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Introduction

The appropriateness of deliberate inclusion of recreational reading material in academic libraries' collections remains unresolved (Odess-Harnish, 2003). Regardless of the lack of consensus, many libraries support lifelong reading (Elliot, 2007).

Sam Houston State University (SHSU) is located in Huntsville, Texas, a small city of 38,000 located about an hour north of Houston. While the permanent collection of the Newton Gresham Library (NGL) primarily supports the curriculum and research needs, it is also used by some patrons in their pursuit of reading for fun. In the 1980s, the Library made the decision to include a collection of popular paperback fiction to supplement recreational reading materials in the main collection. The collection development policy for this Browsing Collection states that, "Books from various popular fiction genre are included. In particular mysteries, romance, science fiction, suspense, and general fiction are collected." At this time the collection is entirely in print format. Although the researchers know that books in the Browsing and permanent collections are used for reading recreationally, SHSU librarians are interested in finding out what patrons prefer to read and in what format. The purpose of the research is to provide information about recreational reading, such as:

- What patrons like to read in both fiction and non-fiction
- How patrons learn about and obtain materials
- In what language they would prefer to read
- In what format they would prefer to read their selections
- If their format preference changes and why

The authors intend to use the information obtained through the survey to inform selection in the Browsing and the various permanent collections.

Literature Review

There is still an ongoing debate over whether or not it is an academic library's responsibility to support recreational reading (Odess-Harnish, 2003). Though the Association of College & Research Libraries' (2010) *Guidelines for University Library Services to Undergraduate Students* states that "Collection policies should include access to information on current events, cultural interests, careers, and recreational reading, among others, to encourage exploration of information resources as a part of everyday life," the focus is on access rather than actual collecting (Resources and Collections section). Oftentimes, an academic library may point to its Interlibrary Loan Department or the public library as a place where popular fiction may be requested and accessed (Alsop, 2007; Hsieh & Runner, 2005), though access through the academic library is more convenient (Nelson, 2014). It is generally acknowledged that academic libraries collect popular fiction, typically as it supports coursework (Van Fleet, 2003). Popular fiction is still often viewed as worth less than literary or highbrow fiction, until it becomes part of the literary canon and "deemed worthy" (Harris & Crawford, 2001). Van Fleet (2003) found "the perception that popular fiction collections do not support the

missions of public or academic libraries is commonplace and the impact is severe" (p. 74), even though such a collection offers physical, mental, social, and educational benefits[1] and supports missions "that focus on personal growth, cultural awareness, and constructive leisure" (pp. 80-81). As Smith and Young (2008) point out, students still ask for recreational reading materials in an academic library, and in turning them away, libraries are turning away "a crucial opportunity for engagement with the larger community" (p. 521), as well as advocating literacy and supporting each student (and other individuals within the university population served) as a "total individual" (Rathe & Blankenship, 2006, p. 81).

The most recent study on recreational reading in academic libraries comes from Conklin and Moreton (2015). They performed an analysis of their text message reference service in which they saw demand for popular reading. This led to the creation of a small recreational reading collection of leased books at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville. In their examination of the pilot project, they only evaluated undergraduate students via a survey and anecdotal evidence. Conklin and Moreton concluded, "Subject liaisons with collection development responsibilities may want to consider purchasing popular nonfiction titles that will draw readers in and engage them in subject matter they can apply to their personal and professional lives" (p. 76).

As libraries examine patrons' perception of building space and function, leisure reading is occasionally mentioned, either by the surveys or the respondents (Li, 1998; Weber & Flatley, 2008; Whitmire, 2003), which provides information about why a library is used or what types of books might be borrowed (Gardner and Eng, 2005). The dearth of discussion of specific titles, authors, and genres is often the same in the literature on eBooks in academic libraries; though these studies will often allude to or directly ask about recreational reading, it is usually how the text was engaged with or how long was spent reading (Corlett-Rivera & Hackman, 2014; Foasberg, 2014; Keller, 2012; Stern, 2011; Tees, 2010; Walton, 2014). Studies specifically examining recreational reading in academic libraries tend to focus on the habits and general preferences of undergraduates (Gilbert & Fister, 2011; Salter & Brook, 2007). The permanent population of a campus, which includes the faculty, staff, and administrators, are usually excluded from consideration. Authors of several studies hypothesized that faculty and

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[1] See for instance: Aubry, T. (2011). *Reading as therapy: What contemporary fiction does for middle-class Americans*. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press; Berns, G. S., Blaine, K., Prietula, M. J., & Pye, B. E. (2013). Short- and long-term effects of a novel on connectivity in the brain. *Brain Connectivity*, *3*(6), pp.590-600. doi:10.1089/brain.2013.0166; Djikic, M., Oatley, K., & Moldoveanu, M. C. (2013). Opening the closed mind: The effect of exposure to literature on the need for closure. *Creativity Research Journal*, *25*(2), pp.149-154. doi:10.1080/10400419.2013.783735; Johnson, D. R., Jasper, D. M., Griffin, S., & Huffman, B. L. (2013). Reading narrative fiction reduces Arab-Muslim prejudice and offers a safe haven from intergroup anxiety. *Social Cognition*, *31*(5), pp.578-598. doi:10.1521/soco.2013.31.5.578; Koy, C. E. (2003). Keeping English proficient by reading medical fiction. *Medical Education*, 104(6), 208; Mar, R. A., Oatley, K., Hirsh, J., Paz, J. D., & Peterson, J. B. (2006). Bookworms versus nerds: Exposure to fiction versus non-fiction, divergent associations with social ability, and the simulation of fictional social worlds. *Journal of Research in Personality*, *40*(5), pp.694-712. doi:10.1016/j.jrp.2005.08.002; Mar, R. A., Oatley, K., & Peterson, J. B. (2009). Exploring the link between reading fiction and empathy: Ruling out individual differences and examining outcomes. *Communications*, *34*(4), pp.407-428. doi:10.1515/comm.2009.025; Robleh, L. (2009). Diversity and multiculturalism through fiction. *Incite*, *30*(10), pp.16-17.

graduate students have less time to participate in non-academic reading, but studies show these user populations access the library for recreational reading materials to improve certain skills, their knowledgebase, or for enjoyment (Adjah, 2012; Bordonaro, 2006; Dali, 2006; Gladwin & Goulding, 2012; Hallyburton, Buchanan, & Carstens, 2011; Sanders, 2009; Van Fleet, 2003). To ignore these populations of users and potential users of an academic library, in favor of only undergraduates, can create an unbalanced collection.

Studies show that modeling behavior is important and faculty attitudes can affect a student beyond the classroom (Umbach & Wawrzynski, 2005). It is of utmost importance to consider the recreational reading habits and preferences of those who are teaching in order to help and encourage them to model ideal literacy behavior (Burak, 2004). Admittedly the research shows a conundrum: faculty most often judge libraries on how a library's collection "can meet their teaching, learning, and research requirements" (Oseghale, 2008, p. 7). Libraries also judge themselves on the same criteria (Van Fleet, 2003), even if popular fiction has the highest circulation statistics and makes a more welcoming atmosphere (Woodward, 2009). Recreational reading materials are not seen to meet said requirements, though some students will use materials in a specifically created leisure reading collection to help with coursework (Rathe & Blankenship, 2006). It is reasonable to conclude that encouraging leisure reading can help students develop the skills faculty demand of their students.

Reports, case studies, survey results, and anecdotes continue to be published on academic libraries and the role recreational reading and literature plays, or should play, in their collections (Campbell, O'Brien & Flanigan, 2005; Dwyer, 2001). However, published materials most often focus on addressing outreach, acquisition, collection development, budgets, and other obstacles for recreational reading collections rather than on addressing the leisure reading preferences of the campus population.[2] The plethora of this literature leads to the conclusion that more libraries and librarians are

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[2] See for instance: Bosman, R., Glover, J., & Prince, M. (2008). Growing adult readers: Promoting leisure reading in academic libraries. *Urban Library Journal*, *15*(1), pp.1-10. http://ojs.gc.cuny.edu/index.php/urbanlibrary/article/view/1268/1357; Downey, E. M. (2009). Graphic novels in curriculum and instruction collections. *Reference & User Services Quarterly*, *49*(2), pp.181-188. doi:10.5860/rusq.49n2.181; Elliott, J. (2007). Academic libraries and extracurricular reading promotion. *Reference & User Services Quarterly*, *46*(3), pp.34-43. http://www.jstor.org/stable/20864694; Elliott, J. (2009). Barriers to extracurricular reading promotion in academic libraries. *Reference & User Services Quarterly*, *48*(4), pp.340-346. https://journals.ala.org/rusq/article/viewFile/3508/3794; Freeland, M., & Bailey, M. (2008). Print newspapers: Are they still being used in academic and research Libraries? *Serials Librarian*, *55*(1/2), pp.210-226. doi: 10.1080/03615260801970881; Mahaffy, M. M. (2009). In support of reading: Reading outreach programs at academic libraries. *Public Services Quarterly*, *5*(3), pp.163-173. doi: 10.1080/15228950902904267; Thornton, G., & Carroll, H. (2006). The race for readers: a public library and an academic library team up to entice college students to read books. *American Libraries*, *37*(9), pp.24-26; Trott, B. b., Dahlen, S. P., & Watkins, S. G. (2013). A "novel" approach to recreational reading. *Reference & User Services Quarterly*, *53*(2), pp.94-99. https://www.journals.ala.org/rusq/article/view/3475/3756; Yoder, K., & Tilton, K. (2013). Young adult literature in the academic library. *Journal of Library Innovation*, *4*(2), pp.122-133. http://www.libraryinnovation.org/article/view/248/488

willing to advocate for a recreational reading collection than there are those who speak against it.

Recreational reading studies often ask specifically about particular reading preferences—eBooks, audiobooks, and physical copies—or material types (Jeffres & Atkin, 1996)—fiction, newspapers, and nonfiction—but genre, author, and title preferences are often left out of examination. Yet whether to collect recreational reading materials at all should raise considerations such as what genres to collect and which formats to offer (Alsop, 2007; Davis-Kahl, 2008; Lee & Freedman, 2010; Perret, 2012; Perret, 2013). As far as these researchers have been able to determine, Salter and Brooks' 2007 survey and Gilbert and Fister's 2011 survey have been the only studies of American university populations to ask about genre or author preferences in an examination of reading habits. Salter and Brook asked what types of books their respective students liked to read and provided survey-takers with a list of genres. Gilbert and Fister surveyed their campus to determine whether "voluntary reading" is at risk and encouraged students to list genres and authors they enjoyed reading, which in turn helped them locate gaps in their library's collection. The main focus of past studies tends to be on eBooks versus print, whether or not an academic library should support recreational reading (via provision of leisure reading materials), or what recreational reading habits exist.

The diversification of recreational reading sources and format make it important to continually measure a population's interests and needs. The available research does not provide much insight into genre preferences for collection development. At SHSU the researchers sought to examine our community's recreational reading habits and preferences in order to best serve their needs. Additionally the researchers included survey questions on recreational reading genre preferences.

Methodology

The researchers developed the survey to provide the Library with information about patrons' recreational reading preferences, not only of content, but also format and genre. Four researchers developed the survey. After the survey had been administered, but before the analysis and writing of this article, one of the researchers left SHSU. Another researcher joined the group, provided analysis, and shares in authorship of the article. The survey was submitted to the University's Institutional Review Board for Human Subjects Research and was approved in February 2014. Rather than limiting the study to a random sample of the potential population, the survey was distributed by email on April 2, 2014 to all Sam Houston State University faculty, staff, and students who were currently enrolled, or had graduated within the past year. Recent graduates were included since University emails are retained for one year after graduation, and there was no way to easily differentiate between currently enrolled students and those who had recently graduated. In addition to the emails, invitations were also posted on SHSU social media sites and included in the Academic Affairs Newsletter. Although responses were anonymous, participants were invited to provide

their SHSU email to be entered into a drawing for an Amazon Kindle Fire. As indicated in the survey invitation, all personal data was later expunged.

The Survey

The survey began with demographic questions of institutional classification, gender, and age. The questions were designed to provide the researchers with information about a number of recreational reader preferences. Survey questions asked if participants read for fun. In an attempt to make the definition of recreational reading inclusive, *reading for fun* was defined in question 4 as:

> Currently, in the past, or expect to in the future--our definition for reading for fun includes books, magazines, comics, newspapers, web sites, social media, listening to audio books, and more.

Subsequent questions collected finer distinctions concerning preference of genre, language, location and awareness. Skip logic was used throughout the survey, which allowed respondents to skip questions that were not pertinent to their previous responses.   A complete copy of the survey is available in the SHSU Institutional Repository: https://shsu-ir.tdl.org/shsu-ir/

Limitations

Some limitations to the methodology exist. First, the survey's respondents were self-selecting. The reasons for self-selection might include disinterest in the topic, being too busy to complete the survey, or that users who like reading are going to be attracted to a survey on recreational reading. The researchers attempted to mitigate self-selection bias by defining recreational reading as broadly as possible.

Second, the survey was lengthy, containing 40 questions. Skip logic mitigated the length somewhat.

Third, question number 7, which asked participants about their non-fiction reading preferences, omitted science from the listing of genres. Although several respondents used the "Other" selection to indicate their enjoyment of reading science-related materials, it is unknown how many people simply did not include their enjoyment of reading science.

Lastly, two of the questions included the selection option "Unaware". The option was intended to determine if people were unaware of the existence of specific SHSU library collections and material types. It is possible that "Unaware" could be interpreted as unaware or unsure if s/he has checked out the materials. The questions pertain to the participant's history of checking out materials: Questions 24 "Have you ever checked out or read for fun any books from this Browsing Books Collection in the SHSU Library?" and 25 "Have you ever checked out, or read for fun any of the following from the SHSU library?"
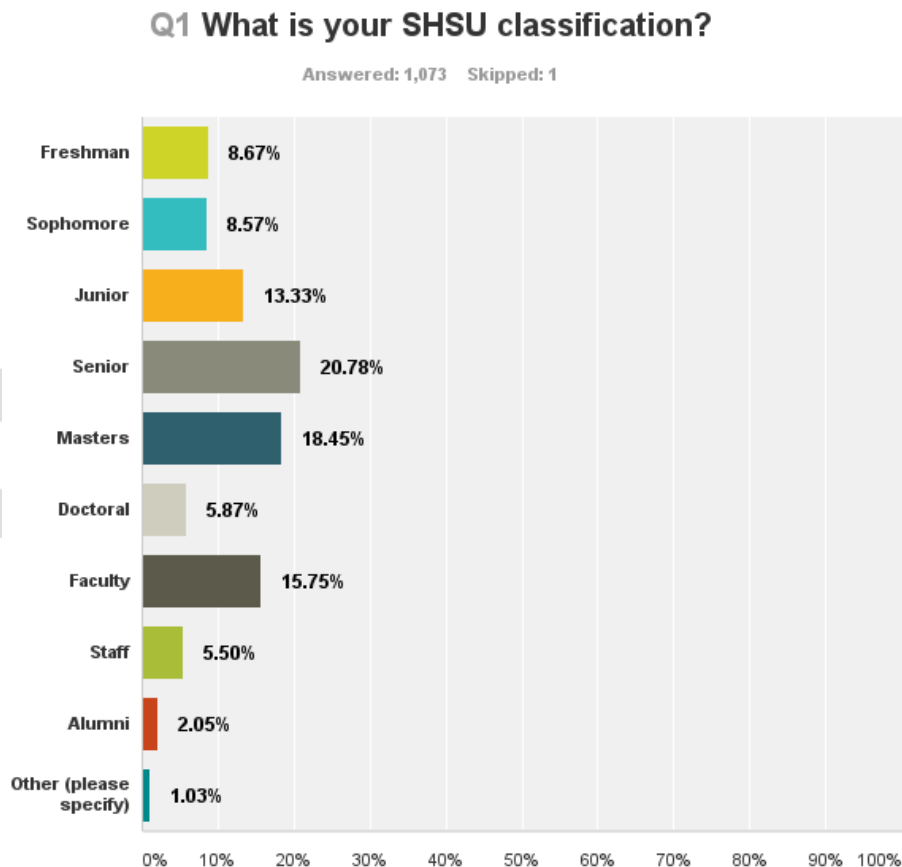
Results

Demographics

The authors wished to identify which institutionally defined groups (faculty, staff, etc.) participated in the survey. At the time, the potential respondents were comprised of 977 faculty, 1,285 staff and 17,603 students. The survey was sent to 19,910 email addresses on April 2, 2014 and remained open for nine weeks. There were 1,073 respondents, giving a response rate of 5.4%.

The institutional classification of survey respondents was as follows: 75.7% students (812), 15.8% faculty (169), 5.5% staff members (59), 2% alumni (22) and 1% other (11). Figure 1 shows further breakout of all institutional classifications. Those describing themselves as "other" were most often respondents with dual status, i.e. staff and student.

FIGURE 1: Survey Question #1

Q1 What is your SHSU classification?
Answered: 1,073   Skipped: 1

Classification	Percentage
Freshman	8.67%
Sophomore	8.57%
Junior	13.33%
Senior	20.78%
Masters	18.45%
Doctoral	5.87%
Faculty	15.75%
Staff	5.50%
Alumni	2.05%
Other (please specify)	1.03%

The majority of the respondents (58.6%) were 17-29 years of age. The remainder followed as 15% were 30-39 years old, 11.4% were 40-49 years old, 8.7% were 50-59 years old, 5.1% were 60-69 years old, and 1.1% were 70 years of age or older.   Of the

1,073 respondents, 768 were female (71.8%), 298 were male (27.9%) and 3 opted not to identify (0.3%).

General Recreational Reading Results

Participants were asked "Do you like to read for fun?" with the disclaimer that they should consider whether they have done so in the past, are doing so currently, or expect to in the future. They were also provided with the explanation that "reading for fun includes books, magazines, comics, newspapers, web sites, social media, listening to audio books, and more." Answering "Yes", 96.8% identified as recreational readers.

When respondents were asked to identify the amount of time per week that they read for fun, 30.4% indicated they read 1-2 hours, 30.3% indicated they read 3-4 hours, 29.2% indicated they read 5 or more hours and 9.3% indicated they read up to one hour. Only 0.7% (7) respondents indicated that they did not read for fun weekly.

Respondents were also asked to identify the fiction and non-fiction genres they enjoy reading. Figure 2 illustrates the five most popular fiction genres and the five least popular fiction genres. Additionally 3.9% of respondents indicated they do not read fiction.

FIGURE 2: Survey Question #6

FICTION:
5 most popular genres

Genre	Percentage
Mystery	49.80%
Young Adult	41.80%
Suspense/Thriller	40.80%
Fantasy	39.50%
Historical	39.30%

FICTION:
5 least popular genres

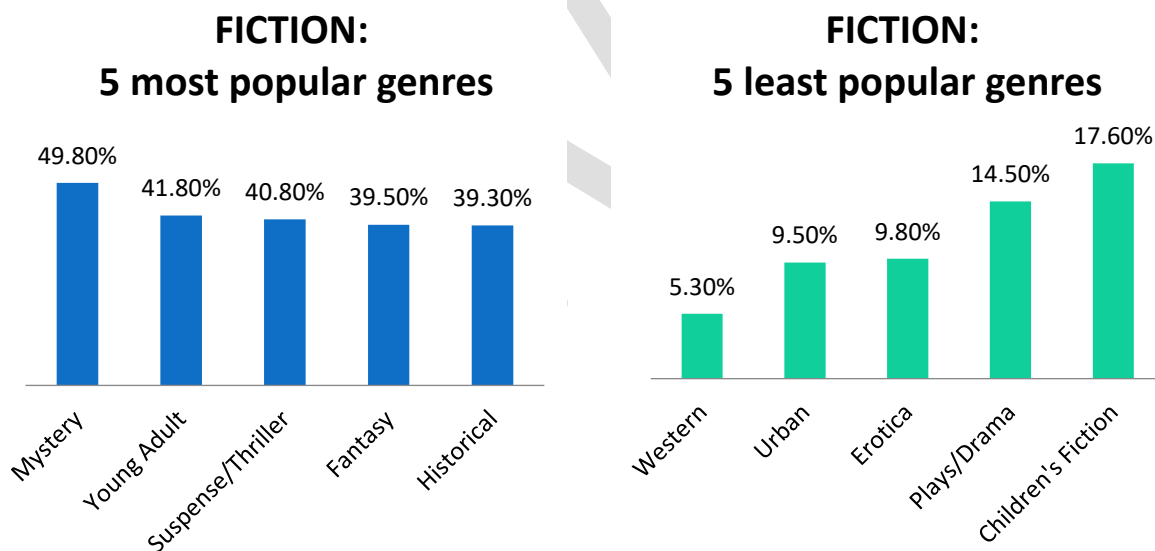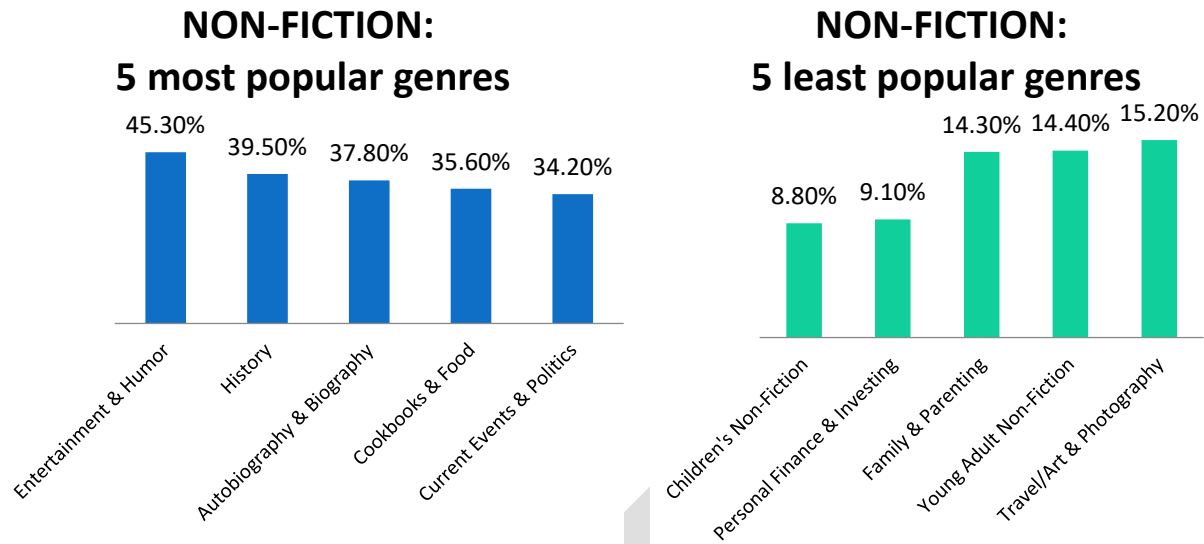| Genre	Percentage
Western	5.30%
Urban	9.50%
Erotica	9.80%
Plays/Drama	14.50%
Children's Fiction	17.60%

Figure 3 illustrates the five most popular non-fiction genres and the five least popular non-fiction genres. Additionally 5.8% of respondents indicated they do not read non-fiction.

NON-FICTION: 5 most popular genres

45.30% — Entertainment & Humor
39.50% — History
37.80% — Autobiography & Biography
35.60% — Cookbooks & Food
34.20% — Current Events & Politics

NON-FICTION: 5 least popular genres

8.80% — Children's Non-Fiction
9.10% — Personal Finance & Investing
14.30% — Family & Parenting
14.40% — Young Adult Non-Fiction
15.20% — Travel/Art & Photography

When asked to rank their book format preferences, the majority of respondents selected print (68.8%) as their first format preference. eBook was the second most preferred format at 20.7% while audiobook was the least preferred format at 10.5%. Comparing faculty respondents to undergraduate respondents, "Print was rated as the top format preference by 71.2% and 69.3% respectively. Age was also a variable in this question, with respondents ages 17-25 choosing "Print" (75.2%) as their preference; respondents ages 26-39 (56.8%) and respondents ages 40-69 (69.6%) also indicated "Print" as their preferred format. Furthermore, when participants were asked whether their book format preference changed sometimes, 57.9% indicated that theirs did not. Of the 42.1% that indicated their book format preference did occasionally change, many individual comments (approximately 29% of the 421 responses) indicated the reader's expected activity, such as traveling, commuting, etc., was a contributing influence.

As illustrated in Figure 4, most respondents indicated that they did not read for fun in languages other than English (85%). Of the languages mentioned, Spanish was the most prevalent. Other languages mentioned in individual comments included American Sign Language (ASL), Arabic, Chinese, French, Finnish, German, Japanese, Korean, and Sinhala.

**Read for fun
in languages
other than
English?**

**Non-English
languages**

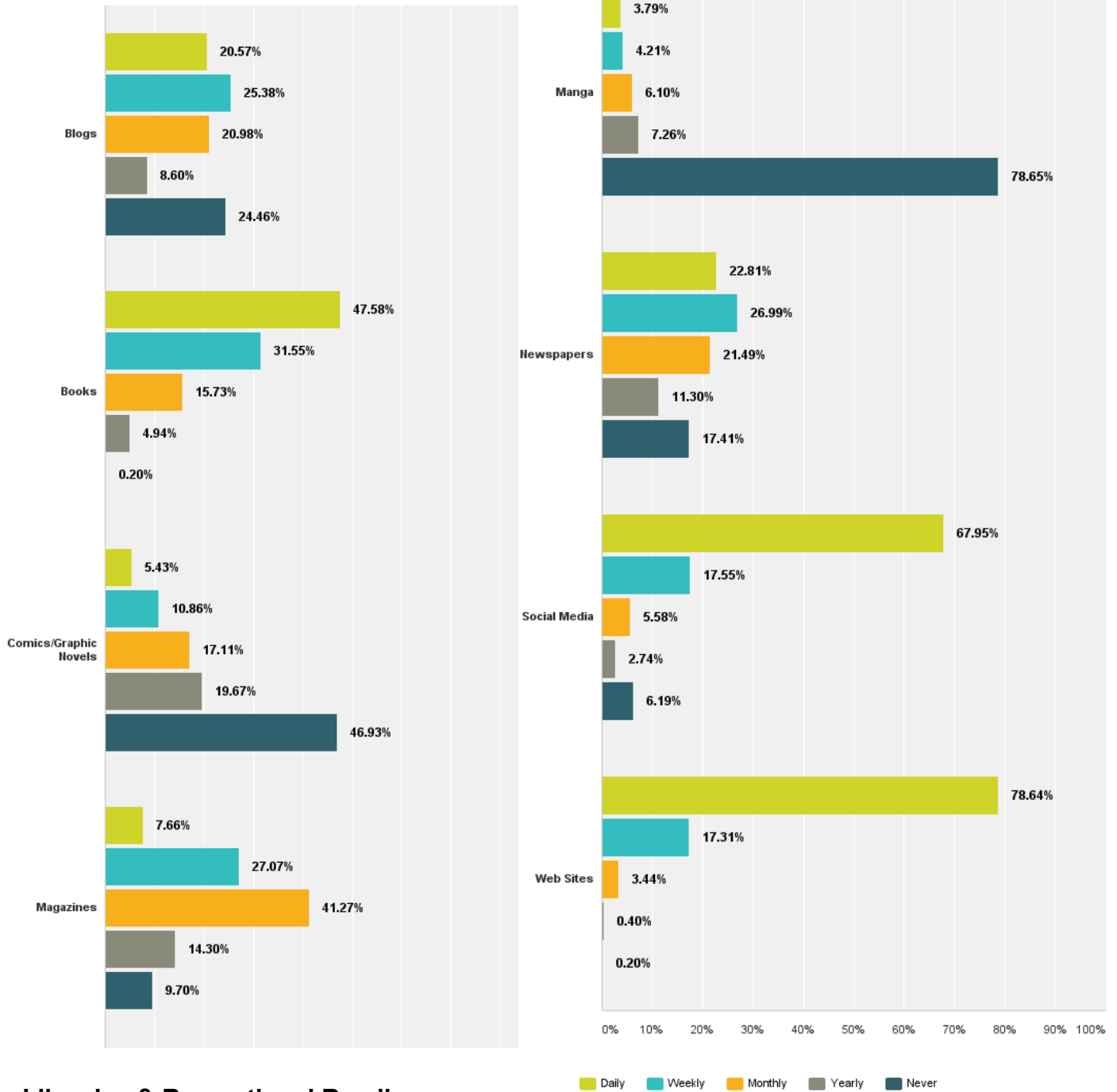15%

85%

Spanish
55%

other
45%
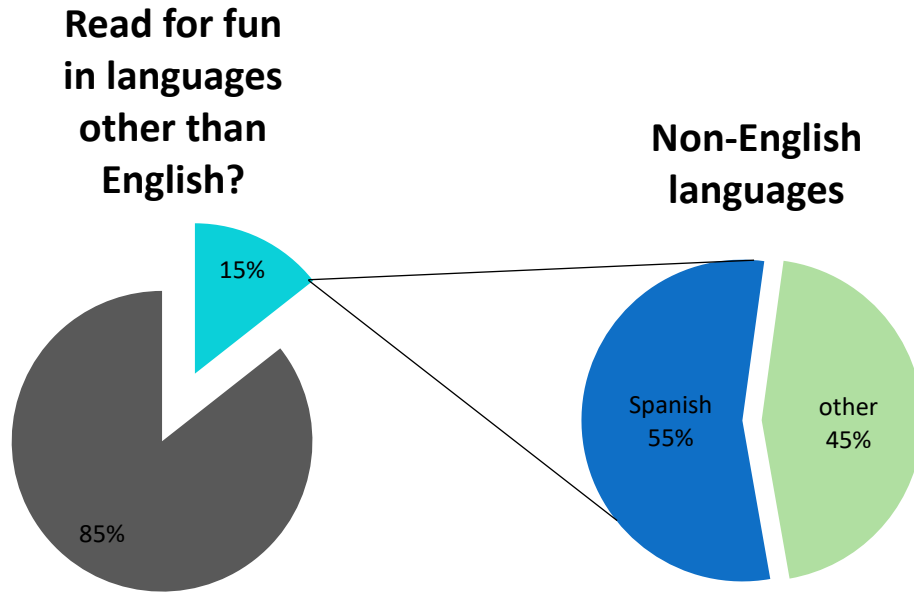
When asked to specify how often (daily, weekly, monthly, yearly, or never) they read blogs, books, comics/graphic novels, magazines, manga, newspapers, social media, and web sites, survey participants indicated different rates/frequencies of reading each material preference.   Frequencies are provided in Figure 5.

Q11 How often do you read the following?
Mark all that apply.

Answered: 1,000   Skipped: 74

Blogs
- 20.57%
- 25.38%
- 20.98%
- 8.60%
- 24.46%

Books
- 47.58%
- 31.55%
- 15.73%
- 4.94%
- 0.20%

Comics/Graphic Novels
- 5.43%
- 10.86%
- 17.11%
- 19.67%
- 46.93%

Magazines
- 7.66%
- 27.07%
- 41.27%
- 14.30%
- 9.70%

Manga
- 3.79%
- 4.21%
- 6.10%
- 7.26%
- 78.65%

Newspapers
- 22.81%
- 26.99%
- 21.49%
- 11.30%
- 17.41%

Social Media
- 67.95%
- 17.55%
- 5.58%
- 2.74%
- 6.19%

Web Sites
- 78.64%
- 17.31%
- 3.44%
- 0.40%
- 0.20%

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

Legend: Daily | Weekly | Monthly | Yearly | Never

Libraries & Recreational Reading Materials

Respondents indicated they most often purchase their recreational reading materials online (70.5%). Borrowing from a library was the 4th most popular method (50.8%) of obtaining materials read for fun. See Figure 6 for details.

FIGURE 6: Survey Question #13

Q13 How do you most often obtain the materials you read for fun? Mark all that apply.

Answered: 1,001   Skipped: 73
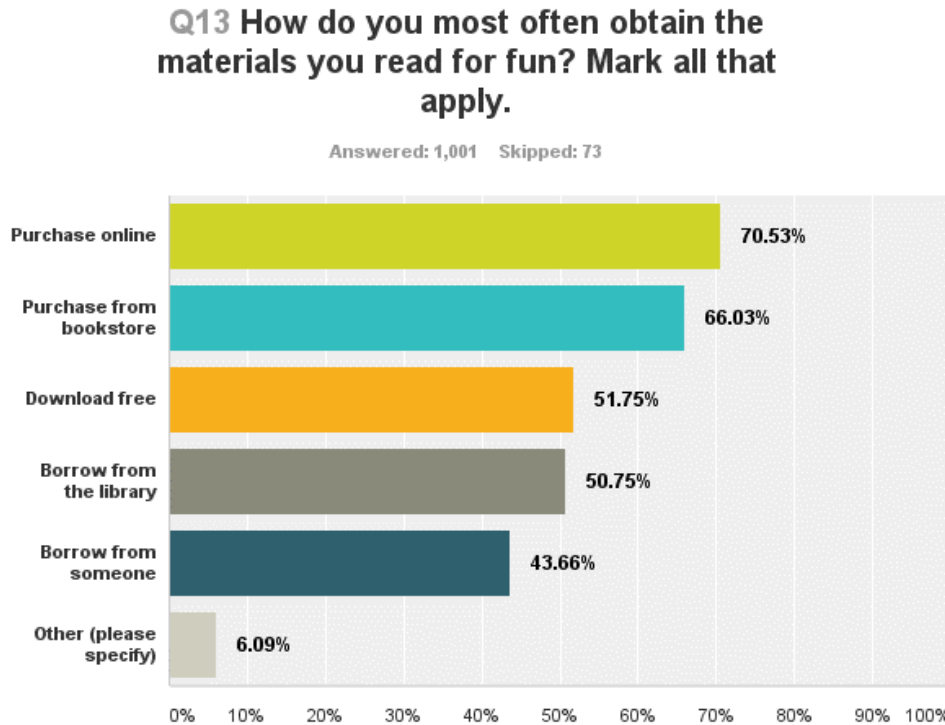
More than 67% of the respondents reported borrowing materials from a library. Of these, 72.4% borrow from a public library, 58.7% borrow from the SHSU library, and 6% borrow from other libraries. When asked how they discover new materials to read, 78.2% learned from friends or family, whereas 58% used Amazon or browsed at bookstores. Browsing libraries was indicated by 37.3% of participants.
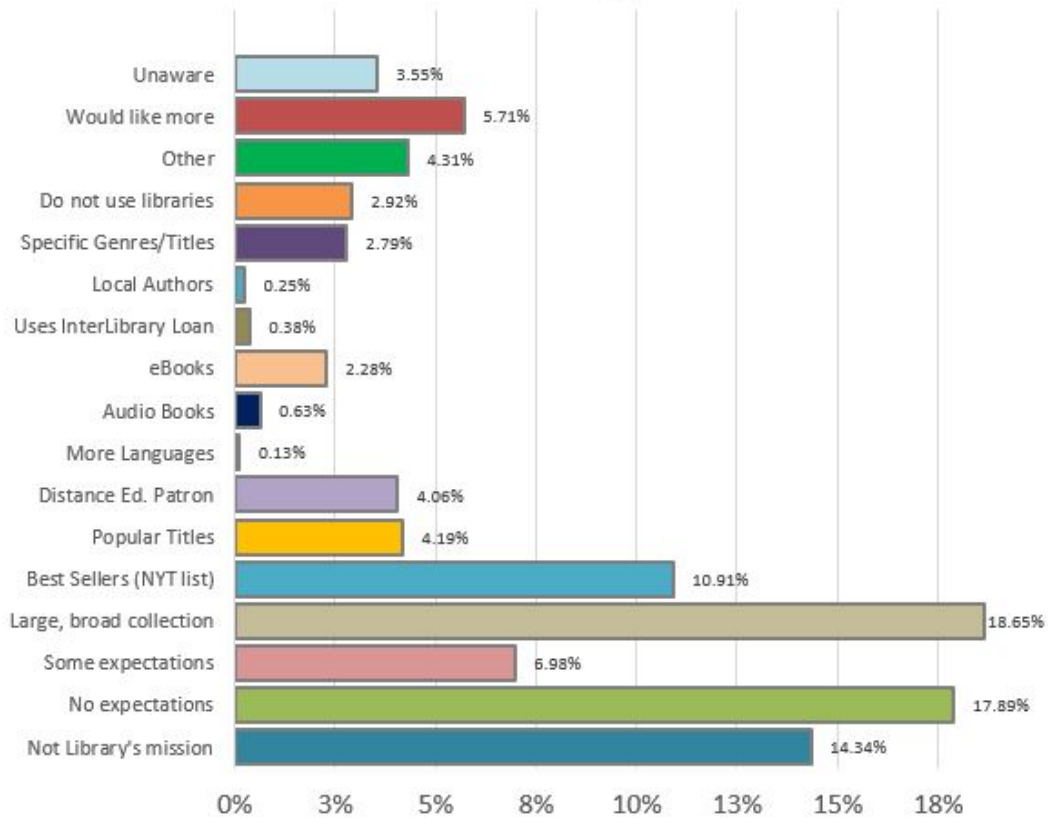
Participants who answered that they borrow from libraries and also that they borrow from a public library indicated that the materials they get from a public library include: "popular fiction" (79.2%), "audiobooks" (22.9%), "eBooks – popular fiction" (19.1%), and "comics/graphic novels/manga" (10.3%). Additionally 23% of these participants opted to choose "other" and provide comments. Many of these comments mention visiting the public library for children's books, videos/media, as well as books that the SHSU library does not have. The main factors that respondents indicated would lead them to prefer to check out library materials included: "availability" (74.4%), "cost" (54%), "genre/subject" (48.1%), "author" (43.2%), and "format – eBook/print/etc." (39.2%).

SHSU Library & Recreational Reading Materials
Expectations of what recreational reading materials the SHSU Library should provide were varied, as seen in Figure 7. Over 49% indicated that the SHSU library should provide some recreational reading materials, whereas 32.2% indicated they had no expectation for the SHSU library to provide any materials for leisure reading.
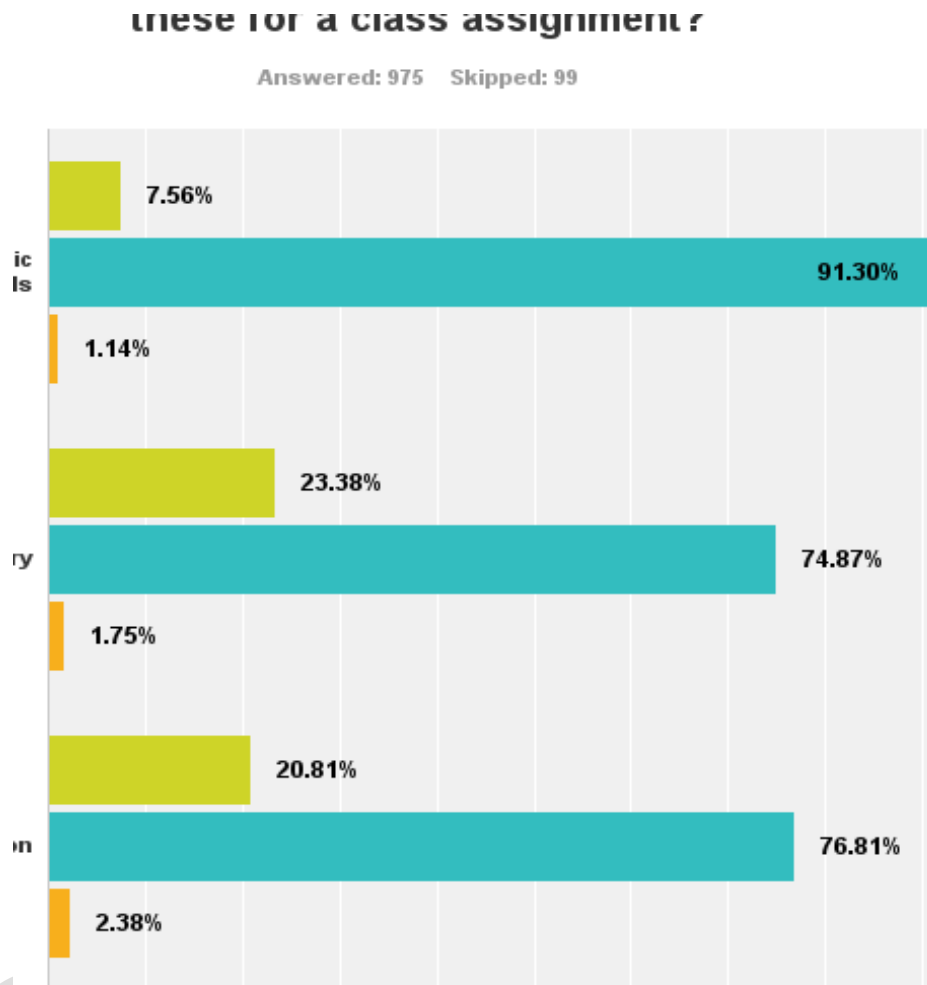
FIGURE 7: Survey Question #22

Expectations of NGL to provide recreational reading materials

Category	Percentage
Unaware	3.55%
Would like more	5.71%
Other	4.31%
Do not use libraries	2.92%
Specific Genres/Titles	2.79%
Local Authors	0.25%
Uses InterLibrary Loan	0.38%
eBooks	2.28%
Audio Books	0.63%
More Languages	0.13%
Distance Ed. Patron	4.06%
Popular Titles	4.19%
Best Sellers (NYT list)	10.91%
Large, broad collection	18.65%
Some expectations	6.98%
No expectations	17.89%
Not Library's mission	14.34%

Within the SHSU library collection, poetry has been used or checked out by 23.4% of survey respondents for a class assignment. Figure 8 illustrates additional data regarding the rate at which respondents used or checked out library materials for class assignments.

these for a class assignment?

Answered: 975   Skipped: 99

ic
ls

7.56%

91.30%

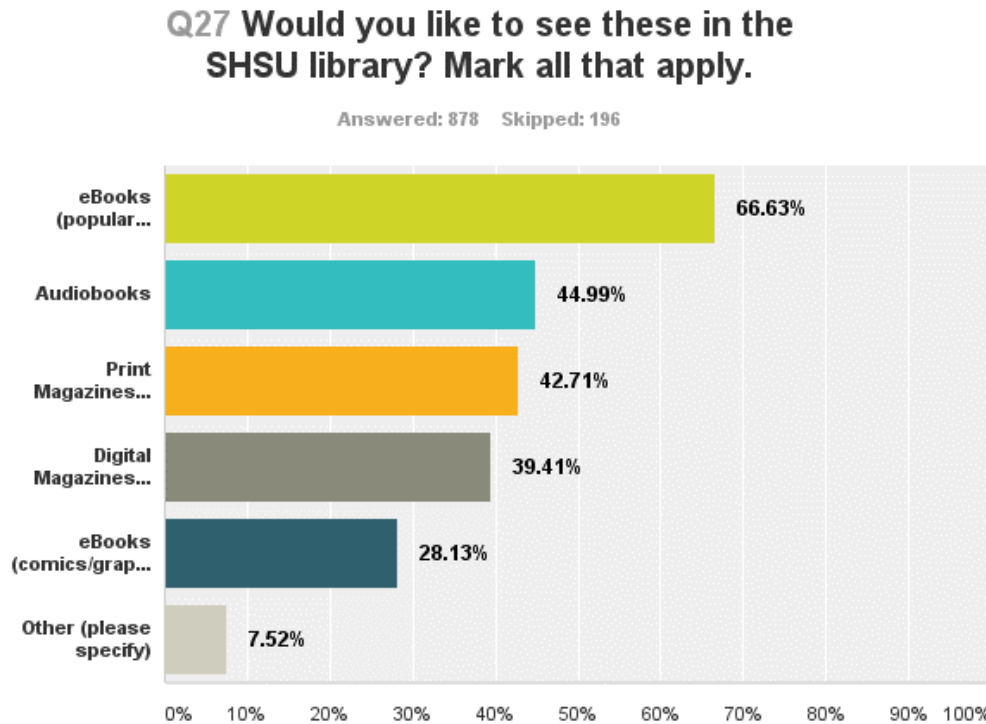1.14%

ry

23.38%

74.87%

1.75%

n

20.81%

76.81%

2.38%

The SHSU library has a collection of paperback popular fiction and bestsellers that are in the lobby. This collection is referred to as the "Browsing Books" collection. Participants were provided with a picture of what this collection looks like and its location. They were then asked if they had ever read for fun or checked out any of these books. Sixty-eight percent indicated they had not, 18% indicated they had, and 11% indicated they were unaware of this collection.

Survey participants were asked, "Have you ever checked out, or read for fun any of the following from the SHSU library?" and given four answer choices: Yes, No, Unaware, and Not Interested. Non-fiction (39.3%), fiction (29.3%) and popular fiction (23%) were the three most prevalent choices. Comics/Graphic Novels/Manga were the least popular option (5.7% had read for fun) and also were the material that the survey respondents were "Not Interested" in (10.5%). Of the collections within the SHSU library, participants were unaware of comic/graphic novels/manga (5.7%) and also popular fiction (5%).

"eBooks – popular fiction" (66.6%) and "audiobooks" (45%) were the most requested materials that survey respondents would like to see at the SHSU library. Figure 9 shows other requested materials.

Q27 **Would you like to see these in the SHSU library? Mark all that apply.**

Answered: 878   Skipped: 196

- eBooks (popular...) — 66.63%
- Audiobooks — 44.99%
- Print Magazines... — 42.71%
- Digital Magazines... — 39.41%
- eBooks (comics/grap...) — 28.13%
- Other (please specify) — 7.52%

Eighty-one percent of survey participants "strongly agree" that 'reading for fun has benefits that go beyond entertainment' while another 17.5% "agree" with the statement. The overall consensus was affirmative by 98.8% of participants. One percent was neutral regarding the statement whereas 0.3% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Discussion

The aforementioned results provide insights about survey respondents' recreational reading habits and preferences. By gathering and analyzing data on how participants discover their leisure reading materials, what expectations they had of the SHSU library to meet those needs, and in what formats they prefer for leisure reading, SHSU librarians plan to modify collection development policies in order to align library acquisitions with participants' indicated preferences.

Library Expectations for Recreational Reading Materials

Nearly 97% of survey respondents said they read for fun, with 90% reading at least one hour a day. Inasmuch as the SHSU library hopes to be a hub for users to obtain all types of reading materials, the series of questions attempted to evaluate reader demand. Only 37.2% of survey respondents browsed libraries to discover recreational reading materials. When asked about their expectations of the SHSU library to supply

materials for fun reading, 32.2% of respondents answered that they didn't expect the library to provide leisure reading materials. Some respondents indicated they perceive the library's mission is to supply "academic" materials. Others just had no expectations. These results indicate that our community does not use the library to discover content to read for fun.

Forty-nine percent of survey respondents said they did expect the library to provide recreational reading materials. In free-response sections of the survey, they suggested several genres and also wanted the library to have complete holdings of popular series. This is a clear indication of demand. Patrons are also looking for non-fiction materials for leisure reading. Nearly 40% of survey respondents indicated that they recreationally read non-fiction materials (see Figure 3).

Questions focusing on how survey respondents acquire their recreational reading materials show they purchase them online, from a brick and mortar bookstore, or download free leisure reading more often than they borrow from a library or borrow from an acquaintance. When given a list of genres (drama, poetry, popular non-fiction, fiction, etc.) and asked if they've ever checked out materials in those areas from the SHSU library, few indicated they had. These data show respondents from the SHSU community do not look first to the library to acquire the materials for their recreational reading needs.

Some survey respondents said they were unaware of the library's recreational reading offerings. Over 11% of respondents said they were unaware of the library's small paperback Browsing Collection. When stating their expectations of the SHSU library, 3.6% of respondents indicated they were unaware that the library offered recreational reading materials. Similarly, when asked if they'd checked out materials from a list of potential leisure reading genres, an average of 4.5% respondents said that they were unaware the SHSU library collected in these areas.
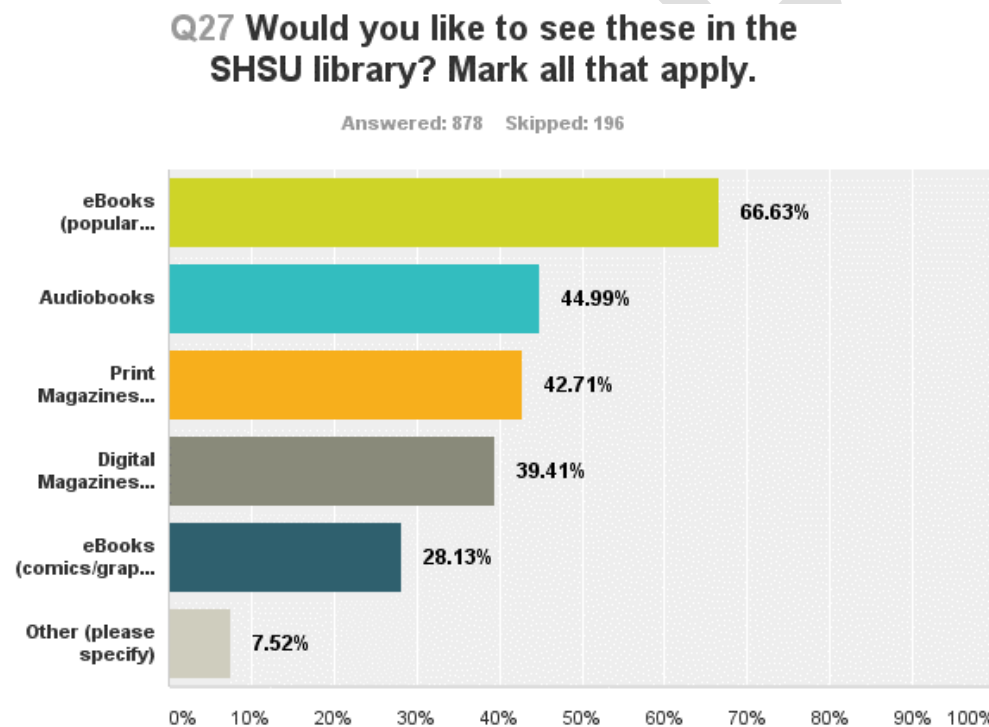
SHSU Library response to survey data

The SHSU library has not traditionally marketed or advertised its materials for recreational reading outside of the small Browsing Collection, focusing rather on the academic uses of the materials. The authors cannot but speculate how these numbers would be affected by marketing. If the library made an effort, not necessarily to increase its "recreational readings" holdings, but to promote its current print and electronic holdings to a recreational reading audience, would more patrons begin to use the collections? Would patrons be more likely to communicate what materials and subjects they'd like in the collections, thus spurring more collecting in recreational reading areas? How would highlighting library holdings of humor books, popular histories, biographies, cookbooks, and political tracts satisfy the demand for non-fiction recreational reading?

The SHSU librarians acknowledge that the University reading community finds its recreational reading in many mediums beyond books and in a broader swath of topics. In an attempt to capture the breadth of the reading environment here, the researchers asked about recreational reading in many formats and arenas. Most survey respondents indicated that they still read books on a daily (45.58%), weekly (31.55%),

or monthly (15.73%) basis, along with many other formats such as web pages, social media, blogs, and magazines. The researchers wanted to better understand their community's format preferences, particularly if readers wanted the library to offer more eBooks. When asked directly what format they preferred for recreational reading, the majority of respondents stated they preferred print books. As the researchers examined this data broken down by age, younger readers ages 17–25 indicated that they preferred print books for recreational reading over eBooks. This was counter to the researchers' preconceptions. Yet survey respondents also indicated that their format preferences change, depending on circumstances. They find audiobooks and eBooks are situationally preferable to print. In an effort to discover opportunities of unmet demand, the authors offered several combinations of categories and mediums of recreational reading materials that are largely not offered in the SHSU library. When asked to indicate among these choices, respondents most positively responded to "eBooks (popular fiction)".

FIGURE 10: Survey Question #27

Q27 **Would you like to see these in the SHSU library? Mark all that apply.**

Answered: 878   Skipped: 196

Category	Percentage
eBooks (popular...	66.63%
Audiobooks	44.99%
Print Magazines...	42.71%
Digital Magazines...	39.41%
eBooks (comics/grap...	28.13%
Other (please specify)	7.52%

Patrons clearly are demanding books in the variety of formats that current technology provides, and a collection that serves patrons' needs will offer materials in that variety of formats.

The researchers believe the data collected from survey participants provides a better grasp of the reading culture of the University community. Through this snapshot of the community's reading behavior, the authors gain a sharper picture of potential modifications to collection development policies and marketing of library materials.

Conclusion

Providing patrons with recreational reading material is important and should be considered so when allocating library resources. Additionally, diversity of formats is being expanded.

This survey provoked further discussion and research topics, such as:

- What data on recreational reading could SHSU librarians glean by examining eBook titles selected by patrons through the Library's demand-driven acquisitions program?
- Is the survey data indicating demand for audiobooks great enough to reevaluate the existing collection development policy?
- Should the Library check out eBook readers and/or iPads/tablets as well as provide access to popular fiction eBooks?
- What percentage of the budget for popular fiction should be allocated for eBooks?
- To what extent will replacing some print popular fiction with electronic format fiction save space?

Although some weaknesses in the survey design and dissemination have been identified and addressed, the results will largely prove helpful to librarians and administrators at this university.

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