chapter then explains the two models for reading attitude, which include the Mathewson Model for Reading Attitude and the McKenna Model for Reading Attitude.

The second section of this chapter includes six studies that are referred to as significant historical research. The six studies are Askov and Fischbach (1973); Shapiro
(1980); Parker and Paradis (1986); McKenna, Kear, and Ellsworth (1989); Smith (1990); and Logan and Johnston (2009). Each study has contributed greatly to current theory of reading attitude. They each play a significant role in what is known today about reading attitude and the factors that contribute to it.

There was no specific research that was found that has established any significant differences or specific mention of the role that community size plays in reading attitudes. Although McKenna et al. (1995) did have a variety of schools from different sized communities, there was no mention to what role that played in the attitudes. The differences or similarities among students from different community size and the reading attitudes have not been studied much. There was almost no mention of this in any of the previous studies. Because of this, this study will be focusing on all of the factors mentioned at the beginning of the chapter as well as the role that community size plays into this topic.
CHAPTER III. METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The purpose of this study was to examine the central topic of: “Are there differences between third, fourth, and fifth grade students’ attitudes toward reading in relation to community size?” The central topic is broken down into two questions: 1) Does community size affect reading attitude scores? and 2) Does the grade level of third, fourth, and fifth grade affect reading attitude scores? These questions were examined in relation to a) academic reading, b) recreational reading, c) total attitude, and d) additional questions. This chapter explains precisely how this entire study was conducted. The first section includes the methods used throughout this study. It examines the research methodology that was implemented, explaining what methods were used and why they were used. Also, in the methods section, a description of the population of subjects of third, fourth, and fifth grade students is reviewed. The process for choosing the participants is discussed as well. The final section of the methods portion of this chapter examines the instrument that was used in the study. This study uses a 20-item survey titled the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (see Appendix A) because it allows for information to be gathered quickly from a large sampling of students. The second section of the survey provides three unfinished sentences for the students to complete.

In the next section of chapter three, procedures are discussed in detail with replication in mind. Next the data collection is discussed. With the 20-item survey based on a four-part Likert-type scale, given to 179 participants, the data needed to be collected to be used and analyzed in a manageable way. The data from the unfinished sentences also needed to be put together in a controllable way. Finally, the Procedure section discusses the data analysis procedure, followed by the summary of the chapter.
Method

Research Methodology

This study applied a mixed-method research design as it utilized quantitative and qualitative data gathered from a survey. The main goal of mixed-methods studies is to better understand and explain the research problem, using whatever methodologies seem appropriate. The *Elementary Reading Attitude Survey* uses a Likert-type continuum scale where students were given the statements and then responded by circling one of four picture responses. This type of survey is considered a closed-response survey, because the rating scales allow the participants to simply select their responses from a choice of a set of four pre-determined responses, rather than providing their own open responses. Closed-response surveys allow the researcher to easily report results, which is the primary reason that this method was chosen for this study. This survey can also be classified as a questionnaire, because the researcher distributed it, the participants responded in a written form, and then returned them to the researcher when they were complete. Because there is only an option of four responses, the responses can have a number assigned to each response, which makes analysis clearer and more accurate (Mertler). The numerical data that was collected from the students helped to make comparisons between the two different school settings, between different reading purposes, and across the different grades (Mertler, 2009; Schmuck, 2000).

Qualitative data was gathered by adding three unfinished sentences to the end of the survey. This allowed for participants to provide open-ended responses, which allow them to individualize their own responses. Analyzing the results is slightly more time-consuming because responses are less controlled, but this is the value of such qualitative
research methodologies; allowing participants to give open-ended responses permits them to reveal unexpected thoughts or feelings that the researcher may not have considered (Mertler).

**Participants**

Participants in this study were students in the third, fourth, and fifth grades from two different schools—one a small city school, and another a nearby rural school. There were six classes in the small city school, with two third, two fourth, and two fifth grade classes participating. The same was done in the rural school with two third, two fourth, and two fifth grade classes participating. Each class in the small city school and the rural school had an average of 15 students who participated in the study. The three grades being examined were chosen because they are far enough into their education where learning to read is being replaced with reading to learn. This often leads to a decline in reading attitude because reading is done for more academic reasons, such as reading in content areas, than just for enjoyment and recreation. On the other hand, it is still early enough for the data to be meaningful for teachers and parents to keep positive reading attitudes as a goal for the students and children.

The small city school in this study has a population of 27,844 residents, according to the U.S. Census Bureau in 2007 (www.census.gov). The rural school is in a town with a population of 935 residents, according to the U.S. Census Bureau in 2007 (www.census.gov). In addition to population differences, there was also a significant difference in percentage of students on free and reduced lunch—72.86% for the small city school district, and 36% for the rural school district. This free and reduced lunch statistic serves as a marker for socio-economic status (SES), indicating that apparent
surface level similarities may mask distinct underlying differences.

The two schools selected were done so based in part for convenience sampling and in part because they represent differences in community size. In other words, on one hand, they were schools in the local county; on the other hand, they were the two schools in the county with the greatest difference in population size. Convenience sampling is “A non-probability sample of research participants or subjects selected not for their representativeness but for their accessibility or handiness” (A Dictionary of Psychology, 2009). In addition to the primary criterion of convenience, the researcher did however randomly choose the specific elementary school in the small city school district. Rather than randomly choosing students from the six different elementary schools, the researcher just randomly chose one school and used the participants in that school. The rural school only has one elementary school so this is the school that was used for the study.

There are currently 3,772 students enrolled in the small city school district and 1,468 student enrolled in the rural school district. The state average is 1,954 students (Ohio Department of Education, 2009). The discrepancy between the population sizes for the rural district, between the school and the total village population, is that the school district includes much of the rural area that surrounds the school; the total population numbers only count those who live in the village. Further parsing of data reveals more information about the two different communities, as can be seen in Table 1.
Table 1. Population Statistics Comparison: Small City v. Rural Village

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Small City</th>
<th>Rural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>27,844</td>
<td>935</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People under 18</td>
<td>25.8 %</td>
<td>27.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>74.5%</td>
<td>97.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>21.1%</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median household income</td>
<td>$33,783</td>
<td>$44,837</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimated median house or condo value</td>
<td>$100,525</td>
<td>$142,580</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The researcher was not only interested in these two different school districts because they were located closely geographically, but also because their reading scores were much different from each other. Using the Ohio Department of Education’s 2008-2009 School Year Report Cards and looking specifically at the differences in performance in reading scores of third, fourth, and fifth grade students prompted the researcher’s questioning of the factors that are affecting the scores to be so different from each other.

Table 2. 2008-2009 School Year Report Card Reading Achievement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Third Grade</th>
<th>Fourth Grade</th>
<th>Fifth Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Small City</td>
<td>73.0%</td>
<td>83.1%</td>
<td>65.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>83.5%</td>
<td>84.1%</td>
<td>76.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The reading scores from the two schools shows a significant difference in third grade and in fifth grade. In third grade, the rural school had 83.5% of their students pass the reading portion of the Ohio Achievement Test compared to the small city school having 73.0% of their third grade students pass. That is a difference of 10.5%. The fourth grade reading scores are 1% higher in the rural school than the small city school. Also, the fifth grade reading scores show a significant difference, with the rural school passing 76.7% of their fifth grade students and the small city school passing 65.7% of their fifth grade students in reading. That is a difference of 11%. Using the information above, these two school districts seemed to have many differences, and yet they are located so closely to each other geographically. Surveying the students from the two communities about their reading attitude will help to establish a correlation between reading attitude and reading scores.

**Instrumentation**

A survey was used in this research study to respond to statements about recreational and academic reading attitudes. The survey that was used was a modified version of the *Elementary Reading Attitude Survey* (ERAS) (see Appendix A), which has 20 items that utilize a four-point Likert-type scale (McKenna & Kear, 1990). Three unfinished sentences were added to the end of the survey to collect qualitative information from the students.

The ERAS is a 20-item survey that is five pages long with four questions on each page. A four-choice picture rating scale is based on the cartoon character of Garfield. There are two 10-item subscales in this survey consisting of recreational and academic reading attitude. Examples of recreational reading attitude questions were “How do you
feel about reading for fun at home?” and “How do you feel about reading instead of playing?” On the other hand, examples of academic reading attitude questions were “How do you feel when your teacher asks you questions about what you read?” and “How do you feel about reading your school books?” The responses are added together by assigning one point for the most positive response and four points to the most negative response. Because of this cartoon character being the choice for response, this survey has been referred to as the “Garfield Test.” This survey has an even numbered scale and does not include the option of not choosing a feeling. According to McKenna and Kear (1990), “a pictorial format was elected because of its natural appeal for children and because of its comprehensibility by the very young” (p. 627). It was also found that Garfield was the most recognizable character to children in grades one through six, in 1990 when the survey was created, according to an informal survey of thirty elementary teachers.

Each question begins with the phrase “How do you feel…” Because this instrument is very user friendly and appropriate for young children, it has become an instrument that is favored among reading educators. Jim Davis, the creator of Garfield, has also permitted the survey with his character to be reproduced and used by educators. These reasons make this survey very fitting for this study.

The researcher modified the survey by adding three unfinished sentences to the end of the survey (see Appendix A). The directions ask the student to finish the sentence. The format and types of questions come from suggestions from Kerby (1986) and Alexander and Filler (1977). The questions are as follows:

1. If I am not reading I like to ________________________________.
2. I would read more if ________________________________.
3. I get my books from ____________________________.

Answers to these items will help the researcher to gather the qualitative data for the study. The qualitative data was shared with the teachers and can be used by educators and parents to find out more about reading habits of third, fourth, and fifth grade students.

Procedures

The first step in this study was deciding which schools were going to be used. The researcher examined the population numbers in the communities in the nearby area by accessing the most recent U.S. Census Bureau Results. The school district with the largest population and the school district with the smallest population sizes were identified to begin with. Then the researcher examined the most recent State School Report Cards and looked specifically at the Ohio Achievement Test results in the area of reading. Once this information was gathered and the schools were decided upon, the researcher gained the permission of the schools, teachers, students, and parents of the selected schools and classrooms. First, the principals of the selected schools were contacted and provided consent with the stipulation that the teachers also consented to participating. The selected teachers did consent for the researcher to conduct the survey and to distribute permission forms to the individual students. Copies of the permission forms are included in Appendix B and Appendix C. Once permission was granted and the classrooms were chosen, the student surveys were conducted.

The students’ survey results are only included in this study from students whose parents gave their permission to allow their children to participate. The classroom teacher was able to keep track of the permission slips as they were returned. As they were collected the teacher kept two lists of students, the first of students whose parents gave
permission and the other for students who did not return a permission slip or whose parent did not consent to have their child participate in the study.

Next the researcher administered the surveys. The students were instructed to keep their name off the survey. Although they were advised to keep their names off the survey, they were instructed to put a grade level number (3, 4, or 5) and a letter A for students in the small city school and a letter B for those from the rural school. This was used to identify the grade level and the school if necessary during the data collection. Instructions were given by the researcher to each group of students. The students were told that their responses were not going to be graded and that their honesty was important for the results of the study to be accurate. They were ensured that their teacher would not be seeing their individual responses, and that since their names were not going to be put on the survey, they would not be penalized or rewarded for their responses. Each class was told that the purpose of the study was to examine the reading attitudes between the same grades at two different schools. The researcher then discussed the different response choices in detail. The choices for response to feelings were demonstrated animatedly so the students were free from confusion about the feeling of the character being displayed in the survey. It was made clear that they were to respond based on how they felt about the statement, and not how they thought Garfield would respond to the statement. Each question was then read orally at least two times and wait time was given for the students to complete each response. They were then instructed to respond to the three unfinished sentences. The oral directions given were to respond in short responses, and that they did not have to rewrite the statement. They were to summarize their answers and make them as short as possible for the researcher to be able to accurately categorize their responses. When
everyone was finished, the surveys were collected and sorted based on the students who had consent and students who did not have consent.

Data Collection

Data were recorded in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet to make the data from the responses useable. This document labels the first column with the school code. A one was given to all of the small city school students’ surveys and a two was given to all the rural school students’ surveys. The coding was necessary for categorizing the students’ scores in a functional way. The second column was for the grade level. Third grade was labeled with a number three, fourth grade was labeled with the number four, and fifth grade was labeled with the number five. The next 20 columns are for each student’s responses to each of the 20 items. A number one was given to a response of the happiest Garfield, number two to a slightly smiling Garfield, number three to a mildly upset Garfield, and a number four to a very upset Garfield.

Next, the data from unfinished sentence responses were gathered and grouped into a usable way. Sorting the groups of participants by grade level and school was the first thing to be done. Then each question was looked at individually for common responses. Once the common responses were identified, the researcher counted each response and recorded the responses into another Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. There was a column available for “other” responses, for responses that did not fit into the most common response categories. Once the data were all recorded in a usable format, the analysis was able to begin.
Data Analysis

Before analysis began, three values were computed: recreational reading attitude, academic reading attitude, and total reading attitude. The reading attitude total was calculated by adding the points that were given for each of the 20 item responses. A total sum of 20 is the most positive score, and a total sum of 80 is the most negative score that a student can receive based upon their responses. The sum of items one through ten represents reading attitude towards recreational reading, while the sum of items 11 through 20 represent reading attitudes towards academic reading. A score of 10 is the most positive, and a score of 40 is the most negative score that can be received based on the students responses to the recreational and academic items.

Data were then entered into Stat Crunch, which is an online statistical program that provides descriptive and inferential analyses. Descriptive statistics were conducted for each scoring item. This analysis calculated the frequency and percent of response for each item based upon the four possible responses. There was also a mean score for each item and subscale along with the standard deviation.

A t-Test of independent samples was conducted to compare small city and rural schools based on recreational, academic, and overall reading attitude scores. Then an analysis of variance, ANOVA, was conducted to analyze reading attitudes by grade levels.

Finally a qualitative analysis examined the responses to the unfinished sentences. The totals for the responses to each unfinished sentence were simply added up and then put into a table. Once all of the statistical analysis was completed, the data was put into individual tables for the purposes of this paper. The results of this analysis can be found
Summary

This chapter provides the reader with an understanding of exactly how this study was conducted, and was organized along the following sections: problem, methodologies, participants, instrumentation, procedures, data collection, and data analysis analysis. The purpose of this study was to examine the central topic of: “Are there differences between third, fourth, and fifth grade students’ attitudes toward reading in relation to community size?” This study used a closed-response survey that was adapted by adding open-ended responses at the end with unfinished sentences, as a result, it used a mixed-method research design because it used an instrument that collected qualitative data and quantitative data. The participants were third, fourth, and fifth grade students in small city and rural school settings. The instrument used in this study was the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey, which was a 20-item survey that allowed participants to respond to a four-choice Likert-type scale based on a continuum of feeling. The procedures were written with replication of the study in mind. Data were collected and organized into a spreadsheet and analyzed through a number of methods, including StatCrunch, t-tests, and ANOVA analysis.
CHAPTER IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The data analysis of this study is found in this chapter. Again, the purpose of this study was to examine the central topic of: “Are there differences between third, fourth, and fifth grade students’ attitudes toward reading in relation to community size?” The central topic is broken down into two questions; 1) Does community size affect reading attitude scores? and 2) Does the grade level of third, fourth, and fifth grade affect reading attitude scores? These questions were examined in relation to a) academic reading, b) recreational reading, c) total attitude, and d) additional questions. These questions are all answered with support of the data provided from this study’s confidential surveys of 179 third, fourth, and fifth grade students from a small city and a rural school district. The data analysis section explores each question separately, and seven data tables across these two sections display the results.

Results

Does community size affect reading attitude scores?

To answer the first question of “Does community size affect reading attitude scores?,” the results of the survey from the small city school and the rural school were compared. There were 87 participants from the small city school and 92 participants from the rural school. The differences were examined between the two different community sizes by measuring the mean and standard deviation in relation to recreational, academic, and overall reading attitudes.

The t-test indicated that there was not a significant difference in reading attitude between the students from the small city and rural school used in this study. The mean overall reading attitude score for students from the small city school was 43.84 with a
standard deviation of 13.11, and the mean overall reading attitude score for the students from the rural school is 43.42 with a standard deviation of 11.17. To show a significant difference, the $p$ score must be less than .05 and it is not. There is a very slight tilt towards the attitude being slightly more positive in the rural school, but it was not.

Furthermore, based on the two variables of recreational and academic reading attitudes, there were also no significant differences in the data. Though the recreational reading attitude scores for rural school participants are slightly more positive than the recreational reading attitude scores of the small city school participants, they were not significant enough to make any definite statements. The mean of the rural students’ scores was 20.85 with a standard deviation of 6.03, and the mean of the small city students was 21.94 with a standard deviation of 6.79. The opposite was true for the results of the academic reading attitude results. The small city participants’ academic reading attitude scores were slightly more positive than the rural participants academic reading attitude scores. The mean of the small city students’ scores was 21.90 with a standard deviation of 7.42 and the mean of the rural students’ scores was 22.58 with a standard deviation of 6.19.

Table 1. t-Test Results Comparing Small City and Rural Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Small City</th>
<th>Rural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n=87</td>
<td>n=92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$M$</td>
<td>$SD$</td>
<td>$M$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreational</td>
<td>21.94</td>
<td>6.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic</td>
<td>21.90</td>
<td>7.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>43.84</td>
<td>13.11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Does the grade level of third, fourth, and fifth grade affect reading attitude scores?

To answer the second question of “Does the grade level of third, fourth, and fifth grade affect reading attitude scores?,” the results from the surveys were compared with the variables being the three grade levels. There were 66 third grade participants, 60 fourth grade participants, and 53 fifth grade participants in this study. The differences were examined between recreational, academic, and overall reading attitude scores. The results combine the rural and small city students and separate the grade level of the students. Comparing the mean and standard deviation from the different grade levels in the different categories achieves this.

According to the ANOVA conducted for this study, there were significant differences among grade levels in that as the grade level increases the reading attitudes scores decline in all three categories. The overall mean for third grade students reading attitude was at the most positive of the three grade levels, followed by the fourth grade level, and then the most negative of the overall reading attitudes were the fifth grade level. The mean score for overall reading attitude of third grade students was 38.94 with a standard deviation of 1.47. This was leaning towards the more positive side of the test with a middle score being a 40. The overall reading attitudes mean score for the fourth grade students was a 44.87 with a standard deviation of 1.17. This was a significant difference in the decline of overall reading attitude scores from the third grade scores.

The overall reading attitudes mean score for fifth grade students was 48.06 with a standard deviation of 1.84. Again, this was a significant difference in the decline of reading attitude scores as the grade level increases by one more level. The $p$ score for this
category is .0001 which is less than .05 and therefore shows a significant difference of overall attitude declining as grade level increases.

These results are similar when comparing recreational and academic reading attitudes as well. The mean recreational reading attitude score for third grade students was 19.56, fourth grade jumped to 22.17, and then fifth grade jumped again to 22.75. The largest difference in recreational reading attitudes is between third and fourth grade students. There was a difference in fifth grade but not as significant. The mean academic reading attitude score for third grade students were 19.38, fourth grade jumped to 22.70, and then fifth grade jumped again to 25.30. These differences were both a little larger and more significant than the recreational scores.

Table 2: ANOVA Results Comparing Grade Levels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Third Grade</th>
<th>Fourth Grade</th>
<th>Fifth Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n=66</td>
<td>n=60</td>
<td>n=53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Recreational</strong></td>
<td>19.56</td>
<td>22.17</td>
<td>22.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Academic</strong></td>
<td>19.38</td>
<td>22.70</td>
<td>25.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overall</strong></td>
<td>38.94</td>
<td>44.87</td>
<td>48.06</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comparing Recreational, Academic, and Total Attitude Scores

According to the results, recreational reading does have more positive results than academic reading. The most positive responses were given to three recreational statements. The majority of the participants enjoy starting new books, reading different kinds of books, and going to the bookstore. On the other hand, recreational reading also
has the top two negative results. When asked if reading is preferred over playing, there was a very definite preference to playing. The majority of the participants also do not prefer to read during summer vacation. The third most negative response came from an academic reading question where the majority of the participants do not enjoy doing reading workbook pages and worksheets.

The answers that the participants have given are compiled and the percentage of the sums is shown in Table 3. For example, in response to the first question: “How do you feel when you read a book on a rainy Saturday?,” of the 179 participants, 25.14% circled the happiest Garfield, shown by the number one (1), 43.02% circled the slightly smiling Garfield, shown by a number two (2), 20.67% circled the mildly upset Garfield, shown by the number three (3), and 11.17% circled the very upset Garfield, shown by the number four (4). The analysis of the data reports that the mean answer was 2.18 with a standard deviation of 0.94. The Garfield chosen the most for question number one is the slightly smiling Garfield with 43.02%, next is the happiest Garfield with 25.14%, then the mildly upset Garfield with 20.67%, and the least chosen was the very upset Garfield with 11.17%.

The three questions with the most positive attitudes were question number 6 with a mean answer of 1.55, number 10 with a mean answer of 1.65, and number 9 with a mean answer of 1.68. Question six asks, “How do you feel about starting a new book?” Question number ten asks, “How do you feel about reading different kinds of books?” The third most positive response came from the question, “How do you feel about going to the bookstore?” All three of these questions were in the category of recreational reading.
The three questions with the most negative results were question number 8 with a mean answer of 3.16, number 7 with a mean answer of 2.96, and number 12 with a mean answer of 2.68. Question number 8 asks, “How do you feel about reading instead of playing?” Question number 7 asks, “How do you feel about reading during summer vacation?” Question number 12 asks, “How do you feel about doing reading workbook pages and worksheets?” The top two most negative responses came from recreational reading questions and the third is an academic reading question.

Table 3 carefully examines each question from the survey. The percentage of responses to each question can be found in Table 3 along with a total that gives the overall average of the responses.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics for Scoring Items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item #</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>25.14</td>
<td>43.02</td>
<td>20.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>41.90</td>
<td>35.20</td>
<td>16.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>32.96</td>
<td>27.93</td>
<td>18.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>42.46</td>
<td>29.05</td>
<td>15.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>31.84</td>
<td>37.43</td>
<td>21.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>62.57</td>
<td>24.58</td>
<td>8.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>11.73</td>
<td>24.02</td>
<td>21.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>9.50</td>
<td>17.88</td>
<td>20.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>53.07</td>
<td>29.61</td>
<td>13.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>52.51</td>
<td>32.96</td>
<td>11.73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
While this study has shown recreational reading attitude to be more positive than academic reading attitude, it is by a very small margin. The mean score for recreational reading is a 21.40 with a standard deviation of 6.42 and the mean score for the academic reading is a 22.25 with a standard deviation of 6.81. The overall attitude towards reading is rather neutral. It tends to tilt slightly towards the negative side. An average score would be a forty for an overall attitude and the participants overall mean is a 43.63 with a standard deviation of 12.12.

As stated above, the survey examines reading attitudes based on questions that are categorized by recreational and academic purposes for reading. The total most positive response that can be observed on this survey was a score of 20. The total most negative response that can be observed on this survey was a score of 80. When comparing the separate categories, the most positive score is a 10 and the most negative score was a 40.
The numbers are just split in half because there is half the amount of questions in each category.

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics for Survey Factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item Number</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recreational</td>
<td>1-10</td>
<td>21.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic</td>
<td>11-20</td>
<td>22.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>1-20</td>
<td>43.63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What do third, fourth, and fifth grade students like to do if they are not reading?

The question of “What do third, fourth, and fifth grade students like to do if they are not reading?” is answered in this study by having students respond to an additional question. Students were asked to finish the sentence, “If I’m not reading I like to ________.” According to this study, the majority of them like to play, watch television, and play video games.

The majority of students finished this sentence with the word “play.” A noteworthy trend is that as students’ grade level increases, their response of “watch TV” decreases and the response of “play video games” increases. Another interesting piece is that the third grade students that attend the small city school had the same response of play as they did several other responses. Math, drawing, dancing, and sleeping were some of their “other” responses. This is the group that had the largest number of responses that did not fit into one of the three main categories.
Table 5: Results from Unfinished Sentence #1 – If I am not reading I like to ________.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small City</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small City</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small City</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What would help a third, fourth, or fifth grade student read more?

The question of “What would help a third, fourth, or fifth grade student read more?” is answered by having the students answer another additional question. Students were asked to finish the sentence, “I would read more if _____.” According to this study, the responses tended to be in relation to interest.

A couple of examples are “I would read more if books were interesting” or “…if they were not boring.” These types of responses increased as the students’ grade level increased. This can be interpreted as the students find books to be less interesting as they get older and material gets harder and for a more academic purpose. In third and in fifth grade there is a trend for more small city students to want interesting reading material than in rural students. The fourth grade response was the same in the two schools, in that they want more interesting material to be available.
Another noteworthy finding is that students responded that they would read more if there was nothing else to do. This is a common response for third grade students, but not so much in the fourth and fifth grade students. Also, only one fifth grade student in the small city school indicated that he or she would read more if they had more time, whereas eight fifth grade students from the rural school indicated that is a contributor to the amount of reading being done. Other than that, the responses do not change much from the school or the grade levels. The most common responses are “more time”, “more books”, “interest”, “rewards”, and “nothing else to do.”

Table 6: Results from Unfinished Sentence #2 – I would read more if _____________.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>More time</th>
<th>More books</th>
<th>Interest</th>
<th>Rewards</th>
<th>Nothing else to do</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Small City</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small City</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small City</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Where do third, fourth, and fifth grade students get their books?

The questions of “Where do third, fourth, and fifth grade students get their books?” is answered in this study by having students respond to the final additional question. Students were asked to finish the sentence of “I get my books from ________.”
According to this study, the majority of small city school students indicated getting more of their books from a store and the rural students got the majority of their books from a library. Fourth grade stayed rather consistent, other than that the response of getting books from a store was, again, higher for small city students than rural students. However, the opposite is true in fifth grade. More rural students indicated getting their books from a store than the small city students. However, more rural students also got their books from a library than the small city students.

Table 7: Results from Unfinished Sentence #3 – I get my books from ___________.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Library</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary

After the data was analyzed, the main question of this study, “Does community size affect reading attitude scores?” was answered and was revealed to have no significant differences, according to this study. The other main question of “Does the grade level of third, fourth, and fifth grade affect reading attitude scores?” was shown to have a significant difference. This study agrees with the research that states that as
student’s grade level increases, their attitude towards reading decreases. This was the most significant finding based on the results of this study. There were also some minor findings in that recreational reading has a more positive attitude result than academic reading does. The results from the additional questions are helpful in answering questions in regards to what students would rather be doing instead of reading, what it would take to get them to read more, and where they get their books. Overall, students prefer to play instead of read. Students from the small city school and the rural school would read more if there were more books that they were interested in. Students who attend the small city school are getting the majority of their books from the store, whereas students from the rural school are getting their books from the library.
CHAPTER V. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study examined reading attitudes of third, fourth, and fifth grade students in regards to the effect of community size and the effect of grade level. In this chapter, chapters one through three are summarized, and the conclusions and results from chapter four are summarized. These are followed by a discussion of the recommendations and implications for future action, and concludes with a summary.

Summary of Previous Chapters

The research question in this study is: “Are there differences between third, fourth, and fifth grade students’ attitudes toward reading in relation to community size?” The central topic is broken down into two questions: 1) Does community size affect reading attitude scores? and 2) Does the grade level of third, fourth, and fifth grade affect reading attitude scores? This question is being asked because there is a lack of research regarding community size and reading attitude. A review of educational literature found that other factors affect reading attitude such as, gender, grade level, ethnicity, reading ability, environment, and teacher and classroom influence. Each study supports the idea that reading ability has an impact on reading attitude. Reading attitudes also decrease throughout the primary grades but seem to stay constant later in life. Also, girls tend to have a more positive attitude toward reading than boys. These issues are important because a positive reading attitude as a child is an indicator of future reading attitudes and abilities.

The participants in this study were third, fourth, and fifth grade students in a small city and rural school setting. The instrument used in this study is the *Elementary Reading Attitude Survey*, a 20-item survey that allows participants to
respond to a four-choice Likert-type scale based on a continuum of feeling. The procedures of this study were written with replication of the study in mind.

Finally, the questions that this study asked were answered. The main question of the study, “Does community size affect reading attitude scores?,” was answered in the negative: there are no significant differences in attitude toward reading based on community size, according to this study. The other main question, “Does the grade level of third, fourth, and fifth grade affect reading attitude scores?,” was also answered. This study concurs with research that there is a significant difference when students’ grade levels increase their reading attitude decreases. This was the most significant finding based on the results of this study. There were also some minor findings in that recreational reading has a more positive attitude result then academic reading does. The results from the additional questions are helpful in answering questions in regards to what students would rather be doing instead of reading, what it would take to get them to read more, and where they get their books.

Conclusions

Research has shown us that there are many factors that contribute to reading attitude. Increasing grade level, gender, reading ability and achievement, environment, teacher and classroom environment, ethnicity and increased choices all have been shown to affect reading attitude (Alexander & Filler, 1975: Askov & Fischbach, 1973: Logan & Johnston, 2009: McKenna et al., 1995: Parker & Paradis, 1986: Sainsbury & Schagen, 2004: Shapiro, 1980: Smith, 1990: Whittingham & Huffman, 2009). While this study did not attempt to investigate each of the factors, there are two factors that it did examine. The first factor is that, as grade level increases, attitudes toward reading decrease. This
was the most significant factor that this study found. It concurs with all of the previous research that has examined this issue.

The second factor, which has not been the focus in previous research, is the role that community size plays in reading attitude. This study found that there was not a significant difference in reading attitude in relation to community size. This was unpredicted because of the differences in the two schools that participated in the study. The small city school had lower reading test scores and a lower socio-economic status, based on free and reduced lunch figures, compared to the rural school. Research has shown that reading ability is a factor in reading attitude, so with the lower test scores it was assumed by the researcher that the findings would show that reading attitude correlated with the reading ability scores.

Now that reading attitude can be eliminated, the small city school can look at what other factors might be affecting the lower reading scores. While we know that reading ability is a contributor in reading attitude, it is not the only determinant. Students can have an overall similar reading attitude and still score low in reading ability measures. This study shows that there are many other variables that impact reading ability.

Implications and Recommendations

Implications for these Two Schools

Despite the fact that community size does not seem to be a factor in attitudes toward reading, there are still some significant differences in test scores between these two schools. The larger district has weaker test scores, and something (or things) must be factors in this difference, if attitudes are essentially equal across the two schools.
Teachers and administrators in both schools should be concerned, and become proactive in exploring the strengths and weaknesses of their existing programs in order to address areas for development. In addition, attitudes toward reading are declining across both schools as students progress up the grade levels. This too should be a central concern of teachers and administrators. The low scores and declining attitudes could be influenced by many other things such as parent involvement, quality of instruction, and educational values, but it is clear that students’ attitudes toward reading are not what is affecting the low test scores. Educators can keep in mind that there are many different factors that affect reading attitude.

*Implications for Students and Teachers in Middle Grades*

There are also implications, in general, beyond these two schools. Scores on reading attitude surveys drop consistently across the country as students progress up the grade levels. This is a national phenomenon, reflected in the results of this study. In addition, reading test scores decline precipitously in the middle grades, as students move from third to fifth grade. Any number of factors could be at stake, and research has yet to clearly define these factors.

Finding ways to keep attitudes positive especially as students get older is extremely important to their future education. If they keep reading and keep a positive attitude, then reading will become something that is enjoyable and they will be more likely to continue to engage reading throughout their lives. Knowing that there is no significant difference between the two community sizes in relation to reading attitude is one factor that can be eliminated for parents as well.
Implications for Future Research

Clearly, more research is need. In particular, one recommendation for future research would be to conduct similar studies in a larger urban area. Rather than surveying students from a small city school in the same area, future research could survey a larger urban school, or develop comparisons across schools of distinctly different makeup. This could also be done using random sampling rather than convenience sampling. Furthermore, more data needs to be gathered on participants, such as gender, ethnicity, and reading ability.

Summary

Finally, while this study was important to this researcher and the constituents of the two schools studied, it did not produce the anticipated results. That is not necessarily a bad thing. Much was learned about attitudes toward reading, and their potential relationship to test scores, but community size, at least for these two schools, was not a significant factor. This, however, does not mean that community size is necessarily insignificant in all cases; different kinds of studies might produce different results. A longitudinal study might be able to track student attitudes across that same students over longer periods of time. Larger randomized studies might be able to study more diverse communities, including a larger difference in community size across samples, in order to make stronger determinations about the role of community size in attitudes toward reading, and in causes of low reading test scores. Improving literacy remains one of the most important issues in education today, and much more work needs to be done to explore it.
REFERENCES


http://ilrc.ode.state.oh.us/


APPENDIX A

ELEMENTARY READING ATTITUDE SURVEY
Elementary Reading Attitude Survey

Please circle the picture that describes how you feel when you read a book.

1. How do you feel when you read a book on a rainy Saturday?

2. How do you feel when you read a book in school during free time?

3. How do you feel about reading for fun at home?

4. How do you feel about getting a book for a present?
Please circle the picture that describes how you feel when you read a book.

5. How do you feel about spending free time reading a book?

6. How do you feel about starting a new book?

7. How do you feel about reading during summer vacation?

8. How do you feel about reading instead of playing?
Please circle the picture that describes how you feel when you read a book.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q.</th>
<th>How do you feel about going to a bookstore?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td><img src="image1" alt="Garfield Pictures" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q.</th>
<th>How do you feel about reading different kinds of books?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td><img src="image2" alt="Garfield Pictures" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q.</th>
<th>How do you feel when a teacher asks you questions about what you read?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td><img src="image3" alt="Garfield Pictures" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q.</th>
<th>How do you feel about reading workbook pages and worksheets?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td><img src="image4" alt="Garfield Pictures" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Page 3

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Survey designed by Dennis J. Kear, Wichita State University
Please circle the picture that describes how you feel when you read a book.

13. How do you feel about reading in school?

14. How do you feel about reading your school books?

15. How do you feel about learning from a book?

16. How do you feel when it's time for reading in class?

Page 4

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Survey designed by Dennis J. Kear, Wichita State University
Please circle the picture that describes how you feel when you read a book.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>How do you feel about stories you read in reading class?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>![Garfield images]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>How do you feel when you read out loud in class?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>![Garfield images]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>How do you feel about using a dictionary?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>![Garfield images]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>How do you feel about taking a reading test?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>![Garfield images]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Please finish the next three sentences.

1. If I am not reading I like to

__________________________________________.

2. I would read more if

__________________________________________.

3. I get my books from

__________________________________________.
APPENDIX B

SCHOOL CONSENT FORM
Dear Principal:

My name is Whitney Hasselbach and I am a graduate student at Bowling Green State University. I am pursuing a Masters of Education in Reading degree. I am inviting the students at your school to be participants in a research study that I am conducting on reading attitude. The purpose of this study is to gather information about reading attitudes of children in rural and urban schools. There is a lot of research on students’ attitudes toward reading, but very little on whether community size has any influence over a child’s attitude. This study will involve two 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade classrooms in your school. The students in the classrooms will be asked to participate in a twenty-question survey. Each student will have four possible responses to questions about assigned reading for school and reading for enjoyment. Each student will also be asked to finish three sentences with a one-word answer also having to do with reading.

The anticipated risks are no greater than those normally encountered in the classroom on a regular day. The schools name and the students’ names will remain confidential and students will not be asked at any time to identify themselves in the survey. The surveys will remain in a locked cabinet until the study is complete and will then be destroyed. Participation in this study is completely voluntary and you or any student can withdraw at any time with no penalty or explanation. If you choose to let the students in your school participate it will be very helpful. By completing this form you are agreeing to allow your school to participate. If at any time you have any questions or would like to be taken out of the study, please contact Whitney Hasselbach or Dr. Timothy Murnen at the numbers listed below.

If you have any questions about this survey or research study, I may be contacted at whasse@bgsu.edu or (419)-271-6456. You may also contact my chairperson, Dr. Timothy Murnen at tmurnen@bgsu.edu or (419)-372-7983. If you have any questions or concerns about your rights, please contact the Chair of the Bowling Green State University Human Subjects Review Board (HSRB) at hsr@bgsu.edu or (419)-372-7716. Thank you for your time and cooperation.

Sincerely,
Whitney Hasselbach

By signing this consent form you are indicating you have read this document and give your consent for Whitney Hasselbach to conduct a study in your school.

Principal’s Signature: ____________________________________________________________

Date: ______________________
APPENDIX C

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM
April 2009

Dear Participant:

My name is Whitney Hasselbach and I am a graduate student at Bowling Green State University. I am going to school to get a Masters of Education in Reading degree. I am inviting you to take part in a research study that I am doing on reading attitude. The purpose of this study is to gather information about reading attitudes of children in rural and urban schools. There is a lot of research on attitudes toward reading, but very little on whether community size has any influence. This study will include 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade classrooms. You will be asked to take a twenty-question survey. There will be four possible answers to questions about reading for school and reading for fun. You will also be asked to finish three sentences with a one-word answer also having to do with reading.

The likely risks are no greater than those normally encountered in the classroom on a regular day. Your names will remain confidential and you will not be asked at any time to identify yourselves in the survey. The surveys will remain in a locked cabinet until the study is complete and will then be destroyed. Participation in this study is completely voluntary and you can withdraw at any time with no penalty or explanation. If you choose to participate it will be very helpful. By completing this form you are agreeing to participate. If at any time you have any questions or would like to be taken out of the study, please ask your teacher, principal, or parent/guardian to contact Whitney Hasselbach or Dr. Timothy Murnen at the numbers listed below.

If you have any questions about this survey or research study, I may be contacted at whasse@bgsu.edu or (419)-271-6456. You may also contact my chairperson, Dr. Timothy Murnen at tmurnen@bgsu.edu or (419)-372-7983. If you have any questions or concerns about your rights, please contact the Chair of the Bowling Green State University Human Subjects Review Board (HSRB) at hsrb@bgsu.edu or (419)-372-7716. Thank you for your time and cooperation.

Sincerely,
Whitney Hasselbach

By signing this consent form I, _______________________________ am indicating that I have read this document
______________________________ (students’ name)
and give consent for Whitney Hasselbach to use my survey in the study.

Students’ Signature: __________________________________________________________

Date: __________________________