

Development of Reading Interests of Children Aged 5 to 12

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Acknowledgements

Before I came to Colchester, the last time I visited the UK, as a student, was in December 2015, attending my master's graduation ceremony. I still remember the moment when I boarded the plane home that winter, I said the hardest goodbye to the UK, and I thought I would never come back as a student. Who could ever imagine that six years later, I found myself studying in the UK again and spent the best of my four years. Colchester, a small yet lovely town, always brings me peace and has become one of my favourite places in the world. All the amazing people I have met here are the most important reason. Four years of this journey, where do I begin?

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Abstract

This project investigated the development of reading interests of children aged 5 to 12 in both the UK and China, with the aim of supporting parents, teachers, librarians and other literacy professionals in broadening children's reading experience.

Study One explored the emerging gender, age, and cultural trends in children's reading interests. It also examined the relationships between children's reading interests, play interests, vocational interests and parents' occupations. 288 British parents and 301 Chinese parents participated in this study. Results revealed that only British boys in Key Stage 2 (KS2, ages 7-11) showed a greater preference for non-fiction than girls. In other Key Stages, neither British nor Chinese boys showed a marked preference for non-fiction, and neither British nor Chinese girls showed a marked preference for fiction. As such, this study challenged the long-standing myth that boys prefer non-fiction while girls prefer fiction. This study also indicated that children's reading interests changed with age, and no cultural differences were found between British and Chinese children. Moreover, no relationships were found between children's reading interests, play interests, vocational interests and parents' occupations.

Study Two explored how parents' perceptions of gender-appropriate reading materials and gender-neutral parenting shaped children's reading interests. A total of 228 British parents and 194 Chinese parents participated. Results suggested that parents positively perceived the gender-neutral parenting style, and they tended to encourage their children to read counter-stereotypical books, particularly for daughters. However, parents still preferred a traditional parenting approach.

Based on a sample of 129 British parents, Study Three explored how parental involvement affected children's reading interests through three dimensions: engagement, accessibility and responsibility. Results suggested that mothers were

more involved in children's reading than fathers, especially in "engagement". The study also found that engagement and responsibility significantly predicted children's reading interests, whereas accessibility did not.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The National Literacy Trust reported that of the 76,131 children and young people aged 8 to 18 in the UK, only 1 in 3 (34.6%) said they enjoyed reading in their free time. This marked the lowest level of reading enjoyment since the question was first asked in 2005. This was also the steepest year-on-year drop ever recorded, with an 8.8-percentage-point decline in reading enjoyment compared with 2023 (Clark et al., 2024). Moreover, Twist et al. (2007) highlighted that, when compared with international findings, children in England report lower levels of reading for pleasure outside of school than children in many other countries. These findings are particularly concerning, as they suggest a significant reduction in children's engagement with recreational reading, defined as reading undertaken freely, voluntarily, and with delight (International Reading Association, 2018). Recreational reading enables children to independently select reading materials according to their interests, with the primary purpose of enjoyment rather than academic requirements (International Reading Association, 2014). The decline in recreational reading is problematic because reading for pleasure has been consistently linked to reading achievement and other learning outcomes (e.g. OECD, 2011, 2019; Mullis et al., 2017; 2023; Cremin & Scholes, 2024). When reading is perceived primarily as a compulsory school activity, children's willingness to read independently may decrease, which may negatively affect both their literacy development and broader learning outcomes. Therefore, addressing this decline requires more than simply increasing the availability of books, it also involves an understanding of children's reading interests, as access to materials that align with children's genre preferences is more likely to encourage engagement in recreational reading and foster a love of reading in their free time.

According to Clark and Douglas (2011), children read a wide range of materials beyond books, with text messages, magazines, websites, and emails being among the most commonly used forms of reading. This highlights that children engage with

different genres and text types, and that reading interests may vary between individuals. When reviewing the research literature on children's reading interests, one of the most common findings is that boys prefer non-fiction, while girls prefer fiction (Simpson, 1996; Boraks, Hoffman & Bauer, 1997; Doiron, 2003; Hopper, 2005; OECD, 2011). However, some more recent findings argued that boys prefer fiction over non-fiction (Merga, 2017; Scholes, 2021; Scholes, Spina & Comber, 2021; Coles & Hall, 2002). Girls have also been found to enjoy non-fiction more than boys (Williams, 2008; Scholes, 2021). These findings give rise to two questions: (1) Do boys really prefer non-fiction, and do girls really prefer fiction? (2) What types of genres do boys and girls actually enjoy? As such, more research is needed to explore the emerging gender trends in children's reading interests so that we can provide a greater range of books for both boys and girls.

Age also makes a difference in children's interests. Studies have shown that as children grow older, their interests in some genres increase while their interests in others decrease (Lauritzen & Cheves, 1974; Hall & Coles, 1999; Clark & Osborne, 2008). Another age trend in children's reading interests is that as children become older, so do their reading interests, with genre preferences shifting from a focus on make-believe (fantasy, fairy tales, folktale, legend, myth or fable) to more realistic perspective of the world (Purves & Beach, 1972; Boraks, Hoffman, & Bauer, 1997). However, the increased availability of children's books raises the question of whether the age differences in children's reading interests may have changed. Thus, more research is need to enrich our understanding of the age trends in children's reading interests.

In contrast to gender and age, the likely impact of cultural backgrounds on children's reading interests seems to be minimal, as research findings suggested that globally, boys prefer non-fiction while girls prefer fiction (OECD, 2011). Additionally, it is universal that children's reading interests change with social age or maturity (Greenburg, Gilbert & Frederick, 2006; Topping, 2015). However, Sabri, Sadeghian

& Bahrak (2020) pointed out that what readers choose to read is closely related to cultural background. Most of the studies on reading interests have been conducted in Western countries, and relatively few cross-culture studies have examined how cultural context may influence children's reading interests. This raises the question of whether children from different educational systems and family practices develop reading interests in similar ways. In particular, it is important to consider what the similarities and differences are in learning to read, and in parental support for learning to read, between the UK and China, as these factors may shape children's reading experiences and influence their reading interests.

As Everson, Chang & Ross (2016) state, learning to read in the UK emphasizes phonetic decoding (synthetic phonics), where children learn how letters represent the sounds of the language and how these sounds can be blended together to read words. Whereas, Chinese education focuses on character memorization, stroke order, and Pinyin, requiring roughly 3,000 characters for primary literacy (Dong, 2014). These differences in literacy learning may lead to different reading experiences for children, which may in turn influence the development of their reading interests across cultural contexts. These differences are also reflected in parental support and home literacy practices. In the UK, parents reading to children is reported as a common family literacy practice (Formby, 2014). Beyond shared reading, parents promote children's reading engagement by ensuring access to a variety of reading materials, maintaining their own book collections (Clark, 2011), setting up literacy-targeted awards such as books or book vouchers (Clark and Rumbold, 2006), and fostering reading for pleasure (Clark and Phythian-Sence, 2008). In contrast, Chinese parents generally engage with their children primarily through reading aloud, rather than incorporating discussion or interactive activities (Yang, 2016). Moreover, Chinese parent-child reading tends to focus predominantly on books about education, science, and habit-cultivation, while considerably less attention is given to books that encourage aesthetic appreciation, visual thinking, or leisure and stress-relief reading (Guangming Daily, 2023). This contrast suggests a broader difference in cultural and

educational priorities, with UK practices focusing on engagement and pleasure, while Chinese practices emphasize academic development and skill acquisition, which may consequently shape children's reading interests.

Nevertheless, despite cross-cultural differences in approaches to parental support for learning to read, in both the UK and China, parents value reading, reflecting a shared recognition of the importance of reading in children's early literacy, language, and overall developmental outcomes (Xu & Gao, 2021; National Literacy Trust, 2025). Furthermore, a recent UK-China knowledge exchange project on parent-child reading highlighted that rather than assuming what children might want, parents and practitioners should listen to children's voices, and work towards creating reading environments that encourage parents not only to read with their children but also to enjoy the experience (Levy & Gao, 2026). This shared emphasis on parent-child reading may result certain similarities in children's reading interests across the UK and China. Therefore, further cross-cultural research is required to address this gap in the literature and to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how cultural context affects children's reading interests.

According to Edmunds & Bauserman (2006), children's reading interests are closely related to their individual interests. Therefore, it is reasonable to combine children's reading interests with their play interests and vocational interests. It seems logical that if a child is interested in astronomy, then he or she will read more books about space or planets and has an aspiration to be an astronaut or an astronomer. However, few studies have combined children's reading interests, play interests and vocational interests and investigated the relationships between them. We also do not know whether parents' jobs have influences on children's reading interests, play interests and vocational interests. More comprehensive research is thus required to further explore the possible relationships between children's reading interests, play interests and vocational interests, and to examine if parents' occupations can affect children's reading interests, play interests and vocational interests.

Parents, as children's first teachers and primary agents of socialization, nurture and socialize children by providing "appropriate" models of boys' and girls' behaviour (Eccles, 2015). When it comes to books, reading or storytelling, research has shown that parents reproduce gender stereotypes by offering different books to boys and girls, or telling stories to boys and girls with different themes (Pownall & Heflick, 2023; Fiese & Skillman, 2000; Krafchick et al., 2005). However, exactly how parents' perceptions of gender-appropriate behaviour can impact children's reading interests still remains to be explored. On the other hand, there has been an increasing awareness of raising children without stereotypical gender norms (Brown, 2014). This parenting style is often referred to as "gender-neutral parenting" or "gender-creative parenting" (Martin, 2005; Rahilly, 2015). Still, however, girls are more likely to be encouraged to fight stereotypes, while boys are more likely to be discouraged from having interests that are regarded as feminine (Goodkind, 2009; Nandini, 2018). As Gloria Steinem said, "*I'm glad we've begun to raise our daughters more like our sons, but it will never work until we raise our sons more like our daughters*" (cited in McGowan, 2018). These trends in parenting raise two questions: (1) Do today's parents tend to use a gender-neutral parenting approach? (2) Do today's girls are more likely than boys to be encouraged to fight against stereotypes? Especially that in reading? These two questions propelled us into more studies to investigate perceptions of gender-appropriate reading materials for boys and girls of today's parents and how these perceptions affect their children's reading interests.

In considering many social and cultural factors that shape gender development, education has gained much attention. Although research has shown that education decreases gender inequality (Davis & Greenstein, 2009), little is known about how parents' education levels influence their perceptions of gender-appropriate behaviour for boys and girls and how does this affects children's reading interests.

Finally, parental involvement in children's reading and its relationship with children's reading interests also waits more investigations. Parental involvement in children's

reading has long been associated with children's educational and literacy outcomes, such as language comprehension, literacy development and reading achievement (Bus, van Ijzendoorn & Pellegrini, 1995; Desforges & Abouchar, 2003; Gest, et al., 2004). However, little research has examined how parental involvement in children's reading make a difference in children's reading interests (Ortiza, Stowe, & Arnold, 2001). In addition, prior work in this area has focused extensively on maternal involvement in children's literacy practices, little is known about the role of paternal involvement in children's reading (Clark, 2009). More research is needed to better understand both maternal and paternal involvement in children's reading, and to assist us with unpacking the relationship between parental involvement in children's reading and children's reading interests.

In view of the above-mentioned research gaps identified in research on children's reading interests, this dissertation sets out to address these concerns to further our understanding of children's reading interests and parents' roles in shaping children's reading interests. Chapter 2 provides a literature review of existing research on children's reading interests and related issues. More specifically, this chapter begins with an overview of research on children's reading interests, play interests and vocational interests. Then, this chapter illustrates parents' socialization of gender in children, gender-neutral parenting and their connections to children's reading. After that, this chapter reviews parental involvement and its relationships with children's reading interests. This chapter also details the theoretical frameworks used to guide the assessment of children's vocational interests (Holland's RIASEC model) and parental involvement in children's reading (Lamb and his colleagues' theoretical model of parental involvement). Finally, this chapter clarifies the problems, objectives significance and research questions.

Between Chapter 3 and Chapter 5 is the main focus of this dissertation, which consists of three studies in Chapter 3, Chapter 4, and Chapter 5 that are designed to assess the development of children's reading interests. Chapter 3 is about the first set of studies

where the researcher conducted a cross-cultural investigation of children's reading interests, play interests and vocational interests in both the UK and China. Chapter 4 is about the second set of studies where the researcher explored parents' perceptions of gender-appropriate reading materials for boys and girls and how these perceptions can shape children's reading interests in both the UK and China. Chapter 5 is about the third set of studies where the researcher investigated parental involvement in children's reading and its connection to children's reading interests in the UK.

The last chapter, Chapter 6, summarizes the main findings and contributions from this dissertation, discusses the limitations of this research project, and suggests directions for future research.

Chapter 2: Literature review

Chapter 2 surveys existing literature and research studies that are pertinent to this dissertation. Section 2.1 is a review of the literature on children's reading interests, play interests and vocational interests. Section 2.1.1 situates the discussion of reading interest in this dissertation in the field of educational psychology, reviewing how the study of reading interest relates to the broader study of "interest" in psychology, examining the theoretical framework for structuring and elucidating interest-related concepts. An understanding of the psychological underpinnings of behind theories of interest is integral to the conceptualization of reading interest and other interest-related concepts. On the basis of that, Section 2.1.2 defines reading interest and highlights the key purpose of reading interest studies. Section 2.1.3 reviews the literature on children's reading interests, with a strong focus on the discussion of gender, age and cultural trends in children's reading interests. Section 2.1.4 and Section 2.1.5 reviews literature on children's play interests and vocational interests in detail. Section 2.1.6 points out the research gaps in children's reading interests, highlighting the significance of finding out the emerging gender, age and cultural trends in children's reading interests. Section 2.1.6 also underlines the importance of examining the link between children's reading interests, play interests and vocational interests, which is a brief summary of the rationale of Study One in this project.

Section 2.2 provides an overview of parents' socialization of gender in children, gender-neutral parenting style and their connections to children's reading. Specifically, Section 2.2.1 reviews literature on parents' gender socialization in children by offering "appropriate models" to boys and girls, and how parents shape children's gender-related beliefs and expectations through books. Section 2.2.2 is a literature review of gender-neutral parenting style and how this parenting style can influence children's reading. Section 2.2.3 reviews how parents' education levels can impact gender equality and children's reading. Section 2.2.4 clarifies the problems in existing literature and points out research questions, which provides a brief summary of the

rationale of Study Two in this project.

2.1 Children's reading interests, play interests and vocational interests

2.1.1 A psychological account of interest

As Silvia (2006) states, interest has fascinated psychologists from diverse areas of psychology. Currently, the study of interest has a home in the psychology of emotion, education, personality, vocation, motivation, development, aesthetics, text processing and alike. This dissertation situates interest in the field of educational psychology, though concepts and theories from other fields within the psychology of interest are drawn on to conceptualize interest-related concepts. Section 2.1.1.1 provides a brief history of studies on interest, highlighting the connection between interest, reading and learning. Section 2.1.1.2 offers a brief introduction of the "*Person-Object Approach to Interest*" (POI) model, which lays out the framework of interest in this dissertation. A sound understanding of the theoretical and psychological underpinnings of interest is crucial to the conceptualization of reading interest and interest-related concepts.

2.1.1.1 A brief history of reading interest

In the field of psychology, the study of interest has a long and complex history. According to Silvia (2006), psychology's oldest explorations of interest come from the research on interest and learning in the field of educational psychology. Traditionally, the study on reading interest (text-based interest) occupies a central position in research on interest and its role in learning, as reading (text) is one of the most common forms for learners to acquire information and gain knowledge. Indeed, as early as the beginning of the 19th century, the German philosopher, psychologist, the founder of pedagogy as an academic discipline, and one of the earliest educators to look at education from a psychological perspective - Johann Friedrich Herbart (1776-1841) noticed that there is a correlation between interest and learning. Interest in learning can promote long-term storage of knowledge and provide motivation for further exploration. Influenced by Herbart's work, in the early 20th century, famous

psychologists, such as John Dewey (1910, 1913), Felix Arnold (1910), and Thronrdike (1935) devoted themselves to study interest in learning, thinking and motivation. At that time, interest was regarded as the most important motivational factors in learning and development (Krapp, 1999, 2002; Silvia, 2006). However, in the middle of the 20th century, with the rise of behaviorism, there was a significant decline in interest studies (Krapp, 1999; Silvia, 2006). Educational psychologists turned their focus on curiosity (Berlyne, 1960), attention (Deutsch & Deutsch, 1963), emotion (Izard, 1977), intrinsic motivation (Deci, 1975; Hunt, 1965), and flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975). Until the 1980s, inspired by findings on interest's important role in text learning, educational psychologists showed a renewed interest in interest. Since then, studies on interest have experienced a resurgence, and the influences of interest on learning, motivation, and academic achievement have become a popular topic of great research interest in the area of educational psychology (Krapp, 1999, 2002; Silvia, 2006).

2.1.1.2 Person-Object Approach to Interest (POI)

In the area of educational psychology, one of the most influential models of interest is the “*Person-Object Approach to Interest*” (POI) (Krapp, 1999, 2002, 2007). According to the “*Person-Object Approach to Interest*” (POI), interest can be identified as “a content-specific motivational variable that can be investigated and theoretically” (Krapp, 2007). More specifically, Renninger & Hidi (2020) explained that interest is a content-specific motivational variable that describes two characteristics: first, the engagement with specific content (e.g., geography, dancing, football). Second, the motivation to continue to seek opportunities to engage with and to further explore that content. In other words, interest is a motivational variable that gives people the willingness and happiness to engage with a specific content rather than stop doing it (Krapp, 2007; Renninger & Hidi, 2020).

2.1.2 Reading interest

Having investigated the psychological foundation for conceptualizing interest in Section 2.1.1, Section 2.1.2 focuses on the conceptualization of reading interest. The

key point of reading interest studies is also discussed.

2.1.2.1 Defining reading interest

As mentioned earlier in Section 2.1.1, psychology's research on reading interest originated from the research on interest and its role in learning in the area of educational psychology (Hidi, 1990; Schiefele, 1991; Silvia, 2006). This dissertation defines reading interest from an educational psychological view. Based on the framework of the "*Person-Object Approach to Interest*" (POI) model (Krapp, 1999, 2002, 2007), reading interest can be defined as a motivational variable that gives people the willingness and happiness to continue reading rather than put the reading material down (Harackiewicz, Smith, & Priniski, 2016; Krapp, 2007; Renninger & Hidi, 2020; Schiefele & Krapp, 1996).

2.1.2.2. Defining reading interest studies

After previous sections have examined the psychological bases of reading interest and defined the term of reading interest, this section aims to distinguish the differences between reading interest-related terms and emphasize the key point of a reading interest study.

When reviewing literature on reading interest, the terms "reading interest", "reading choice", "reading preference", "reading motivation" are often used interchangeably and show up in the titles of numerous studies that attempt to find out about reading interests. However, researchers have claimed that there are distinctions among these terms (Clark & Pythian-Sence, 2008; Spangler, 1983; Ross, 2009). Thus, distinguishing the differences in these terms can help to clarify what a reading interest study is.

Clark & Pythian-Sence (2008) suggested that the term "reading choice" highlights the importance of having a choice of books. Studies on reading choice explore whether readers who can select books based on their interests are more likely to read

and have better academic performances than those who cannot. Spangler (1983) distinguished the differences between reading preference and reading interest. Studies on reading preference focus on exploring readers' attitudes towards reading. Whereas studies on reading interest primarily concentrate on what the interests are. They often deal with a particular genre or a certain topic. For example, an interest in science fiction, or an interest in the topic of animals (Krapp, 2002; Schiefele & Krapp, 1996). Likewise, Ross (2009) pointed out that the key question of research on reading interest is to find out what readers want to read about, as expressed by a list of genres or topics that readers read by preferences.

There is another distinction needed: "appealing factors" and "reading interest". Ross (2009) noted that in some studies, reading interest is seen as the elements in a text - what some researchers call "appealing factors", such as characterization, content, and plot. These studies aim to examine what elements in a text that readers value when choosing a book to read. While, as mentioned above, studies on reading interest are primarily focus on exploring what genres of books that people prefer to read (Spangler, 1983; Ross, 2009).

In addition, it also bears mentioning that research on reading interest pays special attention to voluntary reading rather than assigned or required reading (Ross, 2009). That is to say, this field of research is reader-centered, readers can read whatever they want to read and there is no accountability in the form of reports, tasks or grades (Cullinan, 2000; Krashen, 2004).

In light of the above mentioned, research on reading interest highlights to find out about readers' reading interests by analyzing what types of genres are most appealing to readers (Spangler, 1983; Ross, 2009).

2.1.3 Research on children's reading interests

Over the years, children's reading interests have become a popular focus of inquiry

both within the education community and beyond. Researchers have studied children's reading interests by a variety of methods, such as surveys, questionnaires (e.g., Vostrovsky, 1899; Lauritzen & Cheves, 1974; Snellman, 1993; Sturm, 2003; Chiu, 2014; Majid, 2018), interviews (Stanchfield, 1962; Byers, 1964; Farris et al., 2009; Becnel & Moeller, 2015; Wilhelm, 2016), library borrowing records (Moss & McDonald, 2004; Galyani-Moghaddam & Taheri, 2021), and observations (Carnovsky, 1934, as cited in Ross, 2009; Morrow, 1983; Meganathan et al., 2020). Why, then, have researchers been exploring children's reading interests for such a long time? For teachers, parents, and researchers, knowing children's reading interests will allow them to provide books that children are interested in. When children read books that they like, their engagement in reading activities will be increased and this will help to improve their comprehension skills and reading academic achievement. Librarians found that research on children's reading interests can help to weed outdated books, ensure an updated library collection that is appealing for both boys and girls in all age groups. For writers, understanding children's reading interests can help them choose what to write to attract more younger readers. Furthermore, knowing what genres of books that children prefer to read can help publishers select what to publish and later may guide on bookstores what to stock, which has a positive influence on book retail industry. Section 2.1.3 surveys existing research relevant to this topic, examining the gender, age and cultural differences in children's reading interests.

2.1.3.1 Gender differences in children's reading interests

When reviewing the research literature on gender-based reading interests of children, one of the most common findings is that boys prefer non-fiction, while girls prefer to read fiction. However, some more recent findings suggest that this is no longer the case. For example, Merga (2017) conducted a large scale study to investigate boys' reading interests. By analyzing unpublished data from the 2015 International Study of Avid Book Readers (n=1136) and the 2016 Western Australian Study in Children's Book Reading (n=997), Merga found that boys favour fiction over non-fiction. Also in Australia, a growing collection of studies have shown that boys prefer fiction than

non-fiction (Scholes, 2021; Scholes, Spina &Comber, 2021). Another large sample study in the UK also challenged the long-standing myth that boys prefer non-fiction. Data from 8000 children (10- to 14-year-old) in England has revealed that:

‘There is a common misconception that boys at these ages read non-fiction almost exclusively. This is not borne out by the survey findings, although the overwhelming majority (78%) of those few children who do choose to read exclusively non-fiction are boys. But only 2% of children in our survey chose nonfiction as their exclusive book-reading diet.’ (Coles & Hall, 2002, p. 105).

It is also worth noting that although girls prefer fiction have long been documented, some more recent findings argue that girls favour non-fiction than boys. For example, Williams (2008) worked with 293 economically disadvantaged African American children in Florida, age ranging from 8 to 12. She found that while both boys and girls tended to read more fiction, girls preferred non-fiction more strongly than boys. This may attribute to the relatively lower socioeconomic status of population. Similarly, a more recent Australian study exploring reading enjoyment, reading frequency and student achievement has also indicated that girls enjoyed non-fiction more than boys (Scholes, 2021).

Although gender differences are typically found in children’s reading interests, still, there are similarities between boys and girls in terms of their genre preferences. Books about adventure and mystery have been consistently cherished by both boys and girls and have remained popular for more than a century (Ashley, 1970; Seegers, 1936; McCarty, 1950; Carsley, 1957; Ashley, 1970; Greenlaw & Wielan, 1979; Bank, 1986; Kimmins, 1986; Snellman, 1993; Coles & Hall, 2002; Clark & Foster, 2005; Majid, 2018; Aydin & Ayranci, 2018; Meganathan et. al., 2020). Fantasy, science fiction, sports have also been associated with both boys’ and girls’ preferences across time, and remain highly ranked among children’s reading interests, though not as popular as mystery and adventure (Vostrovsky, 1899; Seegers, 1936; Smith, 1962;

Stanchfield, 1962; Ashley, 1970; Lauritzen & Cheves, 1974; Kimmins, 1986; Whittemore, 1992; Snellman, 1993; Boraks, Hoffman & Bauer, 1997; Coles & Hall, 2002; Sturm, 2003; Clark & Foster, 2005). Religion and poetry were the two least popular genres (Seegers, 1936; Rudman, 1955; Lauritzen & Cheves, 1974; Chiu, 1984; Whittemore, 1992; Snellman, 1993; Majid, 2018). However, Sturm (2003) found that poetry was favored by both boys and girls, and even ranked in the third position in the list of genres. A possible explanation is that in his study poetry stood by itself as a genre, while in most studies, poetry has been classified as fiction. It is also interesting to note that in earlier studies, few children mentioned they have a preference for humor and horror (Grant & White, 1925; McCarty, 1950). Since the mid-20th century, humor and horror have become popular by both boys and girls (Bank, 1986; Whittemore, 1992; Simpson, 1996). In more recent studies, humor and horror usually ranked in the top 5 preferences (Coles & Hall, 2002; Clark & Foster, 2005; Majid, 2018).

2.1.3.2 Age differences in children's reading interests

Children's reading interests have been found changed with age. Research has show that increasing maturity brings an increase in interest in some kinds of reading materials and a decrease in interest in others. For example, Lauritzen & Cheves (1974) classified reading interests of 881 American children aged 7 to 12. They noted that children shown more interest in mystery with maturity. In the UK, Coles & Hall (1999) worked with 8000 children aged between 10, 12 and 14. The results have shown that the 7-year-olds predominantly read books with animal characters, while from age 8, children expressed more interest in books about science, mystery, sports and history. Clark & Osborne (2008) also found that social age brings an increase in particular genres. In their study, secondary school children have shown more interest in romance than primary school children.

Another age trend in children's reading interests is that as children mature, so do their reading interests, with genre preferences shifting from a focus on make-believe

(fantasy, fairy tales, folktale, legend, myth or fable) to more realistic perspective of world. For example, Purves & Beach (1972) suggested that younger children prefer to read make-believe stories, especially fantasy, while older children prefer to read realistic literature, such as realist fiction, historical fiction, and non-fiction. This is because as grow older, children tend to regard reading as a source of information. Boraks, Hoffman, & Bauer (1997) conducted a survey to examine reading interests of 315 American school children in grades 3 to 5. They found that the third and the fourth graders predominantly read fantasy, whereas children in the fifth grade show a stronger interest in realistic fiction.

2.1.3.3 Cultural differences in children's reading interests

In contrast to gender and age, the likely impact of cultural backgrounds on children's reading interests seems to be minimal, as research findings show more similarities than differences. Across countries, boys read more non-fiction while girls read more fiction (OECD, 2011). Additionally, it is universal that children's reading interests change with social age or maturity (Greenburg, Gilbert & Frederick, 2006; Topping, 2015). Thus, one of the reasonable assumptions that researchers can make is that there are no cultural differences in children's reading interests based on gender and age. However, Sabri, Sadeghian & Bahrak (2020) suggested that what people choose to read is closely related to cultural background. Most of the studies on reading interests are down in western countries and less cross-country studies have been carried out to examine the differences based on reading interests. This pushes us to conduct more research to fill in the research gap by examining how culture can impact reading interests.

In summary, although previous research has provided some insights into the gender, age and cultural trends in children's reading interests, the increased availability of children's books might have changed reading interests of today's children. Therefore, more in-depth studies are still needed to extend the research findings, as this will help educators, parents, researchers, librarians, writers and publishers build a connection

between children's reading interests and children's literature.

2.1.4 Play interest

Section 2.1.4 provides a review of children's play, identifying children's play interests based on the "*Person-Object Approach to Interest*" (POI) model (Krapp, 1999, 2002, 2007). This section then divides children's play into seven patterns by integrating the approaches to classify types of play.

2.1.4.1 Children's play

Play is ubiquitous among children. Many educators and psychologists have pointed out that play is really a child's work, that's how they learn all of their skills throughout life (Mehta et al., 2020). As Susan Isaacs wrote, '*Play is indeed the child's work, and the means whereby he grows and develops*' (Isaacs, 1929, p. 9; cited in Murray, 2021).

One of the most widely used definitions of play derives from the *Play Strategy for Scotland*. In June 2013, the Scottish Government published Scotland's first national Play Strategy and Action Plan. This defined play as: '*Play encompasses children's behaviour which is freely chosen, personally directed and intrinsically motivated. It is performed for no external goal or reward and is a fundamental and integral part of healthy development which seeks to improve play experiences for all children.*' (Play Strategy for Scotland, 2013). Similarly, Casey and Robertson (2019) explained that in play children decide and control the content of their play, by following their own instincts, thoughts and interests, with no influence from others, especially adults. According to Meire (2007), play is something that children (individually or collectively) choose to do because it is fun and enjoyable (Meire, 2007). So, remember that children can play alone or with others. Whatever children choose to play with, they do it because they want to, not because someone's making them.

2.1.4.2 Defining play interest

As discussed earlier in Section 2.1.1, this dissertation positions interest in the field of educational psychology. According to the “*Person-Object Approach to Interest*” (POI) model (Krapp, 1999, 2002, 2007), children’s play interests can be understood as a motivational variable that gives children the willingness and happiness to engage with a specific object (e.g.: a toy doll, a toy car, or building blocks) or activity (e.g.: playing football, swimming, playing chess, watching TV, or computer games) (Krapp, 1999, 2002, 2007; Renninger & Hidi, 2016; Harackiewicz, Smith & Priniski, 2016; McHale, Crouter, & Tucker, 2001). Those objects or activities are usually selected by the children themselves based on how they want to spend their time, with no influence from others (Badrić, Prskalo, & Matijević, 2015; Purdon, 2018).

2.1.4.3 Types of children’s play

If you pay attention to your everyday life, you’ll notice that children play in different ways. For example, children can engage in physically active play like playing football, swimming, cycling or horse-riding. Also, children can enjoy more mentally active play like singing, drawing, or playing games on computers or smartphones.

According to Meire (2007), play can be categorised by its form, its content or its developmental function. Therefore, it is not surprising that there are various ways to classify the types of play in the contemporary psychological literature. By combining and integrating the approaches to classify play through literature, in this study, the various kinds of play can be divided into seven types based upon the developmental purpose. These types are commonly referred to as physical play, constructive play, exploratory play, competitive play, pretend play, symbolic play, and object play.

2.1.4.3.1 Physical play

Physical play is the type of play that use physical movements to allow children to exercise their bodies, using their large and small muscles. Physical play includes indoor physical activities (e.g., playing construction toys, indoor obstacle course, or balance beam) and outdoor physical activities (e.g., riding a bike, riding a horse,

swimming, running, climbing or ball playing). Physical play encourages children to develop gross and fine motor skills and to enjoy physical activity, which provides lifelong benefits (Whitebread, 2012).

2.1.4.3.2 Constructive play

Constructive play involves manipulation of objects to create things. Examples include building with blocks, Legos, or magnetic tiles, making a road for toy trains, or constructing a fort out of couch pillows (Wardle, 2000; Park, 2019).

2.1.4.3.3 Exploratory play

Exploratory play, also known as investigative play, is the kind of play when children use their senses to explore what happens when objects are manipulated. Examples include mixing paint to find primary and secondary colours, spatial relations, or numbers and patterns (Schulz & Bonawitz, 2007).

2.1.4.3.4 Competitive play

Children who enjoy competitive play are usually thrive on winning and being the best. Video games such as shooting or driving games, often involve competition between two or more players, are well-known activities for competitive play (Bateman et al., 2011).

2.1.4.3.5 Pretend play

Pretend play, also known as dramatic play or fantasy play. when children dressing up as princesses or superheroes, feeding a doll with a toy, pretending they are doctors and give ‘patient’ an injection, or pretending they are shopping at a grocery store, it is a pretend play/ dramatic play/ fantasy play. Through this type of play, children can share their thoughts and ideas, and find a new way to express themselves by acting out their feelings, which is beneficial for their social- emotional skills (Stagnitti & Unsworth, 2000; Whitebread, 2012).

2.1.4.3.6 Symbolic play

Symbolic play, also known as expressive play or creative play. This type of play is about creating art, music, stories or even writing to express one's creativity. Examples include vocal activities activities (e.g.: signing, jokes, or rhymes), crafts and arts (e.g.: painting, drawing, colouring, playing with playdough or clay), counting signing and making music. Symbolic play enables children to express their feeling and emotional needs, which may help to develop cognitive and emotional skills (Whitebread, 2012).

2.1.4.3.7 Object play

Object play refers to playful use of any type of objects, such as dolls, building blocks, puzzles, cars, kitchen or food toys. Sometimes, object play involves pretend play. For example, a child pretends to be an astronaut with a toy rocket ship, or a child holds a toy phone to his ear and pretends to talk. However, it is worth noting that object play is different from pretend play. Object play is more focused on the object, its properties and what can be done with it, rather than what it can represent (Smith & Pellegrini, 2013; Whitebread, 2012). Object play object play allows children to try out new combinations while they interacting with objects or toys, which may help develop social relationship and problem-solving skills (Whitebread, 2012; Smith & Pellegrini, 2013).

2.1.5 Vocational interest

Section 2.1.5 situates the discussion of vocational interest in this dissertation in the field of vocational psychology. By using *Holland's RIASEC Model* (Holland, 1973, 1985, 1996, 1997) as a framework, this section provides a classification of vocations.

2.1.5.1 Interest and vocational

As Silvia refers (2006), apart from reading interest, vocational interest is also one of the oldest topics in the psychology of interest. Since 1943, beginning with Strong's pioneering work, vocational psychologists have created a variety of methods

to measure occupation interests, ranging from complex inventories to simple card-sorting tests.

2.1.5.2 Defining vocational interest

In the field of vocational psychology, vocational interest is a crucial component of personality. It is a relatively stable psychological disposition towards to a particular activity, which reflects a person's preference for certain career or job choice (Holland, 1997; Schermer, 2016; Etzel et al., 2019).

2.1.5.3 Holland's RIASEC Model

In the area of vocational psychology, there are various theories/models of vocational interests have been developed. Among them, John Holland's RIASEC Model (Holland, 1973, 1985, 1996, 1997), which provides a framework for characterizing people and working environments, has dominated both basic and applied aspects of vocational psychology for several decades (Silvia, 2006; Stoll et al., 2017). The key assumption of Holland's RIASEC Model (Holland, 1973, 1985, 1996, 1997) is that people can be categorized into six personality types: Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and Conventional (RIASEC). Each personality type represents people's preferences for certain activities, their characteristics, skills, abilities, values, and, most importantly, their interests. According to Holland (1997), people look for environments that are compatible with their interests. In other words, when people work where they feel valued, they will demonstrate more persistence, better performance, and more satisfactions with their job.

2.1.5.3.1 Realistic (R)

Realistic people enjoy working with tools, machines, and their hands. They see themselves as practical, mechanical and realistic. People who fall into this category generally prefer to engage in hands-on or manual activities rather than social activities. For example, realistic people enjoy working with concrete things (e.g., building, plants or animals) more than dealing with people. Mechanic, electrician, engineer, and

veterinarian are typical occupations that realistic people favour.

2.1.5.3.2 Investigative (I)

Investigative people are intellectual, analytical, and logical. They are good at understanding abstract ideas and solving math and science problems. They prefer scientific jobs, such as researcher, technician, science writer, medical technologist, biologist, chemist and systems analyst.

2.1.5.3.3 Artistic (A)

Artistic people are innovative, imaginative and creative. They value opportunities for self-expression and imagination through artistic creation. People who fall into this category have good artistic abilities. For example, they are good at creative writing, drawing, painting, drama, crafts, and music. Writer, reporter, musician, painter and interior decorator are common vocations for artistic people.

2.1.5.3.4 Social (S)

Social people like to do things to help people and solving social problems. They are good at teaching, training, counseling, nursing, providing information and giving first aid. They see themselves as helpful, friendly, and trustworthy. They prefer interacting with people rather than working with machines and tools. Teacher, nurse, counselor, and social worker are common occupations for this type of people.

2.1.5.3.5 Enterprising (E)

Enterprising people value ambitious, persuasion, leadership, self-confidence, and personal success. They enjoy activities that allow them to persuade others or influence others. Typical enterprising occupations include sales, business executive and manager, politician and public speaker.

2.1.5.3.6 Conventional (C)

Conventional people are organized and reliable. They prefer engaging in structured,

organized and systematic activities, such as working with numbers and records. Typical conventional vocations include accountant, banker, and secretary.

2.1.6 Statement of problem

The notion that boys prefer non-fiction and girls prefer fiction is a common belief about children's reading. However, some more recent research indicates this is no longer the case. Given these mixed findings, this study aims to examine gender trends in children's reading interests, with the aim of supporting parents, teachers, librarians and other literacy professionals in promoting children's reading experience. In addition, although previous research has provided some insights into the age and cultural trends in children's reading interests, the increased availability of children's books raises the question of whether the age and cultural trends in reading interests of today's children may have changed. Thus, a more in-depth study is needed to fill this research gap by exploring the emerging age and cultural differences in reading interests of today's children.

Furthermore, according to Edmunds & Bauserman (2006), children's reading interest is closely related to their individual interest. Johnston (1999) also suggested that children prefer books that are connected to their daily life. Thus, it is reasonable to combine children's reading interests with their play interests (free-time activities) and vocational interests. It seems logical that if a child is interested in astronomy, he or she will read more books about space or planets and has an aspiration to be an astronaut or an astronomer. Again, if a child enjoys horse riding, he or she he will read more books about horse, riding performance and equestrian skills, and will an aspire to be an equestrian athlete or when grow up. However, little has been done to explore the relationship between children's reading interests and their play interests and vocational interests. A more comprehensive study is thus required.

Building on previous research, in this project, Study One aimed to investigate the reading interests of children aged 5 (from starting compulsory school) to 12 (the end

of primary education and the beginning of secondary education) in both the UK and China. The possible relationships between children's reading interests, play interests, and vocational interests were also examined. Furthermore, Study One also investigated the influence of parents' occupations on children's reading interests, play interests and vocational interests.

2.1.6.1 Reasons to study children's reading interests, play interests and vocational interests

Theoretical reasons

With the development of society, the range of books, recreational activities, and future occupations available to children has become increasingly diverse. This raises the question of whether new trends are emerging in reading interests, play interests and vocational interests. Meanwhile, it is also worth examining whether the increased availability of books may further influence children's play interests and vocational interest, as reading is an important source of collecting information and acquiring knowledge (Noortyani, 2018). Therefore, it is important to explore how influential this source of information is in shaping children's play interests and vocational interests.

Practical reasons

So, why are we concerned about children's reading interests? For teachers, parents, and researchers, one answer lies in the link between reading interest, reading comprehension skills and academic achievement. Children's exposure to reading materials and engagement in reading activities have research-based evidence for improving children's reading comprehension skills (McGeown, 2015). These reading comprehension skills, in turn, have been found to contribute to children's academic performance, since a crucial component of academic achievement in most school subjects is the ability to read and comprehend text-based materials (Stamboltzis & Pumfrey, 2000). Thus, knowing and being familiar with children's reading interests can help teachers, parents, and researchers increase children's engagement in reading

activities by providing books that children want to read. On the basis of that, teachers, parents, and researchers can help children improve their reading comprehension skills and eventually support them to achieve better academic performance. Teachers, parents, and researchers have also found research useful in promoting reading for pleasure in children. As teachers, parents, and researchers, we would probably hope our children learn not only how to read, but they read more and love reading. Yet, substantial children withdraw from reading when they find books less interesting (Kauffman, 2005). Therefore, knowing children's reading interests will assist teachers, researchers, and parents in connecting children with books that they enjoy. When children's favourite books are available in schools or at home, they will have more fun from reading and this may encourage children to become life-long readers (Higginbotham, 1999). Librarians found that research on children's reading interests can help to weed outdated books, ensure an updated library collection that is appealing for both boys and girls in all age groups (Sturm, 2003). For writers, understanding children's reading interests can help them choose what to write to attract more younger readers (Ross, 2009). Furthermore, knowing what genres of books that children prefer to read can help publishers select what to publish and later may guide on bookstores what to stock, which has a positive influence on book retail industry (Ross, 2009).

2.1.6.2 Reasons to explore reading interests of British children and Chinese children

In many studies over the years and across various countries, boys have been shown to read more non-fiction, while girls read more fiction (OECD, 2011). In addition, it is a global phenomenon that children's reading interests change with social age or maturity (Greenburg, Gilbert & Frederick, 2006; Topping, 2015). As a result, it is reasonable to make an assumption that there are no cultural differences in children's reading interests. If there are, then the UK and China will be good candidates to make a comparison, since these two countries differ considerably in terms of culture and educational systems. Therefore, in the first study of this project, I intended to explore

reading interests of both British and Chinese children aged 5 to 12. This study represents the first attempt to conduct a cross-sectional assessment of reading interests across the compulsory schooling period, and the first attempt to compare two countries that are quite different in culture and educational systems.

2.1.6.3 Research questions and hypothesis

The first study of this project aimed to explore the development of reading interest of children aged 5 (from starting compulsory school) to 12 (the end of primary education and the beginning of secondary education) in both the UK and China. On the whole, there were three main foci in this study. First, this study investigated gender, age and cultural differences in children's reading interests in both the UK and China. Second, as less research has combined reading interests, play interests and vocational interests together, this study filled in the research gap by exploring the possible associations between children's reading interests, play interests and vocational interests. Third, this study explored whether parents' careers may influence their children's reading interests, play interests and vocational interests.

The research questions are:

1. What kinds of books are children interested in?
2. Are there gender, age and cultural differences in children's reading interests?
3. Are there any relationships between children's reading interest and their play interests and vocational interests?
4. In what ways, if any, can parents' careers influence children's interest in reading, play and future jobs?

Hypothesis

Gender prediction

On the one hand, because a great deal of research has shown that boys and girls enjoy different types of books - with boys favouring non-fiction, particularly science &

technology and sports; while girls favouring fiction, especially fantasy, fairy tales, mystery, adventure and romance (Simpson, 1996; Boraks, Hoffman & Bauer, 1997; Coles & Hall, 2002; Doiron, 2003; Majid & Tan, 2007; Sun & Majid, 2020), the presenting study predicted that in general, boys prefer non-fiction, while girls prefer fiction. On the other hand, research has shown despite the fact that boys favoured non-fiction, they still liked fiction, particularly science fiction, adventure, mystery, and comics (Harkrader & Moore, 1997; Coles & Hall, 2002b; Hébert & Pagnani, 2010; Manuel & Robinson, 2003; Merga, 2017). Therefore, this study predicted that although boys prefer non-fiction, they enjoy fiction as well, especially in science, adventure, mystery sports and comics.

Age prediction

This study also took age difference into account. According to previous studies, as children grow older, their interests in some types of genres increase while their interest in others decrease. Therefore, this study predicted that increasing maturity brings an increase in interest in some kinds of reading materials and a decrease in interest in others.

Another significant age trend in children's reading interests was as children mature, so do their reading interests, with genre preferences shifting from a focus on make-believe (fantasy, fairy tales, folktale, legend, myth or fable) to more realistic perspective of world (Purves & Beach, 1972; Boraks, Hoffman & Bauer, 1997). Thus, this study predicted that there would be a shift away from imaginative genres towards realistic genres as children progressed through grade levels.

Cultural prediction

Studies have shown that in contrast to gender and age, the likely impact of cultural backgrounds on children's reading interests seems to be minimal, as research finding showed more similarities than differences. Across countries, boys preferred non-fiction, whereas girls preferred fiction (OECD, 2011). Therefore, in this study, the

reasonable assumption was there are no cultural differences in children's reading interests between British children and Chinese children based on gender. In both the UK and China, boys prefer non-fiction and girls prefer fiction. In terms of age differences in children's reading interests, as it is universal that children's reading interests change with social age (Greenburg, Gilbert & Frederick, 2006; Topping, 2015), this study predicted that there would be no cultural differences based on age. In both the UK and China, children's reading interests were expected to change with children's increasing maturity.

The prediction of the relationships between children's reading interests, play interests and vocational interests

According to Edmunds and Bauserman (2006), reading interest is closely related to other individual interests. Additionally, when a person develops an interest in something, it would lead to an increase in behaviour related to that domain (Palmer, Dixon, & Archer, 2016). In other words, it seems logical that if a child is interested in science, he or she will read more books about science and has an aspiration to be a scientist. Therefore, this study predicted that children's reading interests, play interests and vocational interests are correlated.

The prediction of the relationships between children's reading interests, play interests, vocational interests, and parents' careers

Previous research suggested that what children choose to read was significantly influenced by their backgrounds and environments (Sabri, Sadeghian & Bahrak, 2020). In addition, parents from different socioeconomic backgrounds interact with their children in different ways, and these differences play a major role in children's development (Baroody & Dobbs - Oates, 2011; Bennett, 2012). Therefore, this study predicted that parents' careers have an impact on children's reading interests, free-time activities and vocational interests.

2.2 Parents' socialization of gender in children and gender-neutral parenting

Gender socialization begins early in childhood, with parents playing a crucial role in shaping children's gender beliefs and behaviors. Section 2.2 reviews literature on parents' gender socialization in children and gender-neutral parenting style, assessing how parents' stereotypical thinking about what is suitable for boys or girls causes (part) of children's reading interests, and examining the trends in parenting style, with a focus on parents' perceptions of gender-neutral parenting, and how this parenting change may impact children's reading interests.

2.2.1 Parents' socialization of gender in children

Parents are often seen as primary agents of child socialization, holding significant influence on child development (Maccoby, 1994). A parent-child relationship is among the earliest and most enduring bonds in one's life. Children depend on their parents since infancy for nurturing, supporting and direction. As primary caregivers, parents play a crucial role in shaping children's early experiences, beliefs, and perceptions towards the world. This influence extends beyond providing direct care, it also involves the transmission of cultural and social norms, including gender norms and expectations (Halim et al., 2023). Section 2.2.1.1 provides a brief review of how parents shape children's gender-related beliefs and behaviours by offering models. Section 2.2.1.2 reviews literature on how parents transmit gender beliefs and expectations from books to children.

2.2.1.1 Parents' gender-role modeling

As a primary and influential socializing agent of children, parents provide children with their first lesson about gender by offering "appropriate" and "inappropriate" behaviour for boys and girls (Eccles, 2015). Children are taught to act gender-appropriate behaviour both explicitly and implicitly by their parents (West & Zimmerman, 1987; Tenenbaum & Leaper, 2002). Children receive direct guidance on "appropriate" behaviour for boys and girls, and they also see gender-appropriate behaviour through role modelling and reinforcement by parents' behaviour (Krishna

et al., 2024). Moreover, parents convey and reinforced gendered messages through everyday interactions, such as the toys they provided (e.g., toys cars, action figure, construction, sports equipment, fighting and conquering for boys; dolls, dressing-up toys, kitchen sets, art and craft for girls), the activities (e.g., boys play football, basketball; girls play with dolls, participate in household chores) they encourage, the social skills (e.g., technology for boys, childcare for girls) they teach, and gendered language they use (e.g., calling a woman a “female doctor” or a man a “male nurse”, implying that the profession is not typically associated with that gender) (Lytton & Romney, 1991; Hussain et al., 2015; Zero Tolerance and the Care Inspectorate, 2018; Boe & Woods, 2020; Nair et al., 2023).

2.2.1.2 Parents’ gender socialization and children’s book reading

While parents’ gender socialization influences the toys children play with, the activities children engage in, social skills children develop, and the gendered language children pick up, research also suggests that parents shape children’s beliefs about gender roles and expectations through books. For example, by using a deductive content analysis approach to explore the transmission and existence of gender stereotypes in children’s books, Pownall & Heflick (2023) suggested that parents tend to provide books to boys and girls that reflect traditional gender stereotypes. Fiese & Skillman (2000) investigated how parents’ gender socialization can affect story telling. They found that parents reproduce gender stereotypes by telling stories with different themes to boys and girls. Krafchick et al. (2005) examined how gender in parenting was addressed via books, they found that parents select books for children that represent their own gender ideologies.

Although existing literature suggests that parents’ gender beliefs and expectations influence the books that they select for children, and that these books offer models for how children should “do gender”, little is know about how parents’ perceptions of gender-appropriate behaviour can shape children’s reading interests. Scholars like Krafchick et al. (2005) argued that more prior empirical studies should be carried out

to explore the relationship between gender socialization and children's books.

2.2.2 Gender-neutral parenting

One of the dramatic social transformations in most countries in the last several decades has been in the entrance of more women into the labor force. There has been a corresponding increase in adults' endorsement of gender egalitarian attitudes (Leaper, 2014). There is now more parents express egalitarian expectations for their children and hold the awareness of raising children without stereotypical gender norms (Brown, 2014). This parenting style is often referred to as "gender-neutral parenting", "gender-creative parenting", "gender-inclusive parenting" or "gender-open parenting" (Martin, 2005; Rahilly, 2015). Section 2.2.2.1 offers a brief discussion on the terminology of "gender-neutral parenting". Section 2.2.2.2, Section 2.2.2.3, and Section 2.2.2.4 then discusses the ways that parents can practice gender-neutral parenting, the rise of gender-neutral parenting style, and pros and cons of gender-neutral parenting style. Section 2.2.2.5 provides a quick review of how gender-neutral parenting style can be related to children's book reading, with an emphasis on girls are more likely than boys to be encouraged to read counter-stereotypical books.

2.2.2.1 What is gender-neutral parenting?

Gender-neutral parenting is a parenting style that parents raise their children without imposing gender norms or stereotypes (Rahilly, 2015; Rahilly, 2022; Martinez, 2022). This parenting approach encourages personal expression, equal opportunities, and respect for individuality, allowing children to explore their own interests and pick their own identities without being told that certain things are "for boys" or "for girls". By not limiting children to predetermined gender norms, gender-neutral parenting aims to minimize the influence of traditional gender expectations and foster open communication about gender and identity with children (Rahilly, 2015; Davies, 2020; Chandel & Shanwal, 2024).

2.2.2.2 How to practice gender-neutral parenting?

The key distinction between gender-neutral parenting and traditional parenting style, is allowing children to explore interests and develop their identities freely. There are various ways in which parents can practice gender-neutral parenting. According to Gontcharova (2023), parents can create a gender-neutral parenting for children by (a) choosing gender-neutral colours (not defaulting to pink for girls and blue for boys) and decor for children's rooms; (b) purchasing gender-neutral clothing for children, look for brands that offer unisex styles, and giving children the freedom to choose what they want to wear; (c) choosing a variety of toys and activities for children. This means allowing children children to play with dolls, vehicles, kitchen sets and building blocks equally. Moreover, allowing children to engage in any activities that they are interested in, no matter it is football or dancing; (d) introducing children to a wide range of books, media, and role models that include individuals of both genders engaging in a range of activities; (e) using gender-neutral language to avoid gender stereotypes. For example, using gender-neutral pronouns such as “they/them”. Again, using roles like “police officer” instead of “policeman/policewoman”. If your child receives a gendered complement, such as “strong like daddy” or “pretty like mommy”, you might gently respond with “and strong like mommy too!”

2.2.2.3 Why gender-neutral parenting is becoming more popular?

During second-wave feminism, roughly dating from the 1960s to the 1980s, indices of gender equality, such as women's labour force participation, women's educational attainment, women's representation and participation in politics and leadership, have significantly improved (Daemyir, 2011; Boehnke, 2011; Thijs et al., 2017), and evidence suggests that there has been a gradual shift in people's gender beliefs, moving away from traditional binary views of gender roles toward egalitarian views of gender identities (Scarborough et al., 2019; Thijs et al., 2019). Alongside these shifting norms, people have become more interested in challenging conventional gender stereotypes, and have shown increasing openness and awareness of nurturing gender diversity. As such, there was a surge of gender-neutral parenting

(American Psychological Association, 2015). Over the last decade, the gender-neutral parenting style has become more popular as the visibility and acceptance of LGBTQ+ communities increase, with more LGBTQ+ families sharing their experiences of raising their children without gender, celebrities supporting their trans and non-binary children, raising their children gender neutral, and a general growing awareness of the impact of stereotypes and biases. These stories make people feel less alone in their parenting choices and inspiring other parents to adopt a different parenting approach (The Mother Baby Center, 2023).

2.2.2.4 Is gender-neutral parenting right for a family?

While more parents are adopting gender-neutral parenting style, however, it is still a niche trend. According to BBC article, parenting author Molly Siever argues that gender-neutral parenting remains a practice for a relatively small number of parents and continues receive significant backlash, similar to what was seen in the early 2010s (Savage, 2022). Logan, Heberle & Goldberg (2025) also pointed out that despite increasing societal acceptance of gender diversity, gender-neutral parenting still faces significant criticism and controversy, with opponents viewing it as a rejection of traditional norms and a potential source of confusion for children. While proponents highlight that the freedom and creatives that gender-neutral parenting offers, allowing children to pursue their interests and develop their identities without rigid gender stereotypes (Choosing Therapy, 2023). However, critics argue it has negatives aspects as well. For instance, adopting gender-neutral parenting may increase bullying risks. Choudhury (2019) suggested that children who defy traditional gender stereotypes may face bullying or jeers from their peers. Similarly, Grant et al., 2011 also suggested that children who do not conform to traditional gender beliefs (e.g., transgender children, children whose gender expression is nonconforming) may experience discrimination. Additionally, it is difficult for transgender children to fit in with bigger peer groups and they may continue to be bullied later in their life across several domains, including employment, healthcare, and legal system (Downing, 2013; Downing & Przedworski, 2018; Rahilly, 2022).

Since gender diversity is still a highly polarized and divided political topic, recent sociopolitical backlash in the US has resulted in the ongoing stigmatization of gender diverse groups (Goldberg & Allen, 2013; Parker & Brown, 2022). This debate includes discussions of the experiences of trans individuals, gender development in children, and the expectations placed on parents as they deal with these developmental milestones. Given the potential risks that trans and gender nonconforming individuals may take, parents who adopt gender-neutral parenting practices should prioritize their children's safety by preventing bullying and providing the necessary support for children to express their identities (Chandel & Shanwal, 2024; Logan, Heberle & Goldberg, 2025).

2.2.2.5 Gender-neutral parenting and children's book reading

With more parents opt gender-neutral parenting and cultivate a culture that celebrates each child's individuality, it seems logical that daughters and sons are more likely to be encouraged to read counter-stereotypical books by their parents than before. However, still, parents tend to treat daughter and sons differently in terms of challenging the gender stereotypes (Goodkind, 2009; Nandini, 2018). For instance, McHale, Crouter & Whiteman (2003) noted that parents are more flexible about the activities they consider appropriate for daughter than sons. According to Leaper (2014), in America, many parents encourage sport participation (a masculine-stereotyped activity) in their daughters. In contrast, few parents encourage their boys to play with dolls (a feminine-stereotyped activity). When it comes to book reading, Pownall & Heflick (2023) found that although parents tend to choose books that reflect traditional gender stereotypes for their children, they also attempted to choose counter-stereotypical books for their daughter. However, there has been very little research exploring whether girls are more likely than boys to be encouraged to read books that fight against gender stereotypes.

Although previous research provides evidence that parents are more likely to

encourage daughters to participate in counter-stereotypical activities, including reading, some scholars have argued that parents are now more accepting of their sons' cross-gender activities than they were in previous decades (Blakemore & Hill, 2008; Wood, Desmarais & Gugula, 2002). Given these mixed findings, further studies should be conducted to explore parents' views of gender-neutral parenting style, to examine whether parents treat daughters and sons differently, and how this relates to children's reading.

2.2.3 Parents' education, gender equality, and children's booking reading

Section 2.2.3 reviews how parents' education can impact gender equality and how it relates to children's reading. Section 2.2.3 also points out the research gaps on parents' education levels and children's reading interests.

The role of education in promoting gender equality has long been part of the discourse on education, gender and development. Existing research suggests that parents' education increase gender equality through several mechanisms, including promoting an egalitarian attitude toward gender within the family, providing access to healthcare and economic resources for children, and fostering a more inclusive understanding of gender roles for children to adopt (Davis & Greenstein, 2009). When parents are more educated, they are more likely to challenge traditional gender stereotypes, leading to greater acceptance of both boys and girls having equal opportunities to pursue their own interests (Keating & Baker, 2023). Fei & Li (2025) explored the impact of parents' education levels on parental gender preferences. They found that mothers with a higher education level tend to have more equal attitudes toward daughter and sons. Evertsson et al. (2009) investigated how gender inequality varies by educational level in the Netherlands, Sweden, and the United States. Results indicated that gender inequality is greater among the less educated in each of the three nations, suggesting that parents' education can reduce gender inequality. Likewise, by analyzing data from the European Social Survey for 14 European countries, Garrido (2020) suggested that education can reduce traditional gender norms in more than 11

percentage points.

When taking into account factors that influence gender development in children, education has always received considerable attention (Jha & Shah 2020). A series of studies suggested that education decreases gender inequality, and parents who have received higher education are more likely to breakdown traditional gender norms, encourage their children to explore their individuality and participate in a range of activities, regardless of gender. However, significant research gaps remain regarding how parents' education levels influence their perceptions of gender equality, gender-neutral parenting, and how this affects children's reading interests. Therefore, further studies are needed to explore whether parents' education levels can impact their perceptions of gender appropriate reading materials for boys and girls.

2.2.4 Statement of problem

Section 2.2.4 is the statement of problem of Study Two in this projects, which addressees the research gaps in parents' perceptions of gender appropriate reading materials for boys and girls and how it can shape children's reading interests.

2.2.4.1 Research gaps

Parents are often seen as primary agents of socialization, nurture and socialize children by providing "appropriate models" of boys' and girls' behaviour (Eccles, 2015). When moving focus to parent's gender socialization and children's book reading, research suggested that parents transmit their gender beliefs by offering different books, or telling stories with different themes to their daughters and sons (Pownall & Heflick, 2023; Fiese & Skillman, 2000; Krafchicket al., 2005). However, exactly how parents' perceptions of gender-appropriate behaviour can impact children's reading interests still needs to be explored. Moreover, some parents are championing gender-neutral parenting style to raise their children without gender (Brown, 2014; Martin, 2005; Rahilly, 2015). Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that parents who are more likely to opt gender-neutral parenting style tend to encourage

their children to read books that challenge traditional gender stereotypes. In addition, studies suggested that parents have differential treatment of daughters and sons. Specifically, parents are more likely to encourage daughters to participate in counter-stereotypical activities, including reading (Goodkind, 2009; Nandini, 2018; Pownall & Heflick 2023). As such, it is interesting to know whether parents are more likely to encourage their daughters to read books that fight against traditional stereotypes.

Despite research suggested that parents who are more educated tend to hold an egalitarian attitude toward gender (Davis & Greenstein, 2009), less is know about how parents' education levels influence their perceptions of gender-appropriate behaviour for boys and girls, gender-neutral parenting style and how these perceptions affect children's reading interests. As such, in this project, the main goal of Study Two was to explore how parents' perceptions of gender gender-appropriate behaviour can shape children's reading interests in both the UK and China.

2.2.4.2 Research questions

The research questions are:

1. What are parents' perceptions of gender-appropriate reading materials for boys and girls?
 - (1) To what extent do parents' gender, children's gender and parents' education levels influence parents' perceptions of gender-appropriate reading materials for boys and girls?
 - (2) Is there an interaction effect between parents' gender, children's gender, and parents' education levels on parents' perceptions of gender-appropriate reading materials for boys and girls?
 - (3) Do parents feel more free to recommend any type of books to girls than boys?
 - (4) Are parents more likely to recommend books that they know to their children?

2. What are parents' perceptions of selecting books for children?

- (1) When selecting books for children, what factors are affecting parents' decisions?
- (2) To what extent do parents' gender, children's gender and parents' education levels influence parents' book selection behaviour for children?
- (3) Is there an interaction effect between parents' gender, children's gender and parents' education levels on parents' book selection behaviour for children?
- (4) Do today's parents feel more free to choose any type of books for girls than boys?

3. What are parents' perceptions of gender-neutral parenting?

- (1) To what extent do parents' gender, children's gender and parents' education levels influence parents' perceptions of gender-neutral parenting?
- (2) Is there an interaction effect between parents' gender, children's gender and parents' education levels on parents' perceptions of gender-neutral parenting?
- (3) Do today's parents tend to use a gender-neutral parenting approach to raise their children? Are parents of girls more likely than parents of boys to opt a gender-neutral parenting approach?

4. What are parents' perceptions of gender equality?

- (1) To what extent do parents' gender, children's gender and parents' education levels influence parents' perceptions of gender equality?
- (2) Is there an interaction effect between parents' gender, children's gender and parents' education levels on parents' perceptions of gender equality?

2.3 Parental involvement and children's reading

One aspect of the family system that has received increasing attention from researchers is parental involvement in raising their children, as parental involvement plays a crucial role in child outcomes (Desforges and Abouchar, 2003). When moving focus to children's reading, a large body of research suggested that parental involvement has long been associated with children's educational and literacy outcomes, such as language comprehension, literacy development and reading achievement (Bus, van Ijzendoorn & Pellegrini, 1995; Desforges & Abouchar, 2003;

Gest, et al., 2004). Section 2.3 reviews literature on parental involvement, especially that in children's reading activities. Section 2.3.1 focuses on examining how mothers and fathers are involved with their children in reading activities, and addressing the unique influence of mother involvement and father involvement on child development. Section 2.3.2 is an introduction of Lamb's theoretical framework of parental involvement, which offers the conceptualization of parental involvement through three aspects: engagement, accessibility and responsibility. Section 2.3.3 reviews literature on the relationship between parental involvement and children's reading interests, highlighting the research gaps in this topic.

2.3.1 Maternal and paternal involvement

2.3.1.1 Mother involvement and father involvement in children's reading

When reviewing literature on parental involvement in children's reading activities, many scholars pointed out that what we know about parental involvement and child outcomes is based on mother-child interactions or the involvement of parents as a whole with mothers and fathers mixed-up (Clark, 2009; Baker, 2013; Grolnick & Slowiaczek, 1994; Van Voorhis et al., 2013). It has been found that parents, mothers in particular, engage in children's reading activities and these mother-child interactions contribute to children's reading achievement (Sikiö et al., 2016; Silinskaset al., 2013).

Traditionally, mothers generally spend more time on childcare than fathers do. However, with the changing outlook on fatherhood, fathers today spend more time than before on child's upbringing (Norman, et.al, 2023). Consequently, fathers' unique influences on children's reading development have received more attention. For example, McWayne et al. (2013) conducted a meta-analysis to explore father involvement during early childhood, and they found that father involvement has a moderate association with children's early learning and development, even though the moderate effect is relatively small. Xiao et al. (2020) investigated the relationship between parent-child literacy teaching activities and preschool children's reading skill. Results highlighted the importance of father involvement in predicting children's

reading skills.

Despite the enormous importance of parental involvement attached to children's achievement, such as reading development and educational attainment (e.g., Varghese & Wachen, 2016; Norman & Davies, 2023; Flouri & Buchanan, 2004; McBride, Schoppe-Sullivan & Ho, 2005), few studies have explored the relationship between parental involvement and children's reading interests.

Moreover, according to Baker & Milligan (2013), both mothers and fathers spend more time reading with daughters than sons. As such, it is reasonable to assume that both mother and father tend to engage more with their daughters than sons in reading activities. However, less research has been carried out to explore this topic. Therefore, more research should be done to explore whether mothers and fathers are differently involved with girls and boys.

2.3.1.2 Unique contributions of mother involvement and father involvement

The unique contributions of mother involvement and father involvement have long been documented (Amato & Gilbreth, 1999; Bronte-Tinkew, et al., 2004; & Williams & Kelly 2005). For example, Trama (2002) found that mother and father involvement have different effects when children's gender is examined, with mother involvement affecting daughter's academic achievement, and father involvements affecting son's academic achievement. Flouri and Buchanan (2003) examined the role of mother involvement and father involvement in children's well-being. Results showed that father involvement had a strong effect on their children's happiness. Moreover, the relationship between father involvement and happiness was stronger for daughters than for sons. Although these empirical evidence did not suggested how mother involvement and father involvement can affect children's reading interests, it pushes us to conduct research to explore the unique contributions of mother involvement and father involvement to children's reading interests.

Given existing literature on parental involvement has confirmed the unique maternal and paternal contributions to child outcomes, it is therefore important to compare mother and father involvement further. In addition, as research suggested that mother involvement and father involvement have differential effects on daughters and sons, it is essential to examine moderating effects of child gender when explore the impact of parental involvement on child development.

2.3.2 Lamb's model of parental involvement

As parental involvement has gained more attention, a perpetual concern is how parental involvement should be defined. One of the most most influential model of parental involvement was outline by Lamb and his colleagues In fact, Lamb's theoretical framework of parental involvement can be traced to his and his colleagues' research on father involvement (Sheehan, 2014). According to Lamb and his colleagues (Lamb, et al.,1985; Lamb, 2000), there are three dimensions of parental involvement: engagement, accessibility and responsibility. Engagement is parent's actual one-on-one interaction with the child. Accessibility refers to that parent is physically and mentally available, they engage with the child indirectly. Responsibility is defined as parent takes responsibility for the child's care and arranging for resources to be available for the child.

2.3.3 Parental involvement and children's reading interests

While parental involvement has long been known to be associated with children's reading achievement (Bus, van Ijzendoorn & Pellegrini, 1995; Desforges & Abouchar, 2003; Gest, et al., 2004), less research has been done to explore the relationships between parental involvement and children's reading interests. As far as we know, only two studies has provided the empirical evidence on the associations between parental involvement and children's reading interests. By using Lamb's theory of parental involvement as framework, Zhu (2020) investigated how father involvement can predict children's reading interests. Results showed that children spend more time reading a wider range of genres when their fathers involved more

through three dimensions: engagement, accessibility and responsibility. Kraaykamp (2003) noted that children were more likely to read a variety of genres (especially in literary novels, romance fiction and suspense novels) when their parents participated more in reading activities with them. However, we still do not know how mothers and fathers are involved in children's reading activities and how it can influence children's reading interests through three aspects: engagement, accessibility and responsibility.

2.3.4 Statement of problem

2.3.4.1 Research gaps

It is often said that parents are children's first teachers. Parental involvement in children's reading has long been documented to be associated with children's educational and literacy outcomes, such as language comprehension, literacy development and reading achievement (Bus, van Ijzendoorn & Pellegrini, 1995; Desforges & Abouchar, 2003; Gest, et al., 2004). However, little research has examined how parental involvement in children's reading make a difference in children's reading interest (Ortiza, Stowe, & Arnold, 2001).

On the other hand, many scholars like Clark (2009) noted that prior work in this area has focused extensively on maternal involvement in children's literacy practices, and little is known about the role of paternal involvement and how fathers affect their children's development. With the changing outlook on fatherhood, fathers today spend more time than before on child's upbringing (Norman, et.al, 2023). As a result , fathers' unique influences on children's development have received more attention. Despite the enormous importance of father involvement attached to children's achievement, such as reading development and educational attainment (e.g., Varghese & Wachen, 2016; Norman & Davies, 2023), few studies have explored the specific influences fathers have on children's reading interests. In addition, research suggests that parents spend more time reading with daughters than sons (Baker & Milligan, 2013), but we do not know whether fathers impact their children's reading interest differently to mothers, or whether paternal involvement is particularly important for

boys or girls, or whether maternal involvement is particularly important for boys or girls.

2.3.4.2 Research questions and hypothesis

2.3.4.2.1 Research questions

1. How are parents involved in their children's reading (through three dimensions: engagement, accessibility and responsibility) ? Are mothers and fathers differently involved with daughters compared to sons?
2. What is the influence of parental involvement in children's reading on children's reading interests?

2.3.4.2.2 Hypothesis

First, although fathers are now more involved in their children's upbringing than in the past, mothers are still expected to override responsibility for their children's education (West et al., 1998; Fisher, McCulloch & Gershuny, 1999; Breiner, Ford & Gadsden, 2016). Therefore, I hypothesized that fathers and mothers are differently involved in children's reading, with mothers being more involved than fathers. Specifically, mothers are expected to score higher than fathers on all three dimensions of parental involvement: engagement, accessibility and responsibility.

Second, as Baker & Milligan (2013) suggested that both fathers and mothers spend more time reading with daughters than with sons, this study hypothesized that both fathers and mothers are more likely to be involved with daughters than sons in reading through three dimensions: engagement, accessibility and responsibility.

Third, according to Zhu (2020), the three dimensions of father involvement: engagement, accessibility and responsibility, effectively predict children's reading interests. Kraaykamp (2003) also found that children were more likely to read if their parents read more on their own, and children with library memberships tended to read more books. These findings suggest that parental responsibility positively influences

children's reading interests. Therefore, this study hypothesized that all three dimensions (engagement, accessibility and responsibility) of parental involvement in children's reading all contribute to predicting children's reading interest, including both reading frequency and reading amount.

Chapter 3

Study One: Children's reading interests, play interests and vocational interests

Chapter 3 reports on the first study conducted for this dissertation. Study One aimed to explore children's reading interests, play interests and vocational interests in both the UK and China.

A total of 288 British parents and 301 Chinese parents participated in Study One. They completed a questionnaire regarding their children's reading interests, favourite free-time activities and career aspirations. Surveyed children's ages ranged from 5 to 12-years-old, and the distribution of gender was 151 boys and 137 girls in the UK, 151 boys and 150 girls in China.

First, the researcher investigated children's reading interests by identifying the types of genres that children are interested in. The gender, age and cultural differences in children's reading interests were considered. Interestingly, results from the independent samples t-test revealed that only British boys in Key Stage 2 (KS2, ages 7-11) preferred non-fiction more than girls. In other Key Stages, both British and Chinese boys had no marked preferences for non-fiction, both British and Chinese girls had no marked preferences for fiction. We conclude that boys may not prefer non-fiction over fiction, and girls may not prefer fiction over non-fiction. As such, this study challenged the long-standing myth that boys prefer non-fiction and girls prefer fiction, which suggested that the range of boys' reading interests (particularly fiction) and girls' reading interests (particularly non-fiction) may have been underestimated. In terms of age differences in children's reading interests, results indicated that increasing maturity brings an increase in some genres while a decrease in others. The findings did not show a movement away from the make-believe genre to a more realistic genre as children grow older. Results also suggested that there were no significant cultural differences in reading interest between British children and Chinese children.

Having examined the gender, age and cultural trends in children's reading interests, the researcher then linked children's reading interests to "play patterns", "vocational interests" and "parents' occupations". Results suggested that there were no correlations between children's reading interests, play interests, vocational interests and parents' jobs.

3.1 Methodology

Section 3.1 is the methodology section that explains the research design, participants, instruments, procedures, data analysis of Study One.

3.1.1 Design

A cross-sectional questionnaire design was used to gather information on children's reading interests, play interests, vocational interests and parents' occupations in both the UK and China.

3.1.2 Participants

3.1.2.1 The UK participants

The original UK study sample comprised 319 parents from England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Among these 319 parents, 48 parents were teachers or researchers from the University of Essex, 250 parents were recruited from Prolific, and 27 parents were recruited from the Colchester Library and the Clacton Library. However, due to insufficient information, 31 responses to the questionnaire were excluded. As a result, the UK sample included 288 parents. Surveyed children's age ranged from 5 to 12-years-old. The gender distribution of surveyed children was 151 boys ($M = 8.50$ years, $SD = 1.89$ years) and 137 girls ($M = 8.14$ years, $SD = 2.02$ years).

3.1.2.2 The Chinese participants

The Chinese participants consisted of 301 parents recruited from elementary and secondary schools in China. The survey children aged between 5 to 12, including 151 boys ($M = 9.47$ years, $SD = 1.94$ years) and 150 girls ($M = 9.98$ years, $SD = 1.96$ years).

years).

3.1.3 Instruments

3.1.3.1 Selected book genres

In light of the variety of approaches that have been employed to categorize book genres, it seems particularly important to set up the standard for the classification of book genres. Thus, to begin this project, apart from reviewing published research on reading interests, I also consulted with an experienced children’s librarian, and a staff from Waterstones for recommendation. Subsequently, I established the criteria for the classification of book genres (see Table 3.1).

Table 3.1: Book genres

Genres	Sub-Genres
Fiction	Adventure; Fantasy; Fairy Tales/Folktale/Legend/Myth/Fable; Comics/ Graphic Novel/ Manga; Mystery; Humour; Horror; Romance; Historical Fiction; Realistic Fiction; Science Fiction.
Non-Fiction	Biography/Autobiography/ Memoir; How to Manual; Education; Science & Technology; Sports; Religion.
Poetry	Poetry stands itself as a genre.

3.1.3.2 Questionnaire

After establishing the criteria for the genres, I created the online questionnaire to collect information about children’s reading interests, play interests, vocational interests and parents’ occupations in both the UK and China.

The online questionnaire ran on PsyToolkit software (Stoet, 2010, 2017) and contained three sections. The first section was used to collect children’s demographical information (age, sex, school year, and country). The second section was designed to ask parents to evaluate their children’s interests in each genre. Each

item was answered using a 5-point Likert scales, ranging from very uninterested to very interested. 1 is “Very uninterested”, 2 is “Uninterested”, 3 is “Neither interested nor uninterested”, 4 is “Interested”, and 5 is “Very interested”. The third section asked parents to answer questions about children’s play interests, vocational interest as well as parents’ occupations by asking “*Please write down what activities does your child like doing most in his or her free time?*” “*What does your child want to be when he or she grows up?*” “*What job(s) do the father and mother have, if any?*” respectively.

Note that the UK online questionnaire and the Chinese online questionnaire were exactly the same. In addition, there were two versions of the questionnaire: Version 1 was for parents of children aged 5 to 8, and version 2 was for parents of children aged 9-12. The only difference was the exclusion of “Horror” and “Romance” in Version 1, while these two genres were included in Version 2.

3.1.4 Procedure

3.1.4.1 The UK procedure

In the UK, only parents of children aged 5 to 12 were invited to participate in this study. If they have more than one child aged 5 to 12, they were asked to select only one (the one they understand best) and then to make the responses to the questionnaire. Once parents have read the information sheet online and given consent to this study, they could start the survey and complete the online questionnaire.

At the beginning of this study, 48 teachers or researchers whose children aged 5 to 12 from the University of Essex voluntarily took part in this survey. This can be seen as a pilot study, and it confirmed the online questionnaire worked. After that, 250 parents from Prolific and 27 parents from librarians (Colchester Library & Clacton Library) were recruited to participate in this study. Initially, a total of 319 British parents children aged 5 to 12 completed the questionnaire. However, due to the insufficient information of the responses, 31 questionnaires were excluded from the analysis. Therefore, 288 responses from British parents have been used for data analysis.

3.1.4.2 The Chinese procedure

As in the UK, only parents of children aged 5 to 12 were recruited in China to participate in this study. The information sheets were provided, and consent was obtained from parents and school principals. In total, 301 Chinese parents completed the online questionnaire.

3.1.5 Data analysis

Parents' responses for children's play interests, vocational interests, and parents' occupations were read and reread, then coded for emerging categories. Both descriptive and inferential statistical analyses were conducted to answer the research questions.

3.1.5.1 How did I code children's play interests

The question "*What activities does your child like doing most in his or her free time?*" was set up to know children's reading interests. Parents' responses to this statement are many and varied. For example, "*Play with small imaginative toys*", "*My child likes to write stories, do arts and crafts*", "*Watch TikTok videos and then create her own dance routines and record them*", "*Play Roblox or Minecraft*", "*She likes playing with her brother in the garden*", or "*My child's favourite activity unfortunately is to play games on their tablet and watch TV. We limit this activity but if given the choice he would choose this activity over anything else*". Then, how to categories play?

As mentioned earlier, in this study, play can be categorised as seven types: physical play, constructive play, exploratory play, competitive play, pretend play, symbolic play, and object play. Table 3.2 shows the seven types of play and examples. I coded children's play interests according to this table.

Table 3.2 Types of play and examples

Types Play	Examples
Psychical play	Playing football, swimming, climbing, ride a bike, riding a horse,
Constructive play	Building with blocks, Legos, magnetic tiles, making a road for toy trains, constructing a fort out of couch pillows.
Exploratory play	Mixing paint to find primary and secondary colours, finding out spatial relations, exploring numbers and pattern.
Competitive play	Video games such as shooting or driving games, often involve competition between two or more players
Pretend play	Dressing up as a princess or a superhero, feeding a doll with a toy, pretending they are doctors and give “patient” an injection, pretending shopping at a grocery store, then, it is a pretend play.
Symbolic play	singing, making jokes or rhymes, making stories, painting, colouring, making crafts, dancing.
Objective Play	A child pretends to be an astronaut with a toy rocket ship, A child holds a toy phone to his ear and pretends to talk. <i>*(Note that unlike pretend play, Object play is more focused on the object, its properties and what can be done with it, rather than what it can represent).</i>

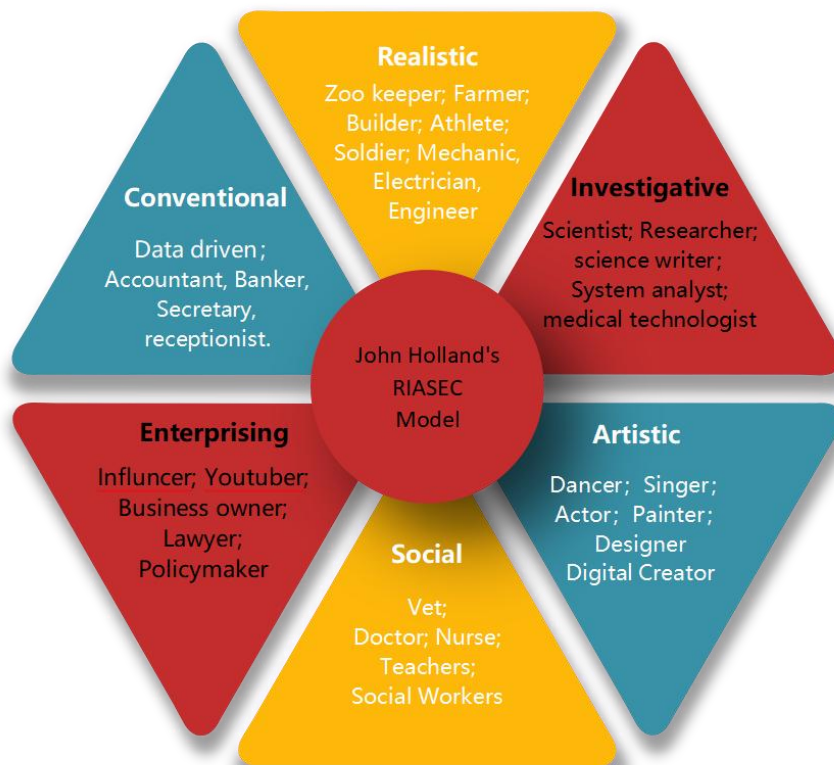
3.1.5.2 How did I code children’s vocational interests and parents’ careers

In this study, the question “*What does your child want to be when he or she grows up?*” “*What job(s) do the father and mother have, if any?*” were used to know children’s vocational interests and parents’ occupations.

As mentioned earlier, I adopted Holland's RIASEC Model (Holland, 1973, 1985, 1996, 1997) as a framework to categorise children’s vocational interests and parent’s careers. According to Holland’s RIASEC Model, people can be categorized into six

personality types: realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising, and conventional (RIASEC). Figure 3.3 shows the hexagon of Holland's RIASEC Model.

Figure 3.3: The Hexagon of John Holland's RIASEC Model



Ideally, relationships can be observed when a child's reading interests, play interests, vocational aspirations, and parents' occupations are related to a similar theme. For example, a child who prefers reading books about sports, enjoys physical play such as football, aspires to become a football player, and has one or both parents working as a football player, coach, or athlete could be considered to show a clear consistency across reading interest, play interest, and vocational interest. However, identifying such relationships is not always straightforward, and simple matching is insufficient. For instance, if a boy reports that he wants to become a policeman in the future, under what conditions are his reading interest, play interest, and vocational interest related to each other? Intuitively, when this boy likes to read books about policeman, and enjoys role-playing as a policeman, the associations between his reading interest, play

interest, and vocational interest is direct and explicit. Nevertheless, if this boy likes to read adventure, and likes to write crime reports, or participates in physical activities, these interests may still be connected to the characteristics associated with police work, as the books about adventure, crime reports and physical activities can be connected to policeman's characters. Therefore, careful coding and interpretation of responses are particularly important. In the present study, children's reading interests, play interests, vocational interests, and parents' occupations were compared through repeated reading of responses, and the coding process was refined through several rounds of review until all responses could be meaningfully categorized.

Table 3.4 outlines the coding scheme used for analyzing the responses. It serves as a reference for identifying possible relationships between children's reading interests, play interests, vocational interests, and their parents' careers. However, interpretations should be made on a case-by-case basis.

The coding scheme used in this study was informed by Holland's theory of vocational interests, commonly known as the RIASEC model, which classifies interests into six types: Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and Conventional (Holland, 1997). This model has been widely used to examine the relationships between individuals' interests, activities, and career preferences, and is considered useful for exploring consistency across different areas of development. In the present study, Holland's framework was adapted to analyse the associations between children's reading interests, play interests, vocational aspirations, and parents' occupations. The assumption underlying this approach is that children's preferences in reading, play, and future careers may reflect similar underlying interest patterns. Therefore, by grouping responses into the six RIASEC categories, it becomes possible to examine whether children show consistent interests across different contexts, and whether these interests are related to their parents' occupational backgrounds.

Children's reading interests were classified according to the genres of the books they

preferred. For example, books about sports, how-to-manual, science & technology, science fiction, biographies/autobiography/ memoir, realistic and historical fiction were grouped under the Realistic category, while fantasy, poetry, humour, and fair tales/folktale/legend/myth/fable were categorized as Artistic. Similarly, play interests were coded based on the type of activity children most frequently reported, such as physical play, constructive play, symbolic play, exploratory play, pretend play, or competitive play, and each type of play was assigned to the corresponding category. Children's vocational interests and parents' occupations were also classified using the same framework. Occupations such as athlete, builder, farmer, soldier, electrician, mechanic, zookeeper, engineer and chef were coded as Realistic, whereas jobs such as scientist, science writer, system analyst, medical technologist, chemist and biologist were coded as Investigative, and careers such as singer, writer, or designer were categorized as Artistic. Social, Enterprising, and Conventional categories were assigned in a similar way based on the nature of the occupation.

The classification process involved repeated reading of the responses and several rounds of coding in order to ensure that each response was assigned to the most appropriate category. This approach allowed comparisons to be made across reading interests, play interests, vocational interests, and parents' occupations, making it possible to explore whether consistent patterns could be identified within individual cases.

Following this, the percentage of cases showing a "perfect match" across these domains was calculated to assess the alignment of reading interests, play interests and vocational interests within each child. Specifically, each child's reading interests, play interests, vocational aspirations, and parents' occupations were first assigned to one of the six RIASEC categories. A "perfect match" was defined as cases in which all four domains were classified under the same category. For example, a child's reading interest, play interest, dream job, and at least one parent's occupation all coded as Realistic. The total number of children meeting this criterion was then divided by the

total sample size to obtain the percentage of cases showing perfect alignment.

Table 3.4: The matching of children’s reading interests, play interests, vocational interests and parents’ occupations

Children’s Favourite Genres	Children’s Favourite Play Activities	Children’ Dream Jobs	Parents’ Occupations
<p>Sports</p> <p>How to Manual</p> <p>Science& Technology</p> <p>Science Fiction</p> <p>Biography/Autobiography/ Memoir</p> <p>Historical Fiction, Realistic Fiction</p>	<p>Physical play: Football, Rugby, Swimming, Horse-riding, Riding a bike, Climbing trees.</p> <p>Constructive Play: Building with blocks, Lego, or magnetic tiles; Making a road for toy trains.</p> <p>Object Play: Play is more focus on the object (material, animal, machine) and what can be done with it, rather than what it can represent.</p>	<p>Realistic: Athlete, Builder, Farmer, Soldier, Electrician, Mechanic, Zookeeper, Engineer, Chef.</p>	<p>Realistic: Athlete, Builder, Farmer, Soldier, Electrician, Mechanic, Zookeeper, Engineer, Chef.</p>
<p>How to Manual;</p> <p>Science & Technology;</p> <p>Science Fiction; Historical Fiction,</p> <p>Realistic Fiction; Education</p>	<p>Exploratory play: Mixing paint to find primary and secondary colours; Spatial relations, Numbers and patterns, scientific video games.</p>	<p>Investigative: Scientist, Science writer, System analyst, Medical technologist, Chemist, Biologist.</p>	<p>Investigative: Scientist, Science writer, System analyst, Medical technologist, Chemist, Biologist.</p>
<p>Fantasy; Poetry; Humour;</p> <p>Fair Tales/Folktale/Legend/Myth</p> <p>/Fable</p>	<p>Symbolic Play: Singing; Dancing, Painting, Drawing, Colouring, Making crafts, Making jokes or rhymes, Making clothes.</p> <p>Pretend Play: Acting</p>	<p>Artistic: Singer, Dancer, Painter, Writer, Illustrator, Designer, Actor, Director.</p>	<p>Artistic: Singer, Dancer, Painter, Writer, Illustrator, Designer, Actor, Director.</p>
<p>How to Manual;</p> <p>Science & Technology</p> <p>Education; Adventure;Mystery</p>	<p>Pretend Play: Feeding a doll or a toy Teddy, Pretending as a doctor or a nurse, Pretending as a teacher; pretending as a policeman.</p>	<p>Social: Vet, Teacher, Teaching assistant, Doctor, Nurse, Social worker, Policemen.</p>	<p>Social: Vet, Teacher, Teaching assistant, Doctor, Nurse, Social worker, Policemen.</p>
<p>How to Manual; Science Fiction;</p> <p>Science& Technology;</p> <p>Biography/Autobiography/ Memoir</p>	<p>Competitive Play: Video games like driving or shooting games, which involve competition between two or more players.</p>	<p>Enterprising: Lawyer, Influencer, Youtuber, Ploicymaker, Business owner.</p>	<p>Enterprising: Lawyer, Influencer, Youtuber, Ploicymaker, Business owner.</p>
<p>How to Manual;Science Fiction;</p> <p>Realistic Fiction;</p> <p>Science & Technology</p>	<p>Object Play: Holding multiple objects, collecting toy cars.</p> <p>Exploratory play: Numbers</p>	<p>Conventional: Banker, Accountant Secretary, Receptionist</p>	<p>Conventional: Banker, Accountant Secretary, Receptionist</p>

3.2 Results

Section 3.2 presents the findings of Study One, focusing on the gender, age and cultural differences in children’s reading interests, and the relationships between children’s reading interests, play interests, vocational interests and parents’ occupations.

Following the national curriculum in this study, the surveyed children were divided into key stages for data analysis. Table 3.5 provides an overview of the Key Stages of the national curriculum. In the UK, the national curriculum is organised into blocks of years called “key stages” (KS). At the end of each key stage, the teacher will formally assess children’s performances (UK Government, 2023).

Table 3.5: The key stages of the national curriculum

Key Stage	Year Groups	Age of Children	Assessment
EYFS (Early Years Foundation Stage)	Reception	4 - 5	Assessment of children’s starting points in language, communication, literacy and maths and teacher assessments
Key Stage 1	Year1 - 2	5 - 7	Phonics test in Year 1 National Tests in Year 2
Key Stage 2	Year 3 - 6	7 - 11	Multiplication Tables Check (MTC) in Year4 National Tests in Year 6
Key Stage 3	Year 7 - 9	11- 14	
Key Stage 4	Year 10 - 11	14 - 16	Some children take GCSEs in Year 10 Most children take GCSEs or other National Tests in Year 11

3.2.1 The UK results

Figure 3.6 : The UK sample size by key stage and gender

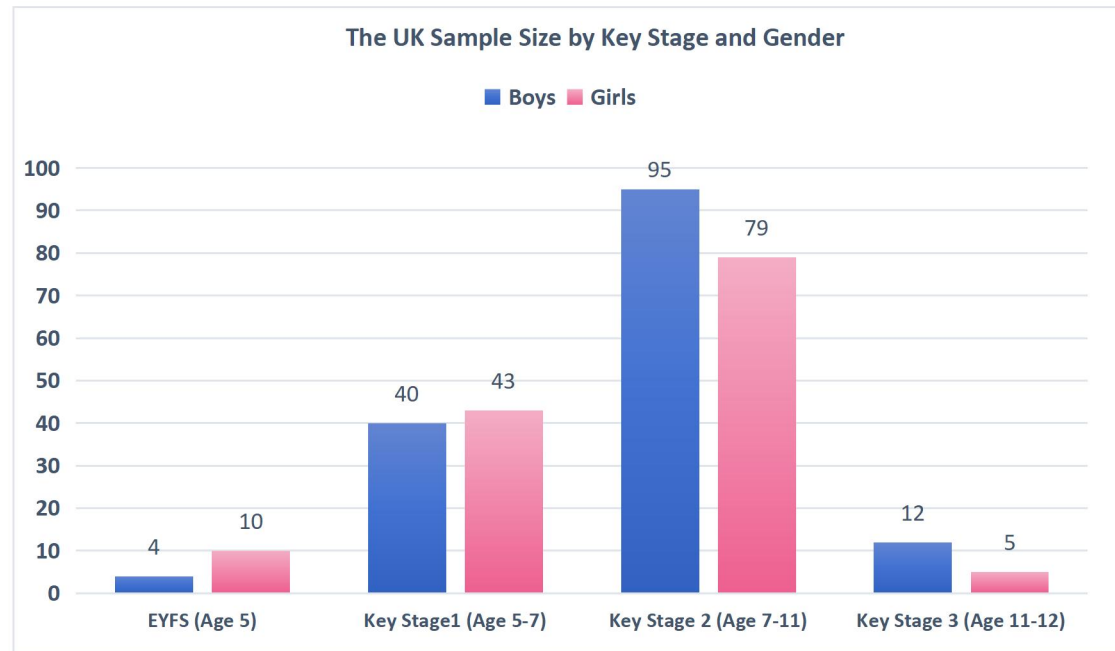


Figure 3.6 shows the distribution of the 288 surveyed British children by Key Stage and gender. In total, there were 151 boys ($M = 8.50$ years, $SD = 1.90$ years) and 137 girls ($M = 8.14$ years, $SD = 2.02$ years). 14 children were from EYFS, with 4 boys ($M = 5.00$ years, $SD = 0.00$ years) and 10 girls ($M = 5.00$ years, $SD = 0.00$ years). In KS1, there were 83 children, with 40 boys ($M = 6.38$ years, $SD = 0.63$ years) and 43 girls ($M = 6.30$ years, $SD = 0.67$ years). There were 174 children in KS2, 95 of them were boys ($M = 9.12$ years, $SD = 1.18$ years) and 79 of them were girls ($M = 9.29$ years, $SD = 1.21$ years). In KS3, there were 17 children, including 12 boys ($M = 11.83$ years, $SD = 0.39$ years) and 5 girls ($M = 12$ years, $SD = 0.00$ years).

Figure 3.7 displays the sample size by year group and gender for each Key Stage, which provides a more thorough picture of the distribution of the sample.

Figure 3.7: The UK sample size by year group and gender in each Key Stage

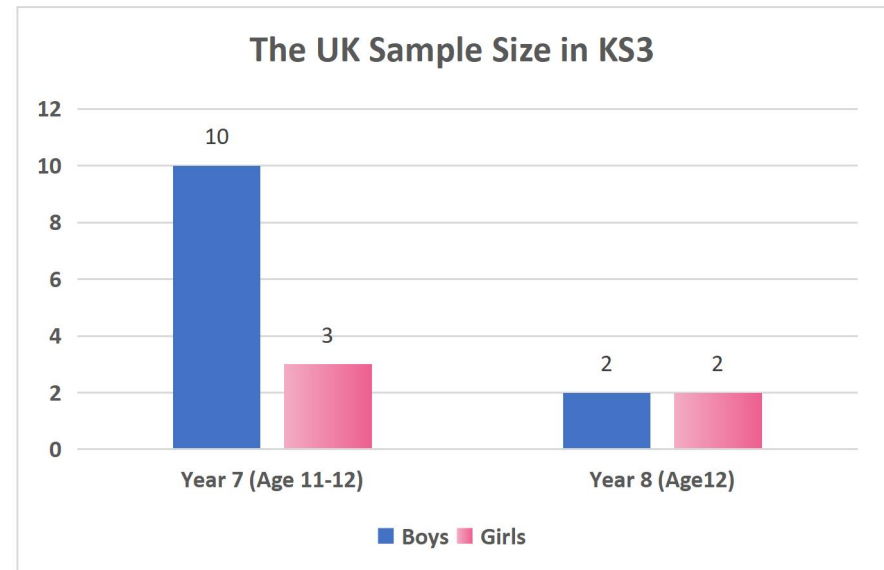
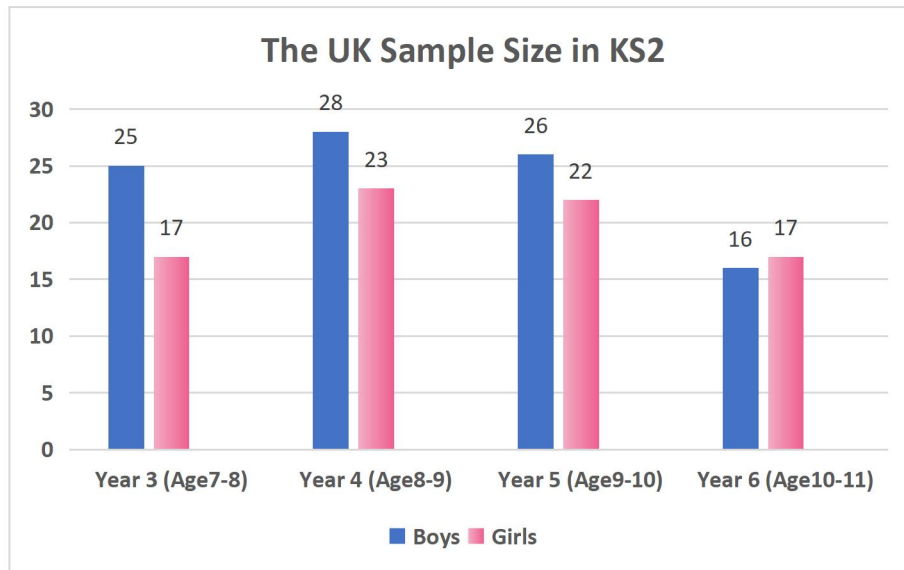
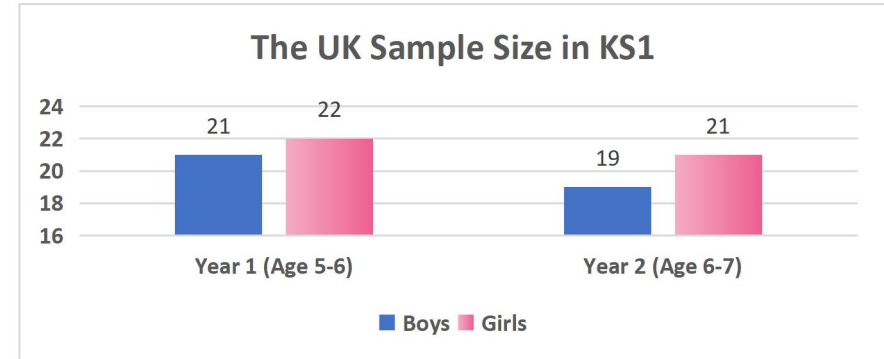
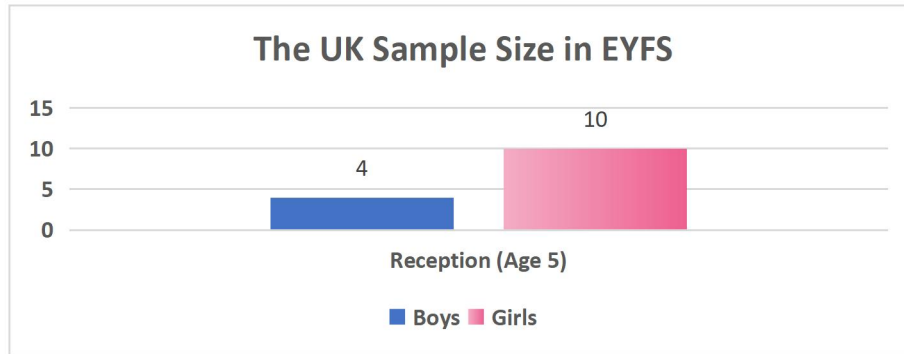


Table 3.8: Preferences for fiction and non-fiction of British children in EYFS, KS1, KS2 and KS3

Genre	EYFE (Age 5)		Key Stage 1 (Age 5-7)		Key Stage 2 (Age 7-11)		Key Stage 3 (Age 11-12)	
	Boy(n=4)	Girls(n=10)	Boys(n=40)	Girls(n=43)	Boys (n=95)	Girls (n=79)	Boys (n=12)	Girls (n=5)
Fiction	3.69	3.48	3.52	3.44	3.37	3.45	3.36	3.15
Non-Fiction	2.75	2.85	2.86	2.69	2.90	2.67	2.57	2.40

**Note: The left hand top panel shows the genre categories: fiction and non-fiction.*

The right hand top panel shows British Children's mean scores for fictional genres and non-fictional genres, by key stage and gender.

Table: 3.9 Genre preferences of British children in EYFS, KS1, KS2, and KS3

Genre	EYFE (Age 5)		Key Stage 1 (Age 5-7)		Key Stage 2 (Age 7-11)		Key Stage 3 (Age 11-12)	
	Boy(n=4)	Girls(n=10)	Boys(n=40)	Girls (n=43)	Boys (n=95)	Girls (n=79)	Boys (n=12)	Girls (n=5)
Adventure	4.50	4.30	4.05	4.26	3.98	4.33	4.17	3.60
Fantasy	4.25	3.90	3.95	3.93	3.79	4.43	4.50	3.40
Fairy Tales/Folktales/ Legend/Myth/Fable	3.50	4.20	3.53	4.23	2.89	3.82	3.67	3.00
Comics/Graphic Novels/Manga	3.00	2.20	3.68	2.60	3.85	2.77	3.67	2.40
Mystery	3.25	3.10	2.95	2.65	3.29	3.59	3.25	3.60
Humour	4.25	4.10	4.00	4.21	4.07	4.00	3.58	3.40
Horror					2.57	2.52	2.67	2.20
Romance					(*n=61) 1.44	(*n=58) 2.17	1.25	2.80
Historical Fiction	2.75	2.80	2.70	2.81	3.05	2.95	3.00	3.40
Realistic Fiction	3.50	3.80	3.38	3.53	3.49	3.61	3.42	3.60
Science Fiction	4.25	2.90	3.50	2.77	3.51	3.13	3.75	3.20
Biography	2.00	2.40	2.40	2.23	2.57	2.54	2.58	2.00
How to Manual	3.00	3.10	3.03	2.93	3.29	3.09	2.83	2.60
Education	3.25	2.70	2.90	3.02	2.79	2.95	2.25	3.40
Science & Technology	3.75	3.50	3.78	3.60	3.94	3.48	3.67	3.20
Sports	2.75	2.30	2.93	2.02	2.89	1.85	2.42	1.60
Religion	1.75	3.10	2.15	2.33	1.94	2.10	1.67	1.60
Poetry	3.25	3.50	2.70	2.77	2.31	3.20	2.50	2.60

3.2.1.1 Gender differences in British children's reading interests

This study explored British children's reading interests by analyzing their preferred genres. Overall, there are three big categories of genres: fiction, non-fiction, and poetry. There are eleven sub-genres for fiction: adventure; fantasy; fairy tales/folktale/legend/myth/fable; comics/graphic novel/manga; mystery; humour; horror; romance; historical fiction; realistic fiction; science fiction. There are six sub-genres for non-fiction: biography/autobiography/memoir; how to manual; education; science & technology; sports; religion. In this study, poetry stands itself as a genre. In order to know what genres that children are interested in, parents of children aged 5 to 12 were asked to evaluate their children's interests in different types of genres. Each item was answered using a 5-point Likert scales, ranging from very uninterested to very interested. 1 is "Very uninterested", 2 is "Uninterested", 3 is "Neither interested nor uninterested", 4 is "Interested", and 5 is "Very interested". Note that for children aged 5 to 8, horror and romance were excluded.

In order to determine children's reading interests in fiction and non-fiction, I calculated each child's mean score for fictional genres and non-fictional genres. This was due to the fact that parents were not specifically asked how much their children enjoyed reading fiction and non-fiction. Figure 3.8 shows British children's preferences for fiction and non-fiction. Figure 3.9 demonstrates British children's preferences for each sub-genre. It can be seen from Figure 3.6 and Figure 3.7, there were very few children in EYFS and K3, therefore only those in KS1 (boys=40, girls=43) and KS2 (boys=95, girls=79) were further analyzed.

3.2.1.1.1 KS1 British children's preferences for fiction and non-fiction

To determine if there are gender differences in children's interest in fiction and non-fiction, an independent samples t-test was performed. Results indicated that there was no significant difference in fiction between boys and girls in KS1 ($t(81) = 0.867$, $p = 0.48$). Data also revealed that there was no significant difference in non-fiction between boys and girls in KS1 ($t(81) = 0.994$, $p = 0.273$).

3.2.1.1.2 KS1 British children's preferences for each sub-genre

When examining children's preferences in each sub-genre, the results (see Figure 3.10.) showed that the top five most popular genres for British boys in KS1 were adventure, humour, fantasy, science&technology and comics/graphic novel/manga.

Fairy tales/folktale/legend/myth/fable, science fiction, realistic fiction, and how to manual were also favoured among British boys in KS1. This was followed by mystery, sports, education, historical fiction, poetry, and biography/autobiography/memoir. Religion was the least favoured genre.

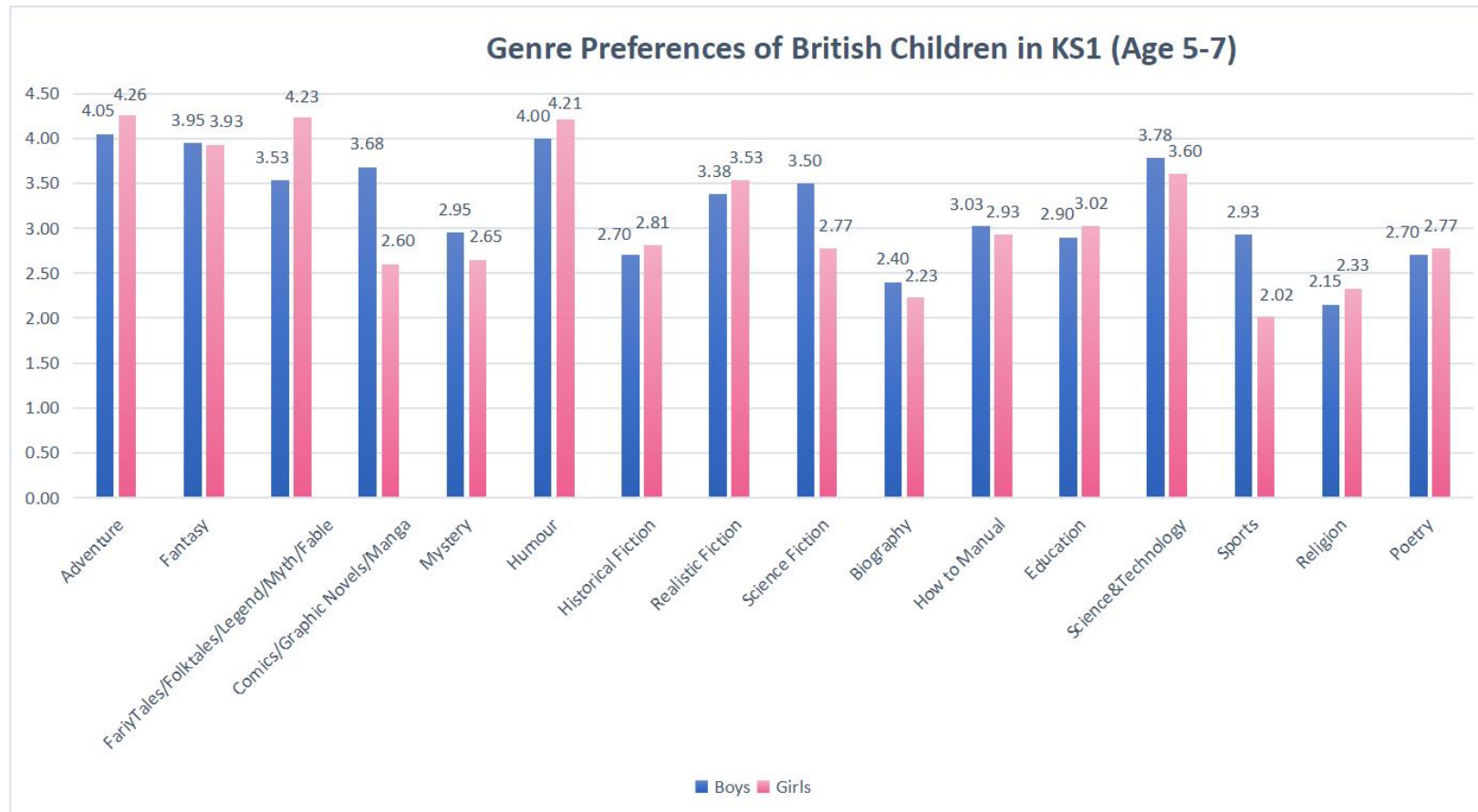
The five most popular genres among British girls in KS1 were adventure, fairy tales/folktale/legend/myth/fable, humour, fantasy, science&technology. These were followed by realistic fiction, education, how to manual, historical fiction, science fiction poetry, mystery, and comics/graphic novel/manga, with religion and biography/autobiography/memoir ranking lower. Sports was among the least popular genre.

An independent samples t-test was conducted to examine gender differences in sub-genre preferences of KS1 British children. First, for fictional genres, results showed that girls scored higher than boys in fairy tales/folktale/legend/myth/fable, $t(81) = -3.753, p < 0.01$, suggesting that girls were more likely than boys to read fairy tales/folktale/legend/myth/fable. A significant difference in comics /graphic novel/manga between boys and girls was found, $t(81) = 4.161, p < 0.01$, indicating that boys preferred comics /graphic novel/manga more than girls. There was a significant difference in science fiction, $t(81) = 3.006, p < 0.01$, suggesting that boys favoured science fiction more than girls.

For non-fictional genres, a significant gender difference was found for sports, $t(81) = 3.699, p < 0.01$, indicating that boys preferred books about sports more than girls did.

In this study, poetry stood itself as a genre, and was favoured by both KS1 boys and KS1 girls, although it was not as popular as adventure, fairy tales/folktale/legend/myth/fable, humour, fantasy and science & technology, and comics /graphic novel/manga. No statistically significant differences were found in preferences for poetry between KS1 British boys and KS1 British girls, $t(81) = 0.545$, $p=0.802$.

Figure 3.10: Genre preferences of British children in KS1 (Age 5-7)



3.2.1.1.3 KS2 British children's preferences for fiction and non-fiction

An independent samples t-test was conducted to see if there are gender differences in KS2 British children's preferences for fiction and non-fiction. Data indicated that there was no significant difference in fiction between British boys and British girls in KS2, $t(172) = 0.310, p = 0.289$.

A significant difference has been found in non-fiction between boys and girls in KS2, $t(172) = 0.970, p = 0.035$, with boys' mean score for non-fiction was 2.90 points, $SD = 0.71$ points; girls' mean score for non-fiction was 2.67 points, $SD = 0.74$ points, indicating that British boys in KS2 were more likely than girls to read non-fiction.

3.2.1.1.4 KS2 British children's preferences for each sub-genre

Figure 3.12 shows KS2 British children's genre preferences of the 18 sub-genres. The top ten popular genres by British boys in KS2 was humour, adventure, science & technology, comics/graphic novel/manga, fantasy, science fiction, realistic fiction, mystery, how to manual, and historical fiction. This was followed by fairy tales / folktale /legend /myth / fable, sports, education, horror, biography / autobiography/ memoir, poetry. Religion and romance were the two least favoured genres by British boys in KS2.

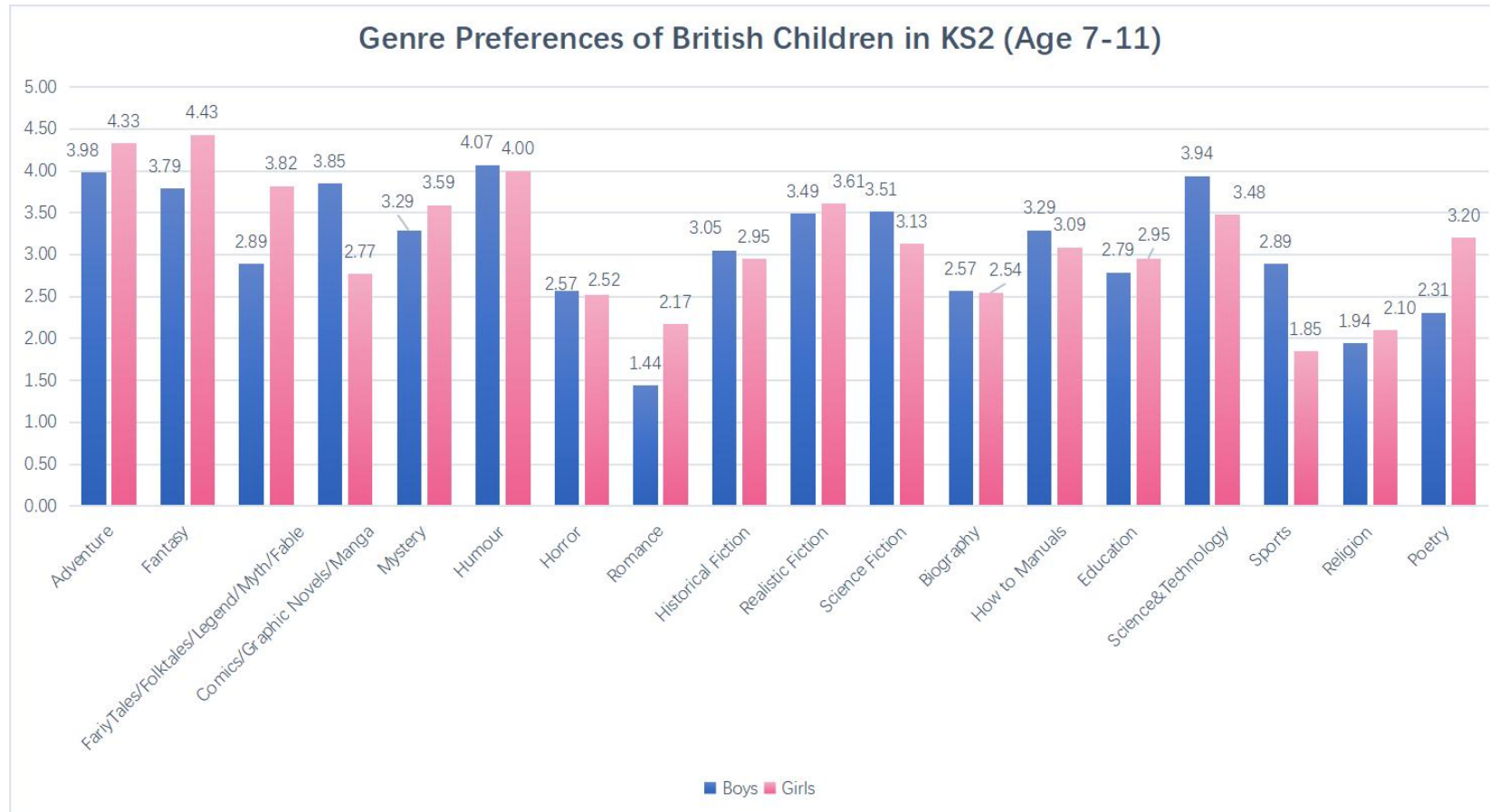
British Girls in KS2 enjoyed fantasy, adventure, humour, fairy tales/folktale/legend/myth/fable and realistic fiction most, followed by mystery, science & technology, poetry, science fiction, how to manual, historical fiction, education, comics/graphic novel/manga, biography/autobiography/memoir, horror, romance, religion and sports. Similar to KS1 British girls, again, sports was among the least popular genre.

An independent samples t-test was performed to examine gender differences in preferences for each genre of KS2 British children. For fictional genres, first, there was significant difference in adventure between boys and girls in KS2, $t(172) =$

-2.938, $p < 0.01$, with boys' mean score for adventure was 3.98 points, $SD = 0.911$ points; girls' mean score for adventure was 4.33 points, $SD = 0.593$ points; indicating that girls preferred adventure more than boys. Second, girls scored higher than boys in fantasy, $t(160.40) = -4.319$, $p < 0.01$, suggesting that girls were more likely than boys to read fantasy in KS2. Third, girls scored higher than boys in fairy tales/folktale/legend/myth/fable, $t(172) = -5.984$, $p < 0.01$, indicating that KS2 British girls have shown more interest in fairy tales/folktale/legend/myth/fable than KS2 British boys. Fourth, there was a significant difference in comics/graphic novel/manga $t(146.32) = 5.713$, $p < 0.01$, between British boys and British girls in KS2, with boys scored higher than girls, suggesting that KS2 British boys preferred comics/graphic novel/manga more than KS2 British girls. Moreover, girls score higher than boys in romance $t(102.39) = -4.372$, $p < 0.01$, suggesting that KS2 British girls preferred romance than KS2 British boys. There was a significant difference in science fiction between KS2 boys and KS2 girls, $t(172) = -2.187$, $p < 0.05$, with boys scored higher than girls, indicating that KS2 British boys were more likely than KS2 British girls to read science fiction.

For non-fictional genres a significant difference in science & technology between gender in KS2 has also been found, $t(145.52) = 2.691$, $p < 0.01$, with boys scored higher than girls, suggesting that KS2 British boys favoured science & technology over KS2 British girls. There was a significant difference in sports between boys and girls in KS2, $t(160.61) = 2.691$, $p < 0.01$, with boys scored higher than girls, indicating that boys preferred sports more than girls in KS2 in the UK. Results also revealed girls scored higher than boys in poetry, $t(172) = 0.951$, $p < 0.01$, suggesting that British girls preferred poetry more than British boys in KS2.

Figure 3.11: Genre preferences of British children in KS2 (Age 7-11)



3.2.1.2 Age differences in British children's reading interests

As the number of responses in each Key Stage are varied widely, particularly, there were very few British children in EYFS (14 children) and K3 (17 children), responses of British children in KS1 and KS2 were used to compare children's preferences across ages. Hence, in order to explore the age trends in children's reading interests, a ranking list of children's favourite genres were generated by selecting age groups (Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2) and gender (boys and girls) and calculating the mean score of each genre (see Table 3.12).

Figure 3.12 is the ranking list of genre preferences of British children in KS1 and KS2. For children in KS1, 16 types of genres were explored. For children in KS2, horror and romanced were added for discussion, and therefore, there were 18 types of genres for children in KS2. For British boys in KS1, the ten most popular genres were adventure, humour, fantasy, science & Technology, comics /graphic novel/manga, fairy tales/folktale/legend/myth/fable, science fiction, realistic fiction, how to manual and mystery. For British boys in KS2, the top ten popular genres were humour, adventure, Science & Technology, comics /graphic novel/manga, fantasy, science fiction, realistic fiction, mystery, how to manual and historical fiction. Science & Technology ranked in the third position, while it was in the fourth position for boys in KS1. Science fiction and realistic jumped from the seventh and the eighty position into the sixth and the seventh position respectively. Historical fiction ranked in the tenth position, which was not included in the top ten favoured genres by children in KS1. It also can be seen from Table 3.12 that for British girls in KS1, the top ten popular genres ranked as: adventure, fairy tales/folktale/legend/myth/fable, humour, fantasy, science & technology, realistic fiction, education, how to manual, historical fiction and science fiction. For girls in KS2, the ten most popular genres were fantasy, adventure, humour, fairy tales/folktale/legend/myth/fable, realistic fiction, mystery, science & technology, poetry, science fiction and how to manual. It is interesting to note that the rank of realistic fiction rose from the sixth position to the fifth position. Science fiction ranked from the tenth position to the ninth position. As a result, the

data indicated that as children grow older, their interests in some types of genres increase while their interests in other types of genres decrease.

Another age prediction in this study was as children grow mature, so do their reading interests, with genre preferences shifting from a focus on make-believe to more realistic perspective of world. To examine this assumption, I picked ten popular genres to discuss. Among them, adventure, humour, fantasy, comics /graphic novel/manga, fairy tales/folktale/legend/myth/fable, and mystery can be categorized as make-believe or imaginative genres. Science & Technology, science fiction, realistic fiction and how to manual can be categorized as realistic genres, as they are more about realistic perspective of world.

One-way ANOVA has been conducted to examine the age differences in British children's preferences for make-believe/imaginative genres and realistic genres. According to Table 3.13, significant differences have only been found in fairy tales/folktale/legend/myth/fable, $F(277.993, 7) = 3.604, p = 0.00$ and mystery, $F(37.131, 7) = 4.183, p = 0.000$.

Table 3.12: Ranking list of British children's favourite genres (KS1 and KS2)

Rank	Key Stage 1 (Age 5-7)		Key Stage 2 (Age 7-11)	
	Boy (n=40)	Girls (n=43)	Boys (n=95)	Girls (n=79)
1	Adventure	Adventure	Humour	Fantasy
2	Humour	FairyTales/Folktales/Legend/Myth/Fable	Adventure	Adventure
3	Fantasy	Humour	Science &Technology	Humour
4	Science &Technology	Fantasy	Comic/Graphic Novels/Manga	FairyTales/Folktales/Legend/Myth/Fable
5	Comic/Graphic Novels/Manga	Science &Technology	Fantasy	Realistic Fiction
6	FairyTales/Folktales/Legend/Myth/Fable	Realistic Fiction	Science Fiction	Mystery
7	Science Fiction	Education	Realistic Fiction	Science &Technology
8	Realistic Fiction	How to Manual	Mystery	Poetry
9	How to Manual	Historical Fiction	How to Manual	Science Fiction
10	Mystery	Science Fiction	Historical Fiction	How to Manual
11	Sports	Poetry	FairyTales/Folktales/Legend/Myth/Fable	Historical Fiction
12	Education	Mystery	Sports	Education
13	Historical Fiction	Comic/Graphic Novels/Manga	Education	Comic/Graphic Novels/Manga
14	Poetry	Religion	Horror	Biograph/Autobiography/Memoir
15	Biograph/Autobiography/Memoir	Biograph/Autobiography/Memoir	Biograph/Autobiography/Memoir	Horror
16	Religion	Sports	Poetry	Romance
17			Religion	Religion
18			Romance	Sports

Table 3.13: British children's preferences for make-believe/imaginative genres and realistic genres (KS1 & KS2)

Genres		Sums of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
*Make-believe Genres						
Adventure	Between groups	3.759	7	0.537	0.86	0.558
	Within groups	159.914	249	0.642		
	Total	163.673	256			
Humour	Between groups	7.704	7	1.101	1.48	0.228
	Within groups	203.3	249	0.816		
	Total	211.004	256			
Fantasy	Between groups	9.934	7	1.419	1.376	0.216
	Within groups	256.751	249	1.031		
	Total	266.685	256			
Comics/Graphic/Novel/Manga	Between groups	14.472	7	2.067	1.203	0.301
	Within groups	427.793	249	1.718		
	Total	442.265	256			
Fairy Tales/Folktale/Legend/Myth /Fable	Between groups	27.993	7	3.999	3.604	0.001
	Within groups	276.256	249	1.109		
	Total	304.249	256			
Mystery	Between groups	37.131	7	5.304	4.183	0.000
	Within groups	315.779	249	1.258		
	Total	352.911	256			
*Realistic genres						
Science & Technology	Between groups	5.952	7	0.850	0.750	0.630
	Within groups	282.313	249	1.134		
	Total	288.265	256			
Science fiction	Between groups	14.263	7	2.038	1.548	0.152
	Within groups	327.745	249	1.316		
	Total	342.008	256			
Realistic fiction	Between groups	3.201	7	0.457	0.465	0.859
	Within groups	244.970	249	0.984		
	Total	248.171	256			
How to Manuals	Between groups	9.398	7	1.343	0.841	0.554
	Within groups	397.365	249	1.596		
	Total	406.763	256			

3.2.1.3 British children's reading interests, play interests, vocational interests and parents' careers

While comparisons based on gender and age were possible in this study due to the feasibility of static analysis, the comparisons between children's reading interests, play interests, vocational interests and parents' careers were problematic. The responses to children's play interests, vocational interests, and parents' careers were very varied and so direct comparison was difficult. However, after coding each response to the questionnaire, calculating how many children's reading interests match their play interests, vocational interests, and parents' careers are more comparable. Thus, the percentages of how many children's reading interests, play interests, vocational interests, and parents' careers are matched was calculated to describe the possible associations between children's reading interests, play interests, vocational interests, and parents' careers.

In terms of the perfect match between British children's reading interests, play interests, and vocational interests. Only 10 percent of British children's reading interests were aligned with their play interests and vocational interests, suggesting that there were no relationships between British children's reading interests, play interests, and vocational interests.

When it comes to the the perfect match between British children's reading interests, play interests, vocational interests and parents' careers. Only 10 percent of British children's reading interests, play interests, vocational interests, and parents' occupations were perfectly matched.

Figure 3.14: The possible associations between British children’s reading interests, play interests, vocational interests, and parents’ careers.

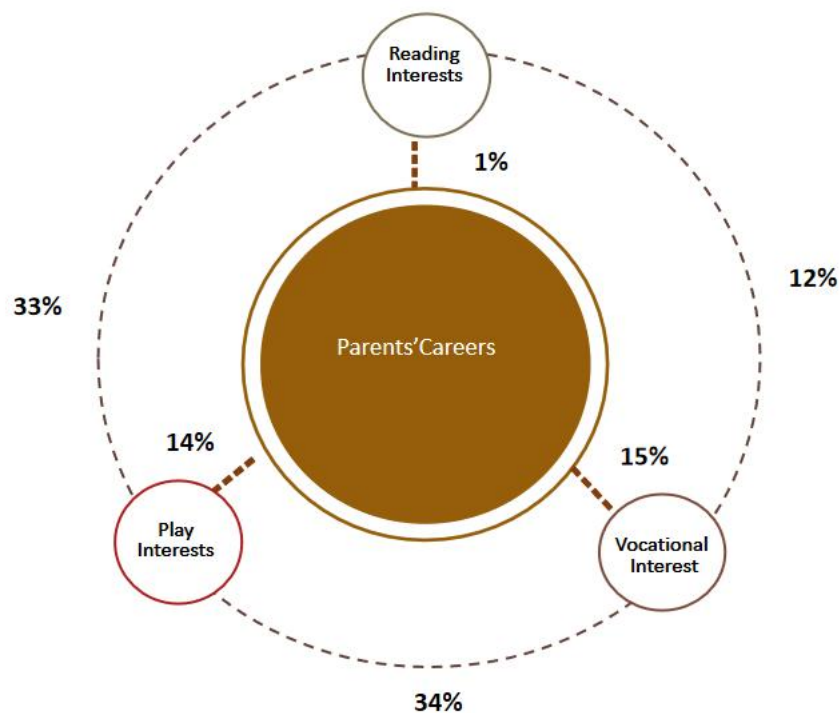
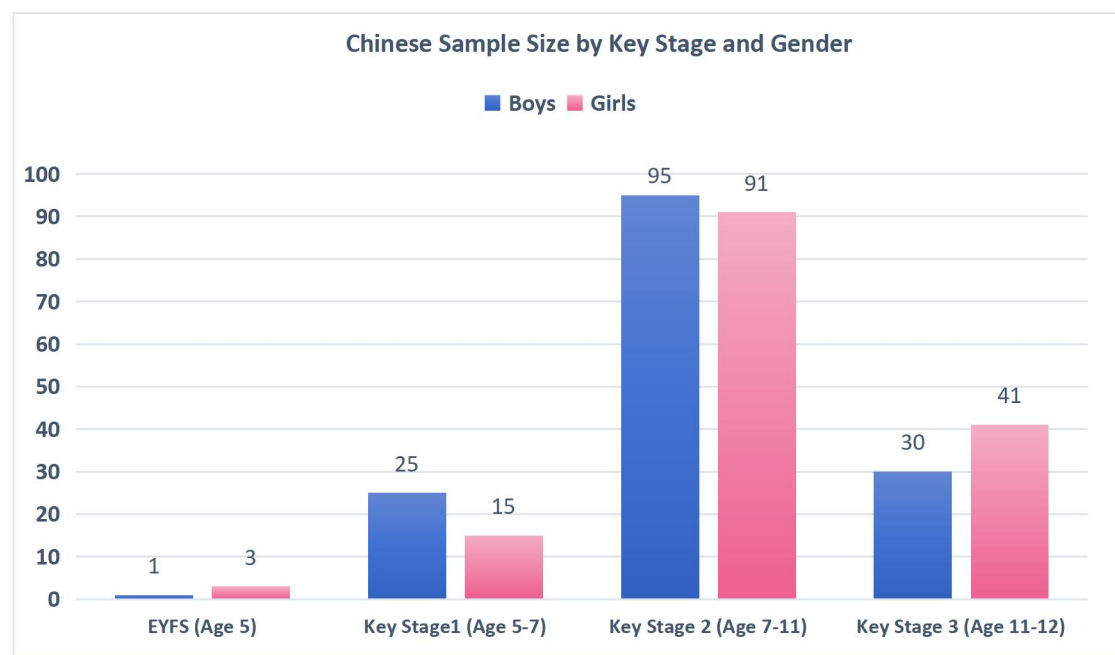


Figure 3.14 shows the possible associations between British children’s reading interests, play interests, vocational interests, and parents’ careers. First, let’s have a look at the links between children’s reading interests, play interests, vocational interests. Results shows that only 33 percent of British children’s reading interests matched their play interests. Only 12 percent of children’s reading interests matched their vocational interests. Only 34 percent of British children’s play interests matched their vocational interest. It also can be seen from Figure 2.18 that only 1 percent of children’s reading interests matched parents’ jobs. Only 14 percent of children’s play interests matched parents’ jobs. Only 15 percent of children’s vocational interests matched parents’ careers. All these results indicated that there were no relationships between children’s reading interests, play interests, vocational interests, and parents’ careers have no influences on children’s reading interests, free-time activities, and future jobs.

3.2.2 The Chinese results

Figure 3.15 shows the distribution of the 301 surveyed Chinese children by Key Stage and gender. In total, there were 151 boys ($M = 9.47$ years, $SD = 1.938$ years) and 150 girls ($M = 9.98$ years, $SD = 1.961$ years). Only 4 children were from EYFS, with 1 boys ($M = 5.00$ years, $SD = 0.00$ years) and 3 girls ($M = 5.00$ years, $SD = 5.00$ years).

Figure 3.15 : Chinese sample size by key stage and gender



In KS1, there were 40 children, with 25 boys ($M = 6.68$ years, $SD = 0.476$ years) and 15 girls ($M = 6.80$ years, $SD = 0.414$ years). There were 186 children in KS2, 95 of them were boys ($M = 9.46$ years, $SD = 1.287$ years) and 96 of them were girls ($M = 9.75$ years, $SD = 1.465$ years). In KS3, there were 71 children, including 30 boys ($M = 11.97$ years, $SD = 0.183$ years) and 41 girls ($M = 11.95$ years, $SD = 0.156$ years).

Figure 3.16 shows the Chinese sample size by year group and gender for each Key Stage, which offers a more complete picture of the distribution of the sample.

Figure 3.16: Chinese sample size by year group and gender in each Key Stage

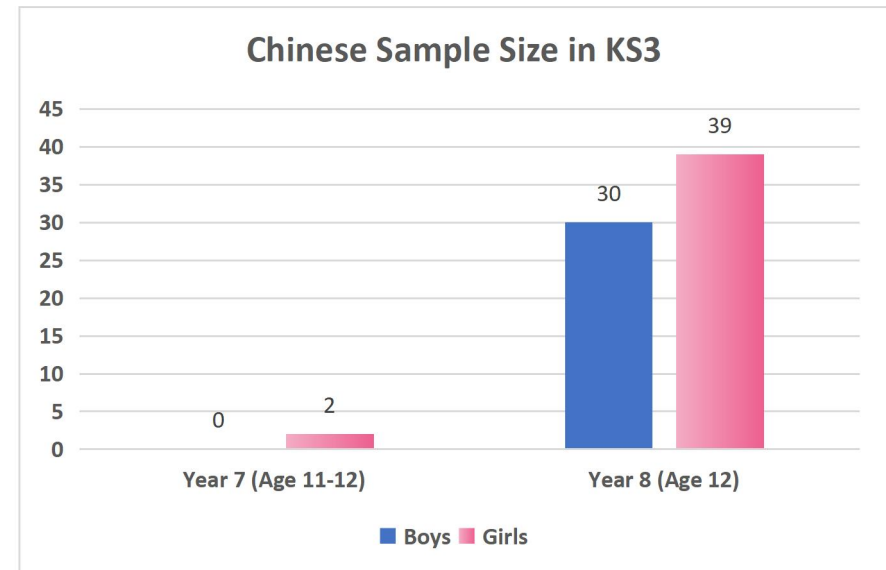
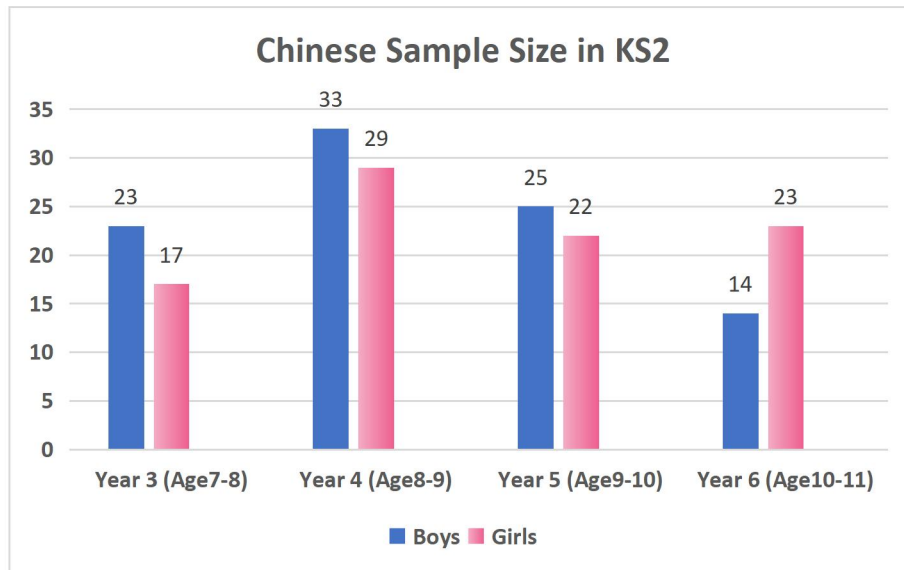
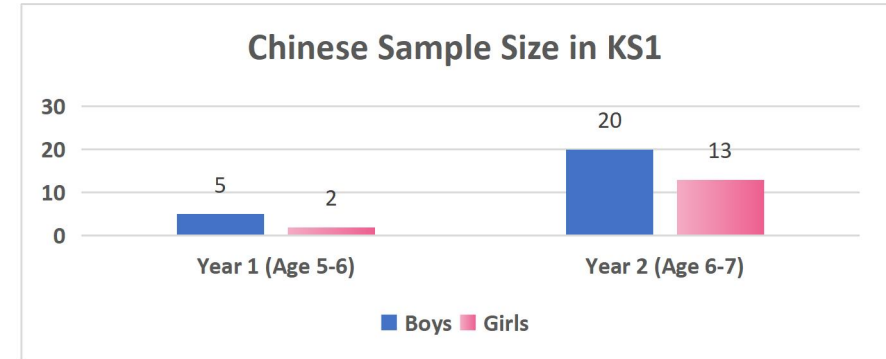
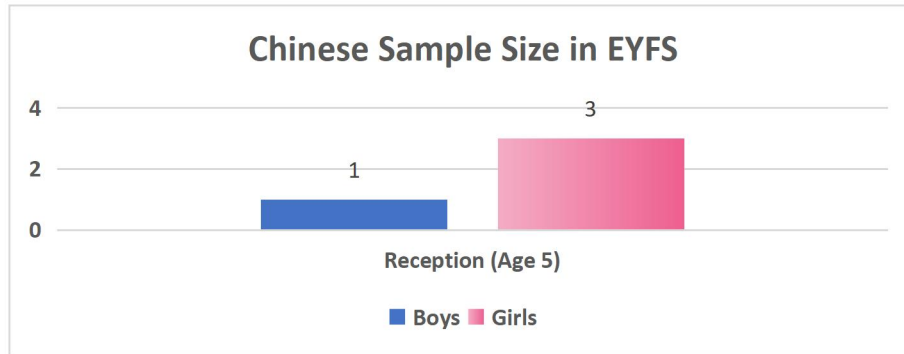


Table 3.17: Preferences for fiction and non-fiction of Chinese children in EYFS, KS1, KS2 and KS3

Genre	EYFE (Age 5)		Key Stage 1 (Age 5-7)		Key Stage 2 (Age 7-11)		Key Stage 3 (Age 11-12)	
	Boy(n=1)	Girls(n=3)	Boys(n=27)	Girls(n=13)	Boys(n=108)	Girls (n=78)	Boys (n=13)	Girls(n=58)
Fiction	3.33	3.66	3.67	3.46	3.59	3.72	3.23	3.21
Non-Fiction	3.33	3.11	3.18	3.15	3.46	3.70	3.24	2.99

Table: 3.18: Genre preferences of Chinese children in EYFS, KS1, KS2, and KS3

Genre	EYFE (Age 5)		Key Stage 1 (Age 5-7)		Key Stage 2 (Age 7-11)		Key Stage 3 (Age 11-12)	
	Boy(n=1)	Girls(n=3)	Boys(n=25)	Girls (n=15)	Boys (n=95)	Girls (n=91)	Boys (n=30)	Girls (n=41)
Adventure	4.00	3.33	3.92	3.67	3.88	3.90	3.43	3.37
Fantasy	2.00	4.00	3.84	3.33	3.59	3.79	3.20	3.51
FairyTales/Folktales/ Legend/Myth/Fable	4.00	4.00	3.84	3.80	3.80	4.21	3.73	3.46
Comics/Graphic Novels/Manga	4.00	3.33	3.52	3.93	3.87	4.08	3.37	3.05
Mystery	4.00	4.00	3.76	3.13	3.67	3.69	3.30	3.29
Humour	4.00	3.33	3.72	3.53	4.03	4.13	3.10	3.54
Horror					3.26	3.17	2.80	3.07
Romance					(*n=73) 2.70	(*n=71) 2.77	2.37	2.68
Historical Fiction	4.00	3.33	3.44	3.20	3.68	3.76	3.40	3.27
Realistic Fiction	2.00	3.33	3.16	3.07	3.35	3.69	3.03	2.90
Science Fiction	3.00	4.33	4.04	3.80	3.87	3.76	3.77	3.17
Biography	2.00	2.33	3.16	3.20	3.49	3.67	3.37	3.24
How to Manual	5.00	3.67	3.36	3.27	3.44	4.12	3.13	3.22
Education	3.00	3.67	3.08	3.07	3.48	3.76	3.27	3.15
Science&Technology	4.00	4.33	3.84	3.67	3.84	3.96	3.47	2.88
Sports	4.00	3.00	3.32	3.13	3.71	3.69	3.53	2.76
Religion	2.00	1.67	2.32	2.53	2.71	2.98	2.67	2.73
Poetry	5.00	3.67	3.40	3.47	3.81	4.14	3.43	3.22

3.2.2.1 Gender differences in Chinese children's reading interests

Table 3.17 shows Chinese children's preferences for fiction and non-fiction. Table 3.18 demonstrates Chinese children's preferences for each sub-genre. It can be seen from Figure 3.15 and Figure 3.16, there were only 4 children in EYFS, therefore only those in KS1, KS2 and KS3 were further analyzed.

3.2.2.1.1 KS1 Chinese children's preferences for fiction and non-Fiction

To examine if there are gender differences in Chinese children's interest in fiction and non-fiction, an independent samples t-test was performed. Results indicated that there was no significant difference in fiction between boys and girls in KS1 ($t(38) = 1.104$, $p = 0.277$). Data also revealed that there was no significant difference in non-fiction between boys and girls in KS1 ($t(38) = 0.145$, $p = 0.885$).

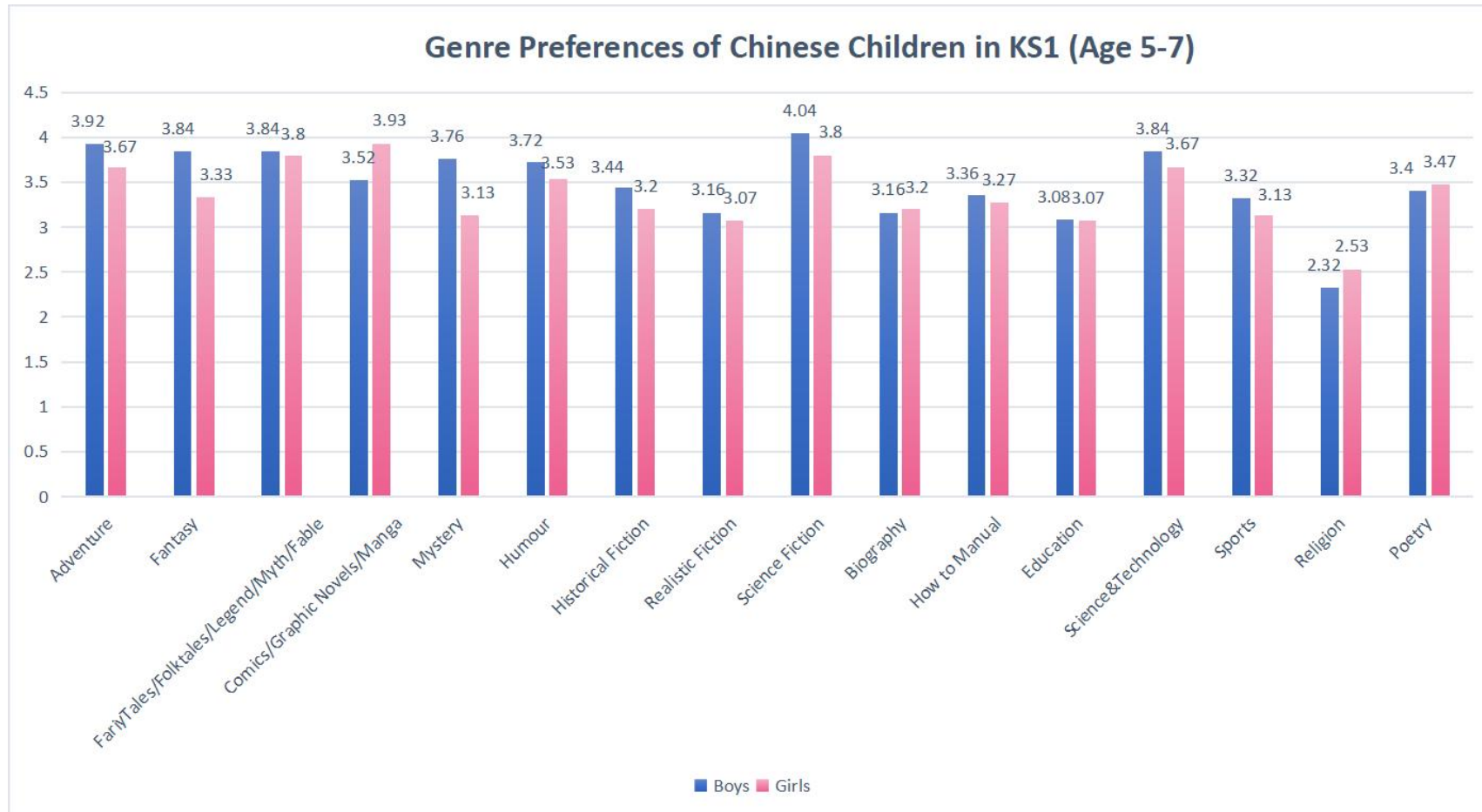
3.2.2.1.2 KS1 Chinese children's preferences for each sub-genre

When examining children's preferences in each sub-genre, results (see Figure 3.19) showed that the top two most popular genres for Chinese boys in KS1 were science fiction and adventure. Fantasy, fairy tales/folktale/legend/myth/fable, and science&technology shared the third place. This was followed by mystery, humour, comics/graphic novels/ manga, historical fiction, poetry, how to manual, sports, biography/autobiography/memoir, and education. Religion was the least favoured genre.

The most preferred popular genres among Chinese girls in KS1 were comics/graphic novel/manga. Fairy tales/folktale/legend/myth/fable and science fiction tied for the second place. Adventure and science&technology shared the third position. This was followed by humour, poetry, how to manual, historical fiction, biography/autobiography/memoir, mystery, sports, realistic fiction, education. Again, religion was among the least popular genre.

An independent samples t-test was conducted to examine gender differences in sub-genre preferences of KS1 Chinese children. Surprisingly, no significant gender differences have been found in each of the genre.

Figure 3.19: Genre preferences of Chinese children in KS1 (Age 5-7)



3.2.2.1.3 KS2 Chinese children's preferences for fiction and non-fiction

An independent samples t-test was adopted to see if there are gender differences in KS2 Chinese children's preferences for fiction and non-fiction. Results indicated that there was no significant difference in fiction between Chinese boys and Chinese girls in KS2, $t(15) = -0.917$, $p = 0.454$. There was no significant difference in non-fiction between Chinese boys and Chinese girls in KS2, $t(15) = -1.262$, $p = 0.226$, either.

3.2.2.1.4 KS2 Chinese children's preferences for each sub-genre

Figure 3.20 shows KS2 Chinese children's genre preferences of the 18 sub-genres. The top ten popular genres by KS2 Chinese boys were humour, adventure, comics/graphic novel/manga, science fiction, science & technology, poetry, fairy tales/folktale/legend/myth/fable, sports, historical fiction, mystery. Following, were fantasy, biography/autobiography/memoir and education, how to manual. Same as previous, realistic fiction was the least favoured genre.

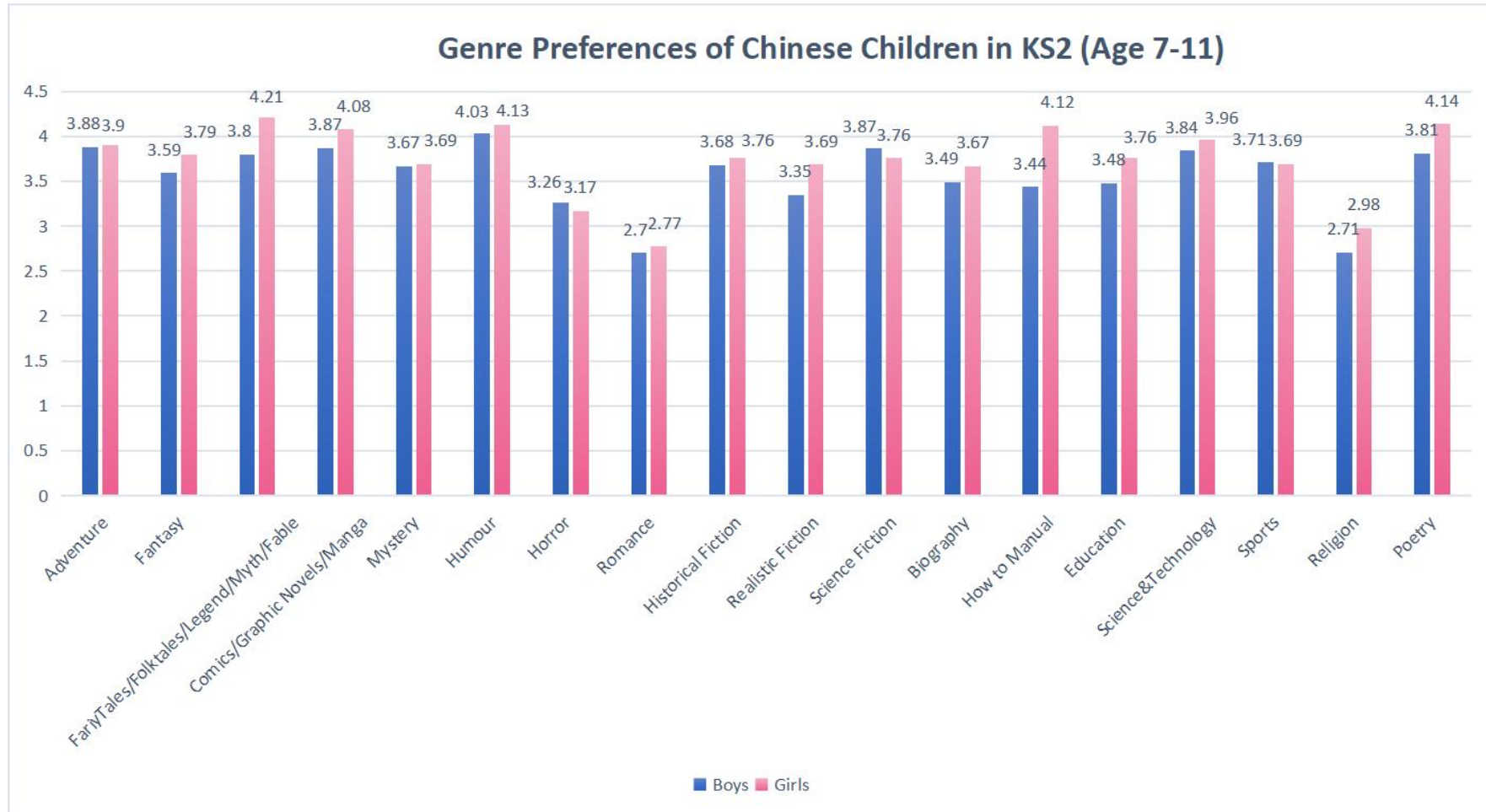
Chinese Girls in KS2 enjoyed fairy tales/folktale/legend/myth/fable most. Then, followed by poetry, humour, how to manual, comics/graphic novel/manga, science & technology, adventure, science fiction, fantasy, historical fiction, education, mystery, sports, realistic fiction, biography/autobiography/memoir, horror, religion. This time, romance was among the least popular genre.

An independent samples t-test was performed to examine gender differences in preferences for each genre of KS2 Chinese children. In terms of fictional genres, there was significant difference in fairy tales/folktale/legend/myth/fable between Chinese boys and Chinese girls, $t(184) = -3.239$, $p = 0.001$, indicating that Chinese girls in KS2 were more likely than Chinese boys in KS2 to read books about fairy tales/folktale/legend/myth/fable. A significant difference has also been found between Chinese boys and Chinese girls in KS2 in realistic fiction, $t(184) = -2.412$, $p = 0.017$, suggesting that KS2 Chinese girls enjoyed realistic fiction more than KS2 Chinese

boys.

For non-fiction genres, significant differences have been shown between KS2 Chinese boys and KS2 Chinese girl in how to manuals, $t(184) = -5.175, p = 0.000$, education, $t(184) = -2.135, p = 0.034$, and poetry, $t(184) = -2.581, p = 0.01$. These results suggested that in KS2, Chinese girls liked how to manuals, education as well as poetry than Chinese boys.

Figure 3.20: Genre preferences of Chinese children in KS2 (Age 7-11)



3.2.2.1.5 KS3 Chinese children's preferences for fiction and non-fiction

To examine if there differences between KS3 Chinese boys and KS3 Chinese girls in fiction and non-fiction, an independent samples t-test was used. Consists with KS1 and KS2, results suggested that there was no significant difference in fiction between Chinese boys and Chinese girls in KS3, $t(69) = 0.096, p = 0.924$. There was no significant difference in non-fiction between Chinese boys and Chinese girls in KS2, $t(69) = 1353, p = 0.181$.

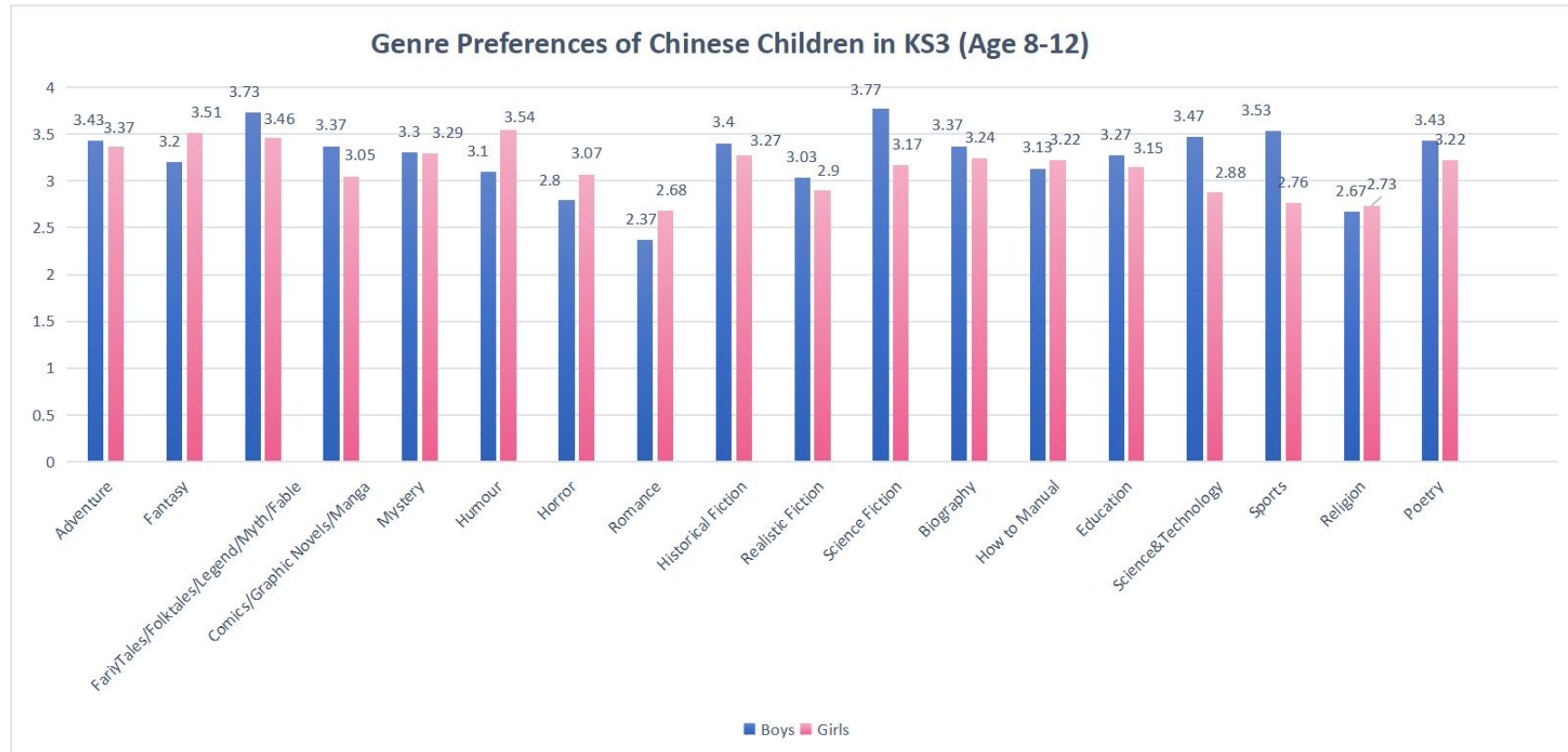
3.2.2.1.6 KS3 Chinese children's preferences for each sub-genre

Figure 3.21 shows KS3 Chinese children's genre preferences of the 18 sub-genres. For boys in KS3, the popular genres were science fiction, fairy tales/folktale/legend/myth/fable, sports, science & technology, adventure, historical fiction and poetry. Religion and romance were the least favoured genre. The top ten popular genres by KS3 Chinese girls were humour, fantasy, fairy tales/folktale/legend/myth/fable, adventure, mystery, biography/autobiography/memoir, poetry, how to manual, science fiction and education. Romance and religion were among the most least favoured genres.

An independent samples t-test was performed to examine gender differences in preferences for each genre of KS3 Chinese children. When it comes to fictional genres, there was significant difference science fiction between KS3 Chinese boys and KS3 Chinese girls, $t(69) = 2.477, p = 0.016$, indicating that Chinese boys in KS3 were more likely than Chinese girls in KS3 to read books about science fiction.

For non-fiction genres, a significant difference has also been found between Chinese boys and Chinese girls in KS3 science & technology, $t(69) = 2.337, p = 0.022$, suggesting that KS3 Chinese boys enjoyed books about science & technology more than KS3 Chinese girls. There was a significant difference in sports as well between KS3 Chinese boys and KS3 Chinese girls, implying Chinese boys in KS3 were more likely than Chinese girls in KS3 to read books about sports.

Figure 3.21: Genre preferences of Chinese children in KS3 (Age 8-12)



3.2.2.2 Age differences in Chinese children's reading interests

Results from figure 3.19, figure 3.20 and figure 3.21 indicated that for Chinese children, increasing maturity brings an increase in interest in some kinds of reading materials and a decrease in interest in other genres.

One-way ANOVA has been conducted to examine the age differences in Chinese children's preferences for make-believe/imaginative genres and realistic genres. According to Table 3.22, significant differences have only been found in fairy science fiction, $F(5.877,1) = 6.442$, $p = 0.012$, and how to manual, $F(12.826, 1) = 13.053$, $p=0.00$, suggesting that there was no movement away from the make-believe genre to a more realistic genre as children grow older.

Table 3.22: Chinese children's preferences for make-believe/imaginative genres and realistic genres(KS1 & KS2& KS3)

Genres		Sums of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
*Make-believe Genres						
Adventure	Between groups	0.386	1	0.386	0.472	0.492
	Within groups	241.116	295	0.817		
	Total	241.502	296			
Humour	Between groups	0.922	1	0.922	1.017	0.314
	Within groups	267.26	295	0.906		
	Total	268.182	296			
Fantasy	Between groups	0.954	1	0.954	0.92	0.338
	Within groups	305.74	295	1.036		
	Total	306.694	296			
Comics/Graphic/Novel/Manga	Between groups	0.287	1	0.287	0.276	0.599
	Within groups	306.265	295	1.038		
	Total	306.552	296			
Fairy Tales/Folktale/Legend/Myth /Fable	Between groups	2.042	1	2.042	2.528	0.113
	Within groups	238.348	295	0.808		
	Total	240.391	296			
Mystery	Between groups	0.595	1	0.595	0.585	0.445
	Within groups	300.24	295	1.018		
	Total	300.835	296			
*Realistic genres						
Science & Technology	Between groups	1.472	1	1.472	1.442	0.231
	Within groups	301.255	295	1.021		
	Total	302.727	296			
Science fiction	Between groups	5.877	1	5.877	6.442	0.012
	Within groups	269.16	295	0.912		
	Total	275.037	296			
Realistic fiction	Between groups	1.78	1	1.78	1.751	0.187
	Within groups	299.884	295	1.017		
	Total	301.663	296			
How to Manuals	Between groups	12.826	1	12.826	13.053	0
	Within groups	289.867	295	0.983		
	Total	302.694	296			

3.2.2.3 Cultural differences in reading interests between Chinese children and British children

When examining cultural differences in children's reading interests between the UK and China, results indicated that only British boys in Key Stage 2 (KS2, ages 7–11) showed a greater preference for non-fiction than girls, $t(172) = 0.970$, $p = 0.035$. However, in other key stages, in both the UK and China, there were no significant differences between boys' and girls' preferences for non-fiction, and no significant differences between boys' and girls' preferences for fiction. Overall, these findings suggest that no consistent cultural differences in reading interests were found between children in the UK and China.

Another similarity in the reading interests of British and Chinese children was that, in both the UK and China, adventure, humour, fairy tales/folktale/legend/myth/fable, fantasy, comics /graphic novel/manga and science fiction were favoured by both genders, whereas romance and religion were the least favoured genres.

Furthermore, results suggested that in both the UK and China, increasing maturity was associated with an increase in some genres and a decrease in others. There was no evidence of a shift from make-believe genres to more realistic genres as children grew older.

3.2.2.4 Chinese children's reading interests, play interests, vocational interests and parents' careers

When considering the perfect match between British children's reading interests, play interests, and vocational interests, 28 percent of Chinese children's reading interests were matched with their play interests and vocational interests. This suggests that there were no meaningful relationships between Chinese children's reading interests, play interests, and vocational interests.

Regarding the perfect match between Chinese children's reading interests, play interests, vocational interests and their parents' careers, only 14 percent of cases showed a perfect alignment. This suggests that parents' careers had no impact on children's reading interests, play interests, and vocational interests in China.

Figure 3.23: The possible associations between Chinese children's reading interests, play interests, vocational interests, and parents' careers

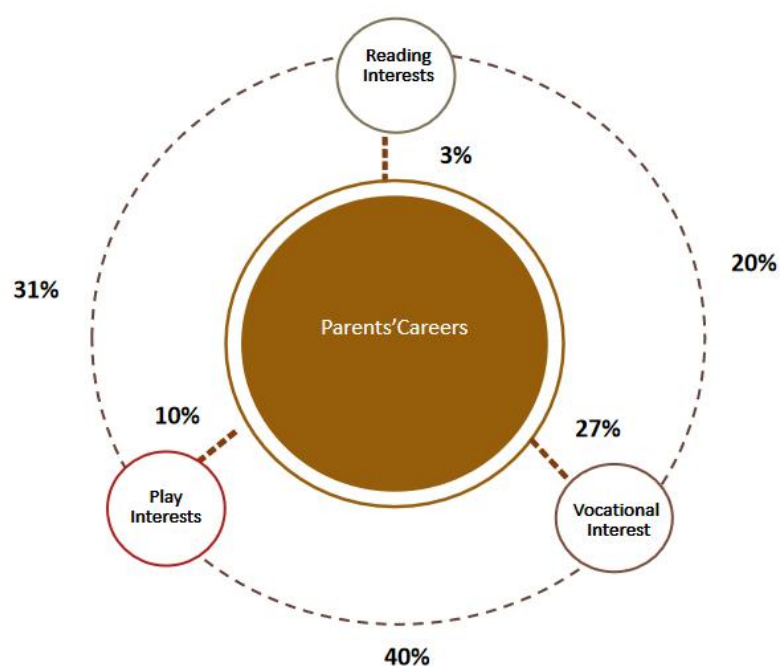


Figure 3.23 illustrates the associations between Chinese children's reading interests, play interests, vocational interests, and parents' careers. Results suggested that 31 percent of Chinese children's reading interests were related to their play interests, while only 20 percent matched their vocational interests. Forty percent of Chinese children's play interests matched their vocational interests. Only 3 percent of children's reading interests were aligned with parents' careers, and only 10 percent of children's play interests were associated with parents' jobs. Furthermore, 27 percent of children's vocational interests matched parents' careers. These results were broadly similar to the findings from the UK study, suggesting that there were no meaningful relationships between children's reading interests, play interests, vocational interests. Moreover, parents' careers appeared to have no impact on children's reading interests, play interests, or future vocational aspirations.

3.3 Initial discussion of Study One

Section 3.3 summarizes the main findings and provides an initial discussion of Study One.

3.3.1 Study overview

3.3.1.1 Gender differences and gender similarities in children's reading interests

The primary purpose of Study One was to explore gender, age and cultural differences in reading interests of children aged 5 to 12 (from the start of compulsory schooling to the end of primary education and the beginning of secondary education in both the UK and China). Based on previous studies, the gender prediction was that boys would prefer non-fiction, while girls would prefer fiction in both countries.

A surprisingly finding from this study was that only British boys in Key Stage 2 (KS2, ages 7-11) showed a greater preference for non-fiction than girls. However, in other key stages, in both the UK and China, there were no significant differences between boys' and girls' preferences for either fiction or non-fiction, suggesting that boys had no marked preferences for non-fiction, and girls had no marked preferences for fiction.

Thus, this study joins the burgeoning body of research that contrasts with much stereotyping about boys and non-fiction as well as girls and fiction (Merga, 2017; Scholes, 2021; Scholes, Spina & Comber, 2021; Coles & Hall, 2002; Williams, 2008; Scholes, 2021). These findings imply that the variety of books read by boys (especially fiction) and girls (especially non-fiction) may have previously been underestimated.

This may be explained by the increasing availability of books, which has resulted in a greater diversity of both fiction and non-fiction books for children to choose from (Merga, 2017). Another explanation may lie in preferences associated with age. Research has shown that increasing maturity is associated with an increase in some types of reading materials and a decrease in others (Norvell, 1958; Moss & McDonald; Clark & Osborne 2008). Therefore, it is understandable that children enjoy both fiction and non-fiction. This may also be due to the mainstream acceptability of masculine fictional heroes, like Harry Potter, which attract both boys and girls to engage more with these books (Merga, 2017).

When considering similarities in reading interests between boys and girls, interestingly, results revealed that among the responses to different genres, poetry was favoured by both boys and girls in both the UK and China. Although a great deal of research has shown that poetry was generally not preferred by either gender (Chiu, 1984; Kimmins, 1986; Seegers, 1936; Snellman, 1993; Stanchfield, 1962), our findings were consistent with Sturm's study (2003), which found that poetry was flavoured by both American boys and girls. A possible explanation is that, in this study, poetry stood itself as a genre, which was included in one of the big categories.

Another interesting finding was the high ranking of humour. Humour often ranked as among the top three genres, and for British boys in KS2 and Chinese girls in KS3, humour ranked the first position. This ranking is markedly higher than what humour has achieved in the past. In earlier studies, few children reported a preference for

humor (Grant & White, 1925; McCarty, 1950). However, since the mid-20th century, humor has become popular among boys and girls (Bank, 1986; Whittemore, 1992; Simpson, 1996). In more recent studies, humor usually ranked within the top five preferences (Coles & Hall, 2002; Clark & Foster, 2005; Majid, 2018) . These findings imply that humour has become a popular genre by both genders with societal development, which may be due to the increasing availability of books about humour that appeal to children's reading tastes. The high ranking of humour in this study may also reflect the fact that children read for pleasure, and humour is a genre that intended to amuse, make smile or laugh, thereby providing enjoyments and happiness.

Another surprising finding was the low ranking of sports. Many studies have indicated that sports is one of the popular genres, particularly among boys (Simpson, 1996; Boraks, Hoffman & Bauer, 1997; Coles & Hall, 2002; Doiron, 2003; Majid & Tan, 2007 ; Loh, Sun & Majid, 2020). However, in this study, sports ranked relatively low, and surprisingly, sports was the least favoured genre among British girls in both KS1 and KS2. This may be due to the fact that, compare to reading books about sports, children prefer engaging in actual sports activities.

Regarding the least favoured genre, consistent with many previous studies (Bank, 1986; Chiu, 1984; Lauritzen & Cheves, 1974; Mitchell, 1993; Seegers, 1936; Whittemore, 1992), our study also indicated that religion was the least popular genre among both genders.

3.3.1.2 Age differences in children's reading interests

Regarding age differences in children's reading interests, results from both the UK study and Chinese studies confirmed our hypothesis that increasing maturity brings an increase in some genres and a decrease in others. These results are consistent with prior research demonstrating that children's reading interests shift with increasing maturity. For example, Lauritzen & Cheves (1974) classified the reading interests of 881 American children aged 7 to 12 and observed that interest in mystery increased

with age. Similarly, in the UK, Coles & Hall (1999) examined 8,000 children aged 7, 10, 12, and 14, finding that 7-year-olds predominantly read books about animal characters, while children from age 8 showed greater interest in science, mystery, sports, and history. Clark & Osborne (2008) also reported age-related trends, noting that secondary school children demonstrated stronger interest in romance compared with primary school children.

Another age-related prediction in this study was that as children mature, their reading interests also develop, with genre preferences shifting from a focus on make-believe (fantasy, fairy tales, folktale, legend, myth or fable) to a more realistic perspective of the world. For instance, Purves & Beach (1972) reported that younger children tend to prefer make-believe stories, particularly fantasy, whereas older children increasingly favour realistic literature, including realist fiction, historical fiction, and non-fiction. Similarly, Boraks, Hoffman, & Bauer (1997) surveyed 315 American school children in grades 3 to 5 and found that third and fourth graders predominantly read fantasy, while fifth graders exhibited stronger interest in realistic fiction.

However, results from one-way ANOVA revealed that there were no significant differences between younger children and older children in terms of their preferences for make-believe genres and realistic genres. As a result, the findings contradicted our prediction. This may be due to the age range of our sample. In our study, we compared the reading interests of British children in KS1 (aged 5-7) and KS2 (aged 7-11), and Chinese children in KS1 (aged 5-7) and KS2 (aged 7-11) and KS3 (aged 8-12). The age differences between these groups were relatively small. On the other hand, this may also be because children in our study were relatively young. As early as 1899, Vostrovsky conducted a pioneering study on children's reading interests in which she worked with 1,269 American children aged 9 to 19. Vostrovsky highlighted the significance of age sixteen, noting that from sixteen years old, both boys and girls showed a greater interest in reading a wider variety of books (Vostrovsky, 1899). Therefore, if older children had been included in our sample, the results might have

been different.

3.3.1.3 Cultural differences in children's reading interests

This study explored cultural differences in reading interests between British children and Chinese children. Interestingly, results from independent samples t-test revealed that only British boys in Key Stage 2 (KS2, ages 7-11) preferred non-fiction more than girls. In other Key Stages, both British and Chinese boys had no marked preferences for non-fiction, both British and Chinese girls had no marked preferences for fiction, suggesting that there were no significant differences between British children and Chinese children in terms of their preferences for fiction and non-fiction. Another similarity in reading interests was that, in both the UK and China, both boys and girls enjoyed reading books about adventure, humour, fairy tales/folktale/legend/myth/fable, fantasy, comics /graphic novel/manga and science fiction, while romance and religion were the least favoured genres. These findings are in line with previous research, indicating that, in contrast to gender and age, the influence of cultural background on children's reading interests is relatively minimal. Research has consistently suggested that, globally, boys tend to prefer non-fiction while girls tend to prefer fiction (OECD, 2011). Moreover, it is widely recognized that children's reading interests evolve with social age or maturity, with preferences shifting as children develop cognitively and socially (Greenburg, Gilbert & Frederick, 2006; Topping, 2015). As such, compared with gender and age, the possible influence of culture on children's reading interests appears limited. Several factors may help explain this. Despite cross-cultural differences in approaches to parental support for learning to read, parents in both the UK and China value reading highly, reflecting a shared understanding of the importance of reading for children's literacy language development, and overall outcomes (Xu & Gao, 2021; National Literacy Trust, 2025). Furthermore, research based on a collaborative project between the UK and China also highlighted that rather than making assumptions about children's interests, parents and practitioners engage with children's voices to create reading environments that encourage joint participation and enhance the enjoyment of parent-child shared

reading (Levy & Gao, 2026). These trends in parent-child reading may foster similarities in children's reading interests across the UK and China. Taken together, these findings suggest that universal developmental factors and similar family literacy practices may act as a determinants of children's reading interests than cultural context alone.

However, further cross-cultural research is still needed to explore this issue in greater depth, as Sabri, Sadeghian & Bahrak (2020) suggested that what children choose to read is strongly associated with cultural background. Moreover, research suggests that the ways in which children learn to read differ considerably between the UK and China, particularly in terms of instructional approaches and parental support for literacy development. According to Everson, Chang and Ross (2016), reading instruction in the UK mainly focuses on phonetic decoding through synthetic phonics, requiring children to learn phonemes. In contrast, literacy education in China places stronger emphasis on memorising characters, learning stroke order, and using Pinyin, with children expected to master around 3,000 characters in order to reach primary literacy (Dong, 2014). Furthermore, there are also differences in the ways in which parents support their children's reading in free time between the UK and China. Specifically, in the UK, parents focus on reading engagement and reading for pleasure, while Chinese parents emphasize academic development and skill acquisition (Clark, 2011; Clark and Rumbold, 2006; Clark and Phythian-Sence, 2008; Yang, 2016; Guangming Daily, 2023). These differences suggest that cultural and educational contexts may result in children's reading experience and influence their reading interests. Therefore, more comparative studies are required to better understand how cultural context interacts with gender, age, and parental support in influencing children's reading interests.

3.3.1.4 Children's reading interests, play interests, vocational interests, and parents' careers

Apart from children's reading interests, this study also aimed to explore the possible associations between children's reading interests, play interests and vocational interests. Edmunds & Bauserman (2006) referred to what children read related to other individual interests, and when when a child develops an interest in something, it would lead to an increase in behaviour related to that domain (Palmer, Dixon, & Archer, 2016). Therefore, it is reasonable to explore if there are correlations between children's reading interests, play interests and vocational interests. However, results in both UK and Chinese study suggested that there were no relationships between children's reading interests, play interests and vocational interests. Furthermore, this study investigated if parents' careers have an impact on children's reading interests, play interests and vocational interests. Based on previous research (Sabri, Sadeghian & Bahrak, 2020; Baroodly & Dobbs - Oates, 2011; Bennett, 2012), this study hypothesized that children's reading interests, play interests and vocational interests are influenced by parents' occupations. However, the results suggested that there no relationships between children's reading interests, play interests and vocational interests and parents' careers. This might be because every child is unique and may have different ideas, aptitudes, and capabilities from their parents. Given this, it seems reasonable that children's ideal careers differ from those of their parents. In addition, this might also be due to the relatively small sample size of our study. If we conducted a large-scale study, the findings may be different.

3.3.2 Strength of this study

This study explored reading interests of children aged 5 to 12 in both the UK and China. This was the first attempt to make a cross-sectional assessment of reading interests throughout the compulsory school, and it was a pioneering study to compare children's reading interests in two countries which are quite different in culture and educational system.

Although the results from this study did not show that there were relationships between children's reading interests, play interests, and vocational interests, as far as we know, it was the very first attempt to combine these areas and investigate the possible associations between them.

3.3.3 Limitations of this Study

3.3.3.1 Sample size

Considering it is difficult for children at a young age to complete the questionnaire, only parents were invited to participate in this study. Although it provided some insights of gender and age and cultural trends in children's reading interests, the results may be different if we ask children themselves to response the questions. In addition, there were very few children in EFYS in both the UK (only 14 children) and Chinese study (only 4) were involved in this study. As a result, the generalization of the study was not enough.

3.3.3.2 Research design

Another limitation of this study is that it employed a cross-sectional design, which prevented us from tracking changes in children's reading interests over time. Conducting longitudinal research would provide a more in-depth understanding of how children's reading interests develop across different age levels. It is hoped that future studies can expand on this work to obtain additional insights.

3.3.3.3 Genre categories

Any study of children's reading interests faces the challenge of overlapping genre categories, as most books are across-genre writing. For example, *Peter Pan* can be classified as either fantasy or adventure, books about religion can also be considered fiction. Thus, distinguishing between the types of genres is often difficult. To minimize this limitation in the presenting study, each genre was provided with a brief description and book titles were given. Nevertheless, the issue of overlapping categories still exists.

3.3.3.4 Administration

In this study, I used open-ended questions to ask children's play interests, vocational interest and parents' careers. Thus, it is hard to directly compare children's reading interests, play interests, vocational interest and parents' careers. However, after coding the data, calculating the percentages of how many children's reading interests, play interests, vocational interests, and parent' careers are matched was more available. Using percentage might not be the best way to examine the associations between this areas, therefore it is hope that a more effective approach can be introduced to rectify the method that I adopted in the presenting study.

3.3.3.5 Data analysis

This study explored cultural differences in reading interests between British and Chinese children. Independent-samples t-tests indicated that only British boys in Key Stage 2 (KS2, ages 7–11) showed a significantly preference for non-fiction than girls. In the other Key Stages, no significant gender differences were found in preferences for fiction or non-fiction in either country. Overall, the results did not provide clear evidence of cultural differences between British and Chinese children in their preferences for fiction and non-fiction.

Cross-cultural statistical comparisons were not conducted in the present study due to several methodological considerations. First, the grouping of children differed between the UK and China due to the limitations of sample size. In the UK, only data from children in KS1 and KS2 were further analysed, whereas in China the sample included children from KS1, KS2, and KS3. This resulted in non-equivalent age groupings across the two countries, which limited the validity of direct cross-cultural statistical comparisons. Second, the primary aim of this study was to examine gender and age differences in children's reading interests within each cultural context rather than to test cross-cultural effects statistically. For this reason, independent samples t-tests were used as a direct and appropriate method for comparing boys and girls within each group. Although more complex analyses, such as ANOVA, could allow

for the simultaneous examination of multiple factors including culture, age, and gender, such analyses would require more comparable grouping structures across samples. Future research could address these limitations by adopting more balanced age groupings across countries and applying more advanced statistical analyses, to enable clearer cross-cultural comparisons of children's reading interests.

On the other hand, in this study, children's reading interests, play interests, vocational aspirations, and parents' occupations were first coded using the Holland RIASEC Model, providing a consistent classification scheme across all domains. Each child's responses were assigned to one of the six RIASEC categories (Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, or Conventional) based on the dominant of their reading, play, and dream job, as well as parents' occupations. Following this, the proportion of children showing a "perfect match" across these domains was calculated by dividing the number of qualifying cases by the total sample size.

A "perfect match" was defined as a child's reading interest, play interest, vocational interest, and at least one parent's occupation all coded as the same categories (e.g. Artistic). To ensure the reliability and accuracy of coding, responses were read and recoded over multiple rounds, with ambiguous cases refined before final classification. This approach provided an initial, quantifiable measure of the degree to which children's reading interests, play interests, vocational interests and parents' occupations were aligned. Although the present study provides an initial exploration of alignments across these domains, future research would benefit from applying more sophisticated methodologies to more comprehensively capture the possible associations between children's reading, play interests, vocational interests and their parents' occupations.

3.3.4 Conclusion

This study draws attention to the potentially detrimental impact a continued insistence on a male preference for non-fiction and a female preference for fiction can have,

with a relationship between reading interests, reading achievement and school success (Scarborough and Dobrich,1994). Consistently directing boys toward non-fiction and girls toward fiction fosters the idea that this is a masculine or feminine standard, which may become self-fulfilling but possibly harmful rather than being responsive to a true gender-based preference. This study also filled the research gap by examining the emerging gender trends in children's reading interests, which suggested that boys may not prefer non-fiction over fiction, and girls may not prefer fiction over fiction. As such, this study offers parents, educators, practitioners and policy makers practical suggestions on how to shape children's love of reading and improve children's reading experiences by providing books that children want to read. Continuing to promote the myth that boys prefer non-fiction and girls prefer fiction will limit both boys' and girls' exposure to books (genres) that may appeal to them. Reading should be a pleasant journey where both boys and girls can enjoy fiction and non-fiction.

This study also paid attention to the possible relationships between children's reading interests, play interests, vocational interests, and parents' occupations. Although results did not confirm the associations between these variables, they imply that every child is unique and may have different ideas, aptitudes, and capabilities from their parents. As parents, caregivers and educators, we should value children for who they are, give them a voice and a platform to express what they aspire to, and support them in becoming who they want to be.

Chapter 4

Study Two: How parents can shape children's reading interests?

Having explored the emerging gender, age and cultural trends in children's reading interests, as well as examined the possible associations between children's reading interests, play interests and vocational interests in both the UK and China in Chapter 3, Chapter 4 reports on the second study that carried out for this dissertation, which aimed to explore how parents' perceptions of gender-appropriate behaviour and how these perceptions affect children's reading interests.

4.1 Methodology

Section 4.1 is the methodology section that explains the research design, participants, instruments, procedures, and data analysis of Study Two.

4.1.1 Design

A 4 (book topic: football, princess/doll, gymnastics, fairy tales) x 2 (the sex of character on book: male and female) design was used to explore parents' book recommendation behaviour for children, parents' book selection behaviour for children, and parents' perceptions of gender-neutral parenting and gender equality in both the UK and China.

4.1.2 Participants

4.1.2.1 The UK participants

In order to be eligible, Prolific participants needed to be residents of the UK and had a child between the ages of 5 and 12 at the time of baseline recruitment. We sampled UK participants on Prolific, balanced on gender (50% male and 50% female). The original study sample comprised 232 parents from England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. However, due to insufficient information, 4 responses to the questionnaire were excluded. As a result, the sample included 228 British parents

(male=114, female= 114) of children aged 5 to 12, as summarized in Figure 4.1 and Figure 4.2. Surveyed British children's age ranged from 5 to 12-years-old. The distribution of the 228 surveyed children was 112 boys (M =6.33 years, SD =1.98 years) and 116 girls (M =6.27 years, SD =1.85 years), as summarized in Figure 4.3.

Figure 4.1: Sample size of British parents by age and gender

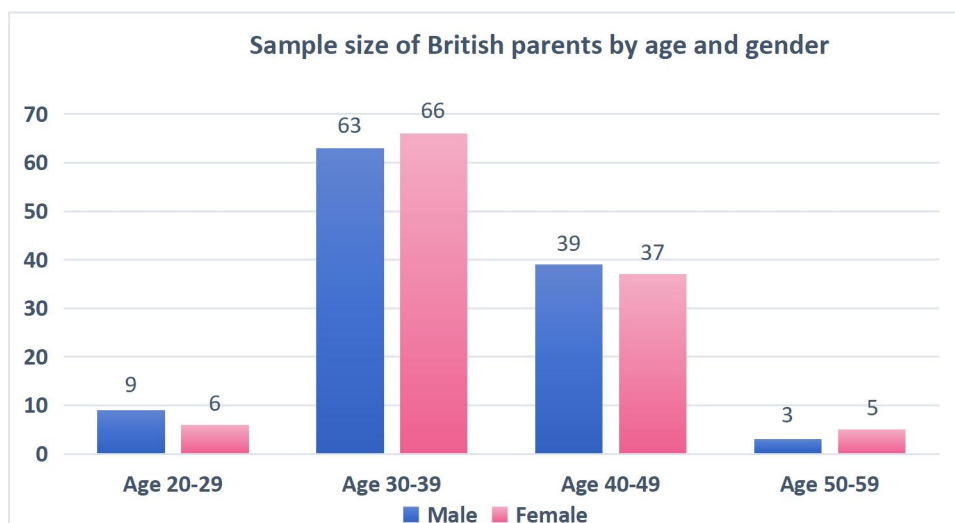


Figure 4.2: Sample size of British parents by education level and gender

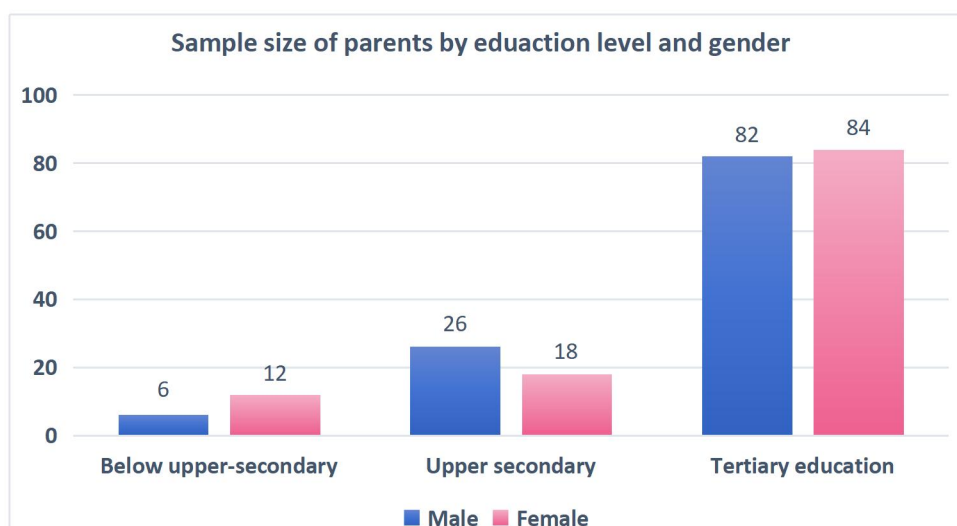
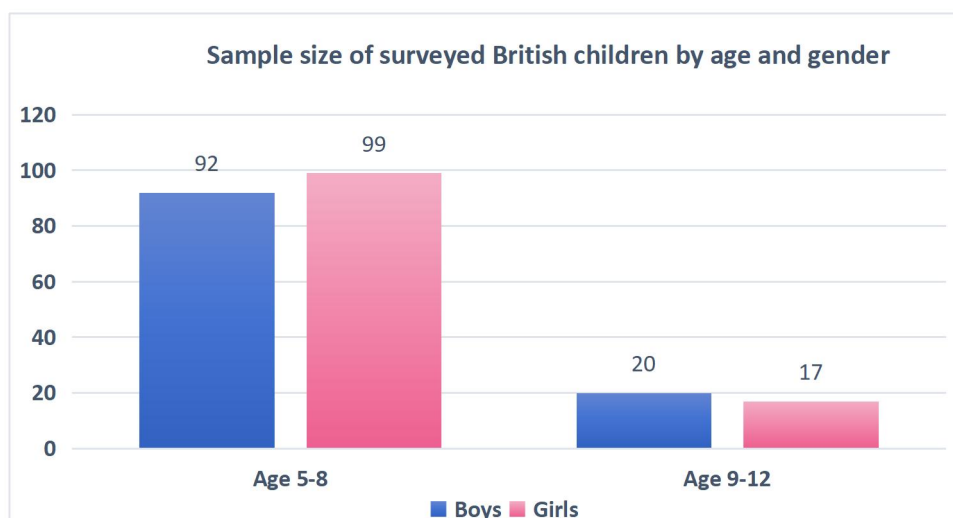


Figure 4.3: Sample size of surveyed British children by age and gender



4.1.2.2 The Chinese participants

Initially, 205 Chinese parents participated in this study. After removing data from those with incomplete questionnaires, 194 were ultimately included in the analysis. Of these participants, there were 63 males and 131 females, as summarized in Figure 4.4 and Figure 4.5. Surveyed Chinese children were aged 5 to 12, including 98 boys ($M = 9.23$ years, $SD = 2.44$ years) and 96 girls ($M = 9.41$ years, $SD = 2.44$ years), as summarized in Figure 4.6.

Figure 4.4: Sample size of Chinese parents by age and gender

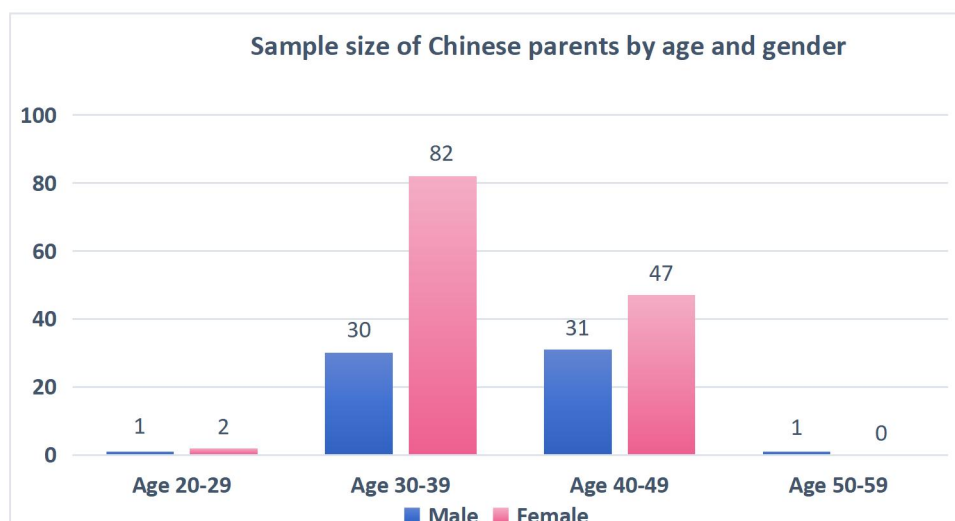


Figure 4.5: Sample size of Chinese parents by education level and gender

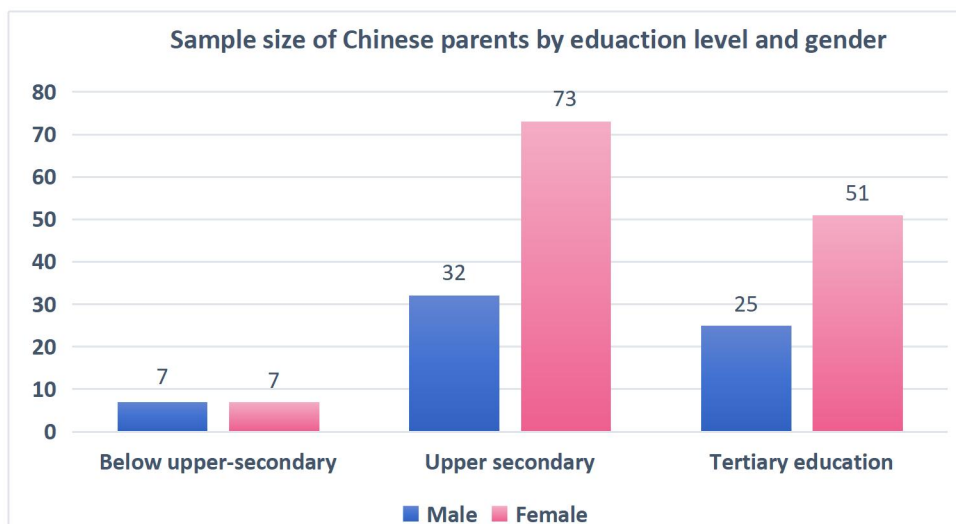
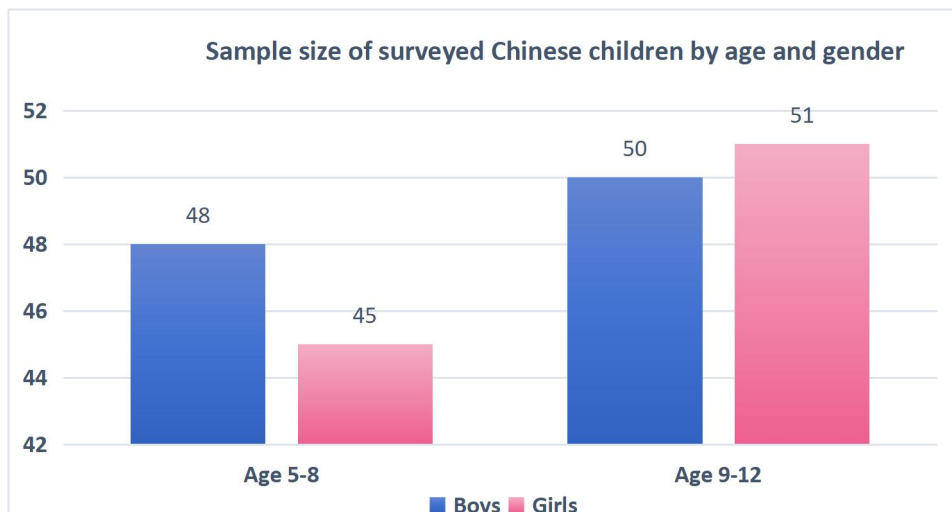


Figure 4.6: Sample size of surveyed Chinese children by age and gender



4.1.3 Instruments

This study distributed an online questionnaire to the participants on Prolific. The questionnaire ran on PsyToolkit (Stoet, 2010) and was designed to explore participants' (1) book recommendation behaviour for children, (2) book selection

behaviour for children, and (3) perceptions of gender-neutral parenting and gender equality. Specifically, parents' book recommendation behaviour for children relates to how parents perceive gender-appropriate reading materials for boys and girls. Parents' book selection behaviour for children relates to how parents perceive factors that are affecting their book selection behaviour for their children. Parents' perceptions of gender-neutral parenting and gender equality can reflect to what extent do today's parents raise children without gender stereotypes.

The online questionnaire included four sections:

Section 1 (including 6 questions) collected the demographic information about parents and their children (parents' gender, parents' age, parents' education level, children's gender, children's age and children's school year).

Section 2 (including 8 questions) provided 8 pictures of book cover. Parents were asked to indicate if they know these books and then rate how likely they are to recommend these books to their children. Each item was answered using a 5-point Likert scales, ranging from "Extremely Unlikely(1)", "Unlikely(2)", "Neither Likely or Unlikely(3)", "Likely(4)" to "Extremely Likely(5)". The questions of section2 were set up to measure parents' perceptions of gender appropriate reading materials for boys and girls.

Note that the UK online questionnaire and the Chinese online questionnaire were the same, except in Chinese online questionnaire, parents were asked to reply if they understand English, as books covers that we chosen contains English characters. Additionally, there were two versions of these 8 pictures of book covers. One was for children aged 5 to 8, the other was for children aged 9 -12. These 8 pictures of book covers could be divided into 4 subcategories by the topic of the book: football, princess/doll, gymnastics, fairy tales and into 2 subcategories by sex of character on book: male and female. These 8 pictures of book cover were ordered randomly. The 8

pictures of book covers are illustrated in Table 4.7 and Table 4.8

Section 3 (including 9 questions) was about parents' book selection behaviour for their child. Question 1 to question 7 were used to explore how parents perceive factors that are affecting their book selection behaviour for their children. Each item was answered using a 7-point Likert scales, ranging from Never to Every time. 1 was "Never", 2 was "Rarely", 3 was "Occasionally", 4 was "Sometimes", 5 was "Frequently", 6 was "Usually" and 7 was "Every time". Item with a higher score represented had a greater influence on parents' book selection behaviour for their children. Question 8 "*How much are the books your child prefers reading stereo-typically typed to his(her) gender?*" allowed us to know to what extent are books that children prefer to read typed to his or her gender. This question was also answered using a 7-point Likert scales, ranging from Never (1) to Every time (7). Question 9 "*How much do you feel pressured to choose books for your child that are gender stereotypical?*" enabled us to know to what extent do parents feel pressured to choose books for their children that are gender stereotypical. This question was also answered using a 7-point Likert scales, ranging from Never to Every time. However, the scores needed to be reversed, namely "Never" was 7, "Every time" was 1.

Section 4 (including 7 questions) was used to investigate parents' perceptions of gender-neutral parenting and gender equality. Each item was answered using a 5-point Likert scales, from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. 1 was "Strongly Disagree", 2 was "Disagree", 3 is "Neither Agree Nor Disagree", 4 was "Agree", and 5 was "Strongly Agree". Parents with higher total score of each item represented that they tended to use a gender-neutral parenting approach and valued gender equality more.

Table 4.7: Book covers for children aged 5-8


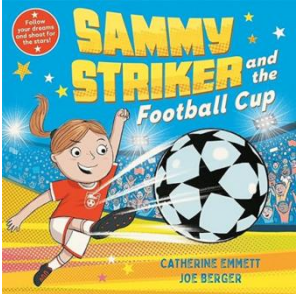

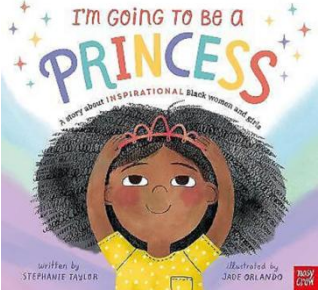
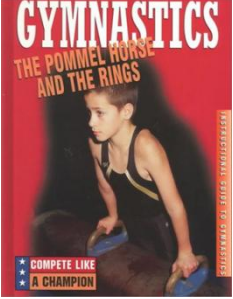
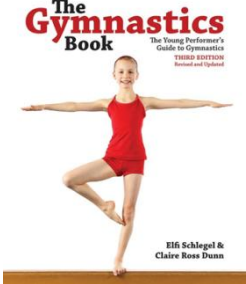

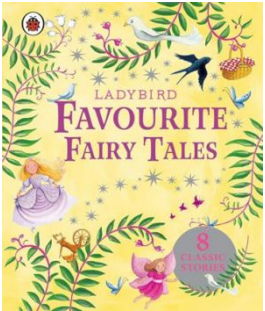
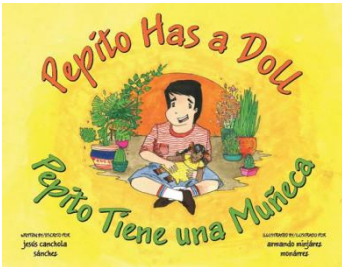
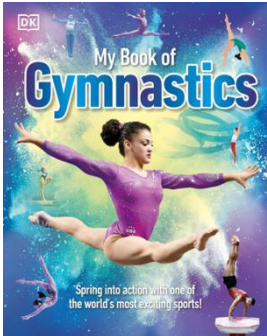
Book topic	Sex of character on book	
	Male	Female
Football		
Princess		
Gymnastics		
Fairy tales		

Table 4.8: Book covers for children aged 9-12

Book topic	Sex of character on book	
	Male	Female
Football		
Doll		
Gymnastics		
Fairy tales		

4.1.4 Procedure

4.1.4.1 The UK procedure

In the UK, only parents who have a child aged 5 to 12 were invited to participate in this study from Prolific. If parents have more than one child aged 5 to 12, they were asked to choose only one (the one they understand best) and then to complete the online questionnaire that ran on PsyToolkit (Stoet, 2010). After reading the information sheet online and given consent to this study, parents began to make responses to the online questionnaire.

4.1.4.2 The Chinese procedure

Similar to the UK study, parents in China were only allowed to participate in this study if their children were between the ages of 5 and 12. If they have more than one child aged 5 to 12, they were asked to select only one (the one they understand best) to answer the questionnaire. The Chinese parents were recruited from preschools and secondary schools with the approval of headmasters in mainland China. Parents have received the information sheet and consent to this study before they start the study. Once they read the instructions and give consent to this study, they began to complete the online questionnaire.

4.1.5 Data analysis

In order to answer research questions, a repeated measures ANOVA was conducted to examine how parents' perceptions of gender appropriate behaviour for boys and girls can shape children's reading interests.

4.2 Results

Section 4.2 presents the findings of Study Two, focusing on how parents' gender, children's gender and parents' education can impact on parents' rating of book covers: book topics (football, princess/doll, gymnastics, fairy tales) and the sex of characters on books (boy and girl). Parents' perceptions of gender-neutral parenting style and gender equality have also been taken into account.

4.2.1 The UK results

4.2.1.1 British parents' perceptions of gender-appropriate reading materials for boys and girls

4.2.1.1.1 British parents' ratings of book covers

Table 4.9 shows the descriptive data of British parents' mean ratings of book covers.

Table 4.9: British parents' mean ratings and SD of book covers

Book covers	Mean	SD	N
Football (Male)	3.24	1.20	228
Football (Female)	3.54	1.10	228
Princess/Doll(Male)	2.52	1.20	228
Princess/Doll(Female)	3.00	1.27	228
Gymnastics (Male)	2.33	1.10	228
Gymnastics (Female)	2.57	1.29	228
Fairy tales (Male)	2.86	1.17	228
Fairy tales (Female)	3.65	1.15	228

4.2.1.1.2 British parents' ratings of book topics and the sex of characters on books

A repeated measures ANOVA was conducted to examine the effect of parents' gender, children's gender and parents' education levels on parents' ratings of book covers: book topics (football, princess/doll, gymnastics, fairy tales) and the sex of characters on books (boy and girl).

The results from multivariate tests using Pillai's Trace as a test statistic appear in Table 4.10. The sphericity assumption was tested using Mauchly's test, which was significant $p < 0.001$ (see Table 4.11). Therefore, the degrees of freedom were corrected using the Greenhouse-Geisser method (see Table 4.12).

Regarding British parents' ratings of book topics, data from multivariate tests (Table 4.10) suggested that there was a significant main effect of British children's gender on British parents' ratings of book topics, $F(3, 214) = 12.924, p < 0.001$. We observed a significant interaction effect between British parents' gender and British parents'

education levels on British parents' ratings of book topics, $F(6, 430) = 3.158, p = 0.005$.

Regarding British parents' ratings of the sex of characters on books, table 4.12 revealed that there was a significant main effect of British parents' gender, $F(1, 226) = 9.504, p = 0.002$] on British parents' ratings of the sex of characters. The main effect of British children's gender on British parents' ratings of the sex of characters was also significant, $F(1, 226) = 55.453, p < 0.01$]. We found a significant interaction effect between British parents' gender and British parents' education levels on British parents' ratings of the sex of characters on books [$F(2, 216) = 4.934, p = 0.008$].

Table 4.10: Multivariate Tests

British parents' ratings of book covers, by parents' gender, children's gender and parents' education levels

Source		Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	P	Partial η^2
Topic*Parents' gender	Pillai's Trace	0.034	2.501	3	214	0.06	0.034
Topic*Children's gender	Pillai's Trace	0.153	12.924	3	214	0	0.153
Topic*Parents' education levels	Pillai's Trace	0.019	0.684	6	430	0.663	0.009
Topic*Parents' gender*Children's gender	Pillai's Trace	0.002	0.175	3	214	0.913	0.002
Topic*Parents' gender*Parents' education levels	Pillai's Trace	0.084	3.158	6	430	0.005	0.042
Topic*Children's gender*Parents' education levels	Pillai's Trace	0.017	0.615	6	430	0.719	0.009
Topic*Parents' gender*Children's gender*Parents' education levels	Pillai's Trace	0.005	0.182	6	430	0.982	0.003
Sex of character*Parents' gender	Pillai's Trace	0.042	9.504	1	216	0.002	0.042
Sex of character *Children's gender	Pillai's Trace	0.204	55.453	1	216	0	0.204
Sex of character *Parents' education levels	Pillai's Trace	0.021	2.339	2	216	0.099	0.021
Sex of character*Parents' gender*Children's gender	Pillai's Trace	0.006	1.269	1	216	0.261	0.006
Sex of character*Parents' gender*Parents' education levels	Pillai's Trace	0.044	4.934	2	216	0.008	0.044
Sex of character*Children's gender*Parents' education levels	Pillai's Trace	0.024	2.702	2	216	0.069	0.024
Sex of character*Parents' gender*Children's gender*Parents' education levels	Pillai's Trace	0.012	1.303	2	216	0.274	0.012

Table 4.11: Mauchly's Test of Sphericity
British parents' ratings of book covers, by parents' gender, children's gender and parents' education levels

Within Subjects Effect	Mauchly's W	Apptox. Chi-Square	df	p	Greenhouse-Geisser	Huynh-Feldt	Lower-bound
Topic	0.659	89.467	5	0.000	0.841	0.895	0.333
Sex of character	1.000	0.000	0		1.000	1.000	1.000
Topic* Sex of character	0.852	34.349	5	0.000	0.903	0.962	0.333

Table 4.12: Tests of Within-Subjects Effects
British parents' ratings of book covers, by parents' gender, children's gender and parents' education levels

Source	Type III Sums of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P	Partial η^2
Topic*Parents' gender	Greenhouse-Geisser 11.222	2.522	4.45	2.918	0.043	0.013
Topic*Children's gender	Greenhouse-Geisser 63.197	2.522	25.063	16.431	0.6	0.071
Topic*Parents' education levels	Greenhouse-Geisser 6.706	5.043	1.33	0.872	0.5	0.008
Topic*Parents' gender*Children's gender	Greenhouse-Geisser 0.905	2.522	0.359	0.235	0.839	0.001
Topic*Parents' gender*Parents' education levels	Greenhouse-Geisser 25.837	5.043	5.123	3.359	0.005	0.03
Topic*Children's gender*Parents' education levels	Greenhouse-Geisser 5.776	5.043	1.145	0.751	0.587	0.007
Topic*Parents' gender*Children's gender*Parents' education levels	Greenhouse-Geisser 1.119	5.043	0.222	0.145	0.982	0.001
Error (Topic)	Greenhouse-Geisser 830.792	544.658	1.525			
Sex of character*Parents' gender	Greenhouse-Geisser 6.527	1	6.527	9.504	0.002	0.042
Sex of character *Children's gender	Greenhouse-Geisser 38.082	1	38.082	55.453	0	0.204
Sex of character *Parents' education levels	Greenhouse-Geisser 3.213	2	1.606	2.339	0.099	0.021
Sex of character*Parents' gender*Children's gender	Greenhouse-Geisser 0.871	1	0.871	1.269	0.261	0.006
Sex of character*Parents' gender*Parents' education levels	Greenhouse-Geisser 6.776	2	3.388	4.934	0.008	0.044
Sex of character*Children's gender*Parents' education levels	Greenhouse-Geisser 3.712	2	1.856	2.702	0.069	0.024
Sex of character*Parents' gender*Children's gender*Parents' education levels	Greenhouse-Geisser 1.789	2	0.895	1.303	0.274	0.012
Error (Sex of character)	Greenhouse-Geisser 148.336	216	0.687			

Data from tests of within-subjects effects (Table 4.12) revealed that the main effect of British parents' gender on British parents' ratings of book topics was significant, $F(2.522, 544.658) = 2.918, p = 0.043$. However, data from multivariate tests indicated that the main effect of British parents' gender on British parents' ratings of book topics was not significant, $F(2.522, 544.658), 2.501, p = 0.06$. As multivariate tests provide a more robust and conservative evaluation of overall effects, the multivariate result was taken as the basis for interpretation, suggesting that there was no significant main effect of British parents' gender on British parents' ratings of book topics.

Accord with the results from multivariate tests, results from tests of within-subjects effects (Table 4.12) also suggested that the main effect of British children's gender on British parents' ratings of book topics was significant, $F(2.522, 544.658) = 16.431, p < 0.001$. The interaction effect between British parents' gender and British parents' education levels on British parents' ratings of book topics was significant, $F(5.043, 544.658) = 3.359, p = 0.005$.

In terms of British parents' ratings of the sex of characters on books, similar to the results from multivariate tests, results from within-subjects effects (Table 4.12) also confirmed that the main effect of British parents' gender on British parents' ratings of the sex of characters on books was significant, $F(1, 216) = 9.504, p = 0.002$. The main effect of British children's gender on British parents' ratings of the sex of characters on books was significant $F(1, 216) = 55.453, p < 0.001$. The interaction effect between British parents' gender and British parents' education levels on British parents' ratings of the sex of characters on books was significant, $F(2, 216) = 4.934, p = 0.008$.

4.2.1.1.2 British parents' ratings of book topics

To further examine the effect of British parents' gender, British children's gender and British parents' education levels on British parents' ratings of book topics, univariate tests were performed.

Results (see Table 4.13 and Table 4.14) indicated that the main effect of British parents' gender on British parents' ratings of football books was not significant, $F(1, 226) = 0.264, p = 0.608$. The main effect of British parents' gender on British parents' ratings of princess/doll books was not significant, $F(1, 226) = 3.636, p = 0.058$. The main effect of British parents' gender on British parents' ratings of gymnastics books, $F(1, 226) = 1.598, p = 0.208$ was not significant. The main effect of British parents' gender on parents' ratings of fairy tales was not significant, neither $F(1, 226) = 0.89, p = 0.347$, suggesting that British fathers and British mothers tended to have similar perceptions of football books, princess/doll books, gymnastics books and fairy tales.

Table 4.13: Univariate Tests
British parents' ratings of book topics, by parents' gender

Topic		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P	Partial η^2
Football	Contrast	0.259	1	0.259	0.264	0.608	0.001
	Error	211.789	216	0.981			
Princess/Doll	Contrast	3.539	1	3.539	3.636	0.058	0.017
	Error	210.209	216	0.973			
Gymnastics	Contrast	1.939	1	1.939	1.598	0.208	0.007
	Error	262.134	216	1.214			
Fairy tales	Contrast	0.734	1	0.734	0.89	0.347	0.004
	Error	178.192	216	0.825			

Table 4.14: Pairwise Comparisons
British parents' ratings of book topics, by parents' gender

Topic	(I) Parents' gender	(J) Parents' gender	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	p	95% Confidence Interval for Difference	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Football	Father	Mother	-0.105	0.204	0.608	-0.507	0.297
	Mother	Father	0.105	0.204	0.608	-0.297	0.507
Princess/Doll	Father	Mother	-0.387	0.203	0.058	-0.788	0.013
	Mother	Father	0.387	0.203	0.058	-0.013	0.788
Gymnastics	Father	Mother	0.287	0.227	0.208	-0.16	0.734
	Mother	Father	-0.287	0.227	0.208	-0.734	0.16
Fairy tales	Father	Mother	-0.176	0.187	0.347	-0.545	0.192
	Mother	Father	0.176	0.187	0.347	-0.192	0.545

When moving focus on children gender, results (see Table 4.15 and Table 4.16) indicated that British parents' ratings of football books for boys ($M=3.641$, $SD=0.141$) and girls ($M=2.909$, $SD=0.147$) were significantly different, $F(1, 216) = 12.92$, $p < 0.001$. British parents' ratings of books about princess/dolls for boys ($M=2.174$, $SD=0.14$) and girls ($M=2.948$, $SD=0.147$) were significantly different, $F(1, 216) = 14.54$, $p < 0.001$. British parents' ratings of fairy tales for boys ($M=2.8$, $SD=0.129$) and girls ($M=3.317$, $SD=0.135$) were significantly different, $F(1, 216) = 7.652$, $p = 0.006$. However, the differences between British parents' ratings of gymnastics books for boys ($M=2.186$, $SD=0.157$) and girls ($M=2.601$, $SD=0.164$) were not significant, $F(1, 216) = 3.347$, $p = 0.069$. This means British parents were more likely to recommend football books to boys than to girls. While British parents were more likely to recommend books about princess, dolls and fairy tales to girls than to boys. It is worth noting that despite British parents tended recommend football books to boys, British parents of girls gave a relatively higher rating score to football books, indicating that football books were also favoured by British parents of girls, although not as popular as fairy tales. Similarly, although British parents tended to recommend fairy tales to girls, fairy tales also received a higher rating score from British parents of boys, suggesting that British parents were happy to see boys reading fairy tales.

Table 4.15: Univariate Tests
British parents' ratings of book topics, by children's gender

Topic		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P	Partial η^2
Football	Contrast	12.668	1	12.668	12.92	0	0.056
	Error	211.789	216	0.981			
Princess/Doll	Contrast	14.15	1	14.15	14.54	0	0.063
	Error	210.209	216	0.973			
Gymnastics	Contrast	4.062	1	4.062	3.347	0.069	0.015
	Error	262.134	216	1.214			
Fairy tales	Contrast	6.312	1	6.312	7.652	0.006	0.034
	Error	178.192	216	0.825			

Table 4.16: Estimates
British parents' ratings of book topics, by children's gender

		95% Confidence Interval			
Children's gender	Topic	Mean	Std. Error	Lower Bound	Upper Bond
Boy	Football	3.641	0.141	3.364	3.919
	Princess/Doll	2.174	0.14	1.897	2.45
	Gymnastics	2.186	0.157	1.877	2.494
	Fairy tales	2.8	0.129	2.546	3.055
Girl	Football	2.909	0.147	2.618	3.199
	Princess/Doll	2.948	0.147	2.659	3.238
	Gymnastics	2.601	0.164	2.277	2.924
	Fairy tales	3.317	0.135	3.051	3.584

Pairwise comparisons using Bonferroni correction (see Table 4.17) have also revealed that there were no significant differences between British parents' ratings of gymnastics books for boys and girls ($p = 0.064$). In addition, British parents' ratings of football books, princess/doll books and fairy tales were significantly different depending on children's gender ($p < 0.01$). Moreover, the gap between British parents' ratings of books about princess or dolls for boys and girls was the biggest, followed by football books, fairy tales and gymnastics books. This means British parents were far more likely to recommend books about princess or dolls to girls than to boys, and British parents were far more likely to recommend football books to boys than to

girls.

Table 4.17: Pairwise Comparisons
British parents' ratings of book topics, by children's gender

Topic	(I)Children's gender	(J)Children's gender	Mean Difference (I-J)	95% Confidence Interval for Difference			
				Std. Error	p	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Football	Boy	Girl	0.733	0.204	0.000	0.331	1.135
Princess/Doll	Boy	Girl	-0.774	0.203	0.000	-1.175	-0.374
Gymnastics	Boy	Girl	-0.415	0.227	0.069	-0.862	0.032
Fairy tales	Boy	Girl	-0.517	0.187	0.006	-0.886	-0.149

Data from multivariate tests, $F(6, 430) = 0.684$, $p = 0.663$, and tests of within-subjects effects, $F(5.043, 544.658) = 0.872$, $p = 0.5$ (see Table 4.10 and Table 4.12) suggested that the main effect of British parents' education levels on British parents' ratings of book topics was not significant. However, data from univariate tests (Table 4.18) indicated that British parents' ratings of princess/doll books, $F(2, 216) = 3.447$, $p = 0.034$ and fairy tales $F(2, 216) = 4.437$, $p = 0.013$ varied depending on British parents' education levels. As multivariate tests are considered more robust in repeated measures ANOVA analyses, the multivariate results were used as the primary basis for interpretation. Therefore, overall, British parents' education levels did not have a significant effect on parents' ratings of book topics.

Table 4.19 indicated that British parents with an upper secondary degree gave a higher rating score to princess/doll books than parents with a below-upper secondary degree ($p = 0.042$). British parents with a tertiary degree also gave a higher rating score to princess/doll books than parents with a below-upper secondary degree ($p = 0.009$). Similarly, fairy tales also received a higher rating score from British parents with an upper secondary degree ($p = 0.04$) and British parents with a tertiary degree ($p = 0.004$) than British parents with a below-upper secondary degree. This means British parents with an upper secondary degree ($p = 0.04$) and British parents with a tertiary

degree ($p = 0.004$) were more likely than British parents with a below-upper secondary degree to recommend books about princess/ dolls and fairy tales to their children.

Table 4.18: Univariate Tests
British parents' ratings of book topics, by parents' education levels

Topic		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P	Partial η^2
Football	Contrast	2.533	2	1.267	1.292	0.277	0.012
	Error	211.789	216	0.981			
Princess/Doll	Contrast	6.709	2	3.355	3.447	0.034	0.031
	Error	210.209	216	0.973			
Gymnastics	Contrast	0.759	2	0.38	0.313	0.732	0.003
	Error	262.134	216	1.214			
Fairy tales	Contrast	7.321	2	3.66	4.437	0.013	0.039
	Error	178.192	216	0.825			

Regarding the interaction effect, both data from multivariate tests , $F(6, 430) = 3.158$, $p = 0.005$ and within-subjects tests, $F(5.043, 544.658) = 3.359$, $p = 0.005$, suggested that the interaction effect between British parents' gender and British parents' education levels on parents' ratings of book topics was significant. This means British parents' ratings of book topics varied depending on British parents' education levels. British parents with an upper secondary degree and British parents with a tertiary degree were more likely than parents with a below-upper secondary degree to recommend princess/ dolls books and fairy tales to their children.

Table 4.19: Pairwise Comparisons
British parents' ratings of book topics, by parents' education levels

Topics	(I)parents' education levels	(J) parents' education levels	Mean Difference (I-J)	95% Confidence Interval for Difference			
				Std. Error	p	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Football	Below upper-secondary	Upper-secondary	-0.085	0.296	0.775	-0.668	0.499
		Tertiary education	-0.303	0.264	0.253	-0.823	0.218
	Upper-secondary	Below upper-secondary	0.085	0.296	0.775	-0.499	0.668
		Tertiary education	-0.218	0.172	0.207	-0.558	0.121
	Tertiary education	Below upper-secondary	0.303	0.264	0.253	-0.218	0.823
		Upper-secondary	0.218	0.172	0.207	-0.121	0.558
Princess/doll	Below upper-secondary	Upper-secondary	-0.603	0.295	0.042	-1.184	-0.022
		Tertiary education	-0.689	0.263	0.009	-1.208	-0.171
	Upper-secondary	Below upper-secondary	0.603	0.295	0.042	0.022	1.184
		Tertiary education	-0.086	0.172	0.615	-0.425	0.252
	Tertiary education	Below upper-secondary	0.689	0.263	0.009	0.171	1.208
		Upper-secondary	0.086	0.172	0.615	-0.252	0.425
Gymnastics	Below upper-secondary	Upper-secondary	-0.116	0.329	0.726	-0.765	0.533
		Tertiary education	-0.204	0.294	0.487	-0.784	0.375
	Upper-secondary	Below upper-secondary	0.116	0.329	0.726	-0.533	0.765
		Tertiary education	-0.089	0.192	0.644	-0.466	0.289
	Tertiary education	Below upper-secondary	0.204	0.294	0.487	-0.375	0.784
		Upper-secondary	0.089	0.192	0.644	-0.289	0.466
Fairy tales	Below upper-secondary	Upper-secondary	-0.561	0.271	0.04	-1.096	-0.026
		Tertiary education	-.709	0.242	0.004	-1.186	-0.231
	Upper-secondary	Below upper-secondary	0.561	0.271	0.04	0.026	1.096
		Tertiary education	-0.148	0.158	0.351	-0.459	0.164
	Tertiary education	Below upper-secondary	0.709	0.242	0.004	0.231	1.186
		Upper-secondary	0.148	0.158	0.351	-0.164	0.459

4.2.1.1.3 British parents' ratings of the sex of characters on books

Univariate tests were conducted to further examine the main effect of British parents' gender, British children's gender and British parents' education levels on British parents' ratings of the sex of characters on books.

When performing multivariate tests, we found a significant main effect of British parents' gender, $F(1, 226) = 9.504, p = 0.002$, on British parents' ratings of the sex of characters. However, results from univariate tests suggested that the effects of British parent's gender on British parents' ratings of both books with male characters, $F(1, 216) = 3.261, p = 0.072$, and books with female characters $F(1, 216) = 0.305, p = 0.581$, were not significant (see Table 4.20). Similarly, results from pairwise comparisons also suggested that there were no significant differences between British fathers' and British mothers' ratings of both books with male characters and books with female character (see Table 4.21). The multivariate results were then taken as the main criterion because multivariate statistics provide a more conservative and reliable evaluation of effects in repeated-measures ANOVA designs. As a result, the effect of British parents' gender on British parents' ratings of the sex of characters was significant.

Table 4.20: Univariate Tests

British parents' ratings of the sex of characters on books, by parent's gender

Sex of character		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P	Partial η^2
Male	Contrast	1.868	1	1.868	3.261	0.072	0.015
	Error	123.731	216	0.573			
Female	Contrast	0.193	1	0.193	0.305	0.581	0.001
	Error	136.817	216	0.633			

Table 4.21: Pairwise Comparisons

British parents' ratings of the sex of characters on books, by parents' gender

Sex of character	(I)Parents' gender	(J)Parents' gender	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	p	95% Confidence Interval for Difference	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Male	Father	Mother	-0.281	0.156	0.072	-0.588	0.026
Female	Father	Mother	0.091	0.164	0.581	-0.232	0.413

Univariate tests were also conducted to examine exactly how British children's gender influences British parents' ratings of the sex of characters on book covers. Results revealed that the main effect of British children's gender on British parents' ratings of books with female characters was significant $F(1, 216) = 17.87, p < 0.001$. Whereas the main effect of British children's gender on British parents' ratings of books with male characters was not significant $F(1, 216) = 1.743, p = 0.188$ (see Table 4.22), suggesting that overall, the main effect of British children's gender on British parents' ratings of books with female characters was significant.

Table 4.22: Univariate Tests

British parents' ratings of the sex of characters on books, by children's gender

Sex of character		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P	Partial η^2
Male	Contrast	0.998	1	0.998	1.743	0.188	0.008
	Error	123.731	216	0.573			
Female	Contrast	11.319	1	11.319	17.870	0.000	0.076
	Error	136.817	216	0.633			

Data from British parents' mean ratings of the sex of characters on books have shown that British parents of boys gave a higher rating score to books with female characters ($M=2.716, SD= 0.113$) than books with male characters ($M=2.648, SD= 0.108$) (see Table 4.23). This was probably due to the topics we chose for this study. As books

about princesses, dolls, gymnastics and fairy tales are usually stereo-typically typed to female characters, parents then chose these books to their children.

Table 4.23: Estimates

British parents' ratings of the sex of characters on books, by children's gender

Children's gender	Sex of character	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bond
Boy	Male	2.684	0.108	2.472	2.896
	Female	2.716	0.113	2.493	2.939
Girl	Male	2.478	0.113	2.256	2.701
	Female	3.409	0.119	3.175	3.643

Table 4.24: Pairwise Comparisons

British parents' ratings of the sex of characters on books, by children's gender

Sex of character	(I)Children's gender	(J)Children's gender	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	p	95% Confidence Interval for Difference	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Male	Boy	Girl	0.206	0.156	0.188	-0.101	0.206
Female	Boy	Girl	-0.693	0.164	0.000	-1.016	-0.693

Pairwise comparisons using Bonferroni correction (see Table 4.24) have also suggested that British parents' ratings of books with female characters were significantly different by children's gender ($p < 0.001$). While British parents' ratings of books with male characters were not significantly different by children's gender ($p = 0.188$). This means British parents tended to choose books with female characters to girls than to boys. However, the difference between British parents of boys and parents of girls on the selections of books with male characters was not significant, suggesting parents were happy to see girls read books with male characters.

Despite data from multivariate tests $F(2, 216) = 2.339, p = 0.099$ and tests of within-subjects effects, $F(2, 216) = 2.339, p = 0.099$ (see Table 4.10 and Table 4.12) suggested that the main effect of British parents' education levels on British parents' ratings of the sex of characters on books was not significant. However, data from univariate tests (Table 4.25) revealed that the main effect of British parents' education levels on British parents' ratings of books with male characters was significant, $F(2, 216) = 3.913, p = 0.021$. Although Results from multivariate tests and tests of within-subjects effects were not significant, univariate analyses were conducted to explore differences across individual parent's education level, which indicated that British parents' ratings of the sex of characters on books varied depending on British parents' education levels.

Data from pairwise comparisons (Table 4.26) indicated that British parents with an upper secondary degree gave a higher rating score to books with male characters than British parents with a below-upper secondary degree ($p = 0.024$). British parents with a tertiary degree also gave a higher rating score to books with male characters than parents with a below-upper secondary degree ($p = 0.006$).

Regarding the interaction effect, as data from both multivariate tests and within-subjects effects suggested that the interaction effect between British parents' gender and British parents' education levels on parents' ratings of the sex of characters on books was significant $F(2, 216) = 4.934, p = 0.008$, suggesting that British parents' ratings of books with male characters varied depending on British parents' education levels. Parents with a higher education level were more likely than parents with a lower education level to recommend books with male characters to their children.

Table 4.25: Univariate Tests

British Parents' ratings of the sex of characters on books, by parents' education levels

Sex of character		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P	Partial η^2
Male	Contrast	4.483	2	2.241	3.913	0.021	0.035
	Error	123.731	216	0.573			
Female	Contrast	3.305	2	1.652	2.609	0.076	0.024
	Error	136.817	216	0.633			

Table 4.26: Pairwise Comparisons

British Parents' ratings of the sex of characters on books, by parents' education levels

Sex of characters	(I)parents' education levels	(J) parents' education levels	Mean Difference (I-J)	95% Confidence Interval for Difference			
				Std. Error	p	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Male	Below upper-secondary	Upper-secondary	-0.515	0.226	0.024	-0.961	-0.069
		Tertiary education	-0.565	0.202	0.006	-0.963	-0.167
	Upper-secondary	Below upper-secondary	0.515	0.226	0.024	0.069	0.961
		Tertiary education	-0.05	0.132	0.707	-0.309	0.21
	Tertiary education	Below upper-secondary	0.565	0.202	0.006	0.167	0.963
		Upper-secondary	0.05	0.132	0.707	-0.21	0.309
Female	Below upper-secondary	Upper-secondary	-0.167	0.238	0.483	-0.636	0.302
		Tertiary education	-0.388	0.212	0.069	-0.806	0.03
	Upper-secondary	Below upper-secondary	0.167	0.238	0.483	-0.302	0.636
		Tertiary education	-0.221	0.138	0.112	-0.494	0.052
	Tertiary education	Below upper-secondary	0.388	0.212	0.069	-0.03	0.806
		Upper-secondary	0.221	0.138	0.112	-0.052	0.494

4.2.1.1.4 Are British parents more likely to recommend books that they know to their children?

A Spearman's Rho correlation was used to examine whether British parents tend to recommend books that they know to their children. Data revealed weak positive significant results on book with male characters, $r_s(228) = 0.279$, $p < 0.001$, football

book with female characters $r_s(228) = 0.232, p < 0.001$, princess/doll book with female characters, $r_s(228) = 0.165, p = 0.013$, gymnastics book with male character $r_s(228) = 0.150, p = 0.023$, gymnastics book with male character, $r_s(228) = 0.165, p = 0.013$], fair tales with male character, $r_s(228) = 0.148, p = 0.026$], fair tales with female character $r_s(228) = 0.155, p = 0.019$. There was a positive no significant results on princess/doll book with male characters, $r_s(228) = 0.123, p = 0.064$. This means in general, British parents tended to recommend books that they know to their children, however, this correlation was very weak.

4.2.1.2 British parents' book selection behaviour for children

4.2.1.2.1 Factors that are affecting British parents' book selection behaviour for children

One of the goals of this study was to explore factors that influence parents' book selection behaviour for children. In order to explore factors that are affecting parents' book selection behaviour for their children, we asked parents to answer how much are the books they select for their children influenced by (1) online reviews, (2) grandparents, (3) friends with children of the same age, (4) other children, (5) teachers, (6) parents' friends and (7) children's gender.

Table 4.27 reports that in the UK, parents' mean ratings of the seven factors that influence parents' book selection behaviour for their children. The average score of each item revealed that teachers ($M=4.08, SD=1.34$) had the greatest effect on parents' book selection behaviour for children. This was followed by child's gender ($M=3.71, SD=1.64$), friends with children of the same age ($M=3.70, SD=1.30$), other children ($M=3.57, SD=1.34$), online review ($M=3.18, SD=1.43$), parents' friends ($M=3.04, SD=1.31$). Grandparents ($M=2.54, SD=1.30$) had the least impact on parents' book selection behaviour for children.

Table 4.27: British parents' mean ratings and SD of factors that affect parents' book selection behaviour for their children

Factors	Mean	SD	N
Online reviews	3.18	1.43	228
Grandparents	2.54	1.30	228
Friends with children of the same age	3.70	1.30	228
Other children	3.57	1.34	228
Parents' friends	3.04	1.31	228
Teachers	4.08	1.34	228
Child's gender	3.71	1.64	228

4.2.1.2.2 British parents' gender, children's gender, and factors that are affecting parents' book selection behaviour for children

A multivariate analysis was conducted to examine the effect of parents' gender and children's gender on parents' ratings of factors that influence parents' book selection behaviour for their children. The results of Pillai's trace as a test statistic appear in Table 4.28.

Results from Table 4.28 revealed that in the UK, the main effect of parents' gender on parents' ratings of factors that affect parents' book selection behaviour for children was significant, $F(7, 210) = 182.16, p < 0$. However, the main effect of children's gender on parents' ratings of factors that affect parents' book selection behaviour for children was not significant, $F(7, 210) = 0.842, p = 0.553$. The main effect of parents' education levels on parents' ratings of factors that affect parents' book selection behaviour for children was not significant, neither, $F(7, 210) = 0.842, p = 0.553$. We also observed a non-significant interaction effect between parents' gender and children's gender parents' ratings of the seven factors, $F(14, 422) = 1.69, p = 0.055$. A non-significant interaction effect between parents' gender and parents' education levels on parents' ratings of the seven factors, $F(14, 422) = 1.69, p = 0.055$. A non-significant interaction effect between children's gender and parents' education

levels on parents' ratings of the seven factors , $F(14, 422) = 0.896, p = 0.442$, and a non-significant interaction effect between parents' gender, children's gender and parents' education levels on parents' gender on parents' ratings of factors the seven factor, $F(14, 422) = 0.896, p = 0.563$.

Table 4.28: Multivariate Tests

British parents' ratings of factors that affect parents' book selection behaviour for their children, by parents' gender, children's gender and parent's education levels

Effect		Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	P	Partial η^2
Parents' gender	Pillai's Trace	0.859	182.160	7	210	0	0.859
Children's gender	Pillai's Trace	0.027	0.842	7	210	0.553	0.027
Parents' education levels	Pillai's Trace	0.013	0.387	7	210	0.909	0.013
Parents' gender*Children's gender	Pillai's Trace	0.106	1.69	14	422	0.055	0.053
Parents' gender*Parents' education levels	Pillai's Trace	0.014	0.441	7	210	0.876	0.014
Children's gender*Parents' education levels	Pillai's Trace	0.065	1.01	14	422	0.442	0.032
Parents' gender*Children's gender*Parents' education levels	Pillai's Trace	0.058	0.896	14	422	0.563	0.029

Univariate tests were used to further examine exactly how parents' gender, children's gender and parents' education levels influence parents' ratings of the seven factors that affect their book selection behaviour for children.

Despite data from multivariate tests have shown that the main effect of parents' gender on parents' ratings of factors that affect parents' book selection behaviour for children was significant, $F(7, 210) = 182.16, p < 0$ (see Table 4.28). However, results from tests of between-subject effects (see Table 4.29) indicated that there was no significant effect of parents' gender on each factor. Data from univariate tests and pairwise comparisons (see Table 4.30 and Table 4.31) also revealed that there was no significant effect of parents' gender on parents' ratings of each factor. It is worth noting that univariate analyses were conducted to explore differences across individual parent's gender, which indicated that British parents' gender has no effect

on British parents' ratings of factors that affect parents' book selection behaviour for children.

Table 4.29: Test of Between-Subjects Effect

British parents' ratings of factors that affect parents' book selection behaviour for their children, by parents' gender, children's gender and parent's education levels

Source	Dependent variables	Type III Sums of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P	Partial η^2
Parents' gender	Online reviews	4.045	1	4.045	1.998	0.159	0.009
	Grandparents	0.374	1	0.374	0.225	0.635	0.001
	Friends with children of the same age	0.609	1	0.609	0.361	0.549	0.002
	Other children	0.992	1	0.992	0.54	0.463	0.002
	Parents' friends	0.005	1	0.005	0.003	0.958	0
	Teachers	0.06	1	0.06	0.033	0.855	0
	Child's gender	2.1	1	2.1	0.78	0.378	0.004
Children's gender	Online reviews	0.182	1	0.182	0.09	0.764	0
	Grandparents	0.001	1	0.001	0.001	0.98	0
	Friends with children of the same age	0.912	1	0.912	0.54	0.463	0.002
	Other children	1.758	1	1.758	0.957	0.329	0.004
	Parents' friends	2.605	1	2.605	1.483	0.225	0.007
	Teachers	0.359	1	0.359	0.199	0.656	0.001
	Child's gender	1.523	1	1.523	0.566	0.453	0.003
Parents' education levels	Online reviews	7.794	2	3.897	1.925	0.148	0.018
	Grandparents	19.528	2	9.764	5.887	0.003	0.052
	Friends with children of the same age	4.366	2	2.183	1.292	0.277	0.012
	Other children	1.207	2	0.603	0.328	0.72	0.003
	Parents' friends	1.902	2	0.951	0.541	0.583	0.005
	Teachers	5.23	2	2.615	1.447	0.238	0.013
	Child's gender	14.42	2	7.21	2.68	0.071	0.024
Parents' gender * Children's gender	Online reviews	0.084	1	0.084	0.041	0.839	0
	Grandparents	0.506	1	0.506	0.305	0.581	0.001
	Friends with children of the same age	0.485	1	0.485	0.287	0.593	0.001
	Other children	1.226	1	1.226	0.667	0.415	0.003
	Parents' friends	0.14	1	0.14	0.08	0.778	0
	Teachers	1.623	1	1.623	0.898	0.344	0.004
	Child's gender	0.124	1	0.124	0.046	0.83	0

Table 4.29: Test of Between-Subjects Effect (Continued)
 British parents' ratings of factors that affect parents' book selection behaviour for their children,
 by parents' gender, children's gender and parent's education levels

Source	Dependent variables	Type III Sums of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P	Partial η^2
Parents' gender * Parents' Education levels	Online reviews	5.771	2	2.886	1.425	0.243	0.013
	Grandparents	2.465	2	1.233	0.743	0.477	0.007
	Friends with children of the same age	1.188	2	0.594	0.352	0.704	0.003
	Other children	0.339	2	0.17	0.092	0.912	0.001
	Parents' friends	1.601	2	0.8	0.456	0.635	0.004
	Teachers	4.631	2	2.316	1.281	0.28	0.012
	Child's gender	5.11	2	2.555	0.95	0.388	0.009
Children's gender*Parents' Education levels	Online reviews	2.661	2	1.331	0.657	0.519	0.006
	Grandparents	1.579	2	0.79	0.476	0.622	0.004
	Friends with children of the same age	1.793	2	0.896	0.531	0.589	0.005
	Other children	0.111	2	0.056	0.03	0.97	0
	Parents' friends	5.18	2	2.59	1.474	0.231	0.013
	Teachers	0.561	2	0.281	0.155	0.856	0.001
	Child's gender	2.264	2	1.132	0.421	0.657	0.004
Parents' gender * Children's gender*	Online reviews	4.92	2	2.46	1.215	0.299	0.011
	Grandparents	1.467	2	0.733	0.442	0.643	0.004
Parents' education levels	Friends with children of the same age	4.602	2	2.301	1.362	0.258	0.012
	Other children	1.719	2	0.859	0.468	0.627	0.004
	Parents' friends	0.227	2	0.114	0.065	0.937	0.001
	Teachers	0.375	2	0.187	0.104	0.902	0.001
	Child's gender	0.515	2	0.257	0.096	0.909	0.001

Table 4.30: Univariate Tests

British parents' ratings of factors that affect parents' book selection behaviour for their children,
by parents' gender

Sex of character		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P	Partial η^2
Online review	Contrast	4.045	1	4.045	1.998	0.159	0.009
	Error	437.331	216	2.025			
Grandparents	Contrast	0.374	1	0.374	0.225	0.635	0.001
	Error	358.244	216	1.659			
Friends with children of the same age	Contrast	0.609	1	0.609	0.361	0.549	0.002
	Error	364.874	216	1.689			
Other friends	Contrast	0.992	1	0.992	0.54	0.463	0.002
	Error	396.842	216	1.837			
Parents' friends	Contrast	0.005	1	0.005	0.003	0.958	0
	Error	379.473	216	1.757			
Teachers	Contrast	0.06	1	0.06	0.033	0.855	0
	Error	390.356	216	1.807			
Children's gender	Contrast	2.1	1	2.1	0.78	0.378	0.004
	Error	581.111	216	2.69			

Table 4.31: Pairwise Comparisons

British parents' ratings of factors that affect parents' book selection behaviour for their children,
by parents' gender

Dependent variable	(I)parents' gender	(J) parents' gender	95% Confidence Interval for Difference				
			Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	p	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Online reviews	Father	Mother	-0.414	0.293	0.159	-0.991	0.163
	Mother	Father	0.414	0.293	0.159	-0.163	0.991
Grandparents	Father	Mother	-0.126	0.265	0.635	-0.648	0.397
	Mother	Father	0.126	0.265	0.635	-0.397	0.648
Friends with children of the same age	Father	Mother	0.161	0.268	0.549	-0.367	0.688
	Mother	Father	-0.161	0.268	0.549	-0.688	0.367
Other children	Father	Mother	0.205	0.279	0.463	-0.345	0.755
	Mother	Father	-0.205	0.279	0.463	-0.755	0.345
Parents' friends	Father	Mother	-0.014	0.273	0.958	-0.552	0.524
	Mother	Father	0.014	0.273	0.958	-0.524	0.552
Teachers	Father	Mother	0.051	0.277	0.855	-0.495	0.596
	Mother	Father	-0.051	0.277	0.855	-0.596	0.495
Child's gender	Father	Mother	0.298	0.338	0.378	-0.367	0.964
	Mother	Father	-0.298	0.338	0.378	-0.964	0.367

Table 4.32: Univariate Tests

British parents' ratings of factors that affect parents' book selection behaviour for their children,
by children's gender

Sex of character		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P	Partial η^2
Online review	Contrast	0.182	1	0.182	0.09	0.764	0
	Error	437.331	216	2.025			
Grandparents	Contrast	0.001	1	0.001	0.001	0.98	0
	Error	358.244	216	1.659			
Friends with children of the same age	Contrast	0.912	1	0.912	0.54	0.463	0.002
	Error	364.874	216	1.689			
Other friends	Contrast	1.758	1	1.758	0.957	0.329	0.004
	Error	396.842	216	1.837			
Parents' friends	Contrast	2.605	1	2.605	1.483	0.225	0.007
	Error	379.473	216	1.757			
Teachers	Contrast	0.359	1	0.359	0.199	0.656	0.001
	Error	390.356	216	1.807			
Children's gender	Contrast	1.523	1	1.523	0.566	0.453	0.003
	Error	581.111	216	2.69			

Table 4.33: Pairwise Comparisons

British parents' ratings of factors that affect parents' book selection behaviour for their children,
by children's gender

Dependent variable	(I)parents' gender	(J) parents' gender	95% Confidence Interval for Difference				
			Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	p	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Online reviews	Boy	Girl	-0.088	0.293	0.764	-0.665	0.49
	Girl	Boy	0.088	0.293	0.764	-0.49	0.665
Grandparents	Boy	Girl	0.007	0.265	0.98	-0.516	0.529
	Girl	Boy	-0.007	0.265	0.98	-0.529	0.516
Friends with children of the same age	Boy	Girl	0.197	0.268	0.463	-0.331	0.724
	Girl	Boy	-0.197	0.268	0.463	-0.724	0.331
Other children	Boy	Girl	0.273	0.279	0.329	-0.277	0.823
	Girl	Boy	-0.273	0.279	0.329	-0.823	0.277
Parents' friends	Boy	Girl	0.332	0.273	0.225	-0.206	0.87
	Girl	Boy	-0.332	0.273	0.225	-0.87	0.206
Teachers	Boy	Girl	0.123	0.277	0.656	-0.422	0.669
	Girl	Boy	-0.123	0.277	0.656	-0.669	0.422
Child's gender	Boy	Girl	0.254	0.338	0.453	-0.412	0.92
	Girl	Boy	-0.254	0.338	0.453	-0.92	0.412

Accord with the results from multivariate tests, results from tests of between- subject effects has also indicated that there was no significant effect of children's gender on each factor. Results from univariate tests and pairwise comparisons (see Table 4.32 and Table 4.33) also indicated that there was no significant effect of children' gender on each factor. This means parents who have a son and parents who have a daughter had similar perceptions of factors that influence their book selection behaviour for children.

Table 4. 34: Univariate Tests

British parents' ratings of factors that affect parents' book selection behaviour for their children, by parents' education levels

Sex of character		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P	Partial η^2
Online review	Contrast	7.794	2	3.897	1.925	0.148	0.018
	Error	437.331	216	2.025			
Grandparents	Contrast	19.528	2	9.764	5.887	0.003	0.052
	Error	358.244	216	1.659			
Friends with children of the same age	Contrast	4.366	2	2.183	1.292	0.277	0.012
	Error	364.874	216	1.689			
Other friends	Contrast	1.207	2	0.603	0.328	0.72	0.003
	Error	396.842	216	1.837			
Parents' friends	Contrast	1.902	2	0.951	0.541	0.583	0.005
	Error	379.473	216	1.757			
Teachers	Contrast	5.23	2	2.615	1.447	0.238	0.013
	Error	390.356	216	1.807			
Child's gender	Contrast	14.42	2	7.21	2.68	0.071	0.024
	Error	581.111	216	2.69			

Despite results from multivariate tests suggested that the main effect of parents' education levels on parents' ratings of factors that affect parents' book selection behaviour for children was not significant, $F(7, 210) = 0.842, p = 0.553$. However, results from univariate tests (Table 4.34) revealed that the effect of parents' education levels on parents' rating of "grandparents" was significant, $F(2, 216) = 5.877, p = 0.003$.

To further examine the main effect of parents' education levels on parents' ratings of "grandparents", we applied the results from pairwise comparisons. Table 4.35 indicated that the ratings of "grandparents" between parents with a below upper secondary's degree and parents with a tertiary education's degree were statistically significant ($p = 0.003$). This means when selecting books for children, parents with a below upper-secondary degree were more likely than parents with tertiary education degree to be influenced by children's grandparents.

Table 4.35: Pairwise Comparisons

British parents' ratings of factors that affect parents' book selection behaviour for their children,
by parents' education levels

Dependent variable	(I)parents' education levels	(J) parents' education levels	Mean Difference (I-J)	95% Confidence Interval for Difference			
				Std. Error	p	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Online reviews	Below upper-secondary	Upper-secondary	0.45	0.425	0.874	-0.576	1.476
		Tertiary education	-0.034	0.38	1	-0.95	0.882
	Upper-secondary	Below upper-secondary	-0.45	0.425	0.874	-1.476	0.576
		Tertiary education	-0.484	0.248	0.156	-1.081	0.113
	Tertiary education	Below upper-secondary	0.034	0.38	1	-0.882	0.95
		Upper-secondary	0.484	0.248	0.156	-0.113	1.081
Grandparents	Below upper-secondary	Upper-secondary	0.396	0.385	0.914	-0.533	1.325
		Tertiary education	-0.36	0.343	0.886	-1.189	0.468
	Upper-secondary	Below upper-secondary	-0.396	0.385	0.914	-1.325	0.533
		Tertiary education	-.756*	0.224	0.003	-1.297	-0.216
	Tertiary education	Below upper-secondary	0.36	0.343	0.886	-0.468	1.189
		Upper-secondary	.756*	0.224	0.003	0.216	1.297
Friends with children of the same age	Below upper-secondary	Upper-secondary	0.009	0.388	1	-0.929	0.946
		Tertiary education	-0.315	0.347	1	-1.152	0.521
	Upper-secondary	Below upper-secondary	-0.009	0.388	1	-0.946	0.929
		Tertiary education	-0.324	0.226	0.46	-0.869	0.222
	Tertiary education	Below upper-secondary	0.315	0.347	1	-0.521	1.152
		Upper-secondary	0.324	0.226	0.46	-0.222	0.869
Other children	Below upper-secondary	Upper-secondary	-0.074	0.405	1	-1.051	0.903
		Tertiary education	-0.219	0.362	1	-1.091	0.654
	Upper-secondary	Below upper-secondary	0.074	0.405	1	-0.903	1.051
		Tertiary education	-0.145	0.236	1	-0.714	0.424
	Tertiary education	Below upper-secondary	0.219	0.362	1	-0.654	1.091
		Upper-secondary	0.145	0.236	1	-0.424	0.714
Parents' friends	Below upper-secondary	Upper-secondary	0.012	0.396	1	-0.944	0.967
		Tertiary education	-0.204	0.354	1	-1.057	0.649
	Upper-secondary	Below upper-secondary	-0.012	0.396	1	-0.967	0.944
		Tertiary education	-0.215	0.231	1	-0.772	0.341
	Tertiary education	Below upper-secondary	0.204	0.354	1	-0.649	1.057
		Upper-secondary	0.215	0.231	1	-0.341	0.772

Table 4.35: Pairwise Comparisons (continued)

British parents' ratings of factors that affect parents' book selection behaviour for their children,
by parents' education levels

Dependent variable	(I)parents' education levels	(J) parents' education levels	Mean Difference (I-J)	95% Confidence Interval for Difference			
				Std. Error	p	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Teachers	Below upper-secondary	Upper-secondary	0.144	0.402	1	-0.825	1.114
		Tertiary education	-0.239	0.359	1	-1.104	0.626
	Upper-secondary	Below upper-secondary	-0.144	0.402	1	-1.114	0.825
		Tertiary education	-0.383	0.234	0.308	-0.947	0.181
	Tertiary education	Below upper-secondary	0.239	0.359	1	-0.626	1.104
		Upper-secondary	0.383	0.234	0.308	-0.181	0.947
Children's gender	Below upper-secondary	Upper-secondary	0.947	0.49	0.164	-0.236	2.13
		Tertiary education	1.012	0.437	0.065	-0.043	2.068
	Upper-secondary	Below upper-secondary	-0.947	0.49	0.164	-2.13	0.236
		Tertiary education	0.065	0.285	1	-0.623	0.754
	Tertiary education	Below upper-secondary	-1.012	0.437	0.065	-2.068	0.043
		Upper-secondary	-0.065	0.285	1	-0.754	0.623

4.2.1.2.3 How much are books children prefer reading stereo-typically typed to their gender?

To better understand how gender stereotypical thinking of parents effect on parents book selection behaviour for their children,we asked parents two more questions as supplementary. The first question was “*How much are the books your child prefers reading stereo-typically typed to his(her) gender?*”

Table 4.36: Frequency of British parental response to the question

“*How much are the books your child prefers reading stereo-typically typed to his(her) gender?*”

Response	Frequency	Percent
Never	17	7.5%
Rarely	27	11.8%
Occasionally	38	16.7%
Sometimes	51	22.4%
Frequently	47	20.6%
Usually	43	18.9%
Every time	5	2.2%

When asked about how much books children prefer reading are stereo-typically typed to their gender, few parents reported “every time” (2.2%) and “never” (7.5%). Around a quarter of parents responded with “rarely” (11.8%). Most parents reported that books their children prefer reading “sometimes”(22.4%), “frequently”(20.6%), and “usually” (18.9%) typed to children’s gender (see Table 4.36). The results demonstrated that for the majority of time, boys prefer “boy’s books” and girls prefer “girls’ books”.

An univariate analysis was used to investigate the effect of parents’ gender and parents’ education levels on parents’ ratings of the question “*How much books children prefer reading are stereo-typically typed to their gender?*”. Descriptive data are shown in Table 4.37.

Table 4.37: Mean ratings of *British* parental responses to the question “*How much are the books your child prefers reading stereo-typically typed to his(her) gender?*” by parents’ gender and parents’ education levels

Parents' gender	Parents' education levels	Mean	Std. Error	N
Father	Below upper-secondary	5.50	1.225	6
	Upper-secondary	4.42	1.301	26
	Tertiary education	3.79	1.561	82
	Total	4.03	1.543	114
Mother	Below upper-secondary	5.00	1.477	12
	Upper-secondary	3.78	1.734	18
	Tertiary education	3.93	1.574	84
	Total	4.02	1.613	114

Table 4.38: Test of Between- Subjects Effects

British parental responses to the question
 “How much are the books your child prefers reading stereo-typically typed to his(her) gender?”
 by parents’ gender and parents’ education levels

Source	Type III Sums of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P	Partial η^2
Parents’ gender	2.768	1	2.768	1.164	0.282	0.005
Parents’ education levels	28.647	2	14.324	6.022	0.003	0.051
Parents’ gender * Parents’ education levels	6.01	2	3.005	1.263	0.285	0.011
Error	528.004	222	2.378		528.004	222

Results (Table 4.38) indicated that the main effect of parents’ gender on parental responses to the question of “how much books children prefer reading are stereo-typically typed to their gender” was not significant, $F(1, 222) = 1.164, p = 0.282$. While the main effect of parents’ education levels on parental responses to the question of “how much books children prefer reading are stereo-typically typed to their gender” was significant, $F(2, 222) = 6.022, p = 0.003$.

The interaction effect between parents’ gender and parents’ educations on parental responses to the question of “how much books children prefer reading are stereo-typically typed to their gender” was not significant, $F(2, 222) = 1.263, p = 0.285$.

Table 4.39: Pairwise comparisons
 British Parental responses to the question
“How much are the books your child prefers reading stereo-typically typed to his(her) gender?”
 by parents’ education levels

		95% Confidence Interval for Difference				
(I)parents’ education levels	(J) parents’ education levels	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	p	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Below upper-secondary	Upper-secondary	1.150	0.452	0.035	0.059	2.241
	Tertiary education	1.389	0.404	0.002	0.416	2.363
Upper-secondary	Below upper-secondary	-1.150	0.452	0.035	-2.241	-0.059
	Tertiary education	0.24	0.265	1	-0.399	0.879
Tertiary education	Below upper-secondary	-1.389	0.404	0.002	-2.363	-0.416
	Upper-secondary	-0.24	0.265	1	-0.879	0.399

Pairwise comparisons were performed to further explore the main effect of parents’ education levels on parental responses to the question of *“how much books children prefer reading are stereo-typically typed to their gender”*. Results from pairwise comparisons indicated that the ratings of the questions *“How much are the books your child prefers reading stereo-typically typed to his(her) gender”* by parents with a below upper-secondary degree and parents with a upper-secondary degree ($p = 0.035$) and with a tertiary education degree ($p = 0.002$) were significantly different. This means parents with a below upper-secondary’s degree were more likely than parents with a upper-secondary degree and parents with a tertiary education degree to report that books their children prefer reading are stereo-typically typed to children’ gender (see Table 4.39).

4.2.1.2.3 How much do you feel pressured to choose books for your child that are gender stereotypical?

The question *“how much do you feel pressured to choose books for your child that are gender stereotypical?”* was set up to explore to what extent are parents feel pressured to choose books for your child that are gender stereotypical. This question was also

answered using a 7-point Likert scales, ranging from Never to Every time. But the scores was reversed for accuracy, namely “Never” =7, “Every time”=1. Therefore, a higher score represents that parents are less likely to feel pressured to choose books that are gender stereotypical for their children.

Table 4.40: Frequency of British parental response to the question

“How much do you feel pressured to choose books for your child that are gender stereotypical?”

Response	Frequency	Percent
Never	99	43.4%
Rarely	56	24.6%
Occasionally	23	10.1%
Sometimes	27	11.8%
Frequently	14	6.1%
Usually	8	3.5%
Every time	1	0.4%

Table 4.40 suggested that very few parents reported that they “every time” (0.4%), “usually” (3.5%), and frequently (6.1%) felt pressured to choose books for their children that are gender stereotypical. Few parents responded with “sometimes”(11.8%) and “occasionally” (10.1%) A round a quarter of parents reported that they “rarely” (24.6%) felt pressured to choose books for their children that are gender stereotypical. Almost half of parents demonstrated that they “never” (43.4%) felt pressured to choose books for their children that are gender stereotypical. This means most parents tended to choose books that are gender stereotypical for children.

An univariate analysis was conducted to examine the effect of parents’ gender, children’s gender and parents’ education levels on parents’ perceptions of how much they feel pressured to choose books for their children that are gender stereotypical.

Table 4.41 indicated that the effect of parents’ gender, $F(1, 216) = 0.081, p = 0.777$, children’s gender, $F(1, 216) = 1.667, p = 0.198$, and parents’ education levels, $F(2,$

216) = 2.512, $p = 0.083$ on parents' perceptions of how much they feel pressured to choose books for their children was not significant.

We also found the interaction effect between parents' gender and children's gender, $F(1, 216) = 0.053$, $p = 0.819$, the interaction effect between parents' gender and parents' education levels, $F(2, 216) = 1.525$, $p = 0.22$, the interaction effect between children's gender and parents' education levels, $F(2, 216) = 0.027$, $p = 0.973$, and the interaction effect between parents' gender, children's gender and parents' education levels, $F(2, 216) = 0.057$, $p = 0.567$, were not significant. This means parents' ratings to the question "*how much do you feel pressured to choose books for your child that are gender stereotypical*" were not significantly influenced by parents' gender, children's gender and parents' education levels.

Table 4.41: Test of Between- Subjects Effects

British parental responses to the question
"How much do you feel pressured to choose books for your child that are gender stereotypical?"
 by parents' gender, children's gender and parents' education levels

Source	Type III Sums of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P	Partial η^2
Parents' gender	0.174	1	0.174	0.081	0.777	0
Children's gender	3.605	1	3.605	1.667	0.198	0.008
Parents' education levels	10.867	2	5.434	2.512	0.083	0.023
Parents'gender* Children's gender	0.114	1	0.114	0.053	0.819	0
Parents'gender* Parents' education levels	6.595	2	3.298	1.525	0.22	0.014
Children's gender* Parents' education levels	0.117	2	0.058	0.027	0.973	0
Parents' gender * Children's gender* Parents' education levels	2.463	2	1.232	0.57	0.567	0.005
Error	467.135	216	2.163			

4.2.3 British parents' perceptions on Gender-Neutral Parenting and gender equality

4.2.3.1 British parents' perceptions on Gender-Neutral Parenting

The question “*I am raising my child in a Gender-Neutral Parenting approach*” was set up to explore to what extent do parents adopt the Gender-Neutral Parenting approach to raise their children.

Table 4.42: Frequency of British parental response to the question
“I am raising my child in a Gender-Neutral Parenting approach”

Response	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	82	36.0%
Disagree	61	26.8%
Neither Agree Nor Disagree	44	19.3%
Agree	38	16.7%
Strongly Agree	3	1.3%

Table 4.42 demonstrates that only 3 parents reported they “strongly agree”(1.3%) with they are raising children in a Gender-Neutral Parenting approach. Few parents reported with “agree” (16.7%) and “neither agree nor disagree” (19.3%). Most parents replied with “strongly disagree” (36%) and “ disagree” (26.8%). This means most parents were raising children in a traditional parenting style.

Table 4.43: Test of Between- Subjects Effects
 British parental responses to the question
“I am raising my child in a Gender-Neutral Parenting approach”
 by parents’ gender, children’s gender and parents’ education levels

Source	Type III Sums of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P	Partial η^2
Parents’ gender	1.502	1	1.502	1.163	0.282	0.005
Children’s gender	4.501	1	4.501	3.485	0.063	0.016
Parents’ education levels	9.281	2	4.641	3.593	0.029	0.032
Parents’gender* Children’s gender	0.355	1	0.355	0.275	0.601	0.001
Parents’gender* Parents’ education levels	2.84	2	1.42	1.1	0.335	0.01
Children’s gender* Parents’ education levels	1.531	2	0.766	0.593	0.554	0.005
Parents’ gender * Children’s gender* Parents’ education levels	0.807	2	0.403	0.312	0.732	0.003
Error	278.971	216	1.292			

An univariate analysis was adopted to examine the effect of parents’ gender, children’s gender and parents’ education levels on parents’ perceptions of Gender-Neutral Parenting approach.

Results from tests of between-subjects effects (Table 4.48) indicated that the effect of parents’ gender on parents’ perceptions of Gender-Neutral Parenting approach was not significant, $F(1, 216) = 1.163, p = 0.28$. The effect of children’s gender on parents’ perceptions of Gender-Neutral Parenting approach was not significant, $F(1, 216) = 3.485, p = 0.063$. However, the effect of parents’ education levels on parents’ perceptions of Gender-Neutral Parenting approach was significant, $F(2, 216) = 3.593, p = 0.029$.

We found the interaction effect between parents’ gender and children’s gender on parents’ perceptions of Gender-Neutral Parenting approach was not significant, $F(1,$

216) = 0.275, $p = 0.601$. The interaction effect between parents' gender and parents' education levels on parents' perceptions of Gender-Neutral Parenting approach was not significant, $F(2, 216) = 1.1, p = 0.335$. The interact effect between children's gender and parents' education levels on parents' perceptions of Gender-Neutral Parenting approach was not significant, $F(2, 216) = 0.593, p = 0.554$. We also observed (see Table 4.43) a non-significant interaction effect between parents' gender, children's gender and parents' education levels on parents' perceptions of Gender-Neutral Parenting approach was not significant, $F(2, 216) = 0.312, p = 0.732$. To further examine the main effect of parents' education levels on parents' perceptions of Gender-Neutral Parenting approach, we we applied the results from pairwise caparisons.

Table 4.44: Pairwise comparisons
 British parental responses to the question
"I am raising my child in a Gender-Neutral Parenting approach"
 by parents' education levels

		95% Confidence Interval for Difference				
(I)parents' education levels	(J) parents' education levels	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	p	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Below upper-secondary	Upper-secondary	-0.126	0.34	1	-0.946	0.693
	Tertiary education	-0.556	0.303	0.203	-1.288	0.175
Upper-secondary	Below upper-secondary	0.126	0.34	1	-0.693	0.946
	Tertiary education	-0.43	0.198	0.092	-0.907	0.047
Tertiary education	Below upper-secondary	0.556	0.303	0.203	-0.175	1.288
	Upper-secondary	0.43	0.198	0.092	-0.047	0.907

Interestingly, despite results from univariate tests suggested that the main effect of parents' education levels on parents' perceptions of Gender-Neutral Parenting approach was significant [$F(2, 216) = 3.593, p = 0.029$]. However, results from pairwise caparisons indicated that the main effect of parents' education levels on parents' perceptions of Gender-Neutral Parenting approach was not significant (see Table 4.44). This suggests that the significant univariate effect does not translate into

meaningful differences between individual groups, and interpretation should therefore rely on the more conservative pairwise results. Therefore, that the main effect of parents' education levels on parents' perceptions of Gender-Neutral Parenting approach was not significant.

4.2.3.2 British parents' perceptions on gender equality

British parents' perceptions on "gender equality is important to me" and "gender equality is important to my child"

Table 4.45 revealed that most parents reported they "strongly agree"(44.3%) and "agree" (39.9%) with the statement "gender equality is important to me". Few parents reported they "strongly disagree"(3.5%) and "disagree" (3.1%) with this statement.

Regarding the statement "gender equality is important to my child", table 37 suggested that few parents demonstrated that they disagree"(10.1%) and "disagree" (3.9%) with this statement. 42.1% of parents reported they "neither agree nor disagree". 30.3% of parents and 13.6% parents reported they "agree" and "strongly agree" respectively. Hence, we could say parents tended to value gender equality towards both themselves and their children.

Table 4.45 : Frequency of British parental response to the question
“Gender equality is important to me” and “Gender equality is important to my child”

Response	Frequency	Percent
<i>Gender equality is important to me</i>		
Strongly Disagree	8	3.5%
Disagree	7	3.1%
Neither Agree Nor Disagree	21	9.2%
Agree	101	44.3%
Strongly Agree	91	39.9%
<i>Gender equality is important to my child</i>		
Strongly Disagree	9	3.9%
Disagree	23	10.1%
Neither Agree Nor Disagree	96	42.1%
Agree	69	30.3%
Strongly Agree	31	13.6%

Results from the Spearman’ s Rho correlation (see Table 4.46) suggested that there was a positive correlation between parents’ responses to the question *“Gender equality is important to my child”* and parents’ responses to the question *“Gender equality is important to my child”* ($r_s=0.562, p < 0.01$). This means parents who value gender equality toward themselves also value gender equality towards their children.

Table 4.46: Correlations

Correlations between British parental responses to *“Gender equality is important to me”* and *“Gender equality is important to my child”*

			Gender equality is important to me	Gender equality is important to my child
Spearman's rho	Gender is important to me	Correlation Coefficient	1.00	0.562**
		Sig. (2-tailed)		
	Gender equality is important to my child	Correlation Coefficient	0.562**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
		N	228	228

British parents' perceptions on ways that can be applied to promote gender equality

Table 4.47 displays the frequency of parents' ratings of ways that can be applied to promote gender equality. The item *"my child has the opportunity to choose the toys, books, activities and clothing that he/she feels suits him/her best, regardless of gender"* received most parents' supports (48.2 % of strongly agree and 42.5% of agree), suggesting that the from parents' perspectives, the most effective way to raise a child with gender equality was to give the child opportunity to choose the toys, books, activities and clothing that he (she) feels suits him (her) best, regardless of gender. It is also supported by parents that removing gender roles from household chores (25.4% of strongly agree and 43% of agree), using a Gender-Neutral Parenting approach (7.5% of strongly agree and 23.7% of agree) is helpful to gender equality. Whereas the item *"using language that avoids labeling gender is helpful to gender equality"* gain parents' least support (10.1% of strongly agree and 20.2% of agree).

Table 4.47 : Frequency of British parents' ratings of ways that can be applied to promote gender equality

Response	Frequency	Percent
<i>Removing gender roles from household chores is helpful for gender equality.</i>		
Strongly Disagree	11	4.8%
Disagree	15	6.6%
Neither Agree Nor Disagree	46	20.2%
Agree	98	43%
Strongly Agree	58	25.4%
<i>Using language that avoids labeling gender is helpful for gender equality.</i>		
Strongly Disagree	42	18.4%
Disagree	49	21.5%
Neither Agree Nor Disagree	68	29.8%
Agree	46	20.2%
Strongly Agree	23	10.1%
<i>My child has the opportunity to choose the toys, books, activities and clothing that he/she feels suits him/her best, regardless of gender.</i>		
Strongly Disagree	3	1.3%
Disagree	3	1.3%
Neither Agree Nor Disagree	15	6.6%
Agree	97	42.5%
Strongly Agree	110	48.2%
<i>A Gender-Neutral Parenting approach can avoid gendered stereotypes when raising my child, which in turn leads to gender equality.</i>		
Strongly Disagree	38	16.7%
Disagree	36	15.8%
Neither Agree Nor Disagree	83	36.4%
Agree	54	23.7%
Strongly Agree	17	7.5%

British parents' gender, children's gender, parents' education levels and parents' perceptions on gender equality

A multivariate analysis was used to explore the main effect of parents' gender, children's gender and parents' education levels on parents' perceptions on gender equality. The results of Pillai's Trace as a test statistic appear in Table 4.48.

Results from multivariate tests suggested that the effect of parents' education levels on parents' ratings of items that are related to gender equality was significant, $F(12, 424) = 2.183, p = 0.012$. However, the main effect of parents' gender on parents' ratings of items that are related to gender equality was not significant, $F(6, 211) = 1, p = 0.427$. The main effect of children's gender on parents' ratings of items that are related to gender equality was not significant, neither, $F(6, 211) = 1.345, p = 0.283$. We also found a significant interaction effect between parents' gender, children's gender and parents' education levels on parents' gender on parents' ratings of items that are related to gender equality.

Table 4.48: Multivariate Tests
British Parents' ratings of items that are related to gender equality (question 2-7)
by parents' gender, children's gender and parents' education levels

Source		Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	P	Partial η^2
Parents' gender	Pillai's Trace	0.028	1	6	211	0.427	0.028
Children's gender	Pillai's Trace	0.037	1.345	6	211	0.238	0.037
Parents' education levels	Pillai's Trace	0.116	2.183	12	424	0.012	0.058
Parents'gender* Children's gender	Pillai's Trace	0.019	0.692	6	211	0.656	0.019
Parents'gender* Parents' education levels	Pillai's Trace	0.066	1.198	12	424	0.282	0.033
Children's gender* Parents' education levels	Pillai's Trace	0.061	1.108	12	424	0.352	0.03
Parents' gender * Children's gender* Parents' education levels	Pillai's Trace	0.103	1.911	12	424	0.031	0.051

Univariate tests (Table 4.49) were performed to further examine the effect of parents' gender, children's gender and parents' education levels on parents' perceptions on gender equality. Table 4.50 revealed that the effect of parents' gender on parents' ratings to each question was not significant. These results were accord with the results from multivariate tests.

Different from the results on multivariate tests, results from univariate tests suggested that the effect of children's gender on parents' ratings of the question "A Gender-Neutral Parenting approach can avoid gendered stereotypes when raising my child, which in turn leads to gender equality" was significant $F(1, 216) = 6.933, p = 0.009$.

Results from multivariate tests also suggested that the main effect of parents' education levels on parents' ratings of the question "Gender equality is important to me", $F(2, 216) = 8.274, p < 0.001$, the question "Gender equality is important to my child", $F(2, 216) = 6.322, p = 0.002$, the question "*Using language that avoids labeling gender is helpful for gender equality*", $F(2, 216) = 4.255, p = 0.015$ was significant. We also observed a significant interaction effect between parents' gender, children's gender and parents' education levels on parents' gender on parents' ratings of the question "Gender equality is important to me", $F(2, 216) = 6.336, p = 0.002$.

Table 4.49: Test of Between- Subjects Effects
 British parents' ratings of items that are related to gender equality
 by parents' gender, children's gender and parents' education levels

Source	Dependent variable	Type III Sums of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P	Partial η^2
Parents' gender	1.Gender equality is important to me	0.909	1	0.909	1.139	0.287	0.005
	2.Gender equality is important to my child	0.003	1	0.003	0.003	0.958	0
	3.Removing gender roles from household chores is helpful for gender equality.	0.556	1	0.556	0.519	0.472	0.002
	4.Using language that avoids labeling gender is helpful for gender equality.	1.258	1	1.258	0.845	0.359	0.004
	5.My child has the opportunity to choose the toys, books, activities and clothing that he/she feels suits him(her) best, regardless of gender.	0.73	1	0.73	1.245	0.266	0.006
	6.A Gender-Neutral Parenting approach can avoid gendered stereotypes when raising my child, which in turn leads to gender equality.	0.31	1	0.31	0.238	0.626	0.001
Children's gender	1.Gender equality is important to me	0.413	1	0.413	0.517	0.473	0.002
	2.Gender equality is important to my child	0.002	1	0.002	0.002	0.965	0
	3.Removing gender roles from household chores is helpful for gender equality.	2.116	1	2.116	1.978	0.161	0.009
	4.Using language that avoids labeling gender is helpful for gender equality.	1.614	1	1.614	1.084	0.299	0.005
	5.My child has the opportunity to choose the toys, books, activities and clothing that he/she feels suits him(her) best, regardless of gender.	0.816	1	0.816	1.393	0.239	0.006
	6.A Gender-Neutral Parenting approach can avoid gendered stereotypes when raising my child, which in turn leads to gender equality.	9.037	1	9.037	6.933	0.009	0.031
Parents' education levels	1.Gender equality is important to me	13.211	2	6.606	8.274	0	0.071
	2.Gender equality is important to my child	11.504	2	5.752	6.322	0.002	0.055
	3.Removing gender roles from household chores is helpful for gender equality.	5.462	2	2.731	2.553	0.08	0.023
	4.Using language that avoids labeling gender is helpful for gender equality.	12.674	2	6.337	4.255	0.015	0.038
	5.My child has the opportunity to choose the toys, books, activities and clothing that he/she feels suits him(her) best, regardless of gender.	0.229	2	0.114	0.195	0.823	0.002
	6.A Gender-Neutral Parenting approach can avoid gendered stereotypes when raising my child, which in turn leads to gender equality.	6.924	2	3.462	2.656	0.073	0.024

Table 4.49: Test of Between- Subjects Effects (continued 1)
 British parents' ratings of items that are related to gender equality
 by parents' gender, children's gender and parents' education levels

Source	Dependent variable	Type III Sums of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P	Partial η^2
Parents' gender*	1.Gender equality is important to me.	1.82	1	1.82	2.28	0.133	0.01
Children's gender	2.Gender equality is important to my child.	0.739	1	0.739	0.812	0.369	0.004
	3.Removing gender roles from household chores is helpful for gender equality.	0.29	1	0.29	0.271	0.603	0.001
	4.Using language that avoids labeling gender is helpful for gender equality.	0.005	1	0.005	0.003	0.955	0
	5.My child has the opportunity to choose the toys, books, activities and clothing that he(she) feels suits him(her) best, regardless of gender.	0.205	1	0.205	0.35	0.555	0.002
	6.A Gender-Neutral Parenting approach can avoid gendered stereotypes when raising my child, which in turn leads to gender equality.	0.514	1	0.514	0.395	0.531	0.002
	Parents' gender*	1.Gender equality is important to me.	2.382	2	1.191	1.492	0.227
Parents' education levels	2.Gender equality is important to my child.	2.122	2	1.061	1.166	0.314	0.011
	3.Removing gender roles from household chores is helpful for gender equality.	1.062	2	0.531	0.496	0.61	0.005
	4.Using language that avoids labeling gender is helpful for gender equality.	0.667	2	0.334	0.224	0.8	0.002
	5.My child has the opportunity to choose the toys, books, activities and clothing that he(she) feels suits him(her) best, regardless of gender.	1.028	2	0.514	0.877	0.417	0.008
	6.A Gender-Neutral Parenting approach can avoid gendered stereotypes when raising my child, which in turn leads to gender equality.	3.754	2	1.877	1.44	0.239	0.013
	Children's gender*	1.Gender equality is important to me.	1.714	2	0.857	1.074	0.344
Parents' education levels	2.Gender equality is important to my child.	2.015	2	1.007	1.107	0.332	0.01
	3.Removing gender roles from household chores is helpful for gender equality.	3.063	2	1.531	1.431	0.241	0.013
	4.Using language that avoids labeling gender is helpful for gender equality.	2.052	2	1.026	0.689	0.503	0.006
	5.My child has the opportunity to choose the toys, books, activities and clothing that he(she) feels suits him(her) best, regardless of gender.	0.238	2	0.119	0.203	0.817	0.002
	6.A Gender-Neutral Parenting approach can avoid gendered stereotypes when raising my child, which in turn leads to gender equality.	3.417	2	1.709	1.311	0.272	0.012

Table 4.49: Test of Between- Subjects Effects (continued 2)
 British parents' ratings of items that are related to gender equality
 by parents' gender, children's gender and parents' education levels

Source	Dependent variable	Type III Sums of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P	Partial η^2
Parents' gender*	1.Gender equality is important to me.	10.116	2	5.058	6.336	0.002	0.055
Children's gender*	2.Gender equality is important to my child.	1.559	2	0.78	0.857	0.426	0.008
Parents' education levels	3.Removing gender roles from household chores is helpful for gender equality.	1.086	2	0.543	0.508	0.603	0.005
	4.Using language that avoids labeling gender is helpful for gender equality.	2.556	2	1.278	0.858	0.425	0.008
	5.My child has the opportunity to choose the toys, books, activities and clothing that he/she feels suits him/her best, regardless of gender.	2.196	2	1.098	1.874	0.156	0.017
	6.A Gender-Neutral Parenting approach can avoid gendered stereotypes when raising my child, which in turn leads to gender equality.	2.108	2	1.054	0.809	0.447	0.007
Error	1.Gender equality is important to me.	172.438	216	0.798			
	2.Gender equality is important to my child.	196.518	216	0.91			
	3.Removing gender roles from household chores is helpful for gender equality.	231.083	216	1.07			
	4.Using language that avoids labeling gender is helpful for gender equality.	321.696	216	1.489			
	5.My child has the opportunity to choose the toys, books, activities and clothing that he/she feels suits him/her best, regardless of gender.	126.578	216	0.586			
	6.A Gender-Neutral Parenting approach can avoid gendered stereotypes when raising my child, which in turn leads to gender equality.	281.547	216	1.303			

We applied the pairwise comparisons to examine how children's gender and parents' education levels influence parents' perceptions of gender equality. Results from pairwise comparisons revealed that the effect of children's gender on parents' ratings of the statement "*A Gender-Neutral Parenting approach can avoid gendered stereotypes when raising my child, which in turn leads to gender equality*" was significant ($p = 0.009$). Parents of girls were more likely than parents of boys to support the statement "*A Gender-Neutral Parenting approach can avoid gendered stereotypes when raising my child, which in turn leads to gender equality*". This

means girls were more likely than boys to be encouraged to fight for stereotypes (Table 4.50).

Table 4.50: Pairwise comparisons
British parents' ratings of items that are related to gender equality
by children's gender

		95% Confidence Interval for Difference				
(I) Children's gender	(J) Children's gender	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	p	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
<i>1. Gender equality is important to me.</i>						
Boy	Girl	-0.132	0.184	0.473	-0.495	0.23
<i>2. Gender equality is important to my child.</i>						
Boy	Girl	-0.009	0.196	0.965	-0.396	0.378
<i>3. Removing gender roles from household chores is helpful to gender equality.</i>						
Boy	Girl	-0.299	0.213	0.161	-0.719	0.12
<i>4. Using language that avoids labeling gender is helpful to gender equality.</i>						
Boy	Girl	-0.262	0.251	0.299	-0.757	0.234
<i>5. My child has the opportunity to choose the toys, books, activities and clothing that he (she) feels suits him (her) best.</i>						
Boy	Girl	-0.186	0.158	0.239	-0.497	0.125
<i>6. A Gender-Neutral Parenting approach can avoid gendered stereotypes when raising my child, which in turn leads to gender equality.</i>						
Boy	Girl	-0.619	0.235	0.009	-1.082	-0.156

Results from pairwise comparisons (Table 4.51) indicated that the effect of parents' education levels on parents' ratings of the statement "*Gender equality is important to me*" ($p = 0.001$) was significant. In specific, parents with a below-upper secondary degree were less likely than parents with a tertiary degree to agree with the statement "*Gender equality is important to me*". In addition, the effect of parents' education levels on parents' ratings of the statement "*Gender equality is important to my child*" ($p = 0.004$) was significant, too. In specific, parents with a below-upper secondary degree were less likely than parents with a tertiary degree to agree with the statement "*Gender equality is important to my child*". This means parents with a tertiary degree valued gender equality both towards themselves and their children more than parents with a below-upper secondary degree.

Despite univariate tests suggested that the effect of parents' education levels on parents' ratings of the statement "*Using language that avoids labeling gender is helpful for gender equality*", $F(2, 216) = 4.255, p = 0.015$ was significant. However, results from pairwise comparisons revealed that the ratings of the statement "*Using language that avoids labeling gender is helpful for gender equality*" between parents with a below-upper secondary degree and parents with an upper secondary degree ($p = 1$), between parents with a below-upper secondary degree and parents with a tertiary degree ($p = 1$), between parents with an upper secondary degree and parents with a tertiary degree ($p = 0.07$) was not significant.

Table 4.51: Pairwise comparisons
 British parents' ratings of items that are related to gender equality
 by parents' education levels

(I)parents' education levels	(J) parents' education levels	Mean Difference (I-J)	95% Confidence Interval for Difference			
			Std. Error	p	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
<i>1. Gender equality is important to me.</i>						
Below upper-secondary	Upper-secondary	-0.589	0.267	0.085	-1.233	0.055
	Tertiary education	-0.899	0.238	0.001	-1.474	-0.324
Upper-secondary	Below upper-secondary	0.589	0.267	0.085	-0.055	1.233
	Tertiary education	-0.31	0.155	0.141	-0.685	0.065
Tertiary education	Below upper-secondary	0.899	0.238	0.001	0.324	1.474
	Upper-secondary	0.31	0.155	0.141	-0.065	0.685
<i>2. Gender equality is important to my child.</i>						
Below upper-secondary	Upper-secondary	-0.505	0.285	0.234	-1.193	0.183
	Tertiary education	-0.821	0.254	0.004	-1.434	-0.207
Upper-secondary	Below upper-secondary	0.505	0.285	0.234	-0.183	1.193
	Tertiary education	-0.316	0.166	0.175	-0.716	0.085
Tertiary education	Below upper-secondary	0.821	0.254	0.004	0.207	1.434
	Upper-secondary	0.316	0.166	0.175	-0.085	0.716
<i>3. Removing gender roles from household chores is helpful to gender equality.</i>						
Below upper-secondary	Upper-secondary	-0.278	0.309	1	-1.024	0.468
	Tertiary education	-0.533	0.276	0.164	-1.198	0.133
Upper-secondary	Below upper-secondary	0.278	0.309	1	-0.468	1.024
	Tertiary education	-0.255	0.18	0.476	-0.689	0.18
Tertiary education	Below upper-secondary	0.533	0.276	0.164	-0.133	1.198
	Upper-secondary	0.255	0.18	0.476	-0.18	0.689
<i>4. Using language that avoids labeling gender is helpful to gender equality.</i>						
Below upper-secondary	Upper-secondary	-0.181	0.365	1	-1.061	0.699
	Tertiary education	-0.672	0.325	0.121	-1.457	0.113
Upper-secondary	Below upper-secondary	0.181	0.365	1	-0.699	1.061
	Tertiary education	-0.491	0.212	0.065	-1.003	0.021
Tertiary education	Below upper-secondary	0.672	0.325	0.121	-0.113	1.457
	Upper-secondary	0.491	0.212	0.065	-0.021	1.003

Table 4.51: Pairwise comparisons (continued)
 British parents' ratings of items that are related to gender equality
 by parents' education levels

(I)parents' education levels	(J) parents' education levels	Mean Difference (I-J)	95% Confidence Interval for Difference			
			Std. Error	p	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
<i>5. My child has the opportunity to choose the toys, books, activities and clothing that he (she) feels suits him (her) best.</i>						
Below upper-secondary	Upper-secondary	-0.136	0.229	1	-0.688	0.416
	Tertiary education	-0.122	0.204	1	-0.615	0.371
Upper-secondary	Below upper-secondary	0.136	0.229	1	-0.416	0.688
	Tertiary education	0.014	0.133	1	-0.307	0.335
Tertiary education	Below upper-secondary	0.122	0.204	1	-0.371	0.615
	Upper-secondary	-0.014	0.133	1	-0.335	0.307
<i>6. A Gender-Neutral Parenting approach can avoid gendered stereotypes when raising my child, which in turn leads to gender equality.</i>						
Below upper-secondary	Upper-secondary	0.265	0.341	1	-0.558	1.089
	Tertiary education	-0.188	0.305	1	-0.923	0.547
Upper-secondary	Below upper-secondary	-0.265	0.341	1	-1.089	0.558
	Tertiary education	-0.453	0.199	0.07	-0.932	0.026
Tertiary education	Below upper-secondary	0.188	0.305	1	-0.547	0.923
	Upper-secondary	0.453	0.199	0.07	-0.026	0.932

4.2.2 The Chinese results

4.2.2.1 Chinese parents' perceptions of gender-appropriate reading materials for boys and girls

4.2.2.1.1 Chinese parents' ratings of book covers and the sex of characters on books

Table 4.52 shows the descriptive data of Chinese parents' mean ratings of book covers.

Table 4.52: Chinese parents' mean ratings and SD of book covers

Book covers	Mean	SD	N
Football (Male)	3.54	0.75	194
Football (Female)	3.44	0.81	194
Princess/Doll(Male)	3.42	0.81	194
Princess/Doll(Female)	3.42	0.87	194
Gymnastics (Male)	3.38	0.84	194
Gymnastics (Female)	3.52	0.86	194
Fairy tales (Male)	3.51	0.75	194
Fairy tales (Female)	3.40	0.89	194

A repeated measures ANOVA was conducted to examine the effect of parents' gender, children's gender and parents' education levels on parents' ratings of book covers: book topics (football, princess/doll, gymnastics, fairy tales) and the sex of characters on books (boy and girl).

The sphericity assumption was tested using Mauchly's test, which was significant $p < 0.05$ (see Table 4.53). Therefore, the degrees of freedom were corrected using the Greenhouse-Geisser method (see Table 4.54).

Table 4.53: Mauchly's Test of Sphericity
Chinese parents' ratings of book covers, by parents' gender, children's gender and parents' education levels

Within Subjects Effect	Mauchly's W	Apptox. Chi-Square	df	p	Greenhouse-Geisser	Huynh-Feldt	Lower-bound
Topic	0.929	12.395	5	0.03	0.951	1	0.333
Sex of character	1	0	0	.	1	1	1
Topic* Sex of character	0.978	3.669	5	0.598	0.986	1	0.333

Table 4.54: Tests of Within-Subjects Effects
Chinese parents' ratings of book covers, by parents' gender, children's gender and parents' education levels

Source	Type III Sums of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P	Partial η^2
Topic*Parents' gender	Greenhouse-Geisser 1.777	2.854	0.623	1.667	0.176	0.1
Topic*Children's gender	Greenhouse-Geisser 2.882	2.854	1.01	2.704	0.048	0.016
Topic*Parents' education levels	Greenhouse-Geisser 4.093	11.417	0.359	0.96	0.484	0.022
Topic*Parents' gender*Children's gender	Greenhouse-Geisser 1.172	2.854	0.411	1.1	0.347	0.006
Topic*Parents' gender*Parents' education levels	Greenhouse-Geisser 5.993	11.417	0.525	1.406	0.163	0.032
Topic*Children's gender*Parents' education levels	Greenhouse-Geisser 1.191	11.417	0.104	0.279	0.991	0.007
Topic*Parents' gender*Children's gender*Parents' education levels	Greenhouse-Geisser 2.159	11.417	0.189	0.506	0.904	0.012
Error (Topic)	Greenhouse-Geisser 180.144	482.363	0.373			
Sex of character*Parents' gender	Greenhouse-Geisser 0.017	1	0.017	0.051	0.821	0
Sex of character *Children's gender	Greenhouse-Geisser 0.366	1	0.366	1.077	0.301	0.006
Sex of character *Parents' education levels	Greenhouse-Geisser 0.825	4	0.206	0.607	0.658	0.014
Sex of character*Parents' gender*Children's gender	Greenhouse-Geisser 0.39	1	0.39	1.149	0.285	0.007
Sex of character*Parents' gender*Parents' education levels	Greenhouse-Geisser 0.313	4	0.078	0.23	0.921	0.005
Sex of character*Children's gender*Parents' education levels	Greenhouse-Geisser 3.655	4	0.914	2.69	0.033	0.06
Sex of character*Parents' gender*Children's gender*Parents' education levels	Greenhouse-Geisser 1.309	4	0.327	0.964	0.429	0.022
Error (Sex of character)	Greenhouse-Geisser 57.407	169	0.34			

Regarding Chinese parents' ratings of book topics, data from multivariate tests (see Table 4.54) suggested that in China, the main effect of children's gender on parents' ratings of book topics was significant, $F(2.854, 482.363) = 2.704, p = 0.0048$.

Regarding Chinese parents' ratings of the sex of characters on books, table 4.54 revealed that the the interaction effect between Chinese children's gender and Chinese parents' educational levels was was significant, $F(4, 169) = 2.9, p = 0.033$].

4.2.2.1.2 Chinese parents' ratings of book topics

In order to examine the main effect off children's gender on parents' ratings of topics, pairwise comparisons using Bonferroni correction was conducted (see Table 4.55, Table 4.56). Results suggested parents of boys gave a significant higher score to football books than parents of girls, while parents of girls gave a significant higher score to princess/doll books than parents of boys. They also gave a significant higher score to fairy tales than parents of boys.

4.55 Estimates

Chinese parents' ratings of book topics, by children's gender

Children's gender	Topic	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bond
Boy	Football	3.692	0.093	3.509	3.875
	Princess/Doll	2.406	0.094	2.221	2.591
	Gymnastics	2.313	0.104	2.108	2.517
	Fairy tales	3.013	0.087	2.841	3.186
Girl	Football	3.099	0.091	2.92	3.279
	Princess/Doll	3.099	0.092	2.917	3.281
	Gymnastics	2.586	0.102	2.385	2.788
	Fairy tales	3.487	0.086	3.318	3.656

Table 4.56: Pairwise Comparisons
Chinese parents' ratings of book topics, by children's gender

Children's gender	Topic	Topic	95% Confidence Interval for Difference				
			Mean	Std. Error	Sig.	Lower Bound	Upper Bond
Boy	Football	Princess/Doll	1.29	0.11	0.00	0.98	1.59
		Gymnastics	1.38	0.12	0.00	1.06	1.70
		Fairy tales	0.68	0.10	0.00	0.40	0.96
	Princess/Doll	Football	-1.29	0.11	0.00	-1.59	-0.98
		Gymnastics	0.09	0.12	1.00	-0.22	0.40
		Fairy tales	-0.61	0.07	0.00	-0.79	-0.43
	Gymnastics	Football	-1.38	0.12	0.00	-1.70	-1.06
		Princess/Doll	-0.09	0.12	1.00	-0.40	0.22
		Fairy tales	-0.70	0.11	0.00	-1.00	-0.40
	Fairy tales	Football	-0.68	0.10	0.00	-0.96	-0.40
		Princess/Doll	0.61	0.07	0.00	0.43	0.79
		Gymnastics	0.70	0.11	0.00	0.40	1.00
Girl	Football	Princess/Doll	-4.44	0.11	1.00	-0.30	0.30
		Gymnastics	0.51	0.12	0.00	0.19	0.83
		Fairy tales	-0.39	0.10	0.00	-0.66	-0.12
	Princess/Doll	Football	4.44	0.11	1.00	-0.30	0.30
		Gymnastics	0.51	0.12	0.00	0.21	0.82
		Fairy tales	-0.39	0.07	0.00	-0.57	-0.21
	Gymnastics	Football	-0.51	0.12	0.00	-0.83	-0.19
		Princess/Doll	-0.51	0.12	0.00	-0.82	-0.21
		Fairy tales	-0.90	0.11	0.00	-1.19	-0.61
	Fairy tales	Football	0.39	0.10	0.00	0.12	0.66
		Princess/Doll	0.39	0.07	0.00	0.21	0.57
		Gymnastics	0.90	0.11	0.00	0.61	1.19

Results from pairwise comparisons also allow us to know if the scores that parents gave to each topic were similar or different from one another. Results suggested that football books received the highest scores from parents of boys, and this score was significantly higher than the scores that they gave to princess/doll books ($p < 0$), gymnastics books ($p < 0$), and fairy tales ($p < 0$).

The score that parents of boys gave to princess/doll books was significantly lower than football books and fairy tales ($p < 0$). In addition, gymnastics books received the lowest score from parents of boys, which was significantly lower than the scores that parents gave to football books and fairy tales ($p < 0$). Fairy tales received the second highest score from parents of boys. This score was significantly lower than the score that parents of boys gave to football books and fairy tales ($p < 0$). While, it was significantly higher than the score that parents of boys gymnastics book ($p < 0$).

Parents of girls gave the highest score to fairy tales, which was significantly higher than the score that they gave to football books and gymnastics books ($p < 0$). Moreover, scores that parents of girls gave to football books and princess /doll books tied for second place. Both were significantly higher than the scores that they gave to gymnastics books ($p < 0$) and fairy tales ($p < 0$).

Same as parents of sons, parents of daughters also gave the lowest score to Gymnastics books, which was significantly lower than the scores that football books, princess/doll book and fairy tales received ($p < 0$).

4.2.2.1.3 Chinese parents' ratings of the sex of characters on books

In order to further examine the the main effect of Chinese parents' gender, Chinese children's gender and Chinese parents' education levels on Chinese parents' ratings of the sex of characters on books, univariate tests were conducted.

Results from tests of within-subjects effects (see Table 4.54) indicated that the the interaction effect between Chinese children's gender and Chinese parents' educational levels on Chinese parents' ratings of the sex of characters on book was significant, $F(4, 169) = 2.9$, $p = 0.03$. However, results from univariate tests suggested that the effects of Chinese children's gender on Chinese parents' ratings of both books with male characters, $F(1, 169) = 1.829$, $p = 0.178$, and books with female characters $F(1, 169) = 3.57$, $p = 0.061$, were not significant (see Table 4.57). In addition, results from

pairwise comparisons also suggested that the effects of Chinese children's gender on Chinese parents' ratings of both books with male characters ($p = 0.439$), and books with female characters ($p = 0.491$) were not significant (see Table 4.58), suggesting that overall, the main effect of Chinese children's gender on Chinese parents' ratings of books with both male and female characters were not significant.

Table 4.57: Univariate Tests

Chinese parents' ratings of the sex of characters on books, by children's gender

Sex of character		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P	Partial η^2
Male	Contrast	0.626	1	0.626	1.829	0.178	0.011
	Error	57.825	169	0.342			
Female	Contrast	1.485	1	1.485	3.57	0.061	0.021
	Error	70.318	169	0.416			

Table 4.58: Pairwise Comparisons

Chinese parents' ratings of the sex of characters on books, by children's gender

Sex of character	(I)Children's gender	(J)Children's gender	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	p	95% Confidence Interval for Difference	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Male	Boy	Girl	0.05	0.065	0.439	-0.078	0.178
Female	Boy	Girl	-0.043	0.063	0.491	-0.167	0.08

Univariate tests were also conducted to examine exactly how Chinese parents' education levels influence Chinese parents' ratings of the sex of characters on book covers. Results (see Table 4.59) revealed that the main effect of parents' education levels on parents' ratings of the sex of characters on book covers was not significant, $F(4, 179) = 0.121$, $p = 0.975$.

Table 4.59: Univariate Tests

Chinese parents' ratings of the sex of characters on books, by parents' education levels

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P	Partial η^2
Contrast	0.17	4	0.042	0.121	0.975	0.003
Error	63.027	179	0.352			

Table 4.60: Pairwise Comparisons

Chinese parents' ratings of the sex of characters on books, by parents' education levels

Sex of characters	(I)parents' education levels	(J) parents' education levels	95% Confidence Interval for Difference				
			Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	p	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Male	Below upper-secondary	Upper-secondary	-0.072	0.154	1.000	-0.502	0.358
		Tertiary education	-0.033	0.167	1.000	-0.499	0.433
	Upper-secondary	Below upper-secondary	0.072	0.154	1.000	-0.358	0.502
		Tertiary education	0.039	0.142	1.000	-0.357	0.435
	Tertiary education	Below upper-secondary	0.033	0.167	1.000	-0.433	0.499
		Upper-secondary	-0.039	0.142	1.000	-0.435	0.300
Female	Below upper-secondary	Upper-secondary	0.054	0.174	1.000	-0.431	0.539
		Tertiary education	0.122	0.185	1.000	-0.395	0.639
	Upper-secondary	Below upper-secondary	-0.054	0.174	1.000	-0.539	0.431
		Tertiary education	0.068	0.158	1.000	-0.372	0.508
	Tertiary education	Below upper-secondary	-0.122	0.185	1.000	-0.639	0.395
		Upper-secondary	-0.068	0.158	1.000	-0.508	0.372

Data from tests of within-subjects effects suggested that the main effect of Chinese parents' education levels on Chinese parents' ratings of the sex of characters on books was not significant, $F(4, 169) = 0.607$, $p = 0.658$ (see Table 4.54). Similarly, data from pairwise comparisons (Table 4.60) also indicated that no significant differences were found between any education-level groups of parents. As such, these findings suggest that Chinese parents' education levels did not significantly influence their ratings of the sex of characters on books covers.

On the other hand, as Table 4.54 revealed a significant interaction effect between Chinese children's gender and Chinese parents' education levels on Chinese parents'

ratings of the sex of characters on books, $F(4, 169) = 2.9$, $p = 0.033$. However, data from Table 4.60 indicated that Chinese parents' education levels did not significantly influence their ratings of the sex of characters on books. This suggests that in China, although parents' education levels alone did not influence ratings, its effect varied depending on the gender of the child.

4.2.2.1.3 Are Chinese parents more likely to recommend books that they know to their children?

A Spearman's Rho correlation was used to examine whether Chinese parents tend to recommend books that they know to their children. Results indicated that regarding books with male characters, surprisingly, results indicated almost all negative associations, football books with female characters, $r_s(194) = -0.72$, $p < 0.001$, princess/dolls books with female characters $r_s(194) = -0.332$, $p < 0.001$, gymnastics books with female characters, $r_s(194) = -0.26$, $p < 0.001$, fairy tales with female characters, $r_s(194) = -0.159$, $p = 0.277$, football books with male characters $r_s(194) = -0.333$, $p < 0.001$, Princess/dolls books with male characters $r_s(194) = -0.274$, $p < 0.001$, gymnastics books with male characters, $r_s(194) = -3.40$, $p < 0.001$, and fairy tales with male characters, $r_s(194) = -0.22$, $p = 0.06$. These findings suggested Chinese parents tend to recommend books to their children even though they don't about that books.

4.2.2.2 Chinese parents' book selection behaviour for children

4.2.2.2.1 Factors that are affecting parents' book selection behaviour for children

Table 4.61: Chinese parents' mean ratings and SD of factors that affect parents' book selection behaviour for their children

Factors	Mean	SD	N
Online reviews	3.69	1.63	194
Grandparents	2.21	1.31	194
Friends with children of the same age	3.73	1.53	194
Other children	3.46	1.52	194
Parents' friends	3.49	1.49	194
Teachers	4.38	1.70	194
Child's gender	4.22	1.60	194

Table 4.61 shows that in China, parents' mean ratings of the seven factors that influence parents' book selection behaviour for their children. The average score of each item revealed that teachers ($M=4.08$, $SD=1.70$) had the greatest effect on parents' book selection behaviour for children. This was followed by child's gender ($M=4.22$, $SD=1.60$), friends with children of the same age ($M=3.73$, $SD=1.53$), online review ($M=3.69$, $SD=1.63$), parents' friends ($M=3.49$, $SD=1.49$), other children ($M=3.57$, $SD=1.34$), Grandparents ($M=2.21$, $SD=1.31$) had the least impact on parents' book selection behaviour for children.

4.2.2.2.2 Parents' gender, children's gender, and factors that are affecting parents' book selection behaviour for children

A multivariate analysis was conducted to examine the effect of parents' gender and children's gender on parents' ratings of factors that influence parents' book selection behaviour for their children. The results of Pillai's trace as a test statistic appear in Table 4.62.

Table 4.62: Multivariate Tests

Chinese parents' ratings of factors that affect parents' book selection behaviour for their children, by parents' gender, children's gender and parent's education levels

Effect		Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	P	Partial η^2
Parents' gender	Pillai's Trace	0.062	1.589	7	168	0.142	0.062
Children's gender	Pillai's Trace	0.025	0.611	7	168	0.746	0.025
Parents' education levels	Pillai's Trace	0.389	2.634	28	684	.00	0.097
Parents' gender*Children's gender	Pillai's Trace	0.06	1.527	7	168	0.161	0.06
Parents' gender*Parents' education levels	Pillai's Trace	0.196	1.262	28	684	0.167	0.049
Children's gender*Parents' education levels	Pillai's Trace	0.195	1.255	28	684	0.172	0.049
Parents' gender*Children's gender*Parents' education levels	Pillai's Trace	0.241	1.565	28	684	0.033	0.06

Results suggested that in China, the main effect of parent's educational levels on parents' book selection behaviour for children was significant, $F(7, 168) = 1.589, p < 0.05$. The interaction effect between parents' gender, children's gender, and parents' education levels on parents' ratings of the seven factors was significant, $F(28, 6684) = 1.55, p = 0.033$.

In order to examine exactly how parents' gender, children's gender and parents' education levels influence parents' ratings of the seven factors that affect their book selection behaviour for children, Univariate tests were conducted. Results from tests of between-subject effects (see Table 4.63) suggested that the parent's education levels significantly effect parents parents' ratings of factors in terms of online review, $F = 5.867, p < 0.01$, friends with children of the same age, $F = 4.336, p = 0.002$, other friend, $F = 5.246, p = 0.001$, parents' friends, $F = 5.246, p < 0.01$, teachers, $F = 5.246, p < 0.01$, child's gender, $F = 5.246, p < 0.01$.

The interaction between parent's gender and children's gender was significantly effect on parents parents' ratings of factors in terms of online review, $F = 4.141, p = 0.043$, child's gender, $F = 5.25, p < 0.023$.

Table 4.63: Test of Between-Subjects Effect

Chinese parents' ratings of factors that affect parents' book selection behaviour for their children,
by parents' gender, children's gender and parent's education levels

Source	Dependent variables	Type III Sums of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P	Partial η^2
Parents' gender	Online reviews	7.181	1	7.181	3.386	0.067	0.019
	Grandparents	2.171	1	2.171	1.284	0.259	0.007
	Friends with children of the same age	4.124	1	4.124	2.032	0.156	0.012
	Other children	0.691	1	0.691	0.336	0.563	0.002
	Parents' friends	0.491	1	0.491	0.285	0.594	0.002
	Teachers	1.122	1	1.122	0.498	0.482	0.003
	Child's gender	0.24	1	0.24	0.105	0.746	0.001
Children's gender	Online reviews	1.17	1	1.17	0.552	0.459	0.003
	Grandparents	1.163	1	1.163	0.688	0.408	0.004
	Friends with children of the same age	0.533	1	0.533	0.263	0.609	0.002
	Other children	0.996	1	0.996	0.484	0.488	0.003
	Parents' friends	0.046	1	0.046	0.027	0.87	0
	Teachers	0.67	1	0.67	0.297	0.586	0.002
	Child's gender	1.53	1	1.53	0.671	0.414	0.004
Parents' education levels	Online reviews	49.773	4	12.443	5.867	0	0.119
	Grandparents	7.767	4	1.942	1.149	0.335	0.026
	Friends with children of the same age	35.197	4	8.799	4.336	0.002	0.091
	Other children	43.18	4	10.795	5.246	0.001	0.108
	Parents' friends	68.431	4	17.108	9.921	0	0.186
	Teachers	64.684	4	16.171	7.168	0	0.141
	Child's gender	32.657	4	8.164	3.583	0.008	0.076
Parents' gender * Children's gender	Online reviews	8.783	1	8.783	4.141	0.043	0.023
	Grandparents	0.865	1	0.865	0.511	0.475	0.003
	Friends with children of the same age	4.843	1	4.843	2.387	0.124	0.014
	Other children	1.318	1	1.318	0.641	0.425	0.004
	Parents' friends	0.142	1	0.142	0.082	0.774	0
	Teachers	5.285	1	5.285	2.343	0.128	0.013
	Child's gender	11.969	1	11.969	5.253	0.023	0.029

Table 4.63: Test of Between-Subjects Effect (Continued)

Chinese parents' ratings of factors that affect parents' book selection behaviour for their children,
by parents' gender, children's gender and parent's education levels

Source	Dependent variables	Type III		Mean Square	F	P	Partial η^2
		Sums of Squares	df				
Parents' gender * Parents' Education levels	Online reviews	5.771	2	2.886	1.425	0.243	0.013
	Grandparents	2.465	2	1.233	0.743	0.477	0.007
	Friends with children of the same age	1.188	2	0.594	0.352	0.704	0.003
	Other children	0.339	2	0.17	0.092	0.912	0.001
	Parents' friends	1.601	2	0.8	0.456	0.635	0.004
	Teachers	4.631	2	2.316	1.281	0.28	0.012
	Child's gender	5.11	2	2.555	0.95	0.388	0.009
Children's gender*Parents' Education levels	Online reviews	2.661	2	1.331	0.657	0.519	0.006
	Grandparents	1.579	2	0.79	0.476	0.622	0.004
	Friends with children of the same age	1.793	2	0.896	0.531	0.589	0.005
	Other children	0.111	2	0.056	0.03	0.97	0
	Parents' friends	5.18	2	2.59	1.474	0.231	0.013
	Teachers	0.561	2	0.281	0.155	0.856	0.001
	Child's gender	2.264	2	1.132	0.421	0.657	0.004
Parents' gender *	Online reviews	4.92	2	2.46	1.215	0.299	0.011
Children's gender*	Grandparents	1.467	2	0.733	0.442	0.643	0.004
Parents' education levels	Friends with children of the same age	4.602	2	2.301	1.362	0.258	0.012
	Other children	1.719	2	0.859	0.468	0.627	0.004
	Parents' friends	0.227	2	0.114	0.065	0.937	0.001
	Teachers	0.375	2	0.187	0.104	0.902	0.001
	Child's gender	0.515	2	0.257	0.096	0.909	0.001

4.2.1.2.3 How much are books children prefer reading stereo-typically typed to their gender?

The question “*How much are the books your child prefers reading stereo-typically typed to his(her) gender?*” was used to understand how gender stereotypical thinking of parents effect on parents book selection behaviour for their children.

Table 4.64: Frequency of Chinese parental response to the question
“How much are the books your child prefers reading stereo-typically typed to his(her) gender?”

Response	Frequency	Percent
Never	20	10.3%
Rarely	8	4.1%
Occasionally	16	8.2%
Sometimes	65	33.5%
Frequently	37	19.1%
Usually	32	16.5%
Every time	16	8.2%

Table 4.64 shows that parents reported “rarely” (4.1%) for the least, followed by “every time” (16%), “occasionally ”(16%), “ never” (20%) “usually”(32%) “ frequently ” (37%). Most parents reported that books their children prefer reading “ sometimes ” (65%), suggesting that Chinese children tend to read books that challenge traditional stereotypes.

4.2.1.2.4 How much do you feel pressured to choose books for your child that are gender stereotypical?

The question “*how much do you feel pressured to choose books for your child that are gender stereotypical?*” was set up to explore to what extent are parents feel pressured to choose books for your child that are gender stereotypical. A higher score represents that parents are less likely to feel pressured to choose books that are gender stereotypical for their children.

Table 4.65: Frequency of Chinese parental response to the question*“How much do you feel pressured to choose books for your child that are gender stereotypical?”*

Response	Frequency	Percent
Never	99	43.4%
Rarely	56	24.6%
Occasionally	23	10.1%
Sometimes	27	11.8%
Frequently	14	6.1%
Usually	8	3.5%
Every time	1	0.4%

Table 4.65 suggests that very few parents reported that they “every time” (0.4%), “usually” (3.5%), and frequently (6.1%) felt pressured to choose books for their children that are gender stereotypical. Few parents responded with “sometimes”(11.8%) and “occasionally” (10.1%) A round a quarter of parents reported that they “rarely” (24.6%) felt pressured to choose books for their children that are gender stereotypical. Almost half of parents demonstrated that they “never” (43.4%) felt pressured to choose books for their children that are gender stereotypical. This means most parents tended to choose books that are gender stereotypical for children.

Table 4.66: Frequency of Chinese parental response to the question*“How much do you feel pressured to choose books for your child that are gender stereotypical?”*

Response	Frequency	Percent
Never	85	43.8%
Rarely	8	4.1%
Occasionally	46	23.7%
Sometimes	43	22.2%
Frequently	8	4.1%
Usually	4	2.1%
Every time	194	100%

Table 4.66 shows that that very few parents reported that they “usually” (2.1%), “frequently” (4.1%), and rarely (4.1%) felt pressured to choose books for their children that are gender stereotypical. Few parents responded with

“sometimes”(22.2%) and “occasionally” (22.7%) . Most parents reported that they “never” (43.8%) felt pressured to choose books for their children that are gender stereotypical, indicating that most parents tend to feel free when their children read books that are gender stereotyped.

4.2.2.3 Parents’ perceptions on Gender-Neutral parenting and gender equality

4.2.2.3.1 Parents’ perceptions on Gender-Neutral Parenting

Table 4.67: Frequency of Chinese parental response to the question
“I am raising my child in a Gender-Neutral Parenting approach”

Response	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	8	4.1%
Disagree	38	19.6%
Neither Agree Nor Disagree	64	33%
Agree	68	35.1%
Strongly Agree	16	8.2%

Table 4.67 demonstrates that only 8 parents reported they “strongly agree”(4.1%) with they are raising children in a Gender-Neutral Parenting approach. Few parents reported with “strongly agree” (8.2%) and “neither agree nor disagree” (19.6%). Most parents replied with “agree” (35.1%) and “ disagree” (19.6%). This means most parents tend to raise children with a traditional parenting style.

Table 4.68: Test of Between- Subjects Effects
 Chinese parental responses to the question
“I am raising my child in a Gender-Neutral Parenting approach”
 by parents’ gender, children’s gender and parents’ education levels

Source	Type III Sums of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P	Partial η^2
Parents’ gender	1.866	1	1.866	1.918	0.168	0.011
Children’s gender	0.938	1	0.938	0.964	0.327	0.006
Parents’ education levels	5.358	4	1.34	1.377	0.244	0.031
Parents’gender* Children’s gender	1.617	1	1.617	0	0.999	0
Parents’gender* Parents’ education levels	4.014	4	1.003	1.031	0.393	0.023
Children’s gender* Parents’ education levels	2.581	4	0.645	0.663	0.618	0.015
Parents’ gender * Children’s gender* Parents’ education levels	6.042	4	1.511	1.552	0.189	0.034
Error	169.317	174	0.973			

An univariate analysis was used to examine the effect of parents’ gender, children’s gender and parents’ education levels on parents’ perceptions of Gender-Neutral Parenting approach. (see Table 4.68). However, no significant effect has been found.

4.2.2.3.2 Parents’ perceptions on gender equality

Parents’ perceptions on “gender equality is important to me” and “gender equality is important to my child”

Table 4.69 revealed that most parents reported they “agree” (55.2 %) with the statement “gender equality is important to me”. Few parents reported they “disagree” (4.1%) and “strongly disagree” (3.1%) with this statement.

Regarding the statement “gender equality is important to my child”, Table 4.69 also suggested that few parents demonstrated that they “strongly disagree” (2.1%) and “disagree” (4.6%) with this statement. 7.7 % of parents reported they “neither agree nor disagree”. 35.1% of parents and 50.5% parents reported they and “strongly agree”

and “agree” respectively, suggesting that parents tended to address gender equality towards both themselves and their children.

Table 4.69 : Frequency of Chinese parental response to the question
 “Gender equality is important to me” and “Gender equality is important to my child”

Response	Frequency	Percent
<i>Gender equality is important to me</i>		
Strongly Disagree	6	3.1%
Disagree	8	4.1%
Neither Agree Nor Disagree	21	10.8%
Agree	107	55.2%
Strongly Agree	52	26.8%
<i>Gender equality is important to my child</i>		
Strongly Disagree	4	2.1%
Disagree	9	4.6%
Neither Agree Nor Disagree	15	7.7%
Agree	98	50.5%
Strongly Agree	68	35.1%

Results from the Spearman’ s Rho correlation (see Table 4.70) indicated that there was a positive correlation between parents’ responses to the question “*Gender equality is important to my child*” and parents’ responses to the question “*Gender equality is important to my child*” ($r_s=0.777$, $p < 0.01$). This means parents who value gender equality toward themselves also value gender equality towards their children.

Table 4.70: Correlations

Correlations between Chinese parental responses to “*Gender equality is important to me*” and “*Gender equality is important to my child*”

			Gender equality is important to me	Gender equality is important to my child
Spearman's rho	Gender is important to me	Correlation Coefficient	1	0.777***
		Sig. (2-tailed)		0
		N	194	194
	Gender equality is important to my child	Correlation Coefficient	0.777***	1
Sig. (2-tailed)		0	.	
N		194	194	

Parents' perceptions on ways that can be applied to promote gender equality

Table 4.71 : Frequency of Chinese parents' ratings of ways that can be applied to promote gender equality

Response	Frequency	Percent
<i>Removing gender roles from household chores is helpful for gender equality.</i>		
Strongly Disagree	6	3.1%
Disagree	6	3.1%
Neither Agree Nor Disagree	13	6.7%
Agree	116	59.8%
Strongly Agree	53	27.3%
<i>Using language that avoids labeling gender is helpful for gender equality.</i>		
Strongly Disagree	4	2.1%
Disagree	11	5.7%
Neither Agree Nor Disagree	22	11.3%
Agree	117	60.3%
Strongly Agree	40	20.6%
<i>My child has the opportunity to choose the toys, books, activities and clothing that he/she feels suits him/her best, regardless of gender.</i>		
Strongly Disagree	4	2.1%
Disagree	11	5.7%
Neither Agree Nor Disagree	18	9.3%
Agree	122	62.9%
Strongly Agree	39	20.1%
<i>A Gender-Neutral Parenting approach can avoid gendered stereotypes when raising my child, which in turn leads to gender equality.</i>		
Strongly Disagree	4	2.1%
Disagree	8	4.1%
Neither Agree Nor Disagree	30	15.5%
Agree	118	60.8%
Strongly Agree	34	17.5%

Table 4.71 displays the frequency of parents' ratings of ways that can be applied to promote gender equality. The item "my child has the opportunity to choose the toys, books, activities and clothing that he/she feels suits him/her best, regardless of

gender” received most parents’ supports (27.3 % of strongly agree and 59.8 % of agree), suggesting that the from parents’ views, the most effective way to raise a child with gender equality was to give the child opportunity to choose the toys, books, activities and clothing that he (she) feels suits him (her) best, regardless of gender. Using a Gender-Neutral Parenting approach (20.1% of strongly agree and 62.9% of agree) also gained popularity by parents they think about ways that can promote gender equality. Removing gender roles from household chores (27.3% of strongly agree and 59.8% of agree) and Using language that avoids labeling gender (20.6 % of strongly agree and 60.3 %) were supported by almost the same amount of parents.

Whereas the item “using language that avoids labeling gender is helpful to gender equality” gain parents’ least support (10.1% of strongly agree and 20.2% of agree).

Univariate tests (Table 4.72) were performed to further examine the effect of parents’ gender, children’s gender and parents’ education levels on parents’ perceptions on gender equality. Table 4.72 revealed that no significant effect has been found, suggesting that parents’ gender, children’s gender and parent’s education levels may not influence parents’ ratings of items that are related to gender equality.

Table 4.72: Test of Between- Subjects Effects
 Chinese parents' ratings of items that are related to gender equality
 by parents' gender, children's gender and parents' education levels

Source	Dependent variable	Type III Sums of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P	Partial η^2
Parents' gender	1.Gender equality is important to me	0.051	1	0.051	0.06	0.806	0
	2.Gender equality is important to my child	0.021	1	0.021	0.026	0.873	0
	3.Removing gender roles from household chores is helpful for gender equality.	0.637	1	0.637	0.827	0.364	0.005
	4.Using language that avoids labeling gender is helpful for gender equality.	0.066	1	0.066	0.092	0.762	0.001
	5.My child has the opportunity to choose the toys, books, activities and clothing that he/she feels suits him(her) best, regardless of gender.	0.849	1	0.849	1.16	0.283	0.007
	6.A Gender-Neutral Parenting approach can avoid gendered stereotypes when raising my child, which in turn leads to gender equality.	0.145	1	0.145	0.214	0.644	0.001
Children's gender	1.Gender equality is important to me	0.001	1	0.001	0.001	0.973	0
	2.Gender equality is important to my child	0.059	1	0.059	0.073	0.787	0
	3.Removing gender roles from household chores is helpful for gender equality.	0.042	1	0.042	0.055	0.815	0
	4.Using language that avoids labeling gender is helpful for gender equality.	0.219	1	0.219	0.307	0.581	0.002
	5.My child has the opportunity to choose the toys, books, activities and clothing that he/she feels suits him(her) best, regardless of gender.	0.117	1	0.117	0.16	0.69	0.001
	6.A Gender-Neutral Parenting approach can avoid gendered stereotypes when raising my child, which in turn leads to gender equality.	0.516	1	0.516	0.763	0.384	0.004
Parents' education levels	1.Gender equality is important to me	0.814	4	0.204	0.241	0.915	0.006
	2.Gender equality is important to my child	0.621	4	0.155	0.193	0.942	0.004
	3.Removing gender roles from household chores is helpful for gender equality.	2.342	4	0.585	0.76	0.553	0.017
	4.Using language that avoids labeling gender is helpful for gender equality.	3.238	4	0.809	1.134	0.342	0.025
	5.My child has the opportunity to choose the toys, books, activities and clothing that he/she feels suits him(her) best, regardless of gender.	2.614	4	0.654	0.893	0.469	0.02
	6.A Gender-Neutral Parenting approach can avoid gendered stereotypes when raising my child, which in turn leads to gender equality.	1.606	4	0.401	0.594	0.668	0.013

Table 4.72: Test of Between- Subjects Effects (continued 1)
 Chinese parents' ratings of items that are related to gender equality
 by parents' gender, children's gender and parents' education levels

Source	Dependent variable	Type III Sums of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P	Partial η^2
Parents' gender*	1.Gender equality is important to me.	0.39	1	0.39	0.462	0.497	0.003
Children's gender	2.Gender equality is important to my child.	1.119	1	1.119	1.393	0.24	0.008
	3.Removing gender roles from household chores is helpful for gender equality.	0.033	1	0.033	0.043	0.836	0
	4.Using language that avoids labeling gender is helpful for gender equality.	0.029	1	0.029	0.041	0.84	0
	5.My child has the opportunity to choose the toys, books, activities and clothing that he(she) feels suits him(her) best, regardless of gender.	0.061	1	0.061	0.083	0.773	0
	6.A Gender-Neutral Parenting approach can avoid gendered stereotypes when raising my child, which in turn leads to gender equality.	0.007	1	0.007	0.011	0.918	0
Parents' gender*	1.Gender equality is important to me.	2.838	4	0.709	0.841	0.501	0.019
Parents' education levels	2.Gender equality is important to my child.	2.221	4	0.555	0.691	0.599	0.016
	3.Removing gender roles from household chores is helpful for gender equality.	0.493	4	0.123	0.16	0.958	0.004
	4.Using language that avoids labeling gender is helpful for gender equality.	1.654	4	0.413	0.579	0.678	0.013
	5.My child has the opportunity to choose the toys, books, activities and clothing that he(she) feels suits him(her) best, regardless of gender.	5.315	4	1.329	1.816	0.128	0.04
	6.A Gender-Neutral Parenting approach can avoid gendered stereotypes when raising my child, which in turn leads to gender equality.	0.987	4	0.247	0.365	0.833	0.008
Children's gender*	1.Gender equality is important to me.	3.979	4	0.995	1.18	0.321	0.026
Parents' education levels	2.Gender equality is important to my child.	3.839	4	0.96	1.194	0.315	0.027
	3.Removing gender roles from household chores is helpful for gender equality.	3.199	4	0.8	1.038	0.389	0.023
	4.Using language that avoids labeling gender is helpful for gender equality.	1.794	4	0.449	0.628	0.643	0.014
	5.My child has the opportunity to choose the toys, books, activities and clothing that he(she) feels suits him(her) best, regardless of gender.	3.607	4	0.902	1.232	0.299	0.028
	6.A Gender-Neutral Parenting approach can avoid gendered stereotypes when raising my child, which in turn leads to gender equality.	1.787	4	0.447	0.661	0.62	0.015

Table 4.72: Test of Between- Subjects Effects (continued 2)
 Chinese parents' ratings of items that are related to gender equality
 by parents' gender, children's gender and parents' education levels

Source	Dependent variable	Type III Sums of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P	Partial η^2
Parents' gender*	1.Gender equality is important to me.	2.41	4	0.603	0.715	0.583	0.016
Children's gender*	2.Gender equality is important to my child.	3.524	4	0.881	1.096	0.36	0.025
Parents' education levels	3.Removing gender roles from household chores is helpful for gender equality.	0.533	4	0.133	0.173	0.952	0.004
	4.Using language that avoids labeling gender is helpful for gender equality.	1.176	4	0.294	0.412	0.8	0.009
	5.My child has the opportunity to choose the toys, books, activities and clothing that he(he) feels suits him(her) best, regardless of gender.	1.117	4	0.279	0.382	0.822	0.009
	6.A Gender-Neutral Parenting approach can avoid gendered stereotypes when raising my child, which in turn leads to gender equality.	3.689	4	0.922	1.364	0.248	0.03
Error	1.Gender equality is important to me.	146.719	174	0.843			
	2.Gender equality is important to my child.	139.84	174	0.804			
	3.Removing gender roles from household chores is helpful for gender equality.	134.094	174	0.771			
	4.Using language that avoids labeling gender is helpful for gender equality.	124.256	174	0.714			
	5.My child has the opportunity to choose the toys, books, activities and clothing that he(he) feels suits him(her) best, regardless of gender.	127.323	174	0.732			
	6.A Gender-Neutral Parenting approach can avoid gendered stereotypes when raising my child, which in turn leads to gender equality.	117.635	174	0.676			

4.3 Initial discussion of Study Two

Section 4.3 summarizes the main findings and provides an initial discussion of Study Two.

4.3.1 Study overview

4.3.1.1 Parents' perceptions of gender-appropriate reading materials

In the present study, we explored how parents perceive gender-appropriate reading materials for boys and girls by examining parents' perceptions of book topics (football, princess/doll, gymnastics, fairy tales) and the sex of characters on book covers (male, female), in both the UK and China.

Parents' ratings of book topics

Regarding parents' perceptions of book topics (football, princess/doll, gymnastics, fairy tales), in both the UK and China, we found that the main effect of parents' gender on parents' ratings of book topics was not significant. This suggests that parents' gender did not significantly influence how they evaluated different types of book topics. In other words, mothers and fathers showed comparable patterns in their ratings across football, princess/doll, gymnastics, and fairy tales books.

In contrast, the main effect of children's gender was significant in both cultural contexts. Specifically, parents were more likely to recommend football books to boys than to girls, whereas books about princesses, dolls, and fairy tales were more likely to be recommended to girls than to boys. These findings indicate that parents' evaluations of book topics varied depending on whether they had a son or a daughter, suggesting that children's gender may play a more influential role than parents' gender in shaping parental book selection behaviour for children.

Interestingly, however, the results also revealed a degree of flexibility in parents' book selection behaviour. Although football books were more frequently recommended to boys, parents of girls still gave relatively high ratings to football books. Similarly,

while fairy tales were more often recommended to girls, parents of boys also evaluated fairy tales positively. These patterns suggest that, although gender-differentiated preferences remain evident, parents may be increasingly open to cross-gender reading choices.

Such results are consistent with previous research suggesting that parents play a crucial role in shaping children's gender-related attitudes and behaviours. As primary and influential socializing agents, parents provide children with their first lessons about gender by defining what is considered "appropriate" and "inappropriate" behaviour for boys and girls (Eccles, 2015). Research has also suggested that parents shape children's beliefs about gender roles and expectations through books. For example, using a deductive content analysis approach to examine the transmission and presence of gender stereotypes in children's literature, Pownall & Heflick (2023) found that parents tend to provide books to boys and girls that reflect traditional gender stereotypes. Similarly, Krafchick et al. (2005) investigated how gender ideologies are reflected in parenting through book selection and found that parents tend to choose books that align with their own gender beliefs.

The observed flexibility in cross-gender book ratings may reflect the growing recognition of gender-neutral parenting, defined as raising children without imposing gender norms or stereotypes (Rahilly, 2015; Rahilly, 2022; Martinez, 2022). This parenting style allows children to explore their own interests and pick their own identities without being told that certain things are "for boys" or "for girls". Over time, this openness may contribute to reducing gendered limitations on children's literary engagement and support more inclusive and varied reading experiences (Rahilly, 2015; Davies, 2020; Chandel & Shanwal, 2024).

The interaction effect between children's gender and parents' education levels on parents' book topic ratings was significant in the UK but not in China, indicating that in the UK, the influence of parental education on book selection for children varied

depending on whether the child is a boy or a girl. Specifically, British parents with an upper secondary or tertiary degree were more likely than those with below-upper secondary education to recommend books about princess, dolls, and fairy tales to their children. This pattern suggests that higher parental education may reflect a more egalitarian attitude toward children's exploration of diverse stories. The lack of a significant interaction in China may be attributed to the fact that the majority of Chinese parents in the sample had only completed primary education. This low and relatively homogeneous level of educational attainment reduces variability and may limit the potential influence of parental education on their evaluations of book topics. In contrast, UK parents have higher and more varied education levels, making it easier to see these differences.

4.3.1.2 Parents' ratings of the sex of characters on books

When it comes to parents' perceptions of the sex of characters on books, results from both the UK and China indicated that the main effect of parents' gender was not significant. In other words, fathers and mothers in both countries tended to evaluate books with male and female characters similarly, suggesting that when parents select books for children, parent's gender alone did not strongly influence their perceptions of the sex of characters on book covers.

In the UK, children's gender has a significant influence on parents' ratings of the sex of character on books. Specifically, British parents' ratings of books with female characters differed significantly depending on whether the child was a boy or a girl. In contrast, ratings of books with male characters did not differ significantly by children's gender. This indicates that British parents were more likely to recommend books with female characters to girls than to boys. However, there was no significant difference between parents of boys and parents of girls in their evaluation of books with male characters, suggesting that parents were generally comfortable with girls reading books with male characters. This pattern could be explained by parental tendencies to treat daughters and sons differently in terms of challenging gender

stereotypes (Goodkind, 2009; Nandini, 2018). In general, girls are more likely to be encouraged to challenge gender stereotypes. For example, according to McHale, Crouter & Whiteman (2003), parents are often more flexible about the activities they consider appropriate for daughters than for sons. Similarly, Leaper (2014) reported that many American parents encourage daughters to participate in masculine-stereotyped activities, such as sports, whereas few parents encourage sons to engage in feminine-stereotyped activities, such as playing with dolls. When it comes to book reading, Pownall & Heflick (2023) found that although parents generally choose books that reflect traditional gender stereotypes, they also attempt to select counter-stereotypical books for daughters. As such, these findings suggest that parents may be more willing to challenge gender stereotypes for girls than for boys, which helps explain why children's gender significantly influences parents' selection of books with female characters in the UK. In contrast, in China, the main effect of children's gender on parents' ratings of the sex of characters was not significant.

In the UK, the main effect of parents' education levels on ratings of books with male characters was significant. Parents with higher educational levels were more likely than those with lower education to recommend books featuring male characters to their children. This pattern may reflect the tendency of more educated parents to encourage children to challenge traditional gender stereotypes and to encourage both boys and girls having equal opportunities to pursue their own interests (Keating & Baker, 2023). Nevertheless, Chinese parents' education levels did not significantly influence their ratings of the sex of characters on books, this was probably due to the low and relatively homogeneous level of educational attainment of Chinese parents.

In the UK, the interaction between parents' gender and parent's education levels on parents' ratings of the sex of characters on books was significant. Specifically, parents with higher education were more likely than those with lower education to recommend books with male characters to their children. This suggests that British parents' ratings of books with male characters varied depending on both their gender

and educational levels. These findings also suggested that more educated parents, whether mothers or fathers, are more likely to encourage children to read books that challenge gender stereotypes. In China, however, although parents' education attainment alone did not influence their ratings on the sex of characters on books, its effect varied depending on the gender of the child. This suggests that even in contexts with generally lower education levels, education can interact with other factors to affect parents' evaluations of the sex of characters on children's books.

Together with the important role of parents' education levels in shaping their ratings of book topics, these findings are consistent with prior research highlighting the role of education in promoting gender equality. These findings are consistent with prior research highlighting the role of education in promoting gender equality. Higher parental education is associated with more egalitarian attitudes toward gender, greater willingness to challenge traditional stereotypes, and a more inclusive understanding of gender roles for children (Davis & Greenstein, 2009; Keating & Baker, 2023). In conclusion, these results suggest that parents with higher education levels may not only select a wider range of books for their children but also adjust their selection according to whether the child is a boy or a girl, supporting children to have reading experiences that are more inclusive and less constrained by traditional gender stereotypes.

4.3.1.3 Are parents more likely to recommend books that they know to their children?

A Spearman's Rho correlation was conducted to examine whether parents tend to recommend books they are familiar with to their children. In the UK, results indicated that parents generally preferred to recommend books they knew, although this relationship was very weak. However, in China, parents were more likely to recommend books to their children that they themselves were not familiar with, suggesting a different pattern in parental selection strategies between the two countries. This reflects that a culture of reading is rooted in and influenced by the

context of the local culture (Cortazzi & Jin, 1996; Jin & Cortazzi, 2006). As Hu (2002) argued, China is a place where a strong tradition of reading and learning is deeply embedded. Learning is often equated with reading books, since knowledge is considered to be preserved in written texts. Traditional sayings such as “*one can find a house of treasure by reading books*” reflect this cultural view of knowledge acquisition. This cultural emphasis helps explain why textbooks and other written materials are highly valued in China and why Chinese parents tend to encourage children to read books beyond their own familiarity.

4.3.1.4 Parents’ book selection behaviour for children

This study examined factors that influence parents’ book selection behaviour for children. Analysis of the mean ratings across seven factors affecting parental book selection revealed that in the UK, teachers exerted the greatest influence on parents’ decisions. This was followed by child’s gender, friends with children of the same age, other children, online review, parents’ friends, while grandparents had the least impact. A very similar pattern was found in the Chinese sample. The average scores indicated that teachers also had the strongest influence on parents’ book selection behaviour for children. This was followed by child’s gender, friends with children of the same age, online reviews, other children, and parents’ friends. Grandparents were reported as having the least influence. Overall, the findings from China closely mirror those of the UK, suggesting that despite with different cultural contexts, when British and Chinese parents selecting books for their children, educational input, as represented by teachers, remains a central guide, children’s gender also play a key role in shaping parents’ book selection behaviour, while family members such as grandparents play a comparatively minor role. The primary influence of teachers on parents’ book selection behaviour for children reflects the authority and professional status that educators hold in both countries. Teachers are often seen as evaluation experts in children’s literacy development and educational needs (Johnston, 1987), and therefore parents tend to rely on teachers’ recommendations when selecting reading materials for their children.

The strong influence of children's gender suggests that gender remains a key factor when parents interpret children's interests and needs. This also suggests that in both the UK and China, parent's book selection or children may still be guided by gender norms and expectations, particularly regarding what is considered appropriate for boys versus girls (Pownall & Heflick, 2023).

Across both the UK and Chinese samples, parents' education levels emerged as a significant factor influencing how parents select books for their children, while parents' gender and children's gender did not.

In the UK, parents' education attainment had a significant effect only on ratings of "grandparents". In China, parents' education attainment had a much broader impact. Specifically, parents' education levels significantly influenced parents' ratings of several factors, including online reviews, friends with children of the same age, other children, parents' friends, teachers, and children's gender. This suggests that, in the Chinese context, educational background may play a more prominent role in shaping how parents evaluate a broad range of influences on their book selection behaviour for children (Fan, 2013). This may also be due to generally lower education levels of Chinese parents in the sample, which could lead them to rely more heavily on external guidance, such as teachers, friends, and online reviews, when selecting books for their children. On the other hand, the consistency of these findings across the UK and China highlights the role of parent's education attainment in shaping parents' decision-making regarding children's reading.

The frequency of parental response to the question "*How much are the books your child prefers reading stereo-typically typed to his (her) gender*" revealed that in the UK, overall, boys preferred "boy's books" and girls preferred "girls' books", indicating that gender-typed reading patterns remain common. However, in China, results suggested that Chinese children tend to read books that challenge traditional stereotypes. Again, this may be attributed to the strong emphasis on texts books and

other written materials, which are regarded as primary source of knowledge (Cortazzi & Jin, 1996; Jin & Cortazzi, 2006; Hu, 2002). As a result, Chinese children appear to engage with a wider range of books, including those that challenge traditional gender stereotypes, rather than being limited to reading materials with conventional gender expectations.

Although parents' gender did not significantly influence their perceptions of how stereotypically gendered their children's preferred books were, parents' education levels again played an important role. In the UK, parents with below upper-secondary education were more likely than those with upper-secondary or tertiary education to report that their children preferred books that were strongly stereotyped based on gender. This may suggest that higher parental education is associated with greater exposure to or acceptance of less gender-typed reading materials, potentially reflecting more egalitarian attitudes toward gender roles. Such findings are consistent with prior research indicating that parents' education promotes gender equality. For example, Davis & Greenstein (2009) suggested that parental education increases gender equality through several mechanisms, including fostering an egalitarian attitude toward gender within the family, providing access to healthcare and economic resources for children, and supporting a more inclusive understanding of gender roles for children to adopt. More highly educated parents are more likely to challenge traditional gender stereotypes, leading to greater acceptance of both boys and girls having equal opportunities to pursue their own interests (Keating & Baker, 2023). Similarly, Fei and Li (2025) found that mothers with higher education levels tend to hold more equal attitudes toward daughters and sons. Evertsson et al. (2009) observed that gender inequality is greater among the less educated in the Netherlands, Sweden, and the United States. Garrido (2020) reported that education can reduce traditional gender norms by over 11 percentage points across 14 European countries. Together, these findings suggest that parental education not only influences the books children read but also promotes more equal attitudes toward gender in parenting.

In addition, in both countries, the interaction effect between parents' gender and parents' educations on parental responses to the question of "*how much books children prefer reading are stereo-typically typed to their gender*" was not significant, suggesting that the influence of parents' education on parental perceptions of gender-typed reading preferences was consistent between mothers and fathers.

When asking "*How much do you feel pressured to choose books for your child that are gender stereotypical?*" Almost half of parents demonstrated that they "never" felt pressured to choose books for their children that are gender stereotypical, in both the UK and China, indicating most parents tend to feel free when their children read books that are gender stereotyped. This suggests that gender norms may still influence the books parents choose for their children, which consist with previous finding that parents tend to provide books to boys and girls that reflect traditional gender stereotypes (Pownall & Heflick , 2023).

We also found the interaction between parents' gender and children's gender, parents' gender and parents' education levels, children's gender and parents' education levels, as well as the three-way interaction among parents' gender, children's gender, and parents' education levels, were all non-significant. This indicates that parents' responses to the question, "*How much do you feel pressured to choose books for your child that are gender stereotypical?*" were not meaningfully influenced by their gender, their children's gender, or their educational background.

4.3.1.5 Parents' perceptions on Gender-Neutral parenting and gender equality

In terms of parents' perception of gender-neutral parenting, British parents share a pattern very similarly to that of Chinese parents.

First, in both the UK and China, the majority of parents responded "strongly disagree" or "disagree" to the statement "*I am raising my child in a Gender-Neutral Parenting approach*", indicating that most parents continue to follow a more

traditional parenting style.

The main effect of parents' gender, children's gender and parents' education levels on parents' perceptions of gender-neutral parenting approach was not significant. Similarly, none of the interaction effects, including parents' gender and children's gender, parents' gender and parents' education levels, children's gender and parents' education levels, or the three-way interaction among parents' gender, children's gender, and parents' education levels were significant. These results indicate that parents' perceptions of gender-neutral parenting were generally consistent, regardless of parent's gender, children's gender, and parents' educational background.

In both the UK and China, most parents reported that they "strongly agree" or "agree" with the statement "*gender equality is important to me*" and "*gender equality is important to my child*". Results from the Spearman's Rho correlation suggested that there was a positive correlation between parents' responses to these two statements. This means parents who value gender equality toward themselves also value gender equality towards their children.

Parents' perceptions on ways that can be applied to promote gender equality indicated that in both the UK and China, the most effective way to raise a child with gender equality was to give the child opportunity to choose the toys, books, activities and clothing that he (she) feels suits him (her) best, regardless of gender. In the UK, this was followed by supporting the removal of gender roles from household chores and adopting a gender-neutral parenting approach. In contrast, the strategy of using language that avoids labeling gender received the least support. While in China, this was followed by using a Gender-Neutral Parenting approach, removing gender roles from household chores and using language that avoids labeling gender is helpful to gender equality. The overall patterns indicates that parents across these two cultural contexts similarly prioritize child choice as the key approach for fostering gender equality, although the relative ranking of other strategies differed slightly. These

findings are in line with previous studies suggesting that parents can promote gender-neutral parenting through multiple approaches (Gontcharova, 2023).

The effect of children's gender on parents' ratings of the statement, "*A gender-neutral parenting approach can prevent gendered stereotypes and promote gender equality,*" was significant. Specifically, parents of girls were more likely than parents of boys to support this statement, suggesting that girls are more likely to be encouraged than boys to engage with practices that challenge traditional gender stereotypes. This finding aligns with previous research indicating that parents tend to treat daughters and sons differently when it comes to challenging gender norms (Goodkind, 2009; Nandini, 2018). For example, parents are generally more flexible in allowing daughters to explore non-traditional activities, while sons are more frequently guided toward stereotypically masculine roles (McHale, Crouter & Whiteman, 2003).

The effect of parents' education levels on parents' ratings of the statement, "*Gender equality is important to me,*" was significant. Specifically, parents with a below-upper secondary degree were less likely than those with a tertiary degree to agree with this statement. Similarly, the effect of education level on parents' ratings of the statement, "*Gender equality is important to my child,*" was also significant, with parents holding a below-upper secondary degree again less likely than those with a tertiary degree to endorse the statement. These results indicate that parents with higher educational attainment place greater value on gender equality, both for themselves and for their children, compared to parents with lower levels of education. These findings agree with prior research suggesting that educational can increase gender equality. Higher parental education may lead a greater acceptance of both boys and girls to explore and develop their own interests. (Keating & Baker, 2023; Fei & Li (2025); Evertsson et al. (2009); Garrido (2020).

A very interesting finding from this study was that, in both the UK and China, parents generally held positive perceptions of gender-neutral parenting. However, in practice,

many still preferred traditional parenting styles when raising their children. This preference may stem from the perceived advantages of conventional approaches. While gender-neutral parenting allows children to pursue their interests and develop their identities without rigid gender stereotypes (Choosing Therapy, 2023), according to Logan, Heberle & Goldberg (2025), despite increasing societal acceptance of gender diversity, gender-neutral parenting still faces significant criticism and controversy. Opponents see this parenting style as a rejection of traditional norms and a potential source of confusion for children and may cause bullying. Similarly, Choudhury (2019) suggested that children who challenge traditional gender stereotypes may face bullying or ridicule from their peers. In addition, Grant et al. (2011) found that children who do not conform to conventional gender norms, such as transgender children or those with nonconforming gender expressions, are at higher risk of discrimination. Furthermore, transgender children often struggle to fit in with larger peer groups and may continue to face bullying later in life, which can extend into multiple domains including employment, healthcare, and interactions with the legal system (Downing, 2013; Downing & Przedworski, 2018; Rahilly, 2022).

4.3.2 Strength of this study

This study is a first attempt to conduct a cross-culture research to explore parents' perceptions of gender-appropriate reading materials and gender-neutral parenting and how these involvement can shape children's reading interests. We found that although gender-neutral parenting has gained popularity by parents', and although girls are more likely to be encourage to read books that challenge gender stereotypes, still, however, parents are more likely to using a traditional parenting style to raise thief children. Thus, this study added to literacy on exploring the fresh trends in parenting and its impact on children's reading interests. Meanwhile, it is also highlighting a more diversity and harmony society where children can be who they wan to be. Educators, policymakers, and government should be collaborate to find more guidance for parents on how to positively adopt gender-neutral parenting to raise their children.

Another contribution of this study is that it explored how parent's perceptions of gender-appropriate behaviour can shape children's reading interests. As far as we know, little research has investigated this area. By choosing books with 4 dimensions of topic (football, gymnastic, princess/dolls, fairy tales) and 2 dimension of the sex of character (male, female), results suggested in both the UK, parents are more likely to encouraging their children to read counter-stereotypical books than before. This finding filled a research gap by adding some new trends in parenting and its connection with children's reading interests.

4.3.3 Limitations of this Study

The first limitations of this study is the sample size of parents. Parental education and children's socioeconomic background are important factors that influence children's reading and overall development, therefore we hypothesized that parents with different education levels might differentially influence their children's reading development. In our study, British parents generally had higher education levels, this might be due to there were all invited from Prolific. While, Chinese parents had comparatively lower education levels, the majority of Chinese parents in the sample had only completed primary education. Because of this imbalance, we were unable to directly statistically compare the influence of parental education across the two cultures. Future research should include a larger and more balanced sample of parents to better explore how variations in education and cultural context affect children's reading outcomes.

Second, the selection of books in this study was limited. We select 8 books covering 4 topics (football, gymnastics, princesses/dolls, and fairy tales) and featuring characters of two genders (male and female) on the covers for parents to assess. This limited range may not fully capture the diversity of children's literature or its potential influence on children's reading interests. Future studies should include a broader variety of genres and themes to provide a more comprehensive understanding of

parental perceptions of gender-appropriate reading materials for boys and girls and their impact on children's reading interests.

4.3.4 Conclusion

Parents, as primary agents of socialization, nurture and socialize children by providing "appropriate" models of boys' and girls' behaviour. This study explored how parents' perception of gender-appropriate reading materials and parents' views of gender-neutral parenting can have an impact on children's reading interests. The results indicated that today's children, especially girls, are more likely to be encouraged to read books that challenge traditional stereotypes. While boys are less frequently encouraged to challenge gender norms, parents are generally supportive when boys engage with books such as fairy tales. On the other hand, with the increasing awareness of raising children without gender, parents are increasingly willing to support their children in exploring interests beyond conventional gender expectations, including reading. However, raising children without gender still facing societal challenges and resistance. Therefore, educators, schools, communities, and governments should work together to promote a more diversity recognition of gender roles, and support parents to raise children with allowing them to pursue their own interest and diversity.

Chapter 5

Study Three: Parental involvement in children's reading and its connections to children's reading interests

Chapter 5 reports on the third study conducted for this dissertation. Based on a sample of British parents, Study Three aimed to explore the differences between fathers and mothers in their involvement in children's reading and to investigate how parental involvement in children's reading can affect children's reading interests. It hypothesized that fathers and mothers are differently involved in children's reading, with mothers involved more in children's reading through all three dimensions: engagement, accessibility and responsibility. In addition, it hypothesized that both fathers and mothers are more likely to be involved with daughters than sons in reading (through three dimensions: engagement, accessibility and responsibility). Finally, this study hypothesized that all three dimensions (engagement, accessibility and responsibility) of parental involvement in children's reading positively predict children's reading interests.

5.1 Methodology

Section 5.1 is the methodology section that explains the research design, participants, instruments, procedures, data analysis of Study Three.

5.1.1 Design

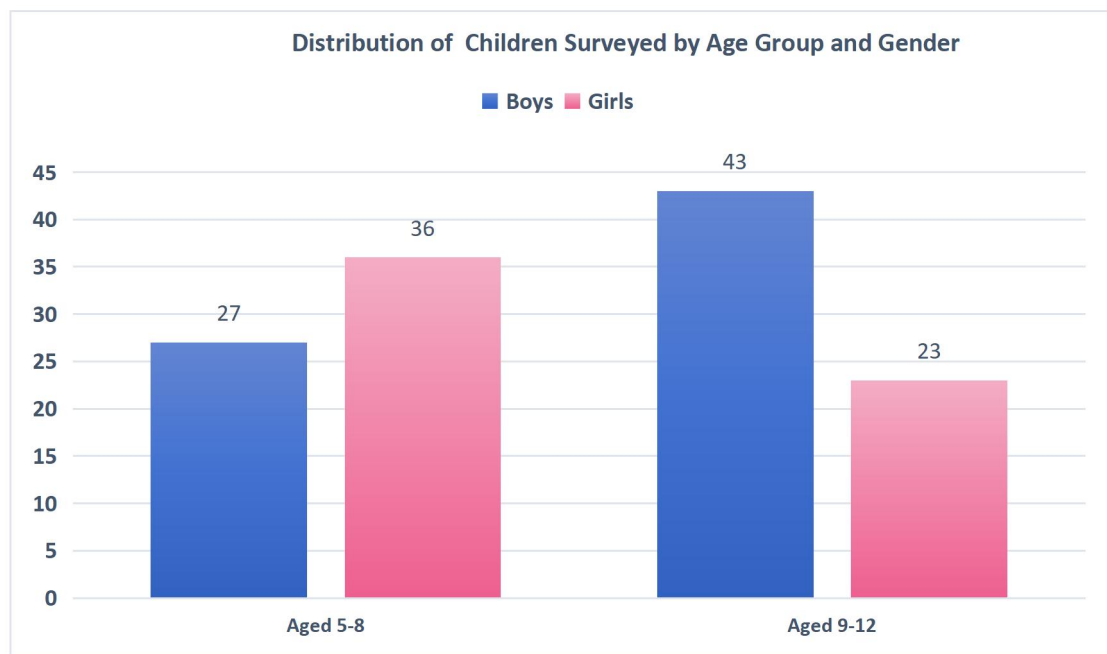
A 2 (parent: father vs. mother) x 2 (child: boy vs girl) x 3 (parental involvement: engagement, accessibility and responsibility) design was used to explore if there are differences between mothers and fathers regarding their involvement in children's reading through engagement, accessibility and responsibility.

5.1.2 Participants

Our sample was composed of 129 British parents (Male=65, Female=64) from

Prolific. The surveyed children of participants aged 5 to 12, including 70 boys (M=8.94, SD=2.35) and 59 girls (M=8.24, SD=2.43). Figure 5.1 shows the distribution of children surveyed by age group and gender.

Figure 5.1: Distribution of children surveyed by age group and gender



5.1.3 Instruments

Questionnaire

According to Lamb and his colleagues' theoretical model of parental involvement, engagement (parent's actual one-on-one interaction with the child), accessibility (parent is physically and mentally available, they engage with the child indirectly), and responsibility (parent takes responsibility for the child's care and arranging for resources to be available for the child) are the mechanisms through which parental involvement influences child outcomes (Lamb, et al.,1985; Lamb, 2000). Based on this model, I created an online questionnaire to collect information about parental involvement in children's reading.

The online questionnaire ran on PsyToolkit software (Stoet, 2010, 2017) and contained five sections. Section 1 (4 questions) was used to collect the demographic information about parents and children, including parents' gender, children's gender,

children's age, and children's school year. Questions from Section 2, Section 3 and Section 4 were used to explore the three dimensions of parental involvement (engagement, accessibility, and responsibility). Specifically:

Section 2 investigated the first dimension of parental involvement, namely "Engagement". There is only one question in this section - "*How often do you read with your child?*" This question will allow us to know parents' actual reading interactions with their children. This question will be answered by using a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from "Never" (1), "Rarely" (2), "A few times a month" (3), "Several times a week" (4) to "Every day" (5). Parents with a higher score tend to have a higher level of engagement, and consequently, they are more likely to engage in children's reading. Considering the question of "*How often do you read with your child?*" may not be enough, so we also asked parents the question "*Please tell us why you read frequently or infrequently with your child.*" as a complementary. This question helped to better understand the frequency of parent-child reading.

Section 3 (5 questions) investigated the second dimension of parental involvement, that is, "Accessibility". In this section, parents will be asked to answer five questions regarding their indirect involvement in children's reading (parent is physically and mentally available, merely providing support and resources). Each item will be answered by using a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from "Never" (1), "Rarely" (2), "Sometimes" (3), "Often" (4) to "Always" (5). Parents who achieve a higher score tend to have a higher level of accessibility. Cronbach's alpha for this test was .721.

Section 4 (9 questions) explored the third dimension of parental involvement, namely "Responsibility" (parent takes responsibility for the child's care and arranging for resources to be available for the child). Each item will be answered by using a 5-point Likert scale, from strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. Parents with a higher score are more likely to take the responsibility of children's reading. Cronbach's alpha was .827 in this study.

Section 5 explored children's reading interest by investigating children's reading frequency of each genre. Parents will be asked to rate how often does their child read a specific genre. A 5-point Likert scale will be used to score each item, ranging from "Never" (1), "Rarely" (2), " Sometimes " (3), "Often" (4) to "Always"(5). The surveyed children with a higher score in a particular genre, represents they read more books about this type of genre.

5.1.4 Procedure

In the UK, only parents of children aged 5 to 12 were invited from Prolific to participate in this study. If they have more than one child aged 5 to 12, they were asked to select only one (the one they understand best) and then to make the responses to the questionnaire. After reading the information sheet online and giving consent to this study, parents began to complete the online questionnaire.

5.1.5 Data analysis

5.1.5.1 How did I measure children's reading interests?

According to Ross (2009), the term reading interest points to a key question: what kinds of genres give people sufficient pleasure that they choose to continue reading rather than put the materials down? That is, reading interest refers: (1) a reader's interest in reading itself, as measured by the amount of time that a reader spends on reading; (2) what a reader wants to read about, as expressed by a list of genres that the reader reads by preference. Thus, in this study, reading interest was measured from two aspects: (1) reading frequency - to measure how much time a child spends on reading; (2) genre preference - to measure a child's preference for each genre.

5.1.5.2 Statistical analysis

To examine the differences between father involvement and mother involvement in children's reading, a two-way repeated measures ANOVA was conducted with a 2 (parent: father vs. mother) x 3 (parental involvement: engagement, accessibility and

responsibility) design.

An ANOVA analysis with a 2 (parent: father vs mother) x 2 (child: boy vs girl) design was conducted to examine whether fathers and mothers are differently involved with boys and girls in reading.

A regression analysis was performed to explore the relationships between parental involvement in children's reading and children's reading interests.

5.2 Results

5.2.1 Difference between father involvement and mother involvement in children's reading

Table 5.2: Means and standard deviations of the reported scores of the three dimensions of parental involvement in children's reading (N=129)

Parental involvement in children's reading	M	SD
Father involvement in children's reading		
Engagement	3.63	1.08
Accessibility	4.35	0.47
Responsibility	3.93	0.52
Mother involvement in children's reading		
Engagement	4.06	0.87
Accessibility	4.44	0.54
Responsibility	4.08	0.60

Table 5.2 presents the means and standard deviations of each dimension of parental involvement (6 item in total, including 3 from maternal reports and 3 from paternal reports). To examine the differences between father involvement and mother involvement in children's reading, a two-way repeated measures ANOVA was conducted with a 2 (parent: father vs. mother) x 3 (parental involvement: engagement, accessibility and responsibility) design.

Mauchly's test indicated that the assumption of sphericity had been violated, $\chi^2(2) = 27.044, p < 0.001$. Therefore, degrees of freedom were corrected using Greenhouse -

Geisser estimates of sphericity ($\epsilon = .838$). Main effect of parental involvement was statistically significant, $F(1.676, 212.88) = 22.219, p < .001, \eta^2 = .149$. The interaction between parents' gender and parental involvement was not significant, $F(1.676, 212.88) = 2.224, p = .12, \eta^2 = .017$.

Univariate tests indicated a significant simple effect of parents' gender on parental involvement in children's reading, $F(1, 127) = 8.216, p = .005, \eta^2 = .061$, suggesting that in general, mothers were more likely than fathers to be involved in children's reading. A significant simple effect of parents' gender on engagement $F(1, 127) = 6.212, p = .014, \eta^2 = .047$, implying that mothers engaged more frequently with their children than did fathers in one-on-one parent-child reading. However, the simple effect of parents' gender on accessibility was not significant, $F(1, 127) = 1.164, p = .283, \eta^2 = .009$. The simple effect of parents' gender on responsibility was not significant either, $F(1, 127) = 2.492, p = .117, \eta^2 = .019$. The results confirmed the hypothesis that mothers are more likely than fathers to be involved in children's reading through the dimension of engagement. However, the assumption that mothers are more involved in children's reading through the dimension of accessibility and responsibility can not be confirmed.

To examine whether fathers and mothers are differently involved with boys and girls in reading, an ANOVA analysis with a 2 (parent: father vs mother) x 2 (child: boy vs girl) design was conducted. Table 5.3 presents the means and standard deviations of each dimension of parental involvement by parent's gender and children's gender.

Results from univariate tests indicated that a main effect of parents' gender on parental engagement in children's reading, $F(1, 125) = 6.974, p = .009, \eta^2 = .053$. While the main effect of parents' gender on parental accessibility in children's reading was not significant, $F(1, 125) = 1.121, p = .292, \eta^2 = .009$. The main effect of parents' gender on parental responsibility in children's reading was not significant, $F(1, 125) = 2.188, p = .142, \eta^2 = .017$. These results consisted with our previous

findings that mothers are more likely than fathers to be involved in children's reading through the dimension of engagement.

Univariate tests also revealed that the main effect of children's gender on all three dimension were not significant, engagement, $F(1, 125) = 2.882, p = .0422, \eta^2 = .000$, accessibility, $F(1, 125) = 1.097, p = .297, \eta^2 = .009$, responsibility, $F(1, 125) = 0.503, p = .48, \eta^2 = .004$.

Furthermore, the interactions between parents' gender and children's gender on all three dimension were not significant [engagement, $F(1, 125) = 2.882, p = .092, \eta^2 = .023$, accessibility, $F(1, 125) = .018, p = .894, \eta^2 = .000$, responsibility, $F(1, 125) = 1.684, p = .197, \eta^2 = .013$, respectively.] That is to say, both fathers and mothers were equally involved with boys' and girls' reading through all three dimensions: engagement, accessibility and responsibility), and therefore, our hypothesis both fathers and mothers are more likely to be involved with daughters than sons in reading through all three dimensions was not confirmed.

Table 5.3: Means and standard deviations of the reported scores of the three dimensions of parental involvement in children's reading by parents' gender and children's gender (N=129)

Parental involvement in children's reading	Parent Gender	Child Gender	M	SD
Engagement	Male	Boy	3.78	0.99
		Girl	3.45	1.18
		Total	3.63	1.08
	Female	Boy	3.94	0.98
		Girl	4.20	0.71
		Total	4.06	0.87
	Total	Boy	3.86	0.98
		Girl	3.83	1.04
		Total	3.85	1.00
Accessibility	Male	Boy	4.31	0.45
		Girl	4.39	0.51
		Total	4.35	0.47
	Female	Boy	4.39	0.59
		Girl	4.50	0.48
		Total	4.44	0.54
	Total	Boy	4.35	0.52
		Girl	4.45	0.49
		Total	4.40	0.51
Responsibility	Male	Boy	3.90	0.56
		Girl	3.96	0.49
		Total	3.93	0.52
	Female	Boy	4.18	0.61
		Girl	3.98	0.59
		Total	4.08	0.60
	Total	Boy	4.03	0.59
		Girl	3.97	0.54
		Total	4.00	0.57

5.2.2 The relationships between parental involvement in children's reading and children's reading interests

When moving focus to the relationships between parental involvement in children's reading and children's reading interests, this study predicted that all three dimensions of parental involvement positively predict children's reading interests.

As mentioned earlier, reading interest is often measured from two aspects: (1) reading frequency - to measure how much time a reader spends on reading; (2) genre preference - to measure children's preference on each genre. Thus, in this study, a child's reading interest was assessed by two measures: (1) the score of children's frequency of reading outside of school that assessed children's reading frequency, and (2) the score of children's reading frequency on each genre that assessed children's genre preference.

To examine the relationships between parental involvement in children's reading and children's reading interests, multiple linear regression analyses were conducted. The three dimensions of parental involvement (engagement, accessibility and responsibility) in children's reading, parent gender, child gender and child age were used to predict children's reading interests (reading frequency and genre preference). The assumptions of linearity, normally distributed errors, and uncorrelated errors were checked and met for all multiple linear regression analyses.

5.2.2.1 Children's reading frequency

The first multiple linear regression analysis assessed children's reading frequency. Parental engagement, parental accessibility, parental responsibility, parent gender, child gender and child age were used as predictors of reading frequency. Table 5.4 represents the unstandardized and standardized coefficients, and multicollinearity of the paths from all predictor variables to children's reading frequency.

As it can be seen from Table 5.4, the entire group of variables significantly predicted

children's reading frequency, $F(6, 122) = 7.58, p < 0.001$, adjusted $R^2 = 0.236$. As indicated by the R^2 measure, a total of 23.6% of the variance in the children's reading frequency can be predicted by the predictors. Both parental engagement ($\beta = 0.346, p < 0.001$) and parental responsibility ($\beta = 0.288, p = 0.002$) significantly predicted children's reading frequency, while prenatal accessibility did not ($\beta = -0.084, p = 0.342$). That is to say, when parents read with their children more often and had a strong sense of responsibility on children's reading, their children read more frequently. The age of child also significantly predicted children's reading frequency ($\beta = 0.17, p = 0.05$), suggesting that older children read more often than younger children. Whereas, the gender of parent ($\beta = 0.108, p = 0.18$) and the gender of child ($\beta = 0.111, p = 0.16$) did not significantly predict children's reading frequency.

The formula of the model was: Children's reading frequency = $0.898 + 0.42 \times \text{parental engagement} - 0.031 \times \text{parental accessibility} + 0.062 \times \text{parental responsibility} + 0.261 \times \text{parent gender} + 0.27 \times \text{child gender} + 0.086 \times \text{child age}$.

Table 5.4: Multiple regression analysis summary predicting children's reading frequency from all predictor variables (N=129)

Predictor Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.	Collinearity Tolerance	Statistics VIF
	B	Std. Error					
Constant	0.898	0.943		0.952	0.343		
Engagement	0.420	0.114	0.346	3.687	0.000	0.678	1.475
Accessibility	-0.031	0.033	-0.084	-0.953	0.342	0.772	1.295
Responsibility	0.062	0.019	0.288	3.207	0.002	0.742	1.347
Gender of parent	0.261	0.194	0.108	1.348	0.180	0.937	1.067
Gender of child	0.270	0.191	0.111	1.413	0.160	0.971	1.030
Age of child	0.086	0.043	0.170	1.982	0.050	0.815	1.226
R2				0.272			
ΔR^2				0.236			
F				F (6,122) = 7.580, P = 0.000			
Durbin-Watson				2.201			

5.2.2.2 Children's genre preferences

Table 5.5 shows children's genre preference for each genre. Similarly to our Study 1, adventure, humour, fantasy, fairy tale/ folktale/ legend/myth/ fable, science fiction, mystery and comics/Graphic Novel/ Manga were the top popular genres by both boys and girls, while religion and was the least favoured gender by both boys and girls.

Table 5.5: Children's genre preference for each genre (N=129)

Genre	Child Gender	N	M	SD
Adventure	Boy	70	3.74	0.74
	Girl	59	3.63	0.69
Fantasy	Boy	70	3.36	0.84
	Girl	59	3.61	0.89
Fairy Tale/ Folktale/ Legend/Myth/ Fable	Boy	70	3.24	0.84
	Girl	59	3.49	0.90
Comics/Graphic Novel/ Manga	Boy	70	3.00	1.18
	Girl	59	2.20	1.20
Mystery	Boy	70	2.84	0.94
	Girl	59	2.71	1.04
Humour	Boy	70	3.53	0.79
	Girl	59	3.10	0.94
Horror	Boy	70	1.79	0.86
	Girl	59	1.91	0.90
Romance	Boy	70	1.47	0.74
	Girl	59	1.83	0.94
Historical fiction	Boy	70	2.77	1.02
	Girl	59	2.56	0.93
Realistic fiction	Boy	70	2.96	1.03
	Girl	59	2.66	0.98
Science fiction	Boy	70	2.93	1.01
	Girl	59	2.37	1.07
Biography/Autobiography/ Memoir	Boy	70	2.03	1.06
	Girl	59	1.63	0.79
How-to-manuals	Boy	70	2.23	1.02
	Girl	59	1.85	1.06
Education & Study Guides	Boy	70	2.80	1.22
	Girl	59	2.53	1.24
Science & Technology	Boy	70	2.91	1.07
	Girl	59	2.24	1.07
Sports	Boy	70	2.80	1.30
	Girl	59	1.92	1.01
Religion	Boy	70	1.89	1.14
	Girl	59	1.76	1.10
Poetry	Boy	70	2.09	1.03
	Girl	59	2.36	1.05

Multiple linear regression analyses were conducted to examine the relationship between parental involvement in children's genre preference. The three dimensions of parental involvement (engagement, accessibility and responsibility) in children's reading, parent gender, child gender and child age were considered to predict children's preference for each genre.

Table 5.6 presents the prediction of children's preference for adventure from parental engagement, parental accessibility, parental responsibility, parents' gender, children's gender and children's age.

Table 5.6: Multiple regression analysis summary predicting children's Preference for Adventure from all predictor variables (N=129)

Predictor Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.	Collinearity Tolerance	Statistics VIF
	B	Std. Error					
Constant	1.041	0.575		1.809	0.073		
Engagement	0.026	0.070	0.037	0.376	0.707	0.678	1.475
Accessibility	0.038	0.020	0.174	1.903	0.059	0.772	1.295
Responsibility	0.041	0.012	0.328	3.525	0.001	0.742	1.347
Gender of parent	0.032	0.118	0.022	0.271	0.787	0.937	1.067
Gender of child	-0.102	0.117	-0.071	-0.876	0.383	0.971	1.030
Age of child	0.018	0.026	0.059	0.668	0.506	0.815	1.226
R2				0.214			
Δ R2				0.175			
F				F (6,122) = 5.532, P=0.000			
Durbin-Watson				1.815			

The entire group of variables significantly predicted children's preference for adventure, $F(6, 122) = 5.532, p < 0.001$, adjusted $R^2 = 0.175$. As indicated by the R2 measure, 17.5% of the variance in the genre preference variable was explained by the model. Parental responsibility significantly predicted children's preference for adventure ($\beta = 0.328, p = 0.001$), while parental engagement and ($\beta = 0.037, p = 0.707$) and parental accessibility ($\beta = 0.174, p = 0.059$) did not. This suggested that

children whose parents took more responsibility on their reading would read more adventure. For the demographic variables, parents' gender ($\beta = 0.022$, $p = 0.787$), children's gender ($\beta = -0.071$, $p=0.38$) and child age ($\beta= 0.059$, $p= 0.506$) did not significantly predict children's preference for adventure.

Table 5.7 shows the prediction of children's preference for fantasy from parental engagement, parental accessibility, parental responsibility, parents' gender, children's gender and children's age.

Table 5.7: Multiple regression analysis summary predicting children's Preference for Fantasy from all predictor variables (N=129)

Predictor Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.	Collinearity Tolerance	Statistics VIF
	B	Std. Error					
Constant	2.066	0.762		2.712	0.008		
Engagement	0.057	0.092	0.066	0.619	0.537	0.678	1.475
Accessibility	-0.007	0.026	-0.025	-0.253	0.801	0.772	1.295
Responsibility	0.018	0.016	0.120	1.183	0.239	0.742	1.347
Gender of parent	-0.152	0.157	-0.088	-0.973	0.333	0.937	1.067
Gender of child	0.294	0.154	0.170	1.908	0.059	0.971	1.030
Age of child	0.046	0.035	0.128	1.313	0.192	0.815	1.226
R2			0.016				
$\Delta R2$			0.014				
F			F (6,122)=1.311, P=0.257				
Durbin-Watson			2.062				

In this regression model, as P value = $0.257 > 0.05$, implying there is no enough evidence to suggest that all the predictors could significantly predict children's preference for fantasy.

Table 5.8 shows the prediction of children's preference form parental engagement, parental accessibility, parental responsibility, parents' gender, children's gender and children's age. The entire group of variables significantly predicted children's

preference for fairy tales/folktale/legend/myth/fable, $F(6, 122) = 5.01$, $p < 0.001$, adjusted $R^2 = 0.158$. As indicated by the R^2 measure, 15.8% of the variance in the genre preference variable was explained by the model. Parental engagement significantly predicted children's preference for fairy tales/folktale/legend/myth/fable ($\beta = 0.251$, $p = 0.012$), suggested that children whose parents were more frequently engaged in parent-child reading would read more books about fairy tales/folktale/legend/myth/fable. However, parental accessibility ($\beta = 0.042$, $p = 0.65$) and parental responsibility ($\beta = 0.114$, $p = 0.23$) did not significantly predict children's preference for fairy tales/folktale/legend/myth/fable. Parents' gender ($\beta = -0.189$, $p = 0.026$) and children's age ($\beta = -0.071$, $p = 0.029$) negatively predicted children's preference for fairy tales/folktale/legend/myth/fable, while children's gender ($\beta = 0.122$, $p = 0.142$) did not significantly predict children's preference for fairy tales/folktale/legend/myth/fable. That is, fathers were more likely than mothers to report that their children enjoy fairy tales/folktale/legend/myth/fable. Younger children were more likely than older children to read fairy tales/folktale/legend/myth/fable.

Table 5.8: Multiple regression analysis summary predicting children's preference for Fairy Tales/Folktale/Legend/Myth/Fable from all predictor variables (N=129)

Predictor Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.	Collinearity Tolerance	Statistics VIF
	B	Std. Error					
Constant	2.374	0.709		3.348	0.001		
Engagement	0.219	0.086	0.251	2.553	0.012	0.678	1.475
Accessibility	0.011	0.024	0.042	0.454	0.650	0.772	1.295
Responsibility	0.017	0.014	0.114	1.206	0.230	0.742	1.347
Gender of parent	-0.329	0.146	-0.189	-2.258	0.026	0.937	1.067
Gender of child	0.212	0.144	0.122	1.477	0.142	0.971	1.030
Age of child	-0.072	0.033	-0.199	-2.212	0.029	0.815	1.226
R2				0.198			
$\Delta R2$				0.158			
F				F (6,122) = 5.010, P = 0.000			
Durbin-Watson				1.950			

Table 5.9 shows the prediction of children's preference for comics/graphic novel/manga from parental engagement, parental accessibility, parental responsibility, parents' gender, children's gender and children's age.

The entire group of variables significantly predicted children's preference for comics/graphic novel/manga, $F(6, 122) = 3.864$, $p = 0.001$, adjusted $R^2 = 0.118$, indicating that 11.8% of the variance in the genre preference variable was explained by the model. Only children's gender ($\beta = -0.201$, $p = 0.001$) has been found significantly predicted children's preferences for comics/graphic novel/manga, suggesting that boys were more likely than girls to read comics/graphic novel/manga. The all three dimensions of parental involvement did not significantly predict children's preference for comics/graphic novel/manga.

Table 5.9: Multiple regression analysis summary predicting children's preference for Comics/Graphic Novel/ Manga from all predictor variables (N=129)

Predictor Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.	Collinearity Tolerance	Statistics VIF
	B	Std. Error					
Constant	2.009	1.038		1.935	0.055		
Engagement	0.025	0.126	0.020	0.196	0.845	0.678	1.475
Accessibility	0.058	0.036	0.153	1.625	0.107	0.772	1.295
Responsibility	0.004	0.021	0.017	0.182	0.856	0.742	1.347
Gender of parent	-0.256	0.213	-0.103	-1.200	0.233	0.937	1.067
Gender of child	-0.752	0.210	-0.301	-3.572	0.001	0.971	1.030
Age of child	0.066	0.048	0.127	1.378	0.171	0.815	1.226
R2			0.160				
$\Delta R2$			0.118				
F			F (6,122) = 3.864		P = 0.001		
Durbin-Watson			1.745				

Table 5.10 illustrates the prediction of children's preference for mystery from parental engagement, parental accessibility, parental responsibility, parents' gender, children's gender and children's age.

Table 5.10: Multiple regression analysis summary predicting children's preference for Mystery from all predictor variables (N=129)

Predictor Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.	Collinearity Tolerance	Statistics VIF
	B	Std. Error					
Constant	-0.858	0.796		-1.078	0.283		
Engagement	0.198	0.096	0.201	2.054	0.042	0.678	1.475
Accessibility	-0.002	0.027	-0.005	-0.056	0.956	0.772	1.295
Responsibility	0.035	0.016	0.204	2.173	0.032	0.742	1.347
Gender of parent	0.248	0.164	0.126	1.515	0.132	0.937	1.067
Gender of child	-0.029	0.161	-0.015	-0.182	0.856	0.971	1.030
Age of child	0.136	0.037	0.332	3.717	0.000	0.815	1.226
R2				0.204			
ΔR^2				0.165			
F				F (6,122) = 5.221, P=0.000			
Durbin-Watson				2.241			

The entire group of variables significantly predicted children's preference for mystery, $F(6, 122) = 5.221, p < 0.001$, adjusted $R^2 = 0.165$, indicating that 16.5% of the variance in the genre preference could be explained by the model. Both parental engagement ($\beta = -0.201, p = 0.042$) and parental responsibility ($\beta = 0.204, p = 0.032$) significantly predicted children's preference for mystery, while parental accessibility ($\beta = -0.005, p = 0.956$) did not. This suggested that children would read more mystery when their parents were more frequently engaged in one-on-one parent-child reading, and when their parents put more responsibility on children's reading. For the demographic variables, only children's age significantly predicted children's preference for mystery, indicating that older children were more likely than younger children to read mystery.

Table 5.11 shows the prediction of children's preference for humour from parental engagement, parental accessibility, parental responsibility, parents' gender, children's gender and children's age.

Table 5.11: Multiple regression analysis summary predicting children's preference for Humour from all predictor variables (N=129)

Predictor Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.	Collinearity Tolerance	Statistics VIF
	B	Std. Error					
Constant	4.139	0.764		5.416	0.000		
Engagement	-0.066	0.092	-0.074	-0.710	0.479	0.678	1.475
Accessibility	-0.025	0.026	-0.092	-0.941	0.349	0.772	1.295
Responsibility	0.026	0.016	0.166	1.665	0.098	0.742	1.347
Gender of parent	0.049	0.157	0.028	0.314	0.754	0.937	1.067
Gender of child	-0.459	0.155	-0.259	-2.961	0.004	0.971	1.030
Age of child	-0.052	0.035	-0.142	-1.489	0.139	0.815	1.226
R2				0.097			
ΔR^2				0.052			
F				F (6,122) = 2.177, $P=0.050$			
Durbin-Watson				2.193			

The entire group of variables significantly predicted children's preference for humour, $F(6, 122) = 2.177, p = 0.05$, adjusted $R^2 = 0.052$. As indicated by the R^2 measure, a total of 5.2% of the variance in the genre preference was explained by the model. Only children's gender significantly predict children's preference for humour ($\beta = -0.259, p = 0.004$). This suggested that boys were more likely than girls to read humour. The all three dimensions of parental involvement, namely parental engagement, parental accessibility and parental responsibility did not significantly predicted children's preference for humour.

Table 5.12 shows the prediction of children's preference for horror from parental engagement, parental accessibility, parental responsibility, parents' gender, children's gender and children's age.

Table 5.12: Multiple regression analysis summary predicting children's preference for Horror from all predictor variables (N=129)

Predictor Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.	Collinearity Tolerance	Statistics VIF
	B	Std. Error					
Constant	-0.345	1.462		-0.236	0.814		
Engagement	0.070	0.115	0.088	0.610	0.544	0.735	1.361
Accessibility	-0.046	0.030	-0.203	-1.537	0.130	0.866	1.155
Responsibility	0.015	0.020	0.102	0.752	0.455	0.818	1.223
Gender of parent	0.069	0.232	0.040	0.298	0.767	0.851	1.174
Gender of child	0.063	0.229	0.035	0.276	0.784	0.951	1.052
Age of child	0.204	0.101	0.264	2.013	0.049	0.881	1.135
R2				0.107			
$\Delta R2$				0.016			
F				F (6,122) = 1.181, $P=0.29$			
Durbin-Watson				1.821			

In this regression model, as P value = 0. 29 >0.05, suggesting there is no enough evidence to confirm that all the predictors could significantly predict children's preference for horror.

Table 5.13 shows the prediction of children's preference for romance from parental engagement, parental accessibility, parental responsibility, parents' gender, children's gender and children's age.

In this regression model, as P value = 0. 603 >0.05, indicating there is no enough evidence to suggest that all the predictors could significantly predict children's preference for romance.

Table 5.13: Multiple regression analysis summary predicting children's preference for Romance from all predictor variables (N=129)

Predictor Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.	Collinearity Tolerance	Statistics VIF
	B	Std. Error					
Constant	1.026	1.409		0.728	0.469		
Engagement	0.081	0.111	0.107	0.730	0.469	0.735	1.361
Accessibility	-0.033	0.029	-0.156	-1.154	0.253	0.866	1.155
Responsibility	0.008	0.019	0.058	0.420	0.676	0.818	1.223
Gender of parent	-0.041	0.223	-0.025	-0.184	0.855	0.851	1.174
Gender of child	0.372	0.220	0.217	1.688	0.097	0.951	1.052
Age of child	0.024	0.098	0.033	0.249	0.804	0.881	1.135
R2				0.072			
$\Delta R2$				- 0.022			
F				F (6,122) = 0.762, $P=0.603$			
Durbin-Watson				2.211			

Table 5.14 shows the prediction of children's preference for historical fiction from parental engagement, parental accessibility, parental responsibility, parents' gender, children's gender and children's age.

The entire group of variables significantly predicted children's preference for historical fiction, $F(6, 122) = 4.181$, $p = 0.001$, adjusted $R^2 = 0.13$. As indicated by the R^2 measure, a total of 13% of the variance in the genre preference was explained by the model. Both parental engagement ($\beta = 0.322$, $p = 0.001$) and parental responsibility ($\beta = 0.194$, $p = 0.044$) significantly predicted children's preference for historical fiction. However, parental accessibility ($\beta = -0.108$, $p = 0.252$) did not. That is to say, children would read more historical fiction when their parents engaged more in parent-child reading, and when their parents took more responsibility on children's reading. Parents' gender ($\beta = 0.021$, $p = 0.808$), children's gender ($\beta = -0.08$, $p = 0.339$) and children's age ($\beta = 0.123$, $p = 0.181$) did not significantly predict children's preference for historical fiction.

Table 5.14: Multiple regression analysis summary predicting children's preference for Historical Fiction from all predictor variables (N=129)

Predictor Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.	Collinearity Tolerance	Statistics VIF
	B	Std. Error					
Constant	0.517	0.814		0.636	0.526		
Engagement	0.326	0.098	0.332	3.320	0.001	0.678	1.475
Accessibility	-0.032	0.028	-0.108	-1.152	0.252	0.772	1.295
Responsibility	0.034	0.017	0.194	2.031	0.044	0.742	1.347
Gender of parent	0.041	0.167	0.021	0.243	0.808	0.937	1.067
Gender of child	-0.158	0.165	-0.080	-0.960	0.339	0.971	1.030
Age of child	0.050	0.037	0.123	1.347	0.181	0.815	1.226
R2				0.171			
$\Delta R2$				0.130			
F				F (6,122) = 4.181, $P=0.001$			
Durbin-Watson				2.103			

Table 5.15 shows the prediction of children's preference for realistic fiction from parental engagement, parental accessibility, parental responsibility, parents' gender, children's gender and children's age.

The entire group of variables significantly predicted children's preference for realistic fiction, $F(6, 122) = 3.788$, $p = 0.002$, adjusted $R^2 = 0.116$. As indicated by the R^2 measure, a total of 11.6% of the variance in the genre preference was explained by the model. Parental responsibility ($\beta = 0.203$, $p = 0.037$) significantly predicted children's preference for realistic fiction. However, parental engagement ($\beta = 0.17$, $p = 0.09$) and parental accessibility ($\beta = 0.027$, $p = 0.773$) did not significantly predict children's preference for realistic fiction. This suggested that children would read more realistic fiction when their parents had a strong sense of responsibility on children's reading. For the demographic variables, children's age significantly predicted children's preference for realistic fiction ($\beta = 0.228$, $p = 0.015$), while parents' gender ($\beta = 0.014$,

$p = 0.872$) and children's gender ($\beta = -0.109, p = 0.2$) did not, suggesting that older children read more realistic fiction than younger children.

Table 5.15 : Multiple regression analysis summary predicting children's preference for Realistic Fiction from all predictor variables (N=129)

Predictor Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.	Collinearity Tolerance	Statistics VIF
	B	Std. Error					
Constant	-0.029	0.842		-0.034	0.973		
Engagement	0.174	0.102	0.173	1.710	0.090	0.678	1.475
Accessibility	0.008	0.029	0.027	0.289	0.773	0.772	1.295
Responsibility	0.036	0.017	0.203	2.105	0.037	0.742	1.347
Gender of parent	0.028	0.173	0.014	0.161	0.872	0.937	1.067
Gender of child	-0.220	0.171	-0.109	-1.289	0.200	0.971	1.030
Age of child	0.096	0.039	0.228	2.471	0.015	0.815	1.226
R2				0.157			
ΔR^2				0.116			
F				F (6, 122) = 3.788, $P=0.002$			
Durbin-Watson				2.167			

Table 5.16 shows the prediction of children's preference for science fiction from parental engagement, parental accessibility, parental responsibility, parents' gender, children's gender and children's age.

The entire group of variables significantly predicted children's preference for science fiction, $F(6, 122) = 4.313, p = 0.001$, adjusted $R^2 = 0.14$. As indicated by the R^2 measure, 13.4 % of the variance in the genre preference was explained by the model. Parental engagement ($\beta = 0.221, p = 0.029$) significantly predicted children's preference for science fiction. However, parental accessibility ($\beta = -0.002, p = 0.772$) and parental responsibility ($\beta = 0.142, p = 0.982$) did not. This suggested that children would read more science fiction when their parents were more engaged in parent-child reading. For the demographic variables, children's gender ($\beta = -0.223, p = 0.009$) and children's age ($\beta = 0.216, p = 0.019$) significantly predicted children's preference for science fiction, while parents' gender ($\beta = -0.027, p = 0.747$) did not.

This suggested that boys were more likely than girls to read science fiction, and older children were more likely than younger children to read science fiction.

Table 5.16: Multiple regression analysis summary predicting children's preference for Science Fiction from all predictor variables (N=129)

Predictor Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.	Collinearity Tolerance	Statistics VIF
	B	Std. Error					
Constant	0.665	0.880		0.755	0.451		
Engagement	0.236	0.106	0.221	2.214	0.029	0.678	1.475
Accessibility	-0.001	0.030	-0.002	-0.023	0.982	0.772	1.295
Responsibility	0.027	0.018	0.142	1.488	0.139	0.742	1.347
Gender of parent	-0.059	0.181	-0.027	-0.324	0.747	0.937	1.067
Gender of child	-0.476	0.178	-0.223	-2.666	0.009	0.971	1.030
Age of child	0.096	0.040	0.216	2.371	0.019	0.815	1.226
R2				0.175			
ΔR2				0.134			
F				F (6, 122) = 4.313, P = 0.001			
Durbin-Watson				2.189			

Table 5.17 shows the prediction of children's preference for biography/autobiography/ memoir from parental engagement, parental accessibility, parental responsibility, parents' gender, children's gender and children's age.

The entire group of variables significantly predicted children's preference for biography/autobiography/ memoir, $F(6, 122) = 3.26, p = 0.005$, adjusted $R^2 = 0.096$. As indicated by the R^2 measure, 9.6 % of the variance in the genre preference was explained by the model. Parental responsibility ($\beta = 0.203, p = 0.039$) significantly predicted children's preference for biography/autobiography/ memoir. However, parental engagement ($\beta = 0.114, p = 0.267$) and parental accessibility ($\beta = -0.102, p = 0.289$) did not. This indicated that children whose parents put more responsibility on their children's reading would read more biography/autobiography/ memoir. Parents'

gender ($\beta = -0.006$, $p = 0.941$) and children's gender ($\beta = -0.167$, $p = 0.053$) did not significantly predict children's preference for biography/autobiography/ memoir either. However, children's age ($\beta = 0.216$, $p = 0.019$) significantly predicted children's preference for biography/autobiography/ memoir, indicating that older children were more likely than younger children to read biography/autobiography/ memoir.

Table 5.17: Multiple regression analysis summary predicting children's preference for Biography/ Autobiography/ Memoir from all predictor variables (N=129)

Predictor Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.	Collinearity Tolerance	Statistics VIF
	B	Std. Error					
Constant	0.368	0.811		0.454	0.651		
Engagement	0.109	0.098	0.114	1.114	0.267	0.678	1.475
Accessibility	-0.030	0.028	-0.102	-1.066	0.289	0.772	1.295
Responsibility	0.035	0.017	0.203	2.083	0.039	0.742	1.347
Gender of parent	-0.012	0.167	-0.006	-0.074	0.941	0.937	1.067
Gender of child	-0.321	0.164	-0.167	-1.952	0.053	0.971	1.030
Age of child	0.095	0.037	0.237	2.550	0.012	0.815	1.226
R ²				0.138			
ΔR^2				0.096			
F				F (6, 122) = 3.260, P = 0.005			
Durbin-Watson				2.078			

Table 5.18 demonstrates the prediction of children's preference for how-to-manuals from parental engagement, parental accessibility, parental responsibility, parents' gender, children's gender and children's age.

In this regression model, as P value = 0.152 > 0.05, implying there is not enough evidence to suggest that all the predictors could significantly predict children's preference for how-to-manuals.

Table 5.18: Multiple regression analysis summary predicting children's preference for How-to-Manuals from all predictor variables (N=129)

Predictor Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.	Collinearity Tolerance	Statistics VIF
	B	Std. Error					
Constant	1.670	0.921		1.813	0.072		
Engagement	0.129	0.111	0.123	1.161	0.248	0.678	1.475
Accessibility	-0.037	0.032	-0.116	-1.172	0.244	0.772	1.295
Responsibility	0.024	0.019	0.128	1.270	0.207	0.742	1.347
Gender of parent	-0.144	0.189	-0.068	-0.760	0.449	0.937	1.067
Gender of child	-0.328	0.187	-0.155	-1.757	0.081	0.971	1.030
Age of child	0.052	0.042	0.118	1.225	0.223	0.815	1.226
R2				0.073			
$\Delta R2$				0.027			
F				F (6, 122) = 1.602, $P=0.152$			
Durbin-Watson				1.836			

Table 5.19 shows the prediction of children's preference for education & study guides from parental engagement, parental accessibility, parental responsibility, parents' gender, children's gender and children's age.

In this regression model, as P value = 0.091 > 0.05, indicating there is not enough evidence to suggest that all the predictors could significantly predict children's preference for education & study guides.

Table 5.19: Multiple regression analysis summary predicting children's preference for Education & Study Guides from all predictor variables (N=129)

Predictor Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.	Collinearity Tolerance	Statistics VIF
	B	Std. Error					
Constant	3.005	1.069		2.812	0.006		
Engagement	0.040	0.129	0.032	0.309	0.758	0.678	1.475
Accessibility	-0.050	0.037	-0.134	-1.356	0.178	0.772	1.295
Responsibility	0.034	0.022	0.158	1.574	0.118	0.742	1.347
Gender of parent	-0.523	0.220	-0.213	-2.379	0.019	0.937	1.067
Gender of child	-0.220	0.217	-0.089	-1.015	0.312	0.971	1.030
Age of child	0.040	0.049	0.079	0.821	0.413	0.815	1.226
R ²				0.084			
ΔR ²				0.039			
F				F (6, 122) = 1.871, P=0.091			
Durbin-Watson				2.026			

Table 5.20 shows the prediction of children's preference for science & technology from parental engagement, parental accessibility, parental responsibility, parents' gender, children's gender and children's age.

The entire group of variables significantly predicted children's preference for science & technology, $F(6, 122) = 3.933, p = 0.001$, adjusted $R^2 = 0.121$. As indicated by the R^2 measure, 12.1 % of the variance in the genre preference was explained by the model. Parental engagement ($\beta = 0.246, p = 0.016$) significantly predicted children's preference for science & technology, while parental accessibility ($\beta = -0.042, p = 0.658$) and parental responsibility ($\beta = 0.086, p = 0.373$) did not. This suggested that children would read more books about science & technology when their parents were more frequently read with them. While parents' gender ($\beta = -0.088, p = 0.306$) and children's age ($\beta = 0.123, p = 0.183$) did not significantly predict children's preference for science & technology, children's gender did ($\beta = -0.277, p = 0.001$), indicating that boys were more likely than girls to read books about science

and technology.

Table 5.20: Multiple regression analysis summary predicting children's preference for Science & Technology from all predictor variables (N=129)

Predictor Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.	Collinearity Tolerance	Statistics VIF
	B	Std. Error					
Constant	1.886	0.930		2.028	0.045		
Engagement	0.275	0.112	0.246	2.443	0.016	0.678	1.475
Accessibility	-0.014	0.032	-0.042	-0.443	0.658	0.772	1.295
Responsibility	0.017	0.019	0.086	0.895	0.373	0.742	1.347
Gender of parent	-0.197	0.191	-0.088	-1.028	0.306	0.937	1.067
Gender of child	-0.620	0.189	-0.277	-3.287	0.001	0.971	1.030
Age of child	0.057	0.043	0.123	1.338	0.183	0.815	1.226
R2				0.162			
ΔR^2				0.121			
F				F (6, 122) = 3.933, $P=0.001$			
Durbin-Watson				2.044			

Table 5.21 shows the prediction of children's preference for sports from parental engagement, parental accessibility, parental responsibility, parents' gender, children's gender and children's age.

The entire group of variables significantly predicted children's preference for sports, $F(6, 122) = 4.77, p < 0.001$, adjusted $R^2 = 0.15$. As indicated by the R^2 measure, 15 % of the variance in the genre preference was explained by the model. Only children's gender ($\beta = -0.330, p < 0.001$) has been found significantly predicted children's preference for science & technology. However, other variables did not. This suggested that boys were more likely than girls to read books about sports. In addition, parental engagement ($\beta = 0.159, p = 0.111$), parental accessibility ($\beta = 0.021, p = 0.822$) and parental responsibility ($\beta = 0.123, p = 0.197$) did not significantly predict children's

preference for sports.

Table 5.21: Multiple regression analysis summary predicting children's preference for Sports from all predictor variables (N=129)

Predictor Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.	Collinearity Tolerance	Statistics VIF
	B	Std. Error					
Constant	1.830	1.022		1.790	0.076		
Engagement	0.198	0.124	0.159	1.606	0.111	0.678	1.475
Accessibility	0.008	0.035	0.021	0.226	0.822	0.772	1.295
Responsibility	0.027	0.021	0.123	1.297	0.197	0.742	1.347
Gender of parent	-0.337	0.210	-0.135	-1.604	0.111	0.937	1.067
Gender of child	-0.846	0.207	-0.338	-4.083	0.000	0.971	1.030
Age of child	0.032	0.047	0.062	0.687	0.494	0.815	1.226
R2				0.190			
ΔR2				0.150			
F				F (6, 122) = 4.770, P = 0.000			
Durbin-Watson				1.931			

Table 5.22 shows the prediction of children's preference for religion from parental engagement, parental accessibility, parental responsibility, parents' gender, children's gender and children's age.

The entire group of variables significantly predicted children's preference for religion, $F(6, 122) = 3.668, p = 0.002$, adjusted $R^2 = 0.111$. As indicated by the R^2 measure, 11.1 % of the variance in the genre preference was explained by the model. Parental responsibility ($\beta = 0.258, p = 0.009$) significantly predicted children's preference for religion. However, parental engagement ($\beta = 0.258, p = 0.009$) and parental accessibility ($\beta = -0.096, p = 0.311$) did not, suggesting that children would read more books about religion when their parents put more responsibility on children's reading. Parents' gender ($\beta = -0.262, p = 0.002$) also significantly predict children's

preference for religion, while children's gender ($\beta = -0.06$, $p = 0.478$) and children's age ($\beta = -0.13$, $p = 0.162$) did not, indicating that more fathers reported that their children liked to read books about religion.

Table 5.22: Multiple regression analysis summary predicting children's preference for Religion from all predictor variables (N=129)

Predictor Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.	Collinearity Tolerance	Statistics VIF
	B	Std. Error					
Constant	1.481	0.934		1.587	0.115		
Engagement	0.163	0.113	0.146	1.443	0.151	0.678	1.475
Accessibility	-0.033	0.032	-0.096	-1.017	0.311	0.772	1.295
Responsibility	0.051	0.019	0.258	2.665	0.009	0.742	1.347
Gender of parent	-0.584	0.192	-0.262	-3.042	0.003	0.937	1.067
Gender of child	-0.135	0.189	-0.060	-0.711	0.478	0.971	1.030
Age of child	-0.060	0.043	-0.130	-1.406	0.162	0.815	1.226
R2				0.153			
$\Delta R2$				0.111			
F				F (6, 122) = 3.668, $P = 0.002$			
Durbin-Watson				2.234			

Table 5.23 shows the prediction of children's preference for poetry from parental engagement, parental accessibility, parental responsibility, parents' gender, children's gender and children's age.

In this regression model, as P value = 0.072 > 0.05, there is not enough evidence to suggest that all the predictors significantly predict children's preference for poetry.

Table 5.23: Multiple regression analysis summary predicting children's preference for Poetry from all predictor variables (N=129)

Predictor Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.	Collinearity Tolerance	Statistics VIF
	B	Std. Error					
Constant	0.472	0.903		0.523	0.602		
Engagement	0.061	0.109	0.058	0.556	0.579	0.678	1.475
Accessibility	-0.039	0.031	-0.122	-1.244	0.216	0.772	1.295
Responsibility	0.051	0.018	0.277	2.760	0.007	0.742	1.347
Gender of parent	-0.104	0.186	-0.050	-0.563	0.575	0.937	1.067
Gender of child	0.293	0.183	0.140	1.599	0.112	0.971	1.030
Age of child	0.006	0.042	0.014	0.142	0.887	0.815	1.226
R2				0.89			
Δ R2				0.044			
F				F (6, 122) = 1.988, $P = 0.072$			
Durbin-Watson				1.892			

In summary, among three dimensions (engagement, accessibility and responsibility) of parental involvement, parental engagement and parental responsibility significantly predict children's reading interests in terms of both reading frequency and genre preference, while parental accessibility did not.

Regarding the relationships between parental involvement and children's reading frequency, the results indicated that parental engagement ($\beta = 0.346, p < 0.001$) and parental responsibility ($\beta = 0.288, p = 0.002$) positively predicted children's reading frequency. These findings suggest that children read more frequently when their parents are more engaged in reading with them, and take greater responsibility for their reading, even after controlling parents' gender, children's gender and children's age.

When it comes to the relationships between parental involvement and children's genre preference, the results revealed that parental engagement positively predicted children's genre preferences for fairy tales/folktale/legend/myth/fable ($\beta = 0.251, p =$

0.012), mystery ($\beta = -0.201, p = 0.042$), historical fiction ($\beta = 0.322, p = 0.001$), science fiction ($\beta = 0.221, p = 0.029$) and science & technology ($\beta = 0.246, p = 0.016$). Moreover, parental responsibility significantly predicted children's genre preference for adventure ($\beta = 0.328, p = 0.001$), mystery ($\beta = 0.204, p = 0.032$), historical fiction ($\beta=0.194, p=0.044$), realistic fiction ($\beta = 0.203, p = 0.037$), biography/autobiography/memoir ($\beta = 0.203, p = 0.039$) and religion ($\beta = 0.258, p = 0.009$), even when parents' gender, children's gender and children' age were considered.

Therefore, our hypothesis that all three dimensions (engagement, accessibility and responsibility) of parental involvement would predict children's reading interests was not supported. In this study, only engagement and responsibility significantly predicted children's reading interests.

5.3 Initial discussion of Study Three

Section 5.3 summarizes the main findings and offers an initial discussion of Study Three.

5.3.1 Study overview

5.3.1.1 Are mothers and fathers differently involved in children's reading?

This study proposes to conduct an analysis in the UK to explore the relationships between parental involvement in children's reading (through three dimensions: engagement, accessibility and responsibility) and how it impacts children's reading interests.

Historically, mothers have spent more time with their children than fathers, although this has been changing with increased parental involvement in recent decades. (West et al., 1998; Fisher, McCulloch & Gershuny, 1999; Breiner, Ford & Gadsden, 2016). Therefore, this study first hypothesized that mothers and fathers would be differently involved in children's reading activities, with mothers being more involved in

children's reading through all three dimensions: engagement, accessibility and responsibility. A two-way repeated measures ANOVA with a 2 (parent: father vs. mother) x 3 (parental involvement: engagement, accessibility and responsibility) design was conducted to examine differences between father involvement and mother involvement in children's reading. The results suggested that, overall, mothers were more likely than fathers to be involved in children's reading. This finding is consistent with previous studies suggesting that mothers still assume primary responsibility for their children's education (e.g. West et al., 1998). Clark (2009) also noted that mothers devote twice as much time as fathers to raising their children.

When examining how mothers and fathers are involved in with children across the dimensions of engagement, accessibility and responsibility, the results showed that mothers engaged more frequently with their children than fathers in one-on-one parent-child reading, suggesting that mothers are more likely than fathers to be involved in children's reading through engagement. However, our assumption that mothers would be more likely to be involved in children's reading through the dimension of accessibility and responsibility was not supported, as the simple effects of parents' gender on accessibility and responsibility were not significant. As such, our first hypothesis that mothers and fathers are differently involved in children's reading through engagement, accessibility and responsibility can not be confirmed. This may be explained by the changing outlook of fatherhood. Research has shown that fathers today spend more time than before on child's upbringing (Norman, et.al, 2023). Results from a Scottish survey (South Lanarkshire Home School Partnership, 2007) indicated that most fathers are engaged in educational activities with their children. In terms of reading, 86% of fathers reported that they read books with their children at home. According to Hurrell & Davies (2005), some fathers in the UK spend the same amount of time as mothers on reading, playing, and talking with their children. All these findings suggest that fathers of today are actively involved in children's reading activities. Therefore, in this study, no differences were found between mothers and fathers in parental accessibility and parental responsibility when

supporting children's reading.

An interesting finding from this study was that parents were more involved in the dimension of accessibility and responsibility than in the dimension of engagement, suggesting that both mothers and fathers are more likely to act indirectly than directly in reading activities. In other words, compared to having one-on-one reading interactions with their children, such as reading with children, and reading to children, parents prefer to support children's reading when children ask for help. Parents are also willing to take responsibility for their children's reading and providing reading-related resources to their children. This may be due to parents' employment status. According to Clark (2009), father involvement is associated with their employment status, with unemployed fathers tending to read to their children more than employed fathers. Thus, parents in this study may not have been able to offer one-on-one reading interactions as much as they would like. Instead, they may have been more likely to provide indirect forms of parent-child interactions in supporting their children's reading.

According to Baker & Milligan (2013), both fathers and mothers tend to spend more time reading with daughters than with sons. Therefore, this study predicted that both fathers and mothers would be more likely to be involved in reading with daughters than with sons across three dimensions: engagement, accessibility and responsibility. To examine whether fathers and mothers were differently involved with boys and girls in reading, a two-way ANOVA with a 2 (parent: father vs mother) x 2 (child: boy vs girl) design was conducted. Results suggested that the interactions between parents' gender and children's gender on all three dimension (engagement, accessibility and responsibility) were not significant, indicating that both fathers and mothers were equally involved in boys' and girls' reading through all three dimensions. Therefore, our hypothesis that both fathers and mothers would be more involved with daughters than with sons in reading across all three dimensions was not supported. This may be because parents value reading. Children's early interest in reading has been

consistently linked to later reading achievement and school success (Scarborough and Dobrich,1994). Thus, parents may wish both their daughters and sons to develop a love of reading, and may therefore spend time reading with both daughters and sons. This finding may also be explained by parents' increasing awareness of gender equality. According to Li et al. (2024), parents promote gender equality by modeling equal sharing of household and care giving duties, therefore, parents may be equally involved in reading activities with both daughters and sons.

5.3.1.2 The relationships between parental involvement in children's reading and children's reading interests.

When moving focus to the relationships between parental involvement in children's reading and children's reading interests, this study hypothesized that parental involvement can positively predict all three dimensions of parental involvement positively predict children's reading interests.

To examine the relationships between parental involvement in children's reading and children's reading interests, multiple linear regression analyses were adopted. The three dimensions of parental involvement (engagement, accessibility and responsibility) in children's reading, parent gender, child gender and child age were considered to predict children's reading interests (reading frequency and genre preference).

Regarding children's reading frequency, the results suggested that both parental engagement and parental responsibility significantly predicted children's reading frequency, while parental accessibility did not. As such, children of highly involved parents (through engagement and responsibility) tend to read more frequently, suggesting that both direct and indirect parental involvement are positively associated with children's reading frequency. Therefore, parents should try to read with their children, take responsibility for supporting their children's reading, and provide books that children want to read.

It is worth noting that, in this study, children's age significantly predicted children's reading frequency, with older children reading more often than younger children. This may be because older children have higher baseline literacy skills than younger children (Price & Kalil, 2018).

When considering the relationships between parental involvement and children's reading interests, Zhu (2020) suggested that all three dimensions (engagement, accessibility and responsibility) of father involvement effectively predicted children's reading interests. In addition, Kraaykamp (2003) found that children tend to read a variety of genres, especially literary novels, romance fiction and suspense novels, when their parents are more involved in reading activities with them. Thus, this study predicted that all three dimensions (engagement, accessibility and responsibility) of parental involvement in children's reading would contribute to predicting children's reading interests in terms of genre preferences. Results from this study indicated that parental engagement positively predicted children's genre preferences for fairy tales/folktale/legend/myth/fable, mystery, historical fiction, and science fiction. Moreover, parental responsibility significantly predicted children's genre preference for adventure, mystery, historical fiction, realistic fiction, biography/autobiography/memoir and religion, even when parents' gender, children's gender and children's age were considered. Thus, our hypothesis that all three dimensions (engagement, accessibility and responsibility) of parental involvement in children's reading would positively predict children's genre preferences was not supported.

5.3.2 Strength of this study

This study adds to the literature in important ways. First, in contrast to most previous studies in this field that focused on the role of mothers, this study assessed both mothers' and fathers' involvement in children's reading. The findings suggest that both maternal and paternal involvement contribute to children's reading interests. The

results also highlight the importance of parental engagement and parental responsibility in promoting children's reading interests. Second, this study filled a research gap by exploring how parents are involved in children's reading through the dimensions of engagement, accessibility, and responsibility. The questionnaire developed for this study may serve as an instrument for future research in this area.

This study also has practical implications for parent-child reading activities. The findings indicated that mothers were generally more involved in children's reading. Considering the unique contribution of father involvement to child outcomes, increasing fathers' involvement in children's reading may be beneficial in cultivating children's love of reading. To achieve this, teachers, educators, schools, and policy makers should work together to enhance awareness of the significance of fathers' roles in children's reading. This is in line with the recent call highlighting that fathers can make a difference in children's education (Norman & Davies, 2023). In addition, some fathers may not have sufficient time to engage in children's reading due to their employment status. Hence, it is importance to provide guidance with fathers on how to balance work and life. Furthermore, schools could promote parental involvement by inviting both mothers and fathers to parent-child events and encouraging contributions from both parents in shared reading activities.

5.3.3 Limitations of this study

There were several limitations in this study. First, only British parents were invited, which limits the generalisability of the findings. Future research should include more diverse cultural contexts to examine how parents from different cultures are involved in their children's reading and how such involvement influences children's reading interests.

Second, although the questionnaire developed for this study may serve as a useful measurement tool in future research, the dimension of parental engagement was assessed using a single-item measure with unknown psychometric properties. As a

result, the internal consistency reliability, namely Cronbach's alpha, could not be evaluated for this dimension. Additionally, parental accessibility did not significantly predict children's reading interests. Therefore, the validity of the questionnaire should be further enhanced, and future research should consider using multiple items to measure parental engagement and to explore the possible relationships between parental accessibility and children's reading interests.

Moreover, this study did not assess the quality of parental involvement in children's reading. Future research is therefore needed to examine the quality of parental involvement in order to strengthen the robustness and interpretability of the results.

Additionally, qualitative methods, such as interviews, may provide deeper insights into parental involvement in children's reading. Future studies should consider combining both qualitative and quantitative approaches to gain a more comprehensive understanding of this topic.

5.3.4 Conclusion

This study explored parental involvement in children's reading and how it can impact on children's reading interests (through three dimensions: engagement, accessibility, and responsibility), based on the UK families. Results indicated that mothers are more involved in children's reading than fathers, especially in "engagement" (one-on-one parent-child reading). It also found that parental engagement and parental responsibility significantly predicted children's reading interests. However, parental accessibility did not significantly predicted children's reading interests. These findings added to the literature by showing the importance of both mother involvement and father involvement in promoting children's reading interests. This study also assessed the different roles of mothers and fathers play in the development of reading interests of their children.

These findings contribute to the literature by exploring the complementary roles of

mothers and fathers in supporting children's reading development and its influence on children's reading interests. While mothers may be more directly involved in parent-child shared reading activities, fathers' engagement and sense of responsibility also play a meaningful role in shaping reading interests. The present study underscores the importance of considering the multiple dimensions of parental involvement, rather than simply the presence, accessibility of resources, or sense of responsibility of reading in promoting children's reading interests.

Future research is needed to examine parental involvement by using larger and more diverse samples, including multiple-item measures for each dimension to improve reliability, and combining quantitative and qualitative approaches to gain a deeper understanding of how different forms of parental involvement influence children's reading interests. Such studies could inform educators, policymakers, and parents about effective strategies to foster lifelong reading habits among children.

Chapter 6

General discussion and conclusion

6.1 Summary of the main findings

This dissertation described a series of experiments that investigated the development of reading interests of children aged 5 (from starting compulsory school) to 12 (the end of primary education and the beginning of secondary education). The gender, age, and cultural differences in children's reading interests were examined in Study One. Study One also explored the possible relationships between children's reading interests, play interests, vocational interests and parents' occupations. Study Two investigated parents' perceptions of gender-appropriate reading materials and gender-neutral parenting styles and how these parental perceptions can shape children's reading interests. Study Three explored parental involvement in children's reading and its effects on children's reading interests. In this chapter, I summaries the main findings from these three studies, highlight the significance of these studies, innovation, limitations, and suggest potential directions for future research.

6.1.1 Summary: Study One

Traditionally, research on gender-based reading interests suggested that boys and girls differ in their reading interests with boys preferring non-fiction and girls preferring fiction books. However, some more recent findings suggest that this is no longer the case. Given these mixed findings, this study collected evidence about gender trends in children's reading interests with the aim of supporting parents, teachers, librarians and other literacy professionals in broadening both boys' and girls reading experience. This study also explored the possible associations between children's reading interests, play interests, vocational interests and parents' occupations.

288 British parents and 301 Chinese parents took part in an online questionnaire regarding their children's reading interests. Surveyed children's ages ranged from 5 to 12-years-old, and the distribution of gender was 151 boys and 137 girls in the UK,

151 boys and 150 girls in China. To our surprise, the results revealed that only British boys in Key Stage 2 (KS2, ages 7-11) tended to prefer non-fiction more than girls. In other Key Stages, in both the UK and China, there was no significant differences between boys' and girls' preferences for fiction or non-fiction, suggesting that boys had no marked preferences for non-fiction, and girls had no marked preferences for fiction. We conclude that boys may not prefer non-fiction over fiction, and girls may not prefer fiction over non-fiction. As such, this study challenged the long-standing myth that boys prefer non-fiction over fiction, which suggested that the range of boys' reading interests may have been underestimated - particularly fiction. Thus, this study joins the burgeoning body of research that contrasts with much stereotyping about boys and non-fiction as well as girls and fiction. It implied that the variety of books that boys read (especially fiction) as well as girls read (especially non-fiction) could have been underestimated.

This study also suggested that increasing maturity brings an increase in some genres and a decrease in others. No significant differences between British children and Chinese children in terms of their preferences for fiction and non-fiction have been found. Therefore, we concluded that compared to gender and age, the possible influence of culture on children's reading interests the potential impact of culture on children's interest in reading in comparison to gender and age seems to be minimal.

Moreover, results from this study showed that there were no relationships between children's reading interests, play interests and vocational interests and parents' careers. This might be because every child is unique and may have different ideas, aptitudes, and capabilities from their parents.

6.1.2 Summary: Study Two

Parents, as primary agents of socialization, nurture and socialize children by providing "appropriate" models of boys' and girls' behaviour (Eccles, 2015). When it comes to books, reading or storytelling, research has shown that parents reproduce

gender stereotypes by offering different books to boys and girls, or telling stories to boys and girls with different themes (Fiese & Skillman, 2000; Culhane & Bazeley, 2019). However, few studies have investigated how parents' perceptions of gender-appropriate behaviour can impact children's reading interests.

According to Brown (2014), there has been an increasing awareness of raising children free of gender stereotypes, which may have changed the way parents raise their daughters and sons. This parenting style is often referred to as "gender-neutral" (Rahilly, 2015). In addition, girls are more likely to be encouraged to fight stereotypes, while boys are more likely to be discouraged from having interests that are regarded as feminine (Goodkind, 2009; Nandini, 2018). However, we do not know how parents' perceptions of gender-neutral parenting style can have an impact on children's reading interests, and whether girls are more likely to be encouraged to read books that challenge traditional stereotypes.

Moreover, Tokal et al. (2023) suggested that gender inequality is closely related to education level and the traditional norms about the division of what to do are mostly supported by individuals with a lower education (Edlund & Öun, 2016). Therefore, to what extent do parents' education levels influence parents' perceptions of (1) gender-appropriate reading materials for boys and girls, (2) selecting books for children, and (3) "gender-neutral parenting" and gender equality have been considered.

228 British parents and 194 Chinese parents participated in this study, results suggested in both the UK and China, parents hold a positive view towards gender-neutral parenting style, however, parents prefer to adopt a traditional parenting style to raise their children in actual life. Moreover, this study also suggested that today's parents tend to encourage their children to read counter-stereotypical books, especially for girls.

6.1.3 Summary: Study Three

Parents, often are seen as children's first teachers. Parental involvement in children's reading has long been associated with children's educational and literacy outcomes, such as language comprehension, literacy development and reading achievement (Bus, van Ijzendoorn & Pellegrini, 1995; Desforges & Abouchar, 2003; Gest, et al., 2004). However, there is little empirical evidence on how parental involvement in children's reading affect children's reading interests. According to Lamb and his colleagues' theoretical model of parental involvement engagement (parent's actual one-on-one interaction with the child), accessibility (parent is physically and mentally available, they engage with the child indirectly), and responsibility (parent takes responsibility for the child's care and arranging for resources to be available for the child) are the mechanisms through which parental involvement influences child outcomes (Lamb, et al.,1985; Lamb, 2000). Parent-child reading, which fall under the category of education and instruction, which is likely to make a differences in children's reading outcomes. Previous research in this area has focused extensively on mother involvement, and few research has explored the role of father involvement. More over, little research has examined the impact of parental involvement on children's reading interests. Based on a sample of 129 British parents, this study explored how mothers and fathers are involved in children's reading and how parental involvement can affect children's reading interests.

Results from this study showed that mothers are more likely than fathers to be involved in children's reading, especially from the dimension of engagement, suggesting that mothers are more involved in one-on-one parent-child reading activities than fathers. This study also suggested that among three dimensions (engagement, accessibility and responsibility) of parental involvement, parental engagement and parental responsibility significantly predict children's reading interests in terms of both reading frequency and genre preference, while parental accessibility did not. As such, this study highlight the important role of both mother involvement and father involvement in cultivating children's reading interests.

6.2 Significance of this dissertation

Although this dissertation is concerned with the development of reading interests of children, it first began with a psychological discussion on the most influential model of interest that inform our understanding of reading interests. The discussion is crucial as an sound of the psychological underpinnings of behind theories of interest is integral to the conceptualization of reading interest and other interest-related concepts. This dissertation then defined reading interest and addressing the key of a reading interest - to explore genre preferences. This made the exploration of children's reading interests possible.

In this dissertation, Study One aimed to add to previous research work by exploring the emerge gender, age, and cultural trends in children's reading interests. In many studies over the years and in various countries, boys have been shown read more non-fiction while girls read more fiction (OECD, 2011). However, in this study, we found that only British boys in Key Stage 2 (KS2, ages 7-11) preferred non-fiction more than girls. In other Key Stages, both British and Chinese boys had no marked preferences for non-fiction. We conclude that boys may not prefer-non fiction over fiction, and girls may not prefer fiction over fiction. As such, the second contribution of this dissertation is that it joins the burgeoning body of research that contrasts with much stereotyping about boys and non-fiction, girls and fiction.

Third, Study One investigated the development of reading interests of children aged 5 (from starting compulsory school) to 12 (the end of primary education and the beginning of secondary education) in both the UK and China, which could be seen as the first attempt to make a cross-sectional assessment of reading interests throughout the compulsory school, and the first attempt to compare two countries which are quite different in culture and educational system.

Fourth, this dissertation presents the attempt to explore the possible relationships between children's reading interests, play interests, vocational interests and parents'

careers. The research took carefully steps in coding children's play interests, vocational interests, and parents' jobs. The seven patterns of play were based upon the developmental purpose, and the six items of vocational interests were based on Holland's RIASEC Model. Although results suggested that there were no relationships between children's reading interests, play interests, vocational interests and parents' careers, these findings pushed us to conduct further research in this area. As reading is an important source of collecting information and acquiring knowledge (Noortyani, 2018). It is worth to know how important this source of information is in determining children's play interests and vocational interests.

Fifth, do parents tend to use a gender-neutral parenting approach? Are girls more likely than boys to be encouraged to fight against stereotypes? Especially that in reading? These two questions propelled us into the second study where we explored parents' perceptions of gender-appropriate reading materials, gender-neutral parenting style, gender equality and how these perceptions can shape children's reading interests. Results suggested that although parents tend to adopt a traditional parenting style to raise their children, they are likely to recommend "boy books" to their daughters. Although parents are more likely to encourage daughters than sons to read counter-stereotypical books, they also happy to see boys reading "girl book", such as fairy tales. As such, we conclude that both girls and today's boys are more likely to read counter-stereotypical books than before. These findings may explain why there are no gender differences in girls' and boys' preferences for fiction or non-fiction in our first study. Also, these findings made clear how important it is for schools, communities, governments, and other social agents to cooperate in order to created an environment where children have the freedom to pursue their own interests and identities without bullying.

The sixth contribution worth noting is the the focus of this desertion has on both mother and father involvement in children's reading. Prior work in this area has focused predominantly on maternal involvement, little research have explored father's

role in children's reading development. In line with previous research, Study Three of this dissertation indicated that mothers are more involved in children's reading than fathers, especially from the dimension of engagement, highlighting the need of guiding fathers on how to engage more in parent-child reading activities with their children. Moreover, Study Three also suggested the importance of both mother involvement and father involvement in predicting children's reading interests, especially from the dimension of engagement and responsibility.

The final contribution worth highlighting is the three questionnaires (children's reading interests, play interests, and vocational interests questioner; parents' perceptions of gender-appropriate reading materials and gender-neutral parenting style questionnaire; and parental involvement in children's reading questionnaire) that the researcher established may be utilized as instruments to explore related issues.

6.3 Limitations and future work

Having summarized the the contributions this dissertation makes in Section 6.1, Section 6.2 details the limitations of this research project, and suggests potential directions for future research.

The first point to be problematized in this project concerns the categories of book genres used in Study One. Any study of children's reading interests faces the problem of overlapping categories of genres, as most of books are across-genre work. For example, *Peter Pan* and *Harry Potter* can be classified as either fantasy or adventure. Sometimes, books about religion can also be fiction. Therefore, it is difficult to distinguish the types of genres. To minimize this limitations when performing Study One, each genre was provided with a brief illustration and example book tittles, however, this issue is still hard to avoid.

Second, in Study One, one of the aims was to explore the possible relationships between children's reading interests, play interests, vocational interests, and parents'

occupations. Children's reading interests, play interests, vocational aspirations, and parents' occupations were first coded using Holland's RIASEC Model (Holland, 1973, 1985, 1996, 1997), ensuring a consistent categorization scheme across all domains. Each child's responses were classified into one of the six RIASEC categories (Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, or Conventional) based on the dominant type of their reading, play, and future job, as well as parents' occupations. Following this, the proportion of children showing a "perfect match" across these domains was calculated by dividing the number of qualifying cases by the total sample size. In other words, the possible associations across these domains were examined by calculating the percentages of how many children's reading interests, play interests, vocational interests, and parent' careers are perfectly matched. Although this approach provides an initial exploration of alignments across these domains, it may not be the best way to assess this issue. Future research would benefit from applying more sophisticated methodologies to refine the method that I adopted and to more comprehensively capture the possible associations between children's reading, play interests, vocational interests and their parents' occupations.

The third limitation of this research project was its administration and the absence of self-reports from children. Study One aimed to investigate the development of reading interests of children aged 5 to 12. Originally, parents of children aged 5 to 8 were intended to complete the online questionnaire, while children aged 9 to 12 were expected to complete the questionnaire by themselves. However, due to COVID-19 restrictions, collaborating with local schools was challenging, and the study ultimately relied predominantly on parents recruited via Prolific. As a result, no self-report data were collected directly from children. This may limit the accuracy of the findings, as parents' perceptions may not fully reflect their children's actual reading interests. Although it is possible that children's responses might closely align with parental reports, future research should include child self-report measures to provide a more direct and reliable assessment of children's reading interests.

Fourth, cross-cultural statistical comparisons were not conducted in the present study due to several methodological limitations. In this research project, both Study One and Study Two relied on non-representative convenience samples in both the UK and China, which limits the generalisability of the findings and reduces the comparability of the samples across countries. Specifically, in Study One, the grouping of children differed between the UK and China due to sample size constraints. In the UK, only children in KS1 and KS2 were included in the analyses, while in China, the sample also comprised children in KS3. Given these methodological constraints, Study One only examined gender and age differences within each cultural context rather than testing cross-cultural effects statistically. Independent-samples t-tests were therefore used as an appropriate method to compare boys and girls within each group. This resulted in non-equivalent age groupings across the two countries, which limited the feasibility of conducting direct cross-cultural statistical comparisons. In addition, one of the goals of study 2 was to explore how parents' educational background influenced their perceptions of gender-appropriate reading materials and gender-neutral parenting. In this study, British parents were recruited from Prolific and therefore generally had higher levels of education. However, the majority of Chinese parents in the sample had only completed primary education. This low and relatively homogeneous level of educational attainment reduces variability and might limit the potential influence of parental education on their ratings of books. Moreover, these differences in educational background between the two countries further limited the validity of direct cross-cultural comparisons, as any observed differences could reflect educational disparities rather than genuine cultural effects. Future research therefore should include larger and more balanced samples to better explore how variations in education and cultural context affect children's reading interests.

The fifth limitation of this study concerns its cross-sectional design, which does not allow for the examination of the development of children's reading interests over time. Longitudinal research would be necessary to track how children's reading interests change across developmental stages.

Sixth, another limitation of this study is the absence of qualitative methods. Qualitative approaches, such as interviews, could provide deeper insights into the nature and development of children's reading interests. In this study, all data were based solely on parent-reported questionnaires, which may not fully capture children's own perspectives of their reading interests. Future research should therefore consider adopting a mixed-methods design, combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches, to achieve a more comprehensive understanding of children's reading interests.

The seventh limitation concerns the use of single-item measures with unknown psychometric properties. In Study Three, parental involvement in children's reading and its influence on children's reading interests were examined through three dimensions: engagement, accessibility, and responsibility. However, the dimension of parental engagement was measured using a single-item indicator, meaning that internal consistency reliability (Cronbachs' alpha) could not be evaluated for this dimension. Future research should employ multi-item scales to assess these dimensions of parental involvement.

A further limitation of this study is the lack of assessment of measurement invariance across countries. The UK and Chinese samples differed in terms of age groups and parental education levels, which makes direct cross-cultural comparisons challenging. In addition, one of the key variables, parental engagement, was measured using single-item indicator, which prevented testing measurement equivalence. The questionnaires may also not have been validated for both cultural contexts. Although the questionnaire was translated using a double-blind procedure and cross-checked, it is not possible to achieve perfectly equivalent translations. Directly translating items from one language to another can be challenging, as certain meanings may be culturally dependent, potentially influencing how participants interpret and answer the questions. Therefore, future research should recruit larger and more diverse international samples to enhance generalisability and cross-cultural comparability.

Additionally, employing interviews would allow researchers to gain richer insights into children's personal views and experiences regarding their reading interests. Future research should also aim to ensure cross-cultural equivalence of questionnaires through translation procedures. This could include forward and back translation, the involvement of bilingual experts, and pilot testing with participants from each cultural context to identify items that may be context-dependent or culturally bound. These steps would enhance the validity and reliability of cross-cultural comparisons when examining potential differences in the development of children's reading interests across countries.

6.4 Conclusion

The series of studies in this dissertation focused on the development of reading interests of children aged 5 to 12. The findings contribute to a better understanding of children's reading interests, providing valuable insights for parents, teachers, educators, librarians, publishers, and policymakers to select and provide books that align with children's genre preferences. Given that the National Literacy Trust (2024) reported that the percentage of children and young people who described themselves as enjoying reading in 2024 was at its lowest level since 2005, it is important that parents, teachers, practitioners and policymakers are aware of the significant contribution they can make to help foster a love of reading. This can be achieved by reading with children, providing a wide range of books, and creating a stimulating reading environment. Together, we can grow a generation of readers so that no child is left behind.

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Appendix I :**Children's reading interests, play interests, and vocational interests
questionnaire****English version****About your child**

Please note: If you have more than one child aged 5 to 12, please choose only one.

Choose the one about which you know most in regard to reading interests.

1. Is your child a boy or a girl?

- Boy

- Girl

2. In which part of the UK does your child go to school?

- England

- Wales

- Scotland

- Northern Ireland

3. How old is your child?

- 5 years old

- 6 years old

- 7 years old

- 8 years old

- 9 years old

- 10 years old

- 11 years old

- 12 years old

4. Which school year group is your child in?

- Reception
- Year 1
- Year 2
- Year 3
- Year 4
- Year 5
- Year 6
- Year 7
- Year 8
- Something else, please specify

About your child's interest in Fiction

***Fictional genres for children aged 5 to 8:**

Fiction is a genre where stories or characters are made up by the author.

5. For each of the fictional genres listed below, how would you rate your child's interest in it?

Adventure (In an adventure story, the protagonist usually leaves everything he or she knows, faces dangers and excitement along the way. For example, *We're Going on a Bear Hunt*)

Very uninterested	Uninterested	Neither interested nor uninterested	Interested	Very interested
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Fantasy (Fantasy often involves elements of supernatural power, like magic and talking animals. For example, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, *How to Train Your Dragon*, *Peter Pan*, and *Harry Potter*.)

Very uninterested	Uninterested	Neither interested nor uninterested	Interested	Very interested
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Fairy Tales, Folktale, Legend, Myth, or Fable (These books contain traditional stories and sometimes have lots of versions. For example, *Cinderella*, *Little Red Riding Hood*, and *The Fox & The Crow*.)

Very uninterested	Uninterested	Neither interested nor uninterested	Interested	Very interested
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Comics, Graphic Novel, or Manga (These books contain stories told in pictures. For example, *Dog Man*, *Marvel Comics*, and *Pokemon*.)

Very uninterested	Uninterested	Neither interested nor uninterested	Interested	Very interested
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Mystery (Mystery often follows a crime, like a murder or a disappearance, but it could be anything unexplainable. For example, *The Deductive Detective*, and *The Sherlock Holmes Children's Collection*.)

Very uninterested	Uninterested	Neither interested nor uninterested	Interested	Very interested
-------------------	--------------	-------------------------------------	------------	-----------------

Humour (Humour is a genre of storytelling intended to amuse, make smile or laugh. For example, *Shh! We Have a Plan*, and *The Wonky Donkey*.)

Very uninterested	Uninterested	Neither interested nor uninterested	Interested	Very interested
-------------------	--------------	-------------------------------------	------------	-----------------

Historical Fiction (Historical fiction is a genre where the stories take place in the past and contain historical elements or facts. For example, *Elisabeth and the Box of Colours*.)

Very uninterested	Uninterested	Neither interested nor uninterested	Interested	Very interested
-------------------	--------------	-------------------------------------	------------	-----------------

Realistic Fiction (Realistic fiction is a genre where the stories are made up, but they could easily happen to real people and animals. For example, *David Gets in Trouble*, and *David Goes to School*.)

Very uninterested	Uninterested	Neither interested nor uninterested	Interested	Very interested
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Science Fiction (Science fiction often deals with the impact of actual or imagined science upon society or individuals. For example, *Jurassic Park*.)

Very uninterested	Uninterested	Neither interested nor uninterested	Interested	Very interested
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***Fictional genres for children aged 9 to 12:**

Fiction is a genre where stories or characters are made up by the author.

5. For each of the fictional genres listed below, how would you rate your child's interest in it?

Adventure (In an adventure story, the protagonist usually leaves everything he or she knows, faces dangers and excitement along the way. For example, *We're Going on a Bear Hunt*, *The Boxcar Children*, and *Holes*.)

Very uninterested	Uninterested	Neither interested nor uninterested	Interested	Very interested
-------------------	--------------	-------------------------------------	------------	-----------------

Fantasy (Fantasy often involves elements of supernatural power, like magic and talking animals. For example, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, *Harry Potter*, *Peter Pan*, and *Charlotte's Web*.)

Very uninterested	Uninterested	Neither interested nor uninterested	Interested	Very interested
-------------------	--------------	-------------------------------------	------------	-----------------

Fairy Tales, Folktale, Legend, Myth, or Fable (These books contain traditional stories and sometimes have lots of versions. For example, *Cinderella*, *Little Red Riding Hood*, *Grimm's Fairy Tales*, and *The Fox & The Crow*.)

Very uninterested	Uninterested	Neither interested nor uninterested	Interested	Very interested
-------------------	--------------	-------------------------------------	------------	-----------------

Comics, Graphic Novel, or Manga (These books contain stories told in pictures. For example, *Marvel Comics*, *Naruto*, *One Piece*, *Demon Slayer*, and *Pokémon*.)

Very uninterested	Uninterested	Neither interested nor uninterested	Interested	Very interested
-------------------	--------------	-------------------------------------	------------	-----------------

Mystery (Mystery often follows a crime, like a murder or a disappearance, but it could be anything unexplainable. For example, *The Deductive Detective*, and *The Sherlock Holmes Collection*.)

Very uninterested	Uninterested	Neither interested nor uninterested	Interested	Very interested
-------------------	--------------	-------------------------------------	------------	-----------------

Humour (Humour is a genre of storytelling intended to amuse, make smile or laugh. For example, *Shh! We Have a Plan*, and *The Wonky Donkey*, and *Winger*.)

Very uninterested	Uninterested	Neither interested nor uninterested	Interested	Very interested
-------------------	--------------	-------------------------------------	------------	-----------------

Horror (Horror is a genre of storytelling intended to create feelings of fear. For example, *The Creakers*.)

Very uninterested	Uninterested	Neither interested nor uninterested	Interested	Very interested
-------------------	--------------	-------------------------------------	------------	-----------------

Romance (Romance often places its primary focus on the relationship and romantic love between two people. For example, *Pride and Prejudice*, or *Jane Eyre*.)

Very uninterested	Uninterested	Neither interested nor uninterested	Interested	Very interested
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Historical Fiction (Historical fiction is a genre where the stories take place in the past and contain historical elements or facts. For example, *Elisabeth and the Box of Colours*, *The Story of the Amulet*, and *When the War Came Home Number the Stars*.)

Very uninterested	Uninterested	Neither interested nor uninterested	Interested	Very interested
-------------------	--------------	-------------------------------------	------------	-----------------

Realistic Fiction (Realistic fiction is a genre where the stories are made up, but they could easily happen to real people and animals. For example, *David Goes to School*, and *Frindle*.)

Very uninterested	Uninterested	Neither interested nor uninterested	Interested	Very interested
-------------------	--------------	-------------------------------------	------------	-----------------

Science Fiction (Science fiction often deals with the impact of actual or imagined science upon society or individuals. For example, *Jurassic Park*, *Journey to the center of the Earth*, and *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea*.)

Very uninterested	Uninterested	Neither interested nor uninterested	Interested	Very interested
-------------------	--------------	-------------------------------------	------------	-----------------

About your child's interest in Non-Fiction

Non-Fiction is about real people, animals, events, places, or things, and everything in the stories actually happened.

6. For each of the non-fictional genres listed below, how would you rate your child's interest in it?

Biography, Autobiography, Memoir (These books are about real people. For example, *Who Was Disney?*)

Very uninterested	Uninterested	Neither interested nor uninterested	Interested	Very interested
-------------------	--------------	-------------------------------------	------------	-----------------

How-to manuals (How-to manuals books provide instructions and information about how to do something. For example, crafts and cookbooks.)

Very uninterested	Uninterested	Neither interested nor uninterested	Interested	Very interested
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Education & Study Guides (These books often include learning resources, with the aim of providing assistance and support for children studying a particular course or topic. For example, academic reference books.)

Very uninterested	Uninterested	Neither interested nor uninterested	Interested	Very interested
-------------------	--------------	-------------------------------------	------------	-----------------

Science & Technology (These literary genres are about nature, geography, animals, technology, medicine, or other things your child learns in science class. For example, *The Magic School Bus*.)

Very uninterested	Uninterested	Neither interested nor uninterested	Interested	Very interested
-------------------	--------------	-------------------------------------	------------	-----------------

Sports (Non-fiction sports books are about real players, real teams, and real events related to sports.)

Very uninterested	Uninterested	Neither interested nor uninterested	Interested	Very interested
-------------------	--------------	-------------------------------------	------------	-----------------

Religion (Religion books are central to the teachings of almost every given religion, for example, *Children's Bible*.)

Very uninterested	Uninterested	Neither interested nor uninterested	Interested	Very interested
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About Your child's interest in Poetry

Poetry is the rhythmic, condensed, linguistic expression of anything that can come out of the human imagination.

7. How would you rate your child's interest in poetry?

Poetry

Very uninterested	Uninterested	Neither interested nor uninterested	Interested	Very interested
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About your child's favourite books

8. Please list one or more books your child enjoyed most reading in the past twelve months:

- Enter book name (and optionally author's name if you know it)

About your child's free-time activities and vocational interest

9. Please write down what activities does your child like doing most in his or her free time.

- My child likes to do:

10. What does your child want to be when he or she grows up? (when he or she is around 30 years

- My child wants to be:

About parents' jobs

11. What job(s) do the father and mother have, if any?

If there is no father or mother, please enter NA.

If unemployed, enter unemployed.

- Father's job(s):

- Mother's job(s):

Chinese version**儿童阅读兴趣、游戏兴趣、职业兴趣调查问卷****关于您的孩子**

请注意：如果您的孩子不止一个正处于 5 至 12 岁这一阶段，请您选则对其阅读兴趣最为了解的那个孩子进行回答。

1. 您孩子的性别是？

- 男孩
- 女孩

2. 您孩子在哪个城市上学？

所在城市：

3.您孩子有几岁？

- 5 岁
- 6 岁
- 7 岁
- 8 岁
- 9 岁
- 10 岁
- 11 岁
- 12 岁

4. 您孩子目前就读几年级？

- 幼儿园中班
- 幼儿园大班
- 小学一年级
- 小学二年级
- 小学三年级

- 小学四年级
- 小学五年级
- 小学六年级（或初中预备班）
- 初中一年级（或七年级）
- 其他年级，请说明

* 5-8 岁儿童的小说类别:

您孩子对虚构类书籍的兴趣

虚构类书籍可以理解为现实生活中不存在的，不真实的，即靠作者的想象力而创作的内容。

5. 请评价您孩子对以下每一项虚构类书籍的感兴趣程度。

冒险小说 (在冒险故事里，主人公往往有不平凡的经历、遭遇和挫折，情节紧张、冲突尖锐、场面惊险、内容离奇。例如，《海底小纵队》《丁丁历险记》《故宫里的大怪兽》《鲁宾逊漂流记》。)

非常不感兴趣	不感兴趣	中立	感兴趣	非常感兴趣
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奇幻小说 (奇幻故事通常发生在与现实世界规律相左的“第二世界”中，或是在现实地球中加入超自然因素（以魔法为代表）。例如《哈利·波特》《彼得·潘》《爱丽丝梦游仙境》《纳尼亚传奇》《指环王》。)

非常不感兴趣	不感兴趣	中立	感兴趣	非常感兴趣
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童话、民间故事、传说、神话或寓言 (童话故事一般有很多使用超自然能力的角色，像是会说话的动物、精灵、仙子、巨人、巫婆等。例如《格林童话》《安徒生童话》。民间故事、传说、神话多依靠口耳相传，可能会有多个版本。例如《山海经》《嫦娥奔月》。寓言故事结构简短，多用借喻手法，使富有教训意义的主题或深刻的道理在简单的故事中体现。例如《狐狸和乌鸦》《伊索寓言》。)

非常不感兴趣	不感兴趣	中立	感兴趣	非常感兴趣
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漫画 (漫画是用简单而夸张的手法来描绘生活、时事或想象的图画。例如,《半小时漫画中国史》《哆啦 A 梦》《美少女战士》《海贼王》。)

非常不感兴趣	不感兴趣	中立	感兴趣	非常感兴趣
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神秘小说 (神秘故事的内容往往以悬疑为主,比如犯罪、谋杀或是失踪,意图带给读者不可思议的神秘感。例如《鸭子侦探》《夏洛克福尔摩斯探案集》《神探虎斑猫》。)

非常不感兴趣	不感兴趣	中立	感兴趣	非常感兴趣
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幽默笑话 (幽默笑话意在娱乐或逗笑读者。例如,《嘘!我们有个计划》《摇摆的毛驴》《幽默笑话大王》。)

非常不感兴趣	不感兴趣	中立	感兴趣	非常感兴趣
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历史小说 (历史小说是根据历史上真实存在的事件而编写的故事,但容许适当的虚构。例如《写给儿童的中国历史》《世界儿童历史小说经典》。)

非常不感兴趣	不感兴趣	中立	感兴趣	非常感兴趣
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现实主义小说 (现实主义小说的故事内容往往是靠作者的想象力而创作的,但是很有可能发生在现实生活中。例如《大卫去上学》《驭蜂少年》。)

非常不感兴趣	不感兴趣	中立	感兴趣	非常感兴趣
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科幻小说 (科幻小说通常描述科学或想象中的科学对人类的影响。例如《侏罗纪公园》《海底两万里》《地心游记》。)

非常不感兴趣	不感兴趣	中立	感兴趣	非常感兴趣
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*** 9-12 岁儿童的小说类别:**

您孩子对虚构类书籍的兴趣

虚构类书籍可以理解为现实生活中不存在的，不真实的，即靠作者的想象力而创作的内容。

5. 请评价您孩子对以下每一项虚构类书籍的感兴趣程度

冒险小说 (在冒险故事里，主人公往往有不平凡的经历、遭遇和挫折，情节紧张、冲突尖锐、场面惊险、内容离奇。例如，《海底小纵队》《丁丁历险记》《故宫里的大怪兽》《鲁宾逊漂流记》。)

非常不感兴趣	不感兴趣	中立	感兴趣	非常感兴趣
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奇幻小说 (奇幻故事通常发生在与现实世界规律相左的“第二世界”中，或是在现实地球中加入超自然因素（以魔法为代表）。例如《哈利·波特》《彼得·潘》《爱丽丝梦游仙境》《纳尼亚传奇》《指环王》。)

非常不感兴趣	不感兴趣	中立	感兴趣	非常感兴趣
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童话、民间故事、传说、神话或寓言 (童话故事一般有很多使用超自然能力的角色，像是会说话的动物、精灵、仙子、巨人、巫婆等。例如《格林童话》《安徒生童话》。民间故事、传说、神话多依靠口耳相传，可能会有多个版本。例如《山海经》《嫦娥奔月》。寓言故事结构简短，多用借喻手法，使富有教训意义的主题或深刻的道理在简单的故事中体现。例如《狐狸和乌鸦》《伊索寓言》。)

非常不感兴趣	不感兴趣	中立	感兴趣	非常感兴趣
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漫画 (漫画是用简单而夸张的手法来描绘生活、时事或想象的图画。例如，《半小时漫画中国史》《哆啦 A 梦》《美少女战士》《海贼王》。)

非常不感兴趣	不感兴趣	中立	感兴趣	非常感兴趣
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神秘小说 (神秘故事的内容往往以悬疑为主, 比如犯罪、谋杀或是失踪, 意图带给读者不可思议的神秘感。例如《鸭子侦探》《夏洛克福尔摩斯探案集》《神探虎斑猫》。)

非常不感兴趣	不感兴趣	中立	感兴趣	非常感兴趣
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幽默笑话 (幽默笑话意在娱乐或逗笑读者。例如, 《嘘! 我们有个计划》《摇摆的毛驴》《幽默笑话大王》。)

非常不感兴趣	不感兴趣	中立	感兴趣	非常感兴趣
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恐怖小说 (恐怖小说是以推理、悬疑、未知、灵异、恐怖、刺激等风格模式构成的虚幻故事。例如《鬼吹灯》《午夜先生惊魂系列》《大宇神秘惊奇系列》。)

非常不感兴趣	不感兴趣	中立	感兴趣	非常感兴趣
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爱情小说 (爱情类书籍以讲述爱情生活为题材, 通常讲述男女之间相爱的故事。例如《傲慢与偏见》《简爱》。)

非常不感兴趣	不感兴趣	中立	感兴趣	非常感兴趣
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历史小说 (历史小说是根据历史上真实存在的事件而编写的故事, 但容许适当的虚构。例如《写给儿童的中国历史》《世界儿童历史小说经典》。)

非常不感兴趣	不感兴趣	中立	感兴趣	非常感兴趣
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现实主义小说 (现实主义小说的故事内容往往是靠作者的想象力而创作的, 但是很有可能发生在现实生活中。例如《大卫去上学》《驭蜂少年》。)

非常不感兴趣	不感兴趣	中立	感兴趣	非常感兴趣
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科幻小说 (科幻小说通常描述科学或想象中的科学对人类的影响。例如《侏罗纪公园》《海底两万里》《地心游记》。)

非常不感兴趣	不感兴趣	中立	感兴趣	非常感兴趣
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您孩子对非虚构类书籍的兴趣

非虚构类书籍是基于一定的事实和信息写成的书，即存在真实的题材、背景、事件、人物等。

6. 请评价您孩子对以下每一项非虚构类书籍的感兴趣程度。

传记、自传、回忆录 (该类书籍主要记述人物的生平事迹，是真实发生过的。)

非常不感兴趣	不感兴趣	中立	感兴趣	非常感兴趣
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操作指导书籍 (该类书籍提供有关如何做某事的信息和说明，例如手工制作教程、食谱。)

非常不感兴趣	不感兴趣	中立	感兴趣	非常感兴趣
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教育&学习书籍 (该类书籍旨在为孩子学习某一特定课程提供帮助和支持。例如学习参考书。)

非常不感兴趣	不感兴趣	中立	感兴趣	非常感兴趣
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科技类书籍 (科技类书籍通常蕴含大量的科学、技术、地理、动物、医药等知识。例如《少年儿童百科全书》《魔法校车》。)

非常不感兴趣	不感兴趣	中立	感兴趣	非常感兴趣
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体育类书籍 (该类书籍涉及的是真实的运动员和运动事件。)

非常不感兴趣	不感兴趣	中立	感兴趣	非常感兴趣
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宗教类书籍 (宗教类书籍通常涉及宗教知识。)

非常不感兴趣	不感兴趣	中立	感兴趣	非常感兴趣
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您孩子对诗歌的兴趣

诗歌是用高度凝练的语言，生动形象地表达作者丰富情感，集中反映社会生活并具有一定节奏和韵律的文学体裁。

7. 请评价您孩子对诗歌的感兴趣程度

诗歌 (例如《唐诗三百首》《中国当代儿童诗歌选》。)

非常不感兴趣	不感兴趣	中立	感兴趣	非常感兴趣
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您孩子最喜欢的书

8. 请您列出在过去一年中，您孩子最喜欢的一本书:

- 请输入书名(请只填写一本)：

*如果方便的话，请备注作者的名字。

您孩子最喜欢的业余活动

9. 请您列出在闲暇之余，您孩子最喜欢做的事或活动

*如果您的孩子喜欢玩电子游戏，请备注游戏的具体种类，例如益智游戏（拼图/对对碰/棋牌），体育游戏（赛车/足球/篮球），或是换装游戏。

- 我的孩子喜欢（请只列出一项）：

10. 您的孩子长大后，想要从事什么职业？（大约 30 岁时）

- 我的孩子想要成为（请只列出一项）：

关于父母的职业

11. 请问孩子父母分别从事什么职业？

如果没有父亲或母亲，请填写“NA”。

如果父母无工作，请填写“无工作”。

- 父亲的工作:
- 母亲的工作:

Appendix II:**Parents' perceptions of gender- appropriate reading materials and
gender-neutral parenting questionnaire****English version****Section 1: About you and your child**

This section collects information about you and your child.

If you have more than one child aged 5 to 12, please choose only one.

1. My gender:

- Male
- Female

2. My age:

- My age is:

3. My education level:

- Primary school or below
- Secondary school up to 16 years
- Higher or secondary or further education (A-levels, BTEC, etc.)
- College or university
- Post-graduate degree

4. My child's gender:

- Boy
- Girl

5. My child's age?

- 5 years old
- 6 years old

- 7 years old
- 8 years old
- 9 years old
- 10 years old
- 11 years old
- 12 years old

6. Which school year group is my child in?

- Year 1
- Year 2
- Year 3
- Year 4
- Year 5
- Year 6
- Year 7
- Year 8
- {other} Something else, please specify

** For children aged 5 to 8*

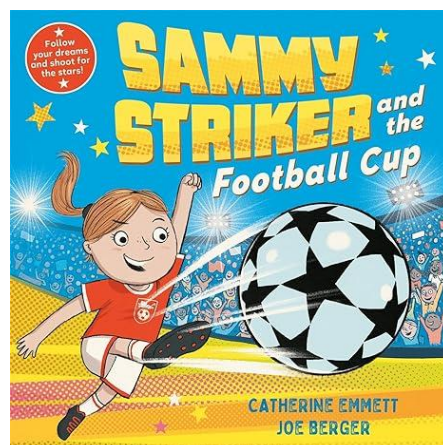
Section 2: Book recommendations for your child

This section of the survey provides some pictures of book covers.

Based on the pictures of the book covers, please indicate how likely you are to recommend these books to your child.

1. Do you know this book?

- Yes
- No

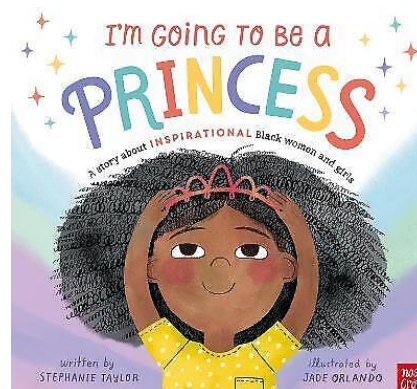


Based on the picture, how likely are you to recommend this book to your child?

Extremely Unlikely	Unlikely	Neither Likely Nor Unlikely	Likely	Extremely Likely
--------------------	----------	-----------------------------	--------	------------------

2. Do you know this book?

- Yes
- No



Based on the picture, how likely are you to recommend this book to your child?

Extremely Unlikely	Unlikely	Neither Likely Nor Unlikely	Likely	Extremely Likely
--------------------	----------	-----------------------------	--------	------------------

3. Do you know this book?

- Yes

- No



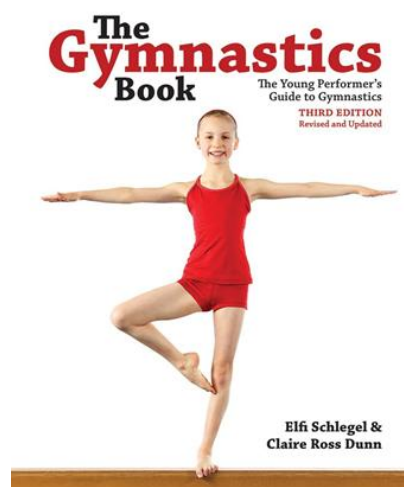
Based on the picture, how likely are you to recommend this book to your child?

Extremely Unlikely	Unlikely	Neither Likely Nor Unlikely	Likely	Extremely Likely
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4. Do you know this book?

- Yes

- No



Based on the picture, how likely are you to recommend this book to your child?

Extremely Unlikely	Unlikely	Neither Likely Nor Unlikely	Likely	Extremely Likely
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5. Do you know this book?

- Yes

- No



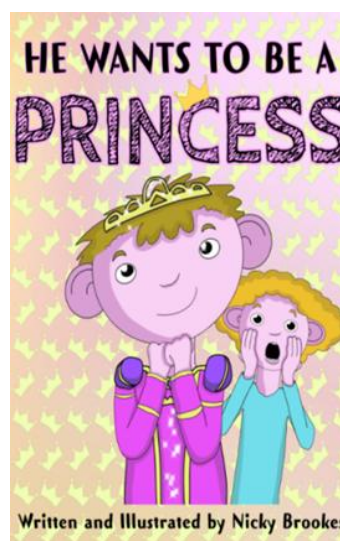
Based on the picture, how likely are you to recommend this book to your child?

Extremely Unlikely	Unlikely	Neither Likely Nor Unlikely	Likely	Extremely Likely
--------------------	----------	-----------------------------	--------	------------------

6. Do you know this book?

- Yes

- No



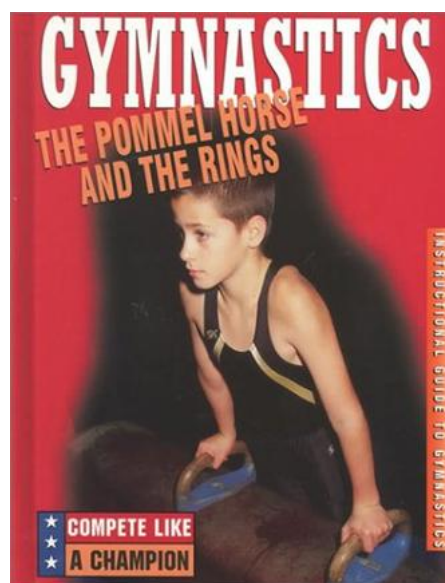
Based on the picture, how likely are you to recommend this book to your child?

Extremely Unlikely	Unlikely	Neither Likely Nor Unlikely	Likely	Extremely Likely
--------------------	----------	-----------------------------	--------	------------------

7. Do you know this book?

- Yes

- No



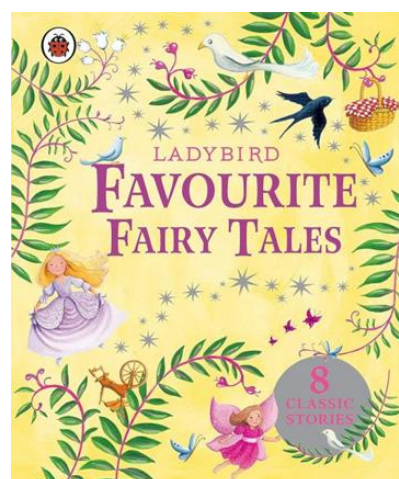
Based on the picture, how likely are you to recommend this book to your child?

Extremely Unlikely	Unlikely	Neither Likely Nor Unlikely	Likely	Extremely Likely
--------------------	----------	-----------------------------	--------	------------------

8. Do you know this book?

- Yes

- No



Based on the picture, how likely are you to recommend this book to your child?

Extremely Unlikely	Unlikely	Neither Likely Nor Unlikely	Likely	Extremely Likely
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** For children aged 9 to 12*

Section 2: Book Recommendations For Your Child

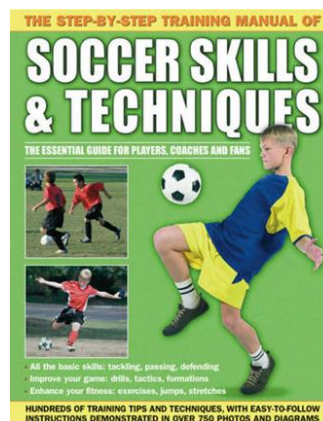
This section of the survey provides some pictures of book covers.

Based on the pictures of the book covers please indicate how likely you are to recommend these books to your child.

1. Do you know this book?

- Yes

- No



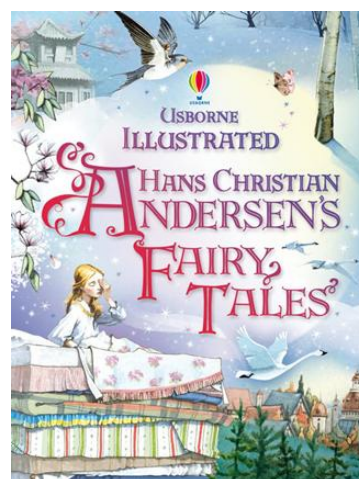
Based on the picture, how likely are you to recommend this book to your child?

Extremely Unlikely	Unlikely	Neither Likely Nor Unlikely	Likely	Extremely Likely
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2. Do you know this book?

- Yes

- No



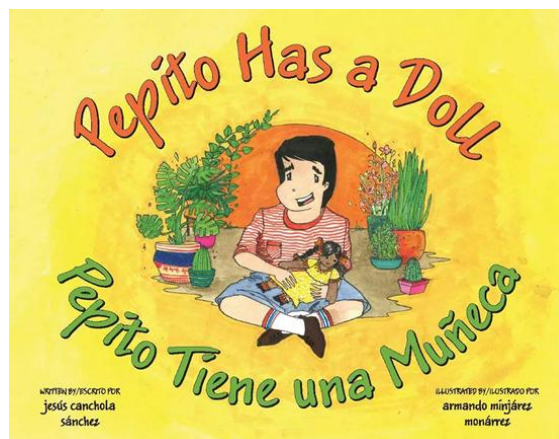
Based on the picture, how likely are you to recommend this book to your child?

Extremely Unlikely	Unlikely	Neither Likely Nor Unlikely	Likely	Extremely Likely
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3. Do you know this book?

- Yes

- No



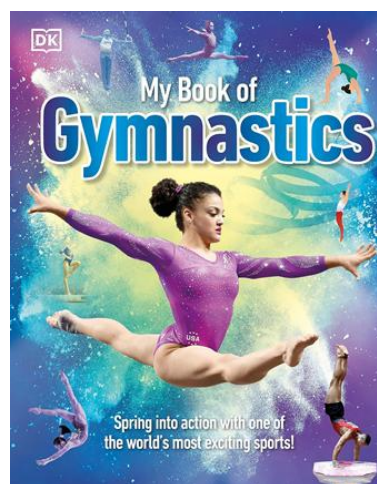
Based on the picture, how likely are you to recommend this book to your child?

Extremely Unlikely	Unlikely	Neither Likely Nor Unlikely	Likely	Extremely Likely
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4. Do you know this book?

- Yes

- No



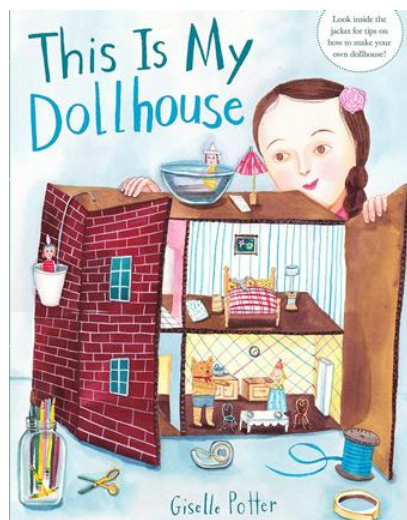
Based on the picture, how likely are you to recommend this book to your child?

Extremely Unlikely	Unlikely	Neither Likely Nor Unlikely	Likely	Extremely Likely
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5. Do you know this book?

- Yes

- No



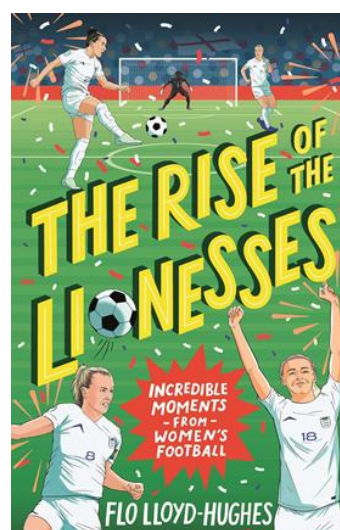
Based on the picture, how likely are you to recommend this book to your child?

Extremely Unlikely	Unlikely	Neither Likely Nor Unlikely	Likely	Extremely Likely
--------------------	----------	-----------------------------	--------	------------------

6. Do you know this book?

- Yes

- No



Based on the picture, how likely are you to recommend this book to your child?

Extremely Unlikely	Unlikely	Neither Likely Nor Unlikely	Likely	Extremely Likely
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7. Do you know this book?

- Yes

- No



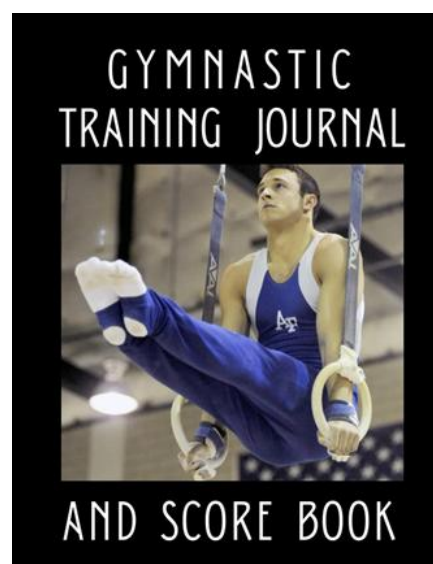
Based on the picture, how likely are you to recommend this book to your child?

Extremely Unlikely	Unlikely	Neither Likely Nor Unlikely	Likely	Extremely Likely
--------------------	----------	-----------------------------	--------	------------------

8. Do you know this book?

- Yes

- No



Based on the picture, how likely are you to recommend this book to your child?

Extremely Unlikely	Unlikely	Neither Likely Nor Unlikely	Likely	Extremely Likely
--------------------	----------	-----------------------------	--------	------------------

Section 3: Book selection behaviour for your child

This section is about your book selection behaviour for your child.

For each question, please select the response that most accurately describes you.

There are no right or wrong answers, only opinions.

1. How much are the books you select for your child influenced by online reviews?

Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Sometimes	Frequently	Usually	Every time
-------	--------	--------------	-----------	------------	---------	------------

2. How much are the books you select for your child influenced by grandparents?

Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Sometimes	Frequently	Usually	Every time
-------	--------	--------------	-----------	------------	---------	------------

3. How much are the books you select for your child influenced by friends with children of the same age?

Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Sometimes	Frequently	Usually	Every time
-------	--------	--------------	-----------	------------	---------	------------

4. How much are the books you select for your child influenced by other children?

Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Sometimes	Frequently	Usually	Every time
-------	--------	--------------	-----------	------------	---------	------------

5. How much are the books you select for your child influenced by your friends?

Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Sometimes	Frequently	Usually	Every time
-------	--------	--------------	-----------	------------	---------	------------

6. How much are the books you select for your child influenced by teachers?

Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Sometimes	Frequently	Usually	Every time
-------	--------	--------------	-----------	------------	---------	------------

7. How much are the books you select for your child based on his(her) gender?

Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Sometimes	Frequently	Usually	Every time
-------	--------	--------------	-----------	------------	---------	------------

8. How much are the books your child prefers reading stereo-typically typed to his (her) gender?

Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Sometimes	Frequently	Usually	Every time
-------	--------	--------------	-----------	------------	---------	------------

9. How much do you feel pressured to choose books for your child that are gender stereotypical?

Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Sometimes	Frequently	Usually	Every time
-------	--------	--------------	-----------	------------	---------	------------

Section 4: Your perspectives on “Gender-Neutral Parenting”

This section is about your views on the “Gender-Neutral Parenting” approach.

Gender-Neutral Parenting approach is raising a child without preconceived gender norms.

For each question, please select the response that most accurately describes you.

There are no right or wrong answers, only opinions.

1. I am raising my child in a Gender-Neutral Parenting approach.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
-------------------	----------	----------------------------	-------	----------------

2. Gender equality is important to me.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
-------------------	----------	----------------------------	-------	----------------

3. Gender equality is important to my child.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
-------------------	----------	----------------------------	-------	----------------

4. Removing gender roles from household chores is helpful for gender equality.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
-------------------	----------	----------------------------	-------	----------------

5. Using language that avoids labeling gender is helpful for gender equality.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
-------------------	----------	----------------------------	-------	----------------

6. My child has the opportunity to choose the toys, books, activities and clothing that he (she) feels suits him (her)best, regardless of gender.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
-------------------	----------	----------------------------	-------	----------------

7. A Gender-Neutral Parenting approach can avoid gendered stereotypes when raising my child, which in turn leads to gender equality.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
-------------------	----------	----------------------------	-------	----------------

Chinese version

父母对性别适宜阅读材料、性别中立育儿方式看法的问卷

第一部分：关于您和您的孩子

该部分问卷收集您和您孩子的基本信息。

如果您的孩子不止一个正处于 5 至 12 岁这一阶段，请您选择其中一个孩子，并根据实际情况进行回答。

1. 我的性别是：

- 男性
- 女性

2. 我的年龄：

- 我的年龄是：

3. 我的学历：

- 小学
- 初中
- 高中或大专
- 本科
- 研究生及以上

4. 我能看懂英语：

- 是
- 否

5. 我孩子的性别：

- 男孩
- 女孩

6. 我孩子的年龄

- 5 岁

- 6 岁

- 7 岁

- 8 岁

- 9 岁

- 10 岁

- 11 岁

- 12 岁

7. 我孩子就读几年级?

- 幼儿园中班

- 幼儿园大班

- 小学一年级

- 小学二年级

- 小学三年级

- 小学四年级

- 小学五年级

- 小学六年级（或初中预备班）

- 初中一年级（或七年级）

- 其他年级，请说明

*5-8 岁儿童版本

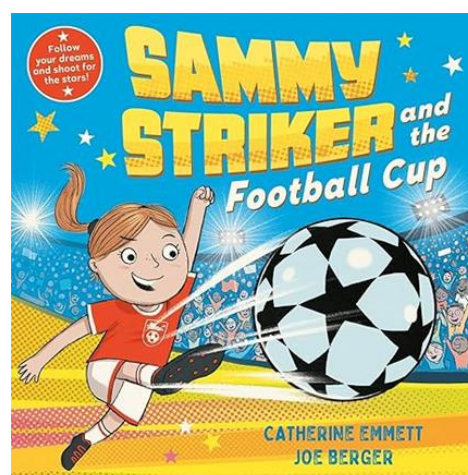
第二部分：关于您如何向孩子推荐书籍

本部分问卷提供了一些儿童书籍封面图片。

根据书籍封面图片，请您表明，在多大程度上，您会向您的孩子推荐这些书籍。

1.您知道这本书吗？

- 知道
- 不知道

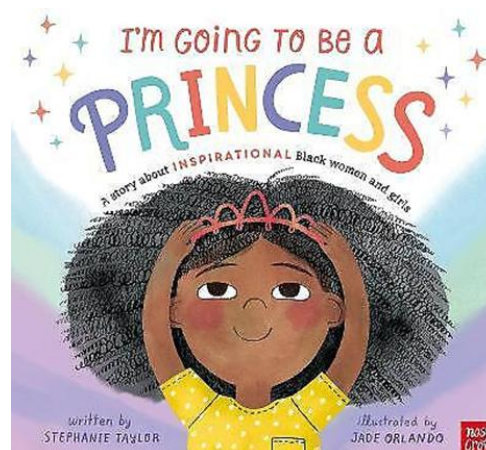


根据该图片，在多大程度上，您会把这本书推荐给您的孩子？

非常不推荐	不推荐	中立	推荐	非常推荐
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2. 您知道这本书吗？

- 知道
- 不知道

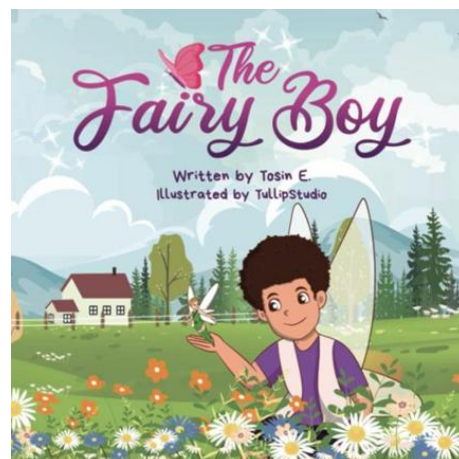


根据该图片，在多大程度上，您会把这本书推荐给您的孩子？

非常不推荐	不推荐	中立	推荐	非常推荐
-------	-----	----	----	------

3. 您知道这本书吗?

- 知道
- 不知道

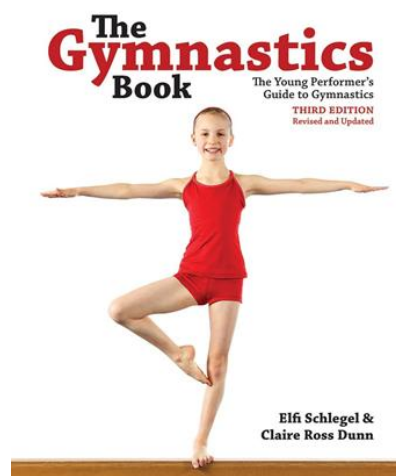


根据该图片，在多大程度上，您会把这本书推荐给您的孩子？

非常不推荐	不推荐	中立	推荐	非常推荐
-------	-----	----	----	------

4. 您知道这本书吗?

- 知道
- 不知道



根据该图片，在多大程度上，您会把这本书推荐给您的孩子？

非常不推荐	不推荐	中立	推荐	非常推荐
-------	-----	----	----	------

5. 您知道这本书吗?

- 知道
- 不知道

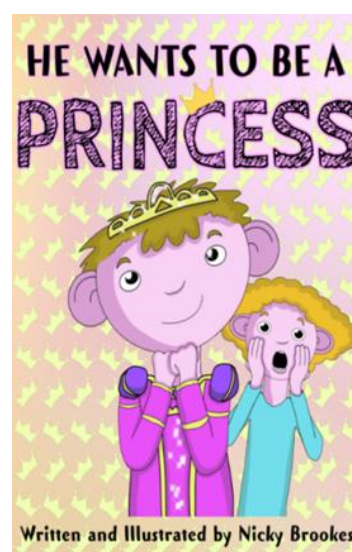


根据该图片，在多大程度上，您会把这本书推荐给您的孩子？

非常不推荐	不推荐	中立	推荐	非常推荐
-------	-----	----	----	------

6. 您知道这本书吗?

- 知道
- 不知道

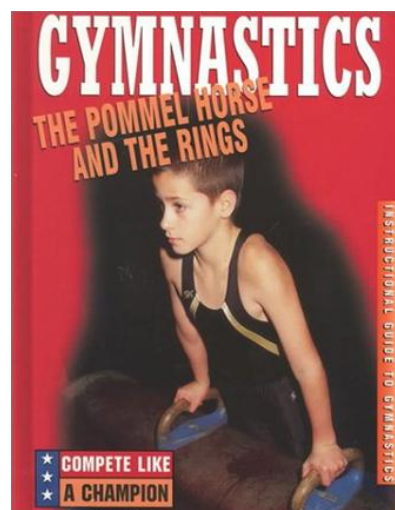


根据该图片，在多大程度上，您会把这本书推荐给您的孩子？

非常不推荐	不推荐	中立	推荐	非常推荐
-------	-----	----	----	------

7. 您知道这本书吗?

- 知道
- 不知道

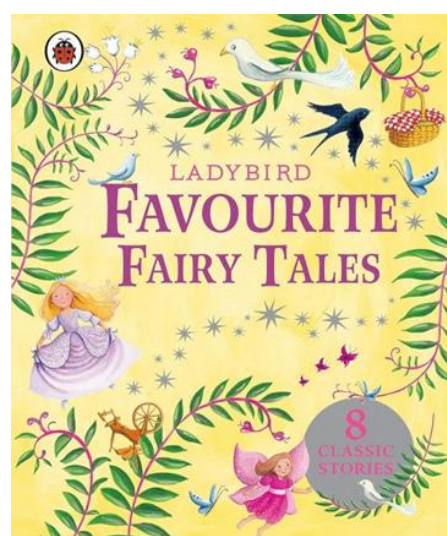


根据该图片，在多大程度上，您会把这本书推荐给您的孩子？

非常不推荐	不推荐	中立	推荐	非常推荐
-------	-----	----	----	------

8. 您知道这本书吗?

- 知道
- 不知道



根据该图片，在多大程度上，您会把这本书推荐给您的孩子？

非常不推荐	不推荐	中立	推荐	非常推荐
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*** 9-12 岁儿童版本**

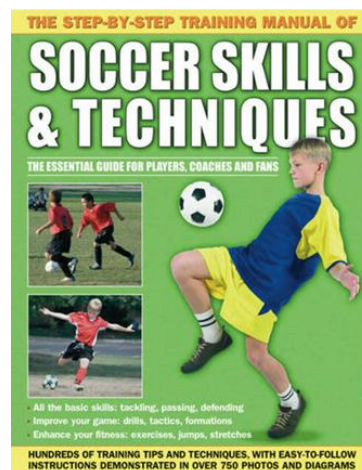
第二部分：关于您如何向孩子推荐书籍

本部分问卷提供了一些儿童书籍封面图片。

根据书籍封面图片，请您表明，在多大程度上，您会向您的孩子推荐这些书籍。

1. 您知道这本书吗？

- 知道
- 不知道

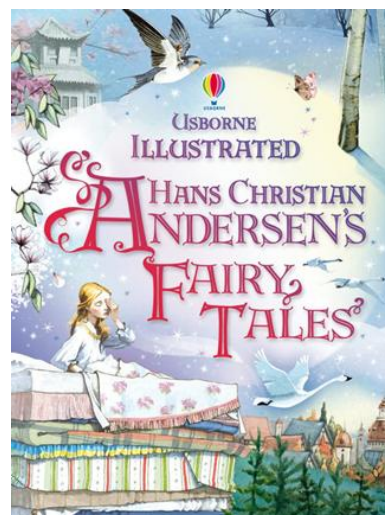


根据该图片，在多大程度上，您会把这本书推荐给您的孩子？

非常不推荐	不推荐	中立	推荐	非常推荐
-------	-----	----	----	------

2. 您知道这本书吗？

- 知道
- 不知道

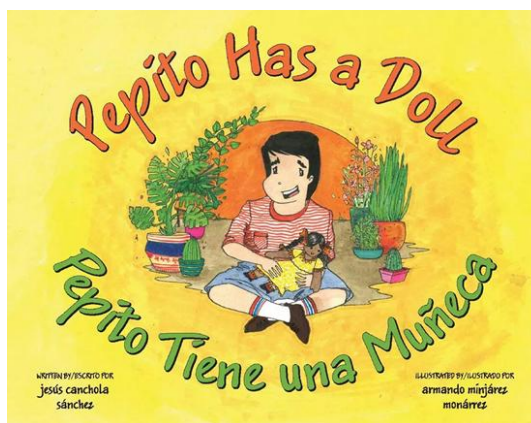


根据该图片，在多大程度上，您会把这本书推荐给您的孩子？

非常不推荐	不推荐	中立	推荐	非常推荐
-------	-----	----	----	------

3. 您知道这本书吗?

- 知道
- 不知道

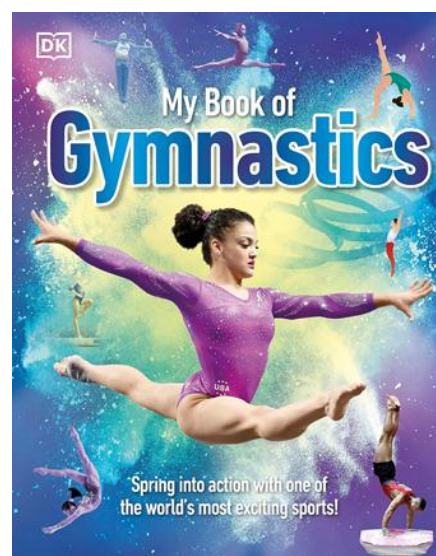


根据该图片，在多大程度上，您会把这本书推荐给您的孩子？

非常不推荐	不推荐	中立	推荐	非常推荐
-------	-----	----	----	------

4.您知道这本书吗?

- 知道
- 不知道

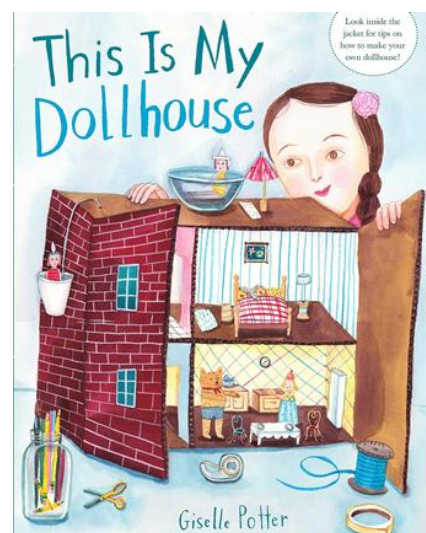


根据该图片，在多大程度上，您会把这本书推荐给您的孩子？

非常不推荐	不推荐	中立	推荐	非常推荐
-------	-----	----	----	------

5. 您知道这本书吗?

- 知道
- 不知道

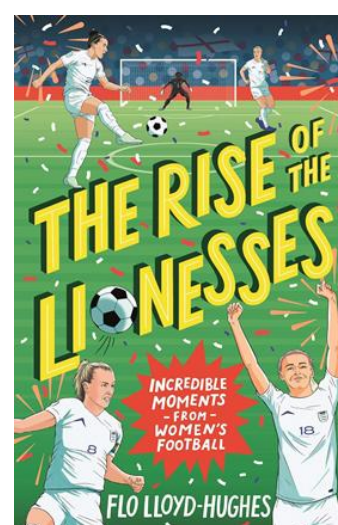


根据该图片，在多大程度上，您会把这本书推荐给您的孩子？

非常不推荐	不推荐	中立	推荐	非常推荐
-------	-----	----	----	------

6. 您知道这本书吗?

- 知道
- 不知道



根据该图片，在多大程度上，您会把这本书推荐给您的孩子？

非常不推荐	不推荐	中立	推荐	非常推荐
-------	-----	----	----	------

7. 您知道这本书吗?

- 知道
- 不知道

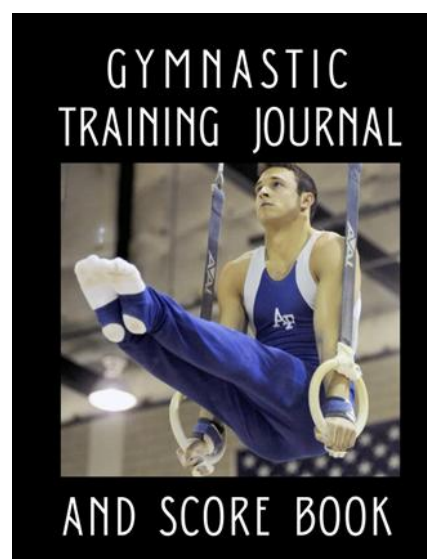


根据该图片，在多大程度上，您会把这本书推荐给您的孩子？

非常不推荐	不推荐	中立	推荐	非常推荐
-------	-----	----	----	------

8. 您知道这本书吗?

- 知道
- 不知道



根据该图片，在多大程度上，您会把这本书推荐给您的孩子？

非常不推荐	不推荐	中立	推荐	非常推荐
-------	-----	----	----	------

第三部分：关于您如何为孩子选书

本部分问卷调查您为孩子挑选书籍的行为。

请仔细阅读以下每个题目，并选择最符合您实际情况的选项。答案并无对错之分，仅代表您的观点。

1. 在多大程度上，您为孩子挑选的书籍受到了网上评价的影响？

从不	罕见	少见	有时	多见	常见	总是
----	----	----	----	----	----	----

2. 在多大程度上，您为孩子挑选的书籍受到了孩子爷爷奶奶、外公外婆的影响？

从不	罕见	少见	有时	多见	常见	总是
----	----	----	----	----	----	----

3. 在多大程度上，您为孩子挑选的书籍受到了同龄孩子的影响？

从不	罕见	少见	有时	多见	常见	总是
----	----	----	----	----	----	----

4. 在多大程度上，您为孩子挑选的书籍受到了其他年龄阶段孩子的影响？

从不	罕见	少见	有时	多见	常见	总是
----	----	----	----	----	----	----

5. 在多大程度上，您为孩子挑选的书籍受到了您朋友的影响？

从不	罕见	少见	有时	多见	常见	总是
----	----	----	----	----	----	----

6. 在多大程度上，您为孩子挑选的书籍受到了老师的影响？

从不	罕见	少见	有时	多见	常见	总是
----	----	----	----	----	----	----

7. 在多大程度上，您会根据您孩子的性别为其挑选书籍？

从不	罕见	少见	有时	多见	常见	总是
----	----	----	----	----	----	----

8. 在多大程度上，您孩子喜欢阅读的书是与他（她）的性别相符的？

从不	罕见	少见	有时	多见	常见	总是
----	----	----	----	----	----	----

9. 在多大程度上，您会因为选择了与您孩子性别相符的书籍而感到压力？

从不	罕见	少见	有时	多见	常见	总是
----	----	----	----	----	----	----

第四部分：您对“性别中立育儿方式”的看法

本部分问卷调查您对“性别中立育儿方式”的看法。

性别中立育儿方式指的是在养育孩子时，避免性别刻板印象，并允许孩子在不受传统性别角色限制的情况下表达自己。请仔细阅读以下每个题目，并选择最符合您实际情况的选项。答案并无对错之分，仅代表您的观点。

1. 我正在采用“性别中立育儿方式”养育我的孩子。

非常不同意	不同意	中立	同意	非常同意
-------	-----	----	----	------

2. 性别平等对我很重要。

非常不同意	不同意	中立	同意	非常同意
-------	-----	----	----	------

3. 性别平等对我的孩子很重要。

非常不同意	不同意	中立	同意	非常同意
-------	-----	----	----	------

4. 消除对家务劳动中的性别角色的刻板印象有助于性别平等。

非常不同意	不同意	中立	同意	非常同意
-------	-----	----	----	------

5. 使用包容性语言，避免基于传统性别角色的假设有助于性别平等。

非常不同意	不同意	中立	同意	非常同意
-------	-----	----	----	------

6. 我孩子可以在不受传统性别角色限制的情况下，选择他（她）所喜欢的玩具、书籍、活动和衣服。

非常不同意	不同意	中立	同意	非常同意
-------	-----	----	----	------

7. “性别中立育儿方式”能够在养育孩子的过程中，避免性别刻板印象，从而实现性别平等。

非常不同意	不同意	中立	同意	非常同意
-------	-----	----	----	------

Appendix III:**Parental involvement in children's reading questionnaire****Section 1: About you and your child**

This section collects information about you and your child.

If you have more than one child aged 5 to 12, please choose only one.

1. My gender:

- Male
- Female
- Prefer to self-describe

2. My child's sex as registered at birth:

- Boy
- Girl

3. My child's age:

- 5 years old
- 6 years old
- 7 years old
- 8 years old
- 9 years old
- 10 years old
- 11 years old
- 12 years old

4. Which school year group is your child in?

- Reception
- Year 1
- Year 2

- Year 3
- Year 4
- Year 5
- Year 6
- Year 7
- Year 8
- Something else, please specify

Section 2: Direct parental involvement in children's reading

This section is about your one-on-one reading interactions with your child.

Please indicate how often you read with your child. There are no right or wrong answers, only opinions.

How often do you read with your child?

Never	Rarely	A few times a month	Several times a week	Every day
-------	--------	---------------------	----------------------	-----------

Please tell us why you read frequently or infrequently with your child.

- I read with my child frequently because both of us enjoy parent-child reading.
- I read with my child frequently because he/she asks for it.
- I read with my child infrequently as he/she enjoys reading by himself/herself.
- I read with my child infrequently as he/she doesn't like reading.

Section 3: Indirect parental involvement in children's reading

This section is about your indirect reading interactions (parent is physically and mentally available, merely providing support and resources) with your child.

For each question, please select the response that most accurately describes you.

There are no right or wrong answers, only opinions.

1. When your child needs your support when he/she is reading, are you there for him/her?

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
-------	--------	-----------	-------	--------

2. Are you available to spend time with your child in reading activities?

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
-------	--------	-----------	-------	--------

3. Can you meet your child's needs for books?

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
-------	--------	-----------	-------	--------

4. Do you enjoy reading with your child?

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
-------	--------	-----------	-------	--------

5. Does reading help you to feel closer to your child?

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
-------	--------	-----------	-------	--------

Section 4: Parent responsibility in children's reading

This section is about how you take responsibility for your child's reading.

For each statement, please indicate how much you agree or disagree. There are no right or wrong answers, only opinions.

1. I stress the importance of reading to my child.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
-------------------	----------	----------------------------	-------	----------------

2. I read at home and encourage my child to do so.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
-------------------	----------	----------------------------	-------	----------------

3. I have a wide variety of reading materials for children around the house.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
-------------------	----------	----------------------------	-------	----------------

4. I spend time discussing with my child about the books we read together.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
-------------------	----------	----------------------------	-------	----------------

5. I take my child to visit the public libraries.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
-------------------	----------	----------------------------	-------	----------------

6. I spend time with my child in bookstores.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
-------------------	----------	----------------------------	-------	----------------

7. I purchase books for my child that he/she wants.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
-------------------	----------	----------------------------	-------	----------------

8. I give my child books as a gift.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
-------------------	----------	----------------------------	-------	----------------

9. I am aware of good books to share with my child.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
-------------------	----------	----------------------------	-------	----------------

10. I encourage my child to set reading goals.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
-------------------	----------	----------------------------	-------	----------------

**For children aged 5 to 8*

Section 5: About your child's reading interests

This section collects information about your child's reading interests

Please indicate how often your child reads each following genre.

1. How often does your child read books about **Adventure**?

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
-------	--------	-----------	-------	--------

2. How often does your child read books about **Fantasy**?

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
-------	--------	-----------	-------	--------

3. How often does your child read **Fairy Tales, Folktale, Legend, Myth, or Fable**?

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
-------	--------	-----------	-------	--------

4. How often does your child read **Comics, Graphic Novel, or Manga**?

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
-------	--------	-----------	-------	--------

5. How often does your child read books about **Mystery**?

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
-------	--------	-----------	-------	--------

6. How often does your child read books about **Humour**?

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
-------	--------	-----------	-------	--------

7. How often does your child read **Historical Fiction** books?

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
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8. How often does your child read **Realistic Fiction** books?

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
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9. How often does your child read Science **Fiction** books?

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
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10. How often does your child read **Biography, Autobiography, Memoir**?

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
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11. How often does your child read books about **How-to manuals**?

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
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12. How often does your child read books about **Education & Study Guides**?

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
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13. How often does your child read books about **Science & Technology** ?

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
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14. How often does your child read books about **Sports**?

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
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15. How often does your child read books about **Religion**?

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
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16. How often does your child read Poetry?

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
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**For children aged 9-12*

Section 5: About your child's reading interest

This section collects information about your child's reading interest

Please indicate how often your child reads each following genre.

1. How often does your child read books about **Adventure**?

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
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2. How often does your child read books about **Fantasy**?

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
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3. How often does your child read **Fairy Tales, Folktale, Legend, Myth, or Fable**?

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
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4. How often does your child read **Comics, Graphic Novel, or Manga**?

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
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5. How often does your child read books about **Mystery**?

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
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6. How often does your child read books about **Humour**?

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
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7. How often does your child read books about **Horror**?

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
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8. How often does your child read books about **Romance**?

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
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9. How often does your child read **Historical Fiction** books?

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
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10. How often does your child read **Realistic Fiction** books?

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
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11. How often does your child read **Science Fiction** books?

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
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12. How often does your child read **Biography, Autobiography, Memoir**?

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
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13. How often does your child read books about **How-to manuals**?

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
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14. How often does your child read books about **Education & Study Guides**?

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
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15. How often does your child read books about **Science & Technology** ?

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
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16. How often does your child read books about **Sports**?

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
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17. How often does your child read books about **Religion**?

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
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18. How often does your child read **Poetry**?

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
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This section is about your child's reading frequency outside of school

Please indicate how often your child reads books for pleasure outside of school.

How often does your child read for pleasure outside of school?

Never	Rarely	Once a month	A few times a month	Once a week	A few times a Week	Daily
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This is the end of this survey. Thank you for your participation.