

FACTORS DETERMINING YOUNG ADULTS' APPRECIATION OF READING POETRY

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Abstract

Reading appreciation sharply declines when students reach the age of 16-18 years, and this is especially true for the appreciation of reading poetry. Research however is unclear what determines this specific type of appreciation. This paper proposes a structural equation model to examine a number of variables: cognitive ability, knowledge of literary devices, dimensions of reading motivation, gender, age, and type of secondary education. The results indicate that the desire to outperform in reading has a negative impact on the appreciation of poetry, whereas the gratification in receiving recognition for success in reading and the satisfaction of mastering complex ideas in a text are positively related to the enjoyment of reading poetry. Other variables are statistically not significant enough to be integrated in this study's model. In this respect, this study confirms the assumption that the appreciation of poetry reading cannot be immediately changed because it is strongly related to a culture of reading.

Keywords: poetry; reading motivation; young adults; secondary education; pedagogy.

1. INTRODUCTION

According to the PISA 2009 results, proficient readers in the age group of 15 years old are students who regularly read for enjoyment and who also read a wide variety of material, such as fiction, magazines and newspapers (OECD, 2010). Via reading a wide variety of material, students learn to master new types of text, and eventually become better at reading. In the context of reading fiction, this means that not only novels, but also other types of fiction such as poetry should be included. On this basis, we could postulate that young adults who enjoy reading poetry are more likely to be more proficient readers. However, it is yet unclear which variables have an impact on this young adults' appreciation of poetry.

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Independent leisure time reading and reading comprehension form a positive spiral (Mol & Bus, 2011). Indeed, the more students read, the more likely they will become proficient in reading, and thus, ideally, spend more time on reading (Schiefele, Schaffner, Möller & Wigfield, 2012). This increased reading time should lead to an expanded vocabulary, which eventually generates better school results (Mol & Bus, 2011). However, self-reported reading pleasure and frequency rapidly decline, as children grow older and reach the age of sixteen (Clark & Teravainen, 2017; Stalpers, 2005). This lower appreciation for reading might even result in a lower reading comprehension, which is detrimental for future academic success in higher education (Fonteyne, Duyck & De Fruyt, 2017).

Educators might wish to counter this downward spiral, but are confronted with the time constraints of education. Time consuming as it is, reading is mostly done outside the classroom. Furthermore, if reading is integrated into class, often only excerpts are possible. Poetry however is not bound by these limitations, as an entire poem can be easily read and studied during one class. Moreover, the huge diversity in poems' stylistic features draws attention to the role language plays in cognition (Locke, 2010) and could challenge students to expand their horizon of expectation (Killander, 2011). Although these affordances might be self-evident, most teachers are still confronted with young adults who do not longer read for pleasure. In this paper, we focus on reading poetry as a tool to increase reading motivation of young adults.

According to the self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000), human motivation can be classified into amotivation, extrinsic motivation and its four subcategories (external regulation, introjection, identification and integration), and intrinsic motivation. Although educators cannot always rely on students' intrinsic motivation, this has shown to be a powerful tool to foster learning. Intrinsic motivation can be identified by processes such as interest, enjoyment, and inherent satisfaction, and within the context of poetry reading, one thus refers to the enjoyment or appreciation of reading poetry. If one wishes to use this intrinsic poetry reading motivation of young adults to improve their reading comprehension (Schiefele, Schaffner, Möller & Wigfield, 2012), it is essential to uncover which variables form the roots of this appreciation of poetry reading.

Currently there is no consensus on how to measure young adults' enjoyment of reading poems. Miall and Kuiken (1995) created The Literary Response Questionnaire to measure seven different aspects of readers' orientation towards literary texts, and Van Schooten and de Glopper (2003) showed that all aspects of this questionnaire decrease with age for students in higher general and pre-academic secondary education, but these studies do not focus on the case of poetry. Moreover, one could refer to the plausible problematic validity of using questionnaires to assess enjoyment. Research on the cognitive validity of school self-evaluation instruments indicates that answering to questionnaire items requires a great deal of cognitive effort, and that participants' answers are not always in line with the researcher's intentions (Faddar, Vanhoof & De Maeyer, 2017). To counter this problem, studies

that investigate young adults' enjoyment of reading poems could investigate this topic more directly than asking participants to self-report enjoyment in general terms, but to our knowledge this type of research has not yet been organized. Finally, one could argue that assessing young adults' enjoyment of reading poems is an impossible task, because a reader's response to a poem is highly individual. According to the Transactional Theory of Literature (Rosenblatt, 1994), readers are active rather than passive recipients of a text. A literary work exists in the transaction between the reader and the text, mutually acting on each other, each affecting and conditioning the other. As such, a reader's response to a poem "(...) will reflect the reader's state of being at a particular time and place and in a particular situation, as well as the reader's relationship to the text." (Karolides, 2000).

In addition to these difficulties in measuring young adults' enjoyment of reading poems, it is also uncertain which factors might determine this specific intrinsic poetry reading motivation. First, it is proposed that the attitude towards reading goes hand in hand with the cognition of the reader. Appleyard (1991) identifies five different roles that a reader might adopt, from the reader as player in the early years to the pragmatic reader as an adult. Although he explicitly declines any claims that these roles refer to the unique experiences of the individual reader, he does mention that a reader learns these five roles in a fairly predictable sequence, and that this sequence of five stages is closely linked to "an evolution of human capacities".

More specifically in the case of poetry, cognition apparently plays an important role in the appreciation, because the comprehension of certain stylistic devices such as a metaphor would highly depend on the cognitive ability of the reader (Peskin, 2010). Longitudinal research (Nelck-da Silva Rosa & Schlundt Bodien, 2004) also indicates that the development of reading attitude and reflective development can be intertwined with ego development, which can be defined as a combination of cognitive, socio-emotional and moral aspects of human development.

Second, students should have enough knowledge of the distinctive stylistic features of literature in order to contribute additional meaning to the poem (Penny, 2011). Knowledge of stylistic features and other literature concepts would seem to make it easier for secondary education students to understand poems (Pieper & Wieser, 2012), which implies that a thorough literature education might be beneficial for the understanding and eventually appreciation of poetry (Peskin, 1998). Other research suggests that providing domain-specific knowledge about the symbolic process fosters symbolic interpretation and significantly increases the enjoyment of poems among young adults (Peskin & Wells-Jopling, 2012). Large-scale longitudinal studies (Van Schooten & de Glopper, 2006; Van Schooten, de Glopper & Stoel, 2004) even indicate that any type of literary education slows down the decreasing literary response and reading attitude among young adults.

In addition to cognition and knowledge of distinctive stylistic features of literature, we can postulate that dimensions of reading motivation such as 'reading involvement' might also be related to the appreciation of poetry. It is a well-established fact that reading motivation has a significant impact on reading amount and

breadth (Schiefele, Schaffner, Möller & Wigfield, 2012; Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997), but to our knowledge the relationship with the appreciation of poetry has not yet been studied.

Finally, in the age group of young adults, gender also plays an important role, because girls are more likely to enjoy reading than boys (Clark & Teravainen, 2017). This gap in reading enjoyment varies across the years, but has always remained substantial. Moreover, the type of secondary education could partly determine the success of reading interventions (Paul & Clarke, 2016), and plays a role in reluctant readers' attitude towards the activity of reading (Nielen, Mol, Sikkema-de Jong & Bus, 2016). It can therefore be hypothesized that type of secondary education could also have an impact on young adults' appreciation of reading poetry.

2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Referring to the research literature discussed above, this study aims to examine the different variables that have an impact on young adults' enjoyment of reading poems. The following research questions have been posed:

- 1) To what extent can young adults' enjoyment of reading poems be measured?
- 2) Do young adults' cognition, knowledge of the distinctive stylistic features of literature, dimensions of reading motivation, gender, type of secondary education and age have an impact on their enjoyment of reading poems?

3. METHODOLOGY

In order to assess young adults' enjoyment of reading poems (Research question 1) one could opt to ask students to self-report their enjoyment of poetry reading in general terms via Likert scales. This approach however might lead to a plausible problematic validity of the research results (Faddar, Vanhoof & De Maeyer, 2017). Instead, this study confronts its participants with actual poems and asks them to score each poem. As a result, we calculate the construct (Council of Europe, 2011) 'young adults' enjoyment of reading poems' as a weighted mean of the scores given to these poems. We then determine which weights are needed to get a mean that reflects this construct. Finally, we examine the impact of the factors cognition, knowledge of stylistic features of literature, reading motivation, gender, type of secondary education and age on young adults' enjoyment of reading poems (Research question 2). The following paragraphs explain this methodology more thoroughly.

4. RESEARCH CONTEXT AND PARTICIPANTS

Six teachers and their class groups were invited to participate in this research on a voluntary basis. In each test setting, parents were informed about the study's

objectives via a passive informed consent, and data were anonymized and only shared with the researchers.

In May 2016, two tests were administered to 190 students recruited from the last two years of secondary education (Grade 11 and 12) of two schools in Eastern Flanders (Belgium), 89 from general and 101 students from technical secondary education. In total, 132 girls and 58 boys (average age: 17.08 years) participated. The first test (30-40 minutes) focused on cognition, whereas the second test (30-40 minutes) introduced the assessment of the poems, the test on knowledge of literature concepts, and the questionnaire related to the dimensions of reading motivation.

In the context of the development of the construct 'young adults' enjoyment of reading poetry', this specific test was organized a second time in a different research setting. In January 2017, 86 students (general secondary education) from a school in the Antwerp province of Belgium participated in this second study; 44 students (25 girls and 19 boys, average age: 16.50 years) completed the poem appreciation test, but now the poems were put in a different order. The other 42 students (29 girls and 13 boys, average age: 16.63 years) also did this test, but now one poem was replaced by an alternative poem, and we kept the order in which the original poems were presented.

The study's sample represents the gender division in Flanders general secondary education fairly well (Flanders: 42.87% boys and 57.13% girls, vs. our study: 40.6% boys and 59.4% girls). However, boys are underrepresented in the group of Flanders technical secondary education (Flanders: 56.97% boys and 43.03% girls, vs. our study: 19.10% boys and 80.90% girls) (Vlaams onderwijs, 2018).

5. RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

Research question 1: To what extent can young adults' enjoyment of reading poems be measured?

Participants were invited to individually read six poems that we selected and to score each poem from 0 (very bad) to 100 (very good). The selected poems reflect the six levels of a taxonomy of poetry we developed in cooperation with two focus groups of eight literature experts and seven secondary education teachers. Below we will discuss this approach more thoroughly.

Peskin (1998) indicates that poems with a high complexity of stylistic features generate a lower appreciation among young adults. On this basis, we developed an instrument in which poems are categorized according to stylistic features, and link this categorization with young adults' appreciation. To our knowledge, there is no such instrument available yet. As a result, we developed our own classification and started from an instrument that classifies novels for upper secondary education students into six different levels based upon the stylistic features of the novels (Witte, 2008; Witte, Rijlaarsdam & Schram, 2010). This classification of novels was transformed into a taxonomy of poems that was used to categorize poems according to

increasing complexity of stylistic features. For instance, a novel from Witte's Level 1 has "few structural elements, such as thoughts or descriptions, to interrupt the action" (p. 528). In our taxonomy of poems, this becomes "a poem from Level 1 uses simple stylistic devices (e.g. rhyme, alliteration, anaphor and comparison) that do not challenge interpretation of the poem", whereas Level 6 brings together poems that deploy highly complex stylistic devices (e.g. complex allegories) that might obstruct interpretation.

In order to have qualitative feedback on this taxonomy of poems, two focus groups were organised, each group with a shared expertise to ensure that members could engage with each other during the discussions (Liamputtong, 2011). To assess the literary perspective, the first focus group consisted of eight literature experts: two literature university professors, two experts in adolescent and young adult literature, two reading promotion professionals, and two persons who organize cultural activities for young adults (e.g. slam poetry events). To assess the educational perspective, the second focus group consisted of seven upper secondary education teachers who varied in gender, years of teaching experience and type of secondary school where they taught.

A first version of our work received extensive feedback from the focus group of literature experts. These comments were integrated into a second version, which was approved by this focus group. The group of teachers only made minor remarks about this second version. The final version of the taxonomy of poems can be found in Table 1.

Furthermore, actual poems were linked to the levels of the taxonomy. We used *Komrij's canon in 100 poems* (Komrij, 2008) as a starting point, but were confronted with some of the limitations of this specific collection of poems. There was a clear lack of adolescent and young adult literature, female and young poets and writers with a migration background, innovative but not yet fully acknowledged types of poetry (e.g. song lyrics and slam poetry), and less depressing topics. This lack of "out-of-school-literacies" (Moje, Overby, Tysvaer & Morris, 2008) might have negatively impacted young adults' enjoyment of reading poems. The two above mentioned focus groups helped us to produce a more balanced anthology of poems, and also advised us to divide this collection poems according to five themes that might appeal to young adults: desire, growth, wonder, memory and protest. The selection of poems thus actively aimed to incorporate poems with more joyous topics.

Table 1: A taxonomy of poetry

Poems and you	Poems, you and the world			Poems, you, the world and poetry	
Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6
Frequently used words	Frequently used words, occasionally an unknown word	Balanced and slightly varied choice of words	Varied choice of words that may be uncommon for an adolescent or young adult	Varied and refined choice of words that are beyond the language use of the average adolescent or young adult	Elaborate and refined choice of words that are beyond the language use of the average adolescent or young adult, and that are often difficult to understand
Everyday language	Everyday language	Everyday language, but occasionally an archaic word or a word from another language, dialect, or sociolect	Some archaic words or words from another language, dialect, or sociolect	Some archaic words or words from another language, dialect, or sociolect	Some archaic words or words from another language, dialect, or sociolect
One semantic field	One or two semantic fields	One or two semantic fields	Two semantic fields	More than two semantic fields	More than two semantic fields, and often references to other cultural artefacts

A clear and simple storyline	A coherent storyline, but descriptive passages can occur	A slightly fragmented storyline: emphasis on description rather than on action	Possibly a fragmented storyline: emphasis on description and reflection rather than on action	Possibly a fragmented storyline: emphasis on description and reflection rather than on action	Hardly any storyline: emphasis on introspection of the lyrical subject
Use of simple stylistic devices (e.g. rhyme, alliteration, anaphor and comparison), that does not challenge interpretation of the poem	Use of some less complex stylistic devices (e.g. enjambment, personification, hyperbole and rhetorical question), that does not challenge the interpretation of the poem	Use of some more complex stylistic devices (e.g. ellipse, polysyndeton, asyndeton, volta, pointe, pleonasm, metaphor and metonymy)	Use of complex stylistic devices (e.g. synaesthesia, onomatopoeia, oxymoron). Possibly a more experimental style.	Use of complex stylistic devices (e.g. paradox) that challenges the interpretation of the poem. Possibly a more experimental style.	Use of complex stylistic devices (e.g. paradox, complex metaphors and allegories) that challenges the interpretation of the poem. Mostly an experimental style.
Recognizable topics and feelings	Recognizable topics and feelings	Topics and feelings that may be less common in the life of an adolescent or young adult	Topics and feelings that may be less common in the life of an adolescent or young adult	Multidimensional topics and implicit feelings that may be uncommon in the life of an adolescent or young adult	Multidimensional topics and implicit feelings that may be uncommon in the life of an adolescent or young adult

To avoid the impact of a participant's preference for a certain theme, we selected six poems from each level within one thematic subset, more specifically within the theme of 'desire'. To assure unbiased responses, these poems were not part of the standard literature education curriculum of secondary education. For most participants, this would thus be the first time that they read these six poems. Before test administration, a panel of three experts on literature education approved this choice. Moreover, to counter preconceived ideas concerning certain authors, we did not mention the author (for instance, one of the authors is known in popular media for his strong political points of view) or the poem's title. Only poems of which the title had a minimal impact on its overall appreciation were selected.

The six poems were presented in a random order to the participants. Each participant was asked to score each poem from 0 (totally dislike it) to 100 (absolutely love it). Via this scoring system we emphasized the participants' enjoyment of reading the poem (Ryan & Deci, 2000), and the readers' response in the transactional process between reader and the poem (Karolidis, 2000).

Research question 2: Do young adults' cognition, knowledge of the distinctive stylistic features of literature, dimensions of reading motivation, gender, type of secondary education and age have an impact on their enjoyment of reading poems?

Cognitive ability was assessed via Raven's Standard Progressive Matrices (Balboni, Naglieri & Cubelli, 2013), which is a nonverbal group test consisting of 60 multiple-choice questions. In each question participants are asked to identify the missing element that would complement a certain sequence. No time limit was given to the participants to complete this assessment.

In addition, we constructed a test consisting of 16 multiple-choice questions that assess the participants' knowledge of literary devices. Although the educational system in Flanders does not make use of central examinations, every school needs to adhere to the attainment targets set by the government, but there are no clear attainment targets regarding knowledge of literary devices. However, all schools in Flanders belong to specific educational networks. Eventually, the attainment targets set by the government are transformed into school curricula by these educational networks. Our test of knowledge of literary devices was based upon the school curriculum of literature education of one specific educational network (VVKSO, 2014) and we ensured that the schools in our study all belonged to this network. Before test administration, a panel of educational experts approved the test's content validity. For instance, one question in the test was "Below you can find a piece from a poem. These verses exemplify a feature that is typical for poetry. "Ik ben altijd heel bazig, en ben daarom zo onderdanig" (I'm always bossy, that's why I'm so submissive") This is 1) a hyperbole, 2) a paradox, 3) a metaphor, 4) a comparison." Compared to students, these experts are able to identify items that may generate

problems for the final data quality (Olson, 2010). The analysis of the data indicated that the reliability of the scale is moderate, but still acceptable (Cronbach's $\alpha = .64$).

Finally, to assess the dimensions of reading motivation, we introduced the revised edition of the Motivation for Reading Questionnaire developed by Wigfield and Guthrie (1997). In addition to this, we also studied the impact of gender, age, and type of secondary education. In collaboration with the educational boards of the test schools, it was opted to inform the parents of the research objectives, instruments and procedure via a passive informed consent document. Questionnaires were anonymised, participants could self-select their gender identification, and test results were only shared with the researchers.

6. RESULTS

Research question 1: To what extent can young adults' enjoyment of reading poems be measured?

This study used a six-level taxonomy to measure young adults' appreciation of poetry. This implies that poems can be categorized according to these six levels and that there are significant differences in appreciation between these levels as represented by the poems. In this respect, each level should significantly contribute to the construct 'young adults' appreciation of poetry'. We first investigate these hypotheses, because currently there is no empirical evidence to support these claims.

Table 2 shows the descriptive statistic results. In the data from the original study, we can observe a decreasing trend in the appreciation of the poems. For instance, the Level 1 poem gets a discernibly higher score than the Level 3 poem, which is in line with Appleyard (1991) and Peskin (1998, 2010). In general, the more complex stylistic features a poem has, the less it will be appreciated. The Level 5 poem however breaks this pattern, and gets a notably higher score than the Level 4 and 6 poems.

To detect whether the differences between the scores of the levels are significant, we used paired t-tests (see Table 3). The t-scores show that only the Level 1 and Level 6 poems statistically significantly differ from the other levels. Hence, Level 1 and Level 6 form separate categories within the taxonomy, but it is yet unclear if Level 5 belongs to the Level 2-3-4 category, or to Level 6.

As a result, we organized two additional studies. In the first extra study we changed the order in which the poems were presented, but kept the selection. In the second extra study, we replaced the Level 5 poem with an alternative poem from the same thematic subset. The first extra study yielded results similar to the ones from the original study (see Table 2). The Level 1 and Level 6 poems again are noticeably distinct from the other poems, with the Level 5 poem again breaking the decreasing trend in appreciation.

Table 2: Descriptive results (mean and standard deviation): the appreciation of the poem

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6
Original Study (n=186)	69.96 (15.36)	64.40 (19.37)	63.21 (16.06)	62.76 (15.11)	65.26 (17.76)	57.67 (14.44)
Extra Study 1 (n=44)	68.18 (14.56)	67.95 (14.78)	66.30 (15.95)	63.98 (12.20)	68.43 (12.73)	57.43 (17.69)
Extra Study 2 (n=42)	64.19 (19.65)	62.76 (16.12)	66.86 (12.06)	64.45 (13.03)	54.83 (18.27)	57.60 (15.11)

Table 3: T-results

		Level 2			Level 3			Level 4			Level 5			Level 6		
		<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>d</i>												
Level 1	Original Study	3.73	<.01	.29	4.64	<.01	.42	5.08	<.01	.48	2.86	<.01	.26	7.98	<.01	.85
	Extra Study 1	.11	.92	.03	.69	.50	.21	1.62	.11	.50	-.08	.94	.02	2.99	<.01	.91
	Extra Study 2	.36	.72	.11	-.96	.35	.30	-.07	.94	.02	2.65	.01	.83	1.96	.06	.61
Level 2	Original Study				.79	.43	.07	1.04	.30	.11	-.56	.58	.05	4.05	<.01	.47
	Extra Study 1				.65	.52	.20	1.70	.10	.52	-.17	.86	.05	3.19	<.01	.97
	Extra Study 2				-1.46	.15	.46	-.61	.54	.19	2.41	.02	.75	1.69	.10	.53
Level 3	Original Study							.32	.75	.03	-1.44	.15	.12	4.56	<.01	.38
	Extra Study 1							.88	.39	.27	-.72	.47	.22	2.62	.01	.80
	Extra Study 2							.85	.40	.27	3.57	<.01	1.11	3.29	<.01	1.03

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Level 4	Original Study	-1.69	.09	.14	4.11	.01	.35
	Extra Study 1	-1.81	.08	.55	2.54	.02	.77
	Extra Study 2	3.24	<.01	1.01	2.04	.05	.64
Level 5	Original Study				5.37	<.01	.53
	Extra Study 1				3.82	<.01	1.16
	Extra Study 2				-.78	.44	.24

The second extra study, however, displayed another picture. Once more, the Level 1 poem constitutes a separate category, but the difference between the Level 5 and Level 6 poems is now no longer statistically significant. It would thus seem that the Level 5 poem used in the original study has some qualities that speak to the participants and as a result surpasses the constraints of its category. Based on these results, it was decided to disregard the differences between Level 5 and Level 6, and consider them as a new category.

To summarize, on the basis of the results of the original study and the two extra ones, we believe that a six-level taxonomy of poetry for young adults can no longer be upheld when it comes to appreciation by this specific age group, because the difference in appreciation between the six levels is not always significant, and certain levels do not significantly contribute to the construct 'young adults' enjoyment of poems'. It would be more appropriate to use a taxonomy that consists of three categories with a strong link to appreciation by young adults: 'poems and you' (former Level 1), 'poems, you and the world' (former Level 2, 3 and 4), and 'poems, you, the world and poetry' (former Level 5 and 6). The names of these newly created categories should comprise the descriptors of the previous levels.

Furthermore, we deleted the numbering of the categories/levels. Our data indicate that generally speaking there is a decreased appreciation in the second and third category, but this does not mean that the poems from these two categories are of a lower quality. The Level 5 poem that clouded the results from Study 1 and 2 could be a clear indicator for this, because it could twice trump the expectations. A numbering might imply a valuation of the categories.

Based on these results, we define the construct 'Young adults' enjoyment of reading poems' as an average of the scores based on the categories: 'poems and you' (former Level 1), 'poems, you and the world' (former Level 2, 3 and 4), and 'poems, you, the world and poetry' (former Level 5 and 6). In our study, the score of the former Level 5 poem is not integrated into the analysis, because the data collection of the first study indicated that there might be concerns with the choice of this specific poem, and the two additional studies provided an extra argument for this interpretation. Hence, the construct 'young adults' enjoyment of reading poetry' is measured through a weighted average with weights $1/3$, $1/9$, $1/9$, $1/9$, 0 and $1/3$ for the Levels 1 to 6 respectively. We believe that the fact that the three-level construct 'Young adults' appreciation of poetry' yields a relatively low reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.54$) compared to the five-level construct variant (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.65$), is partly due to the low number of items ($n=3$) integrated in this scale.

Research question 2: Do young adults' cognition, knowledge of the distinctive stylistic features of literature, dimensions of reading motivation, gender, type of secondary education and age have an impact on their enjoyment of reading poems?

We propose a structural equation model to examine the appreciation of reading poetry among young adults. Different variables were taken into account. 186

participants took part in the study. After removing missing values, 167 observations were left for data analysis using the SAS 9.4 CALIS procedure, and the models tested were covariance structure models with multiple indicators for all latent constructs. The present analysis followed a two-step procedure based on the approach described by Anderson and Gerbing (1988). We followed Bentler's (1989) convention of identifying latent variables with the letter 'F' (for factor), and labelling manifest variables with the letter 'V' (for variable).

7. THE MEASUREMENT MODEL

Firstly, confirmatory factor analysis was used to develop a measurement model that demonstrates an acceptable fit to the data. The model investigated in this study consists of eleven latent variables, each related to an aspect of motivation. The scale Importance was measured by two manifest variables, whereas each of the remaining ten latent variables was measured by at least three indicator variables. Acceptable Cronbach's alpha values were found for the following motivational scales: Challenge (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.71$), Curiosity (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.73$), Reading Involvement (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.75$), Importance (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.80$), Recognition (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.77$), Social (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.81$) and Competition (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.79$). The scales Reading Efficacy (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.65$), Grades (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.67$), Compliance (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.25$) and Reading Work Avoidance (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.51$) turned out to be unreliable and could therefore not be used for further analysis.

The measurement model was estimated using the maximum likelihood method. Statistical power was estimated at .99 for this model using the SAS syntax provided by MacCallum and colleagues (1996). Based on the Lagrange Multiplier statistic subsequent revised measurement models were estimated stepwise in order to improve chi-square and additional fit indices (O'Rourke & Hatcher, 2013, p. 226). The results are summarised in Table 4.

Table 4: Model parameters and goodness-of-fit indices for the fitted measurement models

Model	df	χ^2	SRMR	CFI	RMSEA	p-value
1	788	1359.65	0.0785	0.7854	0.0661 [0.0602 ; 0.0720]	/
2	747	1251.77	0.0755	0.8037	0.0638 [0.0576 ; 0.0699]	< 0.001
3	707	1162.61	0.0742	0.8131	0.0623 [0.0558 ; 0.0687]	< 0.001
4	668	1085.65	0.0720	0.8242	0.0614 [0.0547 ; 0.0679]	< 0.001

Model 4 was tentatively accepted as the study's 'final' measurement model. In this model, the latent variable Reading Involvement is measured by five instead of six manifest variables, whereas Recognition is now based on three instead of five indicator variables. Goodness-of-fit indices for this re-specified measurement model are presented in Table 5. We report an absolute index (SRMR, Standardized Root Mean Square Residual), an incremental index (CFI, Confirmatory Fit Index), and a parsimony index (RMSEA, Root Mean Square Error of Approximation) as well as the 90% confidence limits for the RMSEA. All values are satisfactory.

Standardized factor loadings for the indicator variables in the revised measurement model (model 4) are presented in Table 5. All factor loadings are statistically significant ($p < .01$).

Also reliability estimates for responses to each observed variable, along with composite reliability (to check internal consistency, comparable to coefficient alpha) for each of the latent constructs are provided. Responses to all seven constructs demonstrate adequate reliability with composite reliability coefficients equal to .70 or more.

The final column of Table 5 provides the variance extracted estimate for each construct. This is a measure of the amount of variance captured by a construct, relative to the variance due to random measurement error. Only two of the seven constructs demonstrated variance extracted estimates in excess of .50, the level recommended by Fornell and Larcker (1981). However, O'Rourke and Hatcher (2013, p. 244) point out that this test is quite conservative, very often yielding variance extracted estimates below .50 even when reliability estimates are acceptable. Hence we might say that on the whole, model 4 behaves fairly well and that combined, these findings provide general support for the reliability and validity of constructs and their indicators. Therefore, model 4 was retained as the study's final measurement model against which successive (structural) models are compared.

Table 5: Standardized factor loadings with corresponding t-values, reliability estimates and variance extracted estimates for the final measurement model

Construct and indicators	Standardized loading	t-value	Indicator reliability	Composite reliability	Variance extracted estimate
F1 = Challenge				0.72	0.34214
V7	0.59	10.17	0.34		
V8	0.57	9.79	0.33		
V9	0.70	14.85	0.49		
V10	0.48	7.38	0.23		
V11	0.56	9.29	0.31		

F2 = Curiosity				0.72	0.32266
V12	0.64	11.37	0.41		
V13	0.18	2.20	0.03		
V14	0.62	10.87	0.39		
V15	0.42	5.79	0.18		
V16	0.72	14.80	0.52		
V17	0.64	11.34	0.41		
F3 = Reading involvement				0.70	0.34880
V18	0.63	11.90	0.39		
V19	0.23	2.90	0.05		
V20	0.40	5.68	0.16		
V22	0.62	11.73	0.39		
V23	0.87	28.05	0.75		
F4 = Importance				0.80	0.67252
V24	0.78	18.37	0.60		
V25	0.86	22.59	0.74		
F5 = Recognition				0.79	0.56175
V26	0.68	14.37	0.47		
V28	0.76	18.79	0.57		
V29	0.80	22.25	0.64		
F6 = Social				0.82	0.40395
V31	0.55	9.14	0.30		
V32	0.38	5.39	0.15		
V33	0.74	18.08	0.55		
V34	0.51	8.02	0.26		
V35	0.77	20.55	0.60		
V36	0.65	13.00	0.43		
V37	0.74	18.18	0.55		
F7 = Competition				0.76	0.35653
V38	0.45	6.72	0.21		
V39	0.82	22.65	0.67		
V40	0.54	8.78	0.29		
V41	0.57	9.83	0.33		
V42	0.59	10.31	0.35		
V43	0.54	8.94	0.30		

8. THE STRUCTURAL MODEL

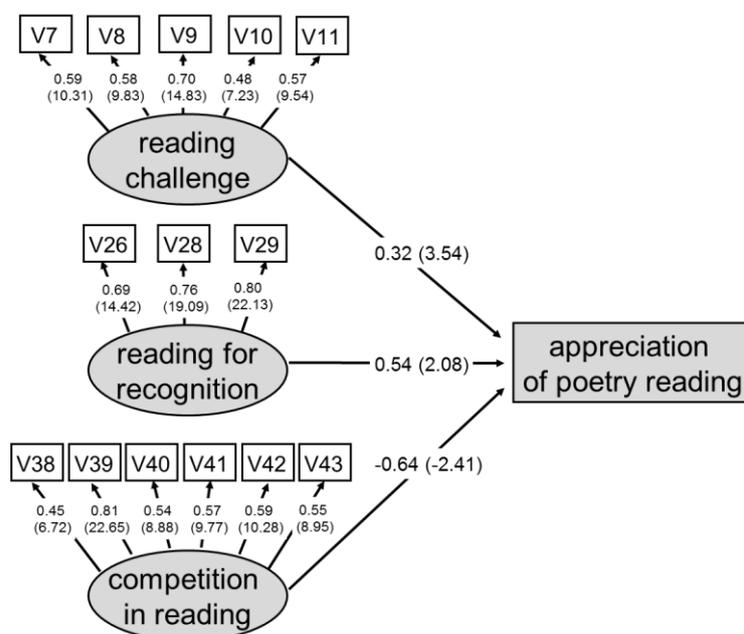
Secondly, a combined measurement and structural model was determined based on the manifest variables and latent constructs as mentioned above. In this recursive structural equation model, 'appreciation of poetry' was considered as an endogenous variable, whereas 'knowledge of literary devices', 'mental ability', the seven dimensions of reading (see e.g. Table 5), 'gender', 'age' and 'type of secondary education' were exogenous variables. Hence, the tested theoretical model predicts that appreciation of poetry is determined by knowledge of the distinctive stylistic features of literature, the cognitive ability of the reader, dimensions of reading motivation, gender, age and type of secondary education. Based on the research literature discussed above, we expect that appreciation of poetry will positively correlate to knowledge of literary devices, mental ability and dimensions of reading motivation. Furthermore, we expect it to negatively correlate to age and to be larger in the female group.

To scale the latent constructs (dimensions of reading motivation), in each scale the item with the highest loading was fixed to 1. All other loadings were set free. The nomological validity of the theoretical model was tested by performing a chi-square difference test. No significant difference was found, which indicates that the theoretical model is successful in accounting for the observed relationships among latent constructs.

As there were various nonsignificant path coefficients, we used the Wald test (Bentler, 1989) to consecutively identify parameters that might be dropped without causing a significant decrease in model chi-square. It turned out that the path coefficients of age, the cognitive ability of the reader, the type of secondary education, reading involvement, knowledge of the distinctive stylistic features of literature, curiosity, importance, social and gender did not significantly differ from zero. These paths could be removed from the structural equation model without affecting the model's fit.

Statistical power for the remaining model remained at .99. All present path coefficients are nontrivial and statistically significant. Figure 1 depicts standardized path coefficients (and corresponding t-values) for this final model. The R^2 value shows that reading challenge, reading for recognition and competition in reading account for 15.17% of variance in appreciation of poetry reading. The goodness-of-fit indices for the final model are more than satisfactory ($df = 677$; $\chi^2 = 1089.03$; SRMR = 0.0723; CFI = 0.8265; RMSEA = 0.0605 with 90% confidence interval [0.0538; 0.0671]).

Figure 1



As a final test, a chi-square difference test compares the fit of the final structural model with that of measurement model 4 resulting in a difference of $1089.03 - 1085.65 = 3.38$, which, with $677 - 668 = 9$ degrees of freedom is nonsignificant ($p > .05$). Hence, the final structural equation model provides a fit that is not significantly worse than that provided by the measurement model 4 in which all exogenous variables were free to covary. Combined, these findings provide support for the model in Figure 1 over the other models tested. It was therefore retained as this study's 'final' model.

9. DISCUSSION

This study investigated how young adults' enjoyment of reading poems could be measured. Based upon empirical results, it developed a taxonomy of poetry consisting of three categories to examine how young adults appreciate poems. Furthermore, it investigated the impact of young adults' cognition, knowledge of the distinctive stylistic features of literature, dimensions of reading motivation, gender, type of secondary education and age on their enjoyment of reading poems.

Based upon an empirically tested structural equation model, we can postulate that the enjoyment of reading poetry among young adults has a positive relationship

with the dimensions of reading motivation 'reading for recognition' (the gratification in receiving some sort of recognition for being a successful reader), and 'reading challenge' (the satisfaction of mastering complex ideas in a text), but experiences a negative impact from the dimension 'competition in reading' (the desire to outperform in reading).

It is important to emphasize that other factors (for instance cognition, knowledge of literary devices, and gender) were not statistically significant enough to be integrated in our final model, despite other research suggesting the opposite (e.g. Nelck-da Silva Rosa & Schlundt Bodien, 2004). This could be due to this study's sample size or the measure instruments used, but this does indicate that the effect of these factors is probably less substantial, otherwise their impact would also have been detected in this dataset. In this respect, the results of this study hint at an empirical evidence of the premise of the Transactional Theory of Literature (Rosenblatt, 1994) that states that a reader's response to a literary work is individualized, because 'reading for recognition' and 'reading challenge' all refer to the unique experience of a young adult reading poetry. The enjoyment of reading poems differed among participants, probably mostly due to these personal preferences and experiences, which again would bring the importance of the Transactional Theory of Literature to light.

In addition to this, by describing the negative impact of the dimension 'competition in reading' on young adults' enjoyment of reading poems, this study indicates the importance of a culture that values poetry reading for its sake, and not as an assessment instrument to differentiate students. The appreciation of reading poetry benefits from a reading climate that confronts young adults with increasingly more complex poems, supports these students in mastering the ideas in these poems, and recognizes their efforts. In this respect, this study's findings are in line with Henschel, Meier and Roick (2016) who mention that there is a harmonious relationship between reader-oriented tasks that stimulate emotional engagement and text-based instructions that address higher-order cognitive processing. Van Schooten and de Gloppe (2006) state that any type of literary education can positively shape young adults' appreciation of literature, but based on this study, we would like to add that literary education should be a learning environment where students are challenged but are also recognized for their reading efforts, and don't have to compete with peers.

10. LIMITATIONS

Despite of this, the results of this study are limited by its design and choice of factors. We need to warn against strong conclusions being drawn from this dataset. The sample of participants is relatively small, and an underrepresentation of boys in the group of technical secondary education could be detected. However, girls tend to appreciate literature more than boys (Mol & Jolles, 2014), which might even entail a too positive outlook on the data for technical secondary education students in our sample.

Moreover, the factor 'knowledge of literary devices' goes hand in hand with regional differences in education, and might, as a result, prove to be more influential in another educational system.

Furthermore, as the data of our study indicate, the innate quality of a poem might have a more substantial impact on young adults' enjoyment of reading poems than the stylistic features this poem embodies. In this respect, the taxonomy indicates in which direction the appreciation of young adults might flow, but does not claim to have detected strict borders in appreciation between poems of different categories. Although our selection of poems actively aimed to incorporate poems with joyous topics, Koopman (2015) suggests that sad-themed poems might also appeal to young adults.

In addition, this study measures cognitive ability via Raven's Standard Progressive Matrices, which is a non-verbal test. Consequently, it only measures fluid intelligence, whereas the Cattell-Horn-Carroll model demonstrates that cognition consists of fluid intelligence, but also other aspects (McGrew, 2005). Further research on the enjoyment of reading poems could also include these items.

Finally, reading promotion programs seem to have a significantly bigger impact on poor readers' than on average readers' reading motivation (Van Steensel, Van der Sande, Bramer & Arends, 2017). Therefore, it would be fruitful to incorporate participants' reading comprehension scores as a variable into the research design.

11. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRACTICE AND CONCLUSION

The results of this study could be used to define a method of teaching poetry that supports young adults' reading of poetry, and eventually lead them to an increased reading for pleasure. 15 year olds' intrinsic reading motivation is strongly linked with teacher involvement, namely teachers who are genuinely interested in what the students feel and think (De Naeghel, Valcke, De Meyer, Warlop, Van Braak & Van Keer, 2014). This study shows what this teacher involvement entails with respect to the reading of poetry. Reading for pleasure cannot be integrated in a teaching approach that solely sees reading literature as a skill that can be taught and graded. Based on this study's results, it is more beneficial to create a classroom context and school community where young adults dare to go into the complexity of a poem, while being supported and informally rewarded by the teacher. Once more, this study underlines the importance of the findings of the Transactional Theory of Literature (Rosenblatt, 1994). Instead of posing as authority, teachers should indeed better enable "a sharing of their students' personal responses, be they valid, semivalid, or erroneous in relation to the text" (Small, 2000).

To our knowledge, this study is the first project that has designed a taxonomy of poetry that is related to appreciation by young adults, and that attempts to uncover and quantify the variables that determine the enjoyment of reading poems within this specific age group. As a result, we hope that this study has opened new routes of research. Longitudinal intervention studies could for instance attempt to change

the poetry reading culture of a school, because this study shows that the way that teachers shape literature education can have a positive impact on reading for pleasure. Moreover, the same research design could also be organized for other age groups than young adults.

Although the reliability of the scale 'young adults' enjoyment of poems' is relatively low, we believe that this is mainly due to the small number of items (n=3) integrated in the scale, and not to the underlying concepts. If further research tested two poems per category, we feel that the reliability of this scale could significantly increase.

Finally, although this paper describes a statistically significant model to understand the appreciation of poetry among young adults, the numbers also indicate that this model cannot explain the whole process. There are still a number of dominant factors waiting to be uncovered by future research, which requires a thorough qualitative investigation of this topic before a new quantitative analysis can be set up.

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