

‘What’s wrong with New Zealand novels?’

An exploration of reader attitudes towards New Zealand fiction

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Abstract

RESEARCH PROBLEM: The purpose of this study was to explore attitudes to New Zealand fiction in order to better understand the generally low readership of New Zealand fiction in New Zealand. Despite this being a 'hot topic' in the New Zealand media and within the publishing industry, formal research on this issue have been few and generally only brief components of studies on wider issues. The aim of this research was to fill these gaps and explore attitudes to New Zealand fiction in greater depth from the reader's perspective, specifically how New Zealand fiction is viewed by readers and how it fits into general reading practices and preferences.

METHODOLOGY: The study used a quantitative framework and was conducted via online survey questionnaires. The sampling techniques employed were a combination of convenience and snowball sampling. Libraries, bookshops and other book-related organizations were approached to advertise the questionnaire, while participants were encouraged to pass on the survey details to others of their acquaintance that enjoyed reading.

RESULTS: Data from 557 participants were included in the results although only 497 of these completed the entire survey. Despite relatively high expressed levels of enthusiasm for New Zealand fiction the results suggest that many struggle to align a desire to read and support New Zealand fiction with their wider reading tastes and practices. The findings indicate this is due to a number of factors, the most pervasive being that nationality is not a main driver for choosing fiction and therefore requires a conscious choice and adjustment in practices in order for it to be considered.

IMPLICATIONS: The study benefits various stakeholders in New Zealand's book industry, including publishers, libraries, booksellers and writers and contributes to a better understanding of the New Zealand market for fiction by New Zealanders. Suggestions for future research include expanding the research population to broader demographics and a wider variety of reader types, as well as exploration of the preferences and practices of genre readers in New Zealand.

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1. Topic statement

The purpose of this study was to explore attitudes to New Zealand fiction in order to better understand the generally low readership of New Zealand fiction in New Zealand.

Various government and industry studies conducted during the past decade provide evidence that New Zealanders read more international titles than New Zealand published titles (Statistics New Zealand, 2003; Colmar Brunton, 2008; Meechan, 2011). Although New Zealand's market size and book-buying capacity per capita justify the lower overall sales of New Zealand published books in comparison to international titles, these factors alone do not explain why fiction in particular fares so badly. New Zealand published fiction accounts for only 4% of the total fiction market in New Zealand, inclusive of New Zealand and international titles, and only 1% of the entire book market (Meechan, 2011).

Despite this being a reoccurring topic of debate with a variety of contributing factors proposed, discussion in the existing literature dealing directly with the topic is predominantly opinion-based and largely confined to the media, publishing magazines and industry-focused blogs and presents the views of industry insiders rather than New Zealand readers. There is very little academic literature on the topic or evidence showing the impact of any of the proposed factors on readership of New Zealand fiction. A survey conducted by Davidson and Cave (1990) over twenty years ago is the only formal study to examine reader attitudes to New Zealand fiction in any depth. However, as this was a small section of a larger study of library user preferences, Davidson and Cave (1990) do not examine the full range of contributing factors behind various reader attitudes or explore possible correlations between types of reader and types of attitude.

The aim of this research was to fill these gaps and explore attitudes to New Zealand fiction in greater depth from the reader's perspective. Specifically, the survey sought to establish how New Zealand readers view New Zealand fiction, particularly in comparison to overseas fiction, and how attitudes impact their reading practices and preferences. The study used a quantitative framework and was conducted via online survey questionnaires which enabled a large sample of readers from across New Zealand to be surveyed. It will benefit various stakeholders in New Zealand's book industry, including publishers, libraries, booksellers and writers. It contributes to a better understanding of the New Zealand market for fiction by New Zealanders, as well as the current barriers to success beyond those that are immediately apparent, namely market size and book-buying capacity per capita.

1.2 Definitions

Fiction

Fictional work from any period, including literary, popular and genre fiction, as well as short stories and poetry. This reflects the Nielsen BookScan fiction category in terms of which work forms constitute fiction (Booksellers New Zealand, 2011).

New Zealand fiction

Definitions differ according to context and there is no agreed definition across the literature. For instance, the Nielsen BookScan New Zealand Fiction category is concerned with measuring New Zealand publishing outputs and the criterion for inclusion is “New Zealand published” (Meehan, 2011). For the purpose of this study a working definition was adopted, encompassing New Zealand published fiction as well as fiction widely considered to be New Zealand fiction, regardless of where it is published. Works featuring New Zealand subject matter as the only link to New Zealand were excluded. This definition has been upheld by the results of the study which show that fiction by New Zealand born or based authors that is successful in overseas markets while remaining little known in New Zealand was generally acknowledged as being considered a separate category, albeit possibly one that needs redressing.

‘International fiction’ / ‘fiction from overseas’ / ‘overseas fiction’

Books written by non-New Zealanders published overseas.

Adult fiction

The focus of the study is on fiction written for adults. Findings relating to children’s and young adult fiction have been differentiated in the results.

2. Literature review

The following presents an overview of the research conducted to date on reader preferences and practices concerning New Zealand published books and draws on related literature relevant to an examination of the issue of attitudes to and consumption of New Zealand fiction by New Zealanders.

2.1 Attitudes to New Zealand fiction

Literature about buying, borrowing and attitudes to New Zealand fiction exists in three clusters of resources: sales statistics from the publishing industry; studies investigating consumption of and attitudes towards New Zealand books; and debate in the media and industry publications about the topic.

2.1.1 Sales statistics

According to book retail statistics, New Zealand published books have an approximate 22% share of the total market but fiction fares the worst of all categories of book published in New Zealand (Meechan, 2011). Sales of New Zealand fiction, as reported by Nielsen BookScan (Meechan, 2011), indicate a decidedly low readership in comparison to international fiction, and even New Zealand non-fiction.¹ According to Nielsen, New Zealand published fiction accounts for only 4% of the total fiction market in New Zealand and represents an approximate 1% share of the entire New Zealand book market (Meechan, 2011). Proportionally, sales of New Zealand published material do not reflect the split by category of the general book market, where fiction accounts for just over a quarter of the market (26% fiction, 51% non-fiction, and 23% children's books). In terms of New Zealand published books the market split is 4% fiction, 77% non-fiction and 19% children's books (Meechan, 2011).

2.1.2 Reader surveys

Only a small amount of research has looked specifically at New Zealand readers' attitudes to, or levels of interest in, New Zealand books. *The Cultural Experiences Survey* found that only 20% of book buyers were "very interested" in buying books by New Zealand authors (Statistics New

¹ Nielsen has collected sales data from a large number of major and independent book retailers in New Zealand only since December 2008 (Booksellers New Zealand, 2010). Therefore there is no possibility of conducting an historical comparison without accessing and combining individual publisher or retailer records. In fact, prior to 2011 Nielsen statistics have not been made available to the general public, though this did not prevent them being discussed by the media or on the internet by individuals who had access to them (see: Stratford, 2010).

Zealand, 2003). Davidson and Cave's (1990) study of Wellington public library fiction borrowers in the late 1980s, nearly a decade earlier, found that 60% of fiction readers did not seek out New Zealand fiction when either borrowing or buying books. According to Davidson and Cave (1990, p.32-33) common reasons for actively avoiding New Zealand fiction included: "dislike of Maori culture," the wish not to read about familiar places and events and "a belief that New Zealand novels were not as good as other fiction".

In both cases, these studies are concerned with book buying or borrowing habits in general and the sections dealing with New Zealand books are minor. There are also limitations to each which make it difficult to compare their findings directly. Davidson and Cave (1990) are concerned with consumption of fiction books but Statistics New Zealand (2003) does not attempt to differentiate between fiction and non-fiction. Statistics New Zealand (2003) analysed data for trends within the population and found that older people (aged 45 and over) are more likely to buy books by New Zealanders, while levels of interest were measured as progressively declining with age. They also concluded that the majority of those expressing interest in New Zealand books had a tertiary qualification and, overall, women are more interested than men. Although Davidson and Cave (1990) recorded the demographic information of participants, no analysis of how these factors might relate to interest in New Zealand fiction was undertaken. Neither study distinguishes between frequent or infrequent readers. The aim of my study was to fill some of these gaps by undertaking a more in-depth survey of attitudes to New Zealand fiction and examining the relationship between reader types, reading preferences and attitudes to New Zealand fiction. Of particular importance was establishing more generally how New Zealand fiction is viewed by readers in New Zealand, beyond simply positive or negative and an examination of motivations and factors contributing to these viewpoints.

2.1.3 Media coverage

A good deal of attention has been paid to the possible reasons behind the low readership of New Zealand fiction in the media, industry publications like *Booknotes* and via discussions on industry related blogs. In this context, "What's wrong with New Zealand novels?" has been a recurring refrain: it appeared on the front cover of the January 2011 issue of *Metro* magazine and was the title of an article in the *New Zealand Herald* in March of 2012 (Gracewood, 2011; Sheehy, 2012). Other titles in a similar vein have included "Why don't we read Kiwi-made?", "Kiwis love crime fiction, but what about our own?", "Why do we write it when it doesn't sell?" and "The (not so) great New Zealand novel" (Why don't we read, 2010; Sisteron, 2010; Dunn, 2011; Adams, 2011).

Though journalists frequently quote industry insiders such as publishers and writers, most information presented through these sources appears to be conjecture and opinion. However, what they *do* provide is an indication, albeit biased, of popular opinions and attitudes to New Zealand fiction and a set of commonly suggested potential reasons for low sales. Commonly suggested factors influencing low readership include: early exposure via the New Zealand school curriculum putting adult readers 'off' New Zealand fiction (Adams, 2011; 'Why don't we read', 2010); cultural cringe and a belief that New Zealand fiction is not as good as international fiction (Caffin, 2004; Levasseur, Rabalais, & Manhire, 2003); the nature and subject matter of New Zealand fiction compared to internationally published fiction (Adams, 2011; Catherall, 2008; Gracewood, 2011; Ryan, 2011; Sheehy, 2012); the availability and presentation of New Zealand fiction compared to international fiction such as segregation in bookshops and libraries (Adams, 2011; 'Why don't we read', 2010; Sharp, 2004); the generally outward-looking nature of New Zealanders (Ryan, 2011; 'Why don't we read', 2010); and, the role of local and international awards and government funding having a significant influence on the type of work which is published (Adams, 2011; Wevers, 2004; Evans, 2004; Caffin, 2004).

There is some correlation between these suggested factors and the attitudes expressed by the respondents in Davidson and Cave's study (1990, p.32-33) who stated they specifically avoided New Zealand fiction. One of the aims of my study was to test for the presence of some of these attitudes in a sample of fiction readers in order to better determine their validity and pervasiveness.

2.2 Readership of national literature in Canada and Australia

Several reader studies in Australia and Canada, other (post)colonial English speaking countries where "a distinction is drawn between local writing and the mainstream of fiction" (Davidson and Cave, 1990, p.33), also attempt to gauge readers' levels of interest in books originating in that country compared to interest in international titles. Though several of these studies do not differentiate between fiction and non-fiction, they nevertheless shed light on how a book's classification as "Australian" or "Canadian" impacts reader preferences. They also reveal the level of concern held by these countries about the readership of local work.

Although their findings are interesting in terms of a general comparison with the New Zealand context, these studies are most valuable as examples of ways to illicit information about reading

preferences, with or without implying a level of judgment.² Davidson and Cave (1990, p.32) discuss the very real difficulty of asking the question 'do you read New Zealand fiction?' in a neutral way so that respondents do not reply as they felt they *ought*, rather than as they actually do. Most of the Canadian and Australian studies, as well as the New Zealand studies, pose the issue as a direct question which results in a classification of the book as "Australian" or other nationality over and above any other attribute: "Either borrowing or buying, do you seek out novels written by New Zealanders?" (Davidson and Cave, 1990, p.32); "How interested are you in buying books by New Zealand authors?" (Statistics New Zealand, 2003); "How long ago did you last buy/borrow a book by an Australian writer?" and "How do you think Australian books rate, compared with books from other countries?" (Guldberg, 1990). This approach assumes that being "Australian" or "New Zealand" is a factor considered by readers when they select books or that it has some meaning consistent with other factors considered in fiction selection such as genre or style of writing. The Department of Canadian Heritage (2007), however, reports that being by a Canadian author was a very low-ranked purchase driver for books and 64% of English-speaking Canadians disagreed that "it is important to read books by Canadian authors".

From the way these questions are phrased it is unclear what motivations are behind participant responses. Is the lack of positive response to these questions actually due to a marked prejudice or dislike of Canadian fiction or is it that the place of publication or nationality of the author is not an issue? For instance, Davidson and Cave (1990, p.32) noted that some of the respondents who said they did not seek out New Zealand fiction also commented, apparently unsolicited, that this did not mean they would be opposed to reading a New Zealand book if they came across it while browsing. The most recent Australian survey of book preferences (AC Nielsen, 2001, p.72) provides one of the most neutral examples of wording the question, giving the option "this is not an issue" as a possible answer to a question about reader preferences for Australian or non-Australian authors. It is clear that, to be most effective, a questionnaire must allow for the possibility that readers may have no marked preference or prejudice.

Much of the ambiguity is also likely due to the space accorded this topic within the larger surveys. In order to provide a full picture of a reader's attitude, additional questions need to be asked, and possibly the same question in a number of ways, to ensure attitudes are accurately comprehended.

² In terms of comparative levels of interest in and consumption of local fiction, Australia appears to fare the best. Australian titles overall account for 66% of total book sales and Australian published fiction accounts for 40% of the total fiction market (Australia Bureau of Statistics, 2005). Detailed statistics for Canadian fiction's market share in Canada is not readily available but Canadian authored works, comprising both fiction and non-fiction, are estimated to have made up 12% of all books read in 2005 (Department of Canadian Heritage, 2007).

In all cases where participants suggest that the country of origin of a book is not an issue it would be of great value to know if they had in fact read fiction from that country or whether they read it on a regular basis. For those who expressed negative attitudes towards the national literature, the question as to why, apart from in Davidson and Cave (1990), is left unanswered. In all cases, where participants indicated they read a large amount of the national fiction or prefer it to international fiction, again information about why they chose to do this would provide a more complete picture.

2.3 Reader preference and fiction choice

A wide range of studies unrelated to national considerations have examined factors which influence the reading preferences and selection processes of adult readers (Spiller, 1980; Davidson and Cave, 1990; Leemans and Stokmans, 1991; Kamphius, 1991; Ross, 2000a and 2000b; Usherwood and Toyne, 2002; Graham, 2007; Ooi and Liew, 2011). These studies vary in terms of attention paid to book buyers or borrowers and in their consideration of the types of readers studied. For instance, Ross's (1999; 2000a; 2000b) in depth study focused on "committed readers" (readers who read heavily and for pleasure), while Graham (2007) includes both "frequent" and "less frequent" readers and draws comparisons between the two. Spiller (1980) and Davidson and Cave (1990) focus on the public library environment while Kamphius (1991) and Leemans and Stockmans (1991) restrict their research to book buyers. There are also variations in terms of the amount of attention paid to demographic variables such as age, sex and income. However, together, these studies support each others' findings on several counts and the factors influencing fiction preference and choice that they identify can be roughly grouped into three streams of influence: book attributes; discovery strategies; and personal experiences and circumstances.

The book attributes most frequently considered when choosing fiction were author, genre, theme and style (or "quality") of writing (Ross, 2000a; Graham, 2007; Leemans and Stokmans, 1991; Spiller, 1980; David and Cave, 1990). The literary reputation of a publisher was also found by both Ross (2000a) and Graham (2007) to be significant for frequent readers. Overall, knowledge or previous experience of authors was found to be the most frequent consideration for readers of all levels of frequency and all types of fiction (Spiller, 1980; Davidson and Cave, 1990; Kamphius, 1991; Leemans and Stokmans, 1991; Ross, 2001a; Graham, 2007). Taking stock of covers, book blurbs and samples of the text were common strategies when evaluating a book though both Spiller (1980) notes that book blurbs, which are "selling mediums" can be misleading.

As well as examining the use of book attributes and discovery strategies to choose fiction, Ross (2000a) found that childhood experiences, current moods and the reading experience desired were also key factors influencing fiction choice. The view that adult reading preferences and methods of choosing are cultivated from childhood is of particular relevance to my study. One of the proposed factors influencing low readership of New Zealand fiction is that many adult New Zealanders had negative experiences of New Zealand literature at school (Adams, 2011; 'Why don't we read', 2010). Usherwood and Toyne (2002) identify escapism as a frequently desired reading experience which may also have an impact on readership of New Zealand fiction by New Zealanders. For instance, Davidson and Cave (1990) identified the wish not to read about familiar places as one of the reasons people avoid New Zealand fiction.

Ross's (2000a) study is of particular interest in light of my research objectives. As well as investigating on what grounds readers might choose a book, Ross (2000a) also considers attributes that cause readers to reject a book and asks about the types of books readers expressly state they do not enjoy and would not choose to read for pleasure. In contrast to Spiller (1980), Ross (2000a) comments that committed readers are aware of conventions associated with book covers and blurbs and use these as indicators for what *not* to read. Genre was found to be equally as important as a basis for rejecting books as it was for choosing, as was style or quality of writing. "Poorly written" is, as Ross notes, a term used by readers in a subjective fashion and often appears to signify "successfully written to achieve an effect that some readers admire but that this particular reader dislikes" such as too scary, sentimental, descriptive or literary (Ross, 2000a, p. 16).

The methodologies, research designs and findings of these studies provide a framework for investigating how "New Zealandness" as a book attribute might interact with other factors like author, genre and writing style and how it fits into the selection criteria, strategies and desired reading experiences of New Zealand readers. Ross (2000a) provides a useful point of reference for an examination of the grounds on which a reader might choose to reject New Zealand fiction. In many of the studies (Ross, 2000a; Graham, 2007; Spiller, 1980; Davison and Cave, 1990) it is the reader's *previous experience* of an author, publisher or other aspects which held the most weight. In addition, Ross (2000a) discusses how a lifetime of reading preferences and habits influences adult choices. How then, do readers' previous experiences of New Zealand fiction, either in childhood or adulthood, impact their adult reading choices?

2.4 New Zealand literary history and social context

Attitudes to New Zealand fiction, whether positive, negative or indifferent, do not exist in a vacuum and need to be situated within the historical and social context. The place of literature in New Zealand society has gradually shifted from a Eurocentric focus towards a more general acceptance of local literature and the growth of a local publishing industry (Sturm, 1998). However, the extent to which New Zealand has managed to cast off the vestiges of colonial cultural cringe and anxiety associated with producing a national canon is contested. Mercer (2010) argues that New Zealand has not yet developed its own distinct culture and on many fronts is still primarily influenced by international forces and a degree of insecurity about what constitutes New Zealandness. Similarly, Perry (2004, p.22) describes New Zealand's cultural influences as progressively shifting away from "British-influenced and literary-derived high culture" only to be replaced by the "populist and more obviously mass media-based American cultural hegemony."

Sturm (1998, p.576) maintains that New Zealand publishing, however, has continued to focus on producing 'literary' fiction and poetry to the almost complete exclusion of popular and genre fiction. He argues this is evidence of an enduring cultural cringe with its origins in insecurities about New Zealand culture measuring up to that of Britain. Wevers (2004, p.111) claims there is a tension in New Zealand publishing between "international attractiveness" (what the general market demands) and "local expressiveness" (what literary funding structures demand). Similarly, Mercer (2010), Johnson (2001) and Evans (2002) all state that the ultimate marker of success for New Zealand fiction is still international recognition, with Hulme's Booker Prize-winning *the bone people* held up as the ultimate example. In addition, as Wevers (2004, p.117-228) notes, the government funding structures upon which local publishing has traditionally depended are primarily concerned with canon formation and the production of symbolic goods rather than economic return. The positioning of New Zealand's national literature as 'high-culture' and 'literary' and the impact this has on its appeal to the reading public is considered in the context of the my study.

Critics also point out that New Zealand literature has a tendency to be viewed as an homogenous whole, historically "dominated by dogged realism, often linear in its shape and plain in its language" (Johnston, 2004, p.310) and that to some extent it would seem that supply of New Zealand fiction, in terms of type, does not correlate with demand (Wevers, 2004). Although the debated nature and quality of New Zealand fiction in comparison to other fiction is of some interest to my study, more important is how readers *perceive* the quality of New Zealand fiction, and to what extent perceptions are based on firsthand experience or preconceptions of New Zealand fiction.

2.5 Theoretical considerations

The methodologies, research designs and findings of fiction reader studies, as outlined in sections 2.2 and 2.3, provided a framework for investigating how and why readers make fiction choices, particularly in terms of the roles book attributes and discovery strategies play. My study, for instance, sought to discover how “New Zealandness” as a book ‘attribute’ fits into the selection process and criteria. The reader studies also provided a guide for classifying types of reader and the affect that this may have on fiction preferences.

In addition, I have used Bourdieu’s (1977; 1990; 1993; and 2004) cultural theory, the Field of Cultural Production, as a sociological framework to interpret the findings of the survey. The ideas central to Bourdieu’s theory are ‘habitus’, ‘field’, and various types of ‘capital’: symbolic, cultural, social and economic. Jenkins (2002, p.74) explains Bourdieu’s intentions regarding habitus as “a bridge-building exercise across the explanatory gap” between subjectivism and objectivism: a way to understand the relationship and connections between individual behaviours and social structures. The term ‘habitus’ denotes the set of perceptions, tendencies and inclinations that guide a person’s behavior while the ‘field’ constitutes a “social universe with its own laws of functioning” (Bourdieu, 2004, p.164-5). Habitus is the embodiment of the laws and conventions of the ‘field’, or social space, by the individuals within it who in turn enact these conventions reflexively as a kind of ‘second nature’. Thus, the framework defines a process of social and cultural inheritance which results in both individual and collective perceptions, tendencies and inclinations among the members, or ‘players’, of a field (Bourdieu, 1993).

Bourdieu describes the process of acquiring habitus as cumulative:

“The habitus acquired in the family underlines the structuring of school experiences... and the habitus transformed by schooling, itself diversified, in turn underlies the structuring of all subsequent experiences (e.g., the reception and assimilation of the message of the culture industry or work experiences) and so on, from restructuring to restructuring.” (Bourdieu, 1977, p.87)

In this way, readers with a similar habitus can be seen to perceive and interact with New Zealand fiction in similar ways: they have internalised the structures of their environment on various levels including familial, educational, social and cultural. For instance, readers who were born, grew up in and who were schooled in New Zealand appear to relate differently to New Zealand fiction than readers who grew up and were schooled elsewhere. Bourdieu’s notion of how habitus is acquired is

similar to Ross's (2000a) description of the cumulative processes of reading in that adult fiction preferences and methods for choosing books are often products of a lifetime of reading habits and influences.

Bourdieu does not discount the notion of personal choice within this process, yet his emphasis is predominantly on the workings of common or collective social behaviours. The structures of the field, which Bourdieu describes as the "possibilities and impossibilities, freedoms and necessities, opportunities and prohibitions inscribed in the objective conditions" (Bourdieu, 1990, p.54), limit the choices available, while habitus predisposes the individuals towards certain types of choice. Thus, although the individual has agency, it is an agency constrained by the possibilities of the field and guided by the ingrained tendencies of habitus.

Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital is also of interest to this study. 'Cultural capital' can be defined as legitimate knowledge, skills or education which confer status upon the individual who has acquired them. They are deemed 'legitimate' in the sense that they have been recognized and consecrated as such by the dominant powers or institutions, usually academic. For example, reading and being familiar with fiction deemed 'literary' by virtue of its presence in university curricula or as a result of winning a literary prize can be said to be a way of acquiring cultural capital. The possession of cultural capital, which is a cumulative result of habitus, is also important for both the enjoyment and appreciation of specific cultural goods: "a work of art has meaning and interest only for someone who possesses the cultural competence, that is, the code, into which it is encoded." (Bourdieu, 1984, p.2)

Bourdieu's framework has been used by others to measure, interpret and understand specific social occurrences or situations where both objective structures and individual actions combine to produce particular behaviours or practices. For instance, Kendall (2008) applies Bourdieu's framework to a study of the reading habits of young adults as a method of exploring a particular reading culture. Levy (2009) uses the framework to explore the nature of sports "fanship" in America by drawing on data from the US Census and sports-related surveys. Both studies use Bourdieu's framework to explore the common practices their target groups engage in order to better understand common behaviours.

Accordingly, when examined through Bourdieu's lens, the fiction choices that readers in New Zealand make can be viewed as the result of both the structures of field and the dispositions that constitute habitus. Cockerham and Hinote (2009, p.210) stress that "given that habitus reflects the

in internalization of exterior structures, it is necessary to obtain measures of such structures” including class circumstances, age, gender and, to a lesser degree, ethnicity. By asking survey participants about their background as well as their exposure to literature at school, their tastes and preferences, and their perceptions of the tastes and preferences of other readers in New Zealand, I have attempted to map the conventions and attitudes which govern the reading of New Zealand fiction in New Zealand.

3. Research Design

3.1 Research questions

Research question 1: What are the attitudes of fiction readers in New Zealand towards New Zealand fiction and how do they differ from attitudes to international fiction?

Research question 2: How does New Zealand fiction fit into the general reading practices of fiction readers in New Zealand?

3.2 Justification for a quantitative study

The study used a predominantly quantitative framework and employed a cross-sectional design to investigate New Zealand readers' attitudes to New Zealand fiction via online survey questionnaires. A cross-sectional design enabled the collection of data on a number of variables related to each respondent including demographic information, reading practices, preferences and attitudes. A quantitative framework was chosen over qualitative because, due to resource constraints, quantitative surveys enabled as large a sample as possible of New Zealand readers to be surveyed (Sue and Ritter, 2007, p.34). Three open questions were included in order to allow a small amount of qualitative data to be collected. This approach was adopted in an effort to capture reader attitudes in greater detail than previous studies such as Davidson and Cave (1990) and *The Cultural Experiences Survey* (Statistics New Zealand, 2003).

3.3 Research population

The targeted population for the study was adult fiction readers in New Zealand who read for pleasure. A total of 557 individuals began the survey, 497 (87%) of whom completed the entire questionnaire. As the data were available, responses from both complete and incomplete surveys have been included in the results.

The inherent problems associated with sampling in online surveys are discussed by Sue and Ritter (2007) and Bryman (2008) and include the difficulty of generating a random sample. Therefore a

combination of non-probability sampling methods was chosen as the best strategy for gathering data: convenience sampling and snowball sampling. In terms of sample size, the data collection procedures outlined below were designed to generate as large a sample as possible in order that findings may be extrapolated.

Although the study is largely concerned with fiction readers and attitudes towards fiction, the survey was advertised generally to “readers” and the level of each respondent’s fiction reading, as opposed to non-fiction reading, was established in the course of the survey rather than set as a criterion of eligibility. This approach was chosen with the view that trends associated with ratios of fiction to non-fiction reading may emerge. The survey topic was also advertised fairly generically as “Reading in New Zealand”, rather than as specifically looking at attitudes towards New Zealand fiction, in an attempt to encourage a range of readers to respond.

3.4 Data collection procedures

3.4.1 Online questionnaires

The questionnaire was designed and administered online using the survey software package Qualtrics (see Appendix B). The questionnaire contained predominately closed questions to ensure it was quick and simple to fill out. Three optional open questions were included for the purpose of allowing participants to clarify their answers and to enable them to explain, in their own words, their opinion or feelings on the topic.

An auto-skip function in Qualtrics was used to prevent respondents having to fill out questions which would have made no sense based on their previous answers. For instance, for those who stated that they read “only non-fiction, no fiction” the majority of remaining questions relating to fiction reading preferences and practices were omitted and only questions relating to past activities, such as school experience, or enquiring about generally held opinions were retained.

Given the time and financial constraints placed on the study, an online survey held a number of significant advantages over postal questionnaires. In addition to faster response times, online survey administration also overcame geographical barriers and allowed any number of readers from around the country to be surveyed at no extra cost. Furthermore, response rates to open questions, as well as the degree of detail provided, are generally improved by online administration (Bryman, 2008, p.652-653).

3.4.2 Convenience sampling

Suitable websites, blogs, social media and email discussion lists for advertising the online survey were identified and approached for permission. As the focus of the study relates to readers, book-related businesses and services such as book shops, public libraries and other book-centred organisations were approached (see Appendix C).

Public libraries were contacted via the email discussion list PUBSIG and follow-up individual email messages. As a result at least 9 public libraries from different regions around the country advertised the survey on their blogs, websites or social media. Online was the method preferred by libraries for advertising the survey, with only one district library requesting printed flyers to distribute to patrons (see Appendix D).

Booksellers New Zealand were contacted via email and agreed to post a message advertising the survey on both their website and Facebook page. As a result of this exposure the message was re-posted to various social media by several Booksellers New Zealand member businesses. A number of independent booksellers were also contacted by email or Facebook who readily agreed to post a message to their online communities. In an effort to reach a wider range of book buyers, several chain bookstores were also contacted but proved unwilling to participate. 'Fiction addiction', an online book column in the *New Zealand Herald*, also advertised the survey link at the end of an article (Sheehy, 2012).

3.4.3 Snowball sampling

Many fiction reader studies emphasise that reading for pleasure is an important part of committed readers lives and they enjoy discussing and sharing information about the books they read (Ross, 2000a; Usherwood and Toyne, 2002; Ooi and Liew, 2011). On this premise, at the end of the questionnaire respondents were encouraged to forward the survey link to other people they knew who enjoyed reading for pleasure.

3.4.4 Incentive to participate

Entry to a prize draw to win a \$50 Booksellers Book Token was offered as an incentive to participate. Once the survey closed the list of emails entered by those interested was exported to Microsoft Excel and the formula RANDBETWEEN was used to generate a random number between 1 and 453. The participant corresponding with this number in the spread sheet was contacted and awarded the book token.

3.5 Ethical considerations

Ethical approval was granted by the School of Information Management Human Ethics Committee. The survey questionnaire included a section detailing the aims of the survey, how the data would be used, and stressing confidentiality and anonymity in both the collection and presentation of data (see Appendix A). It was also made clear that the survey was undertaken on a voluntary basis and that the participant could opt out at any time. All email addresses and submitted details were removed before analysis to preserve anonymity.

3.6 Data analysis

3.6.1 Analysis of quantitative data

Bivariate analysis was employed to identify possible relationships between reported attitudes and practices concerning New Zealand fiction and other variables such as age or preference for fiction genres. Cross-tabulations were generated in Qualtrics and exported to Microsoft Excel where apparent correlations between variables were noted and then tested for statistical significance using the chi-square test for independence. Data categories were merged to create cross-tabulations where none of the expected frequencies were less than 1 and no more than 20% were less than 5 so that the chi-square test could be applied with accuracy (Sirkin, 2006, p.417). Sirkin (2006, p.419) advocates that when there is no logical way to further collapse the data categories, yet the criteria for applying the chi-square test has not been achieved, it is feasible to delete small categories of data in the event that they do not compromise the analysis. This approach was taken when applying the chi-square test to cross-tabulations, namely Q25 which measured readers' frequency of reading New Zealand fiction. The category 'Don't know', which contained only 8 responses, was deleted from the table leaving the essential categories of 'Rarely or never', 'Sometimes' and 'Often' to which the chi-square test could then be validly applied.

The chi-square test returns a p-value which, if less than 0.05, indicates there is a less than 5% probability that the observed relationship occurred by chance, therefore a relationship between the two variables can be inferred (University of Pennsylvania, 2008). It is important to stress that the chi-square test offers corroboration only for the possibility of a causal relationship existing between two variables, it cannot be said to prove that one variable causes the presence of another. It is possible that other variables were present yet not measured in the course of the study (Bryman, 2008, p.326-7).

3.6.2 Analysis of qualitative data

The qualitative data generated in response to the three open questions was exported to Microsoft Excel and analysed for themes and patterns. First, the comments made under each of the open questions were read through quickly to gain an overall impression of emerging themes and tendencies. Then all the comments were read through a second time in greater detail and coded according to the recurring themes observed in the first read-through. Every time a particular theme or idea was mentioned a code was assigned to the text response, thus a single text response could be coded a number of times if it contained more than one idea. If the same idea was repeated within the same text response, this constituted a single occurrence for that response. However, if the same person mentioned the same idea in each of his or her three separate text responses, that idea would be coded three times. Therefore the tally of themes and ideas indicates the total number of text responses that contained each theme or idea throughout the survey. Finally, the coding was reviewed and organized into categories of similar attitudes or ideas.

3.7 Limitations and Delimitations

3.7.1 Data collection and sample

The main limitations of the study concerned time and financial constraints. As a result of these and the necessity of administering the questionnaire in an online format using non-random sampling methods, the sample generated, although large, is unlikely to represent a complete picture of all pleasure readers in New Zealand. However, although any relationships observed are not generalizable to the entire reading population, they can be viewed as reasonably indicative of a subset of this population, as explained below, and provide a useful foundation for further exploration.

3.7.1.1 Reaching a range of readers

Online surveys, by their very nature, are restricted to online populations and will generally bypass those who do not have ready access to the internet or who do not choose to use it frequently. The results of the demographic information section of the questionnaire likely reflect this reality (see section 4.1, Q27-37 and Appendix E). Regarding region and age the survey sample is roughly representative of New Zealand's population, with the exception of those aged 65 and over who are underrepresented. Those on lower incomes are also underrepresented, as well as Maori and other ethnicities. Those with no post-school education are also underrepresented in comparison to the actual population.

The variations between my sample and the New Zealand population are likely to reflect the socio-economic and ethnic composition of the institutions through which the survey was distributed. For example, as no chain bookstores agreed to participate in the study, the survey was mainly submitted through the social media of independent booksellers and therefore would have been viewed chiefly by those who had expressly signed up to follow them. Similarly, in an effort to reach library patrons with limited internet access, flyers were offered as a supplementary means of advertising in libraries. However, only one library opted for this method, with the majority preferring to spread the word using social media. It should also be noted that, given the constraints of the present study, it would have been problematic to get an even spread across various ethnicities and other social groups without altering the focus of the study. In future research more effort would need to be made to specifically target Tangata Whenua, Pacific peoples and English speaking foreign nationals.

3.7.1.2 Underrepresentation of male readers

Male readers were also underrepresented in my sample, yet it is likely this is due to the fact that New Zealand men are less frequent book readers than women overall. A 2012 study of nationwide reading habits commissioned by NZ Book Month found that nearly a quarter of New Zealand men (23%) reported reading no books in the past year compared to only 8% of women (Keogh, 2012). The majority of men said they preferred browsing newspapers, magazines and the internet, while women preferred books. This study also found that only 4% of men reported reading over 50 books in the past year compared to 13% of women. The majority of respondents to my survey were heavy book readers, stating they "really like" reading (63%) and read more than 48 books per year (37%) so, in light of the NZ Book Month study, it is to be expected that a survey of enthusiastic readers would predominantly attract women.

3.7.1.3 Overrepresentation of book-related professions

It should also be acknowledged that, as the method of survey distribution required the participation of librarians and booksellers, it is likely that these professions make up a higher proportion of the sample than would normally be expected. Given the overall size of the final sample, however, it is probable that any bias is minimal.

3.7.1.4 Characteristics of the sample

Although the sample falls short of reflecting the general population, it does reasonably reflect the characteristics of the general book buying public as identified by *The Cultural Experiences Survey* (Statistics New Zealand, 2003):

Book buying population in 2002*	Survey sample
58% women	86% women
69% aged under 65	92% aged under 65
80% European/Pakeha	81% European/Pakeha
57% had tertiary qualifications	86% had tertiary qualifications
59% lived in the Auckland, Wellington or Canterbury regions	66% lived in Auckland, Wellington or Canterbury regions

(*Based on data as reported by Statistics New Zealand, 2003)

In terms of reading habits, my sample can be characterised as largely comprising enthusiastic and heavy readers who read mainly fiction (90% said they really liked reading and 63% read 24 or more books per year; 70% read mainly or only fiction). A high percentage also stated they read to improve their general knowledge (78%) and understanding of other people, places and times (77%) as well as for enjoyment (100%) and relaxation (96%). They reported enjoying a relatively even mix of genres including contemporary fiction (enjoyed by 78%), genre fiction such as crime (enjoyed by 67%) and historical fiction (enjoyed by 64%), as well as literary fiction (enjoyed by 62%).

3.7.2 Researcher bias and the phrasing of questions

In an effort to limit researcher bias, the survey questions were based around question formats of other reader studies addressing readership of national fiction, including Davidson and Cave (1990), *The Cultural Experiences Survey* (Statistics New Zealand, 2002) and two studies by the Australia Council (AC Nielsen, 2001; Guldberg, 1990), as well as around elements considered in fiction readers studies by Ross (2000a; 2000b), Graham (2011), Leemans and Stokmans (1991) and Usherwood and Toyne (2002). Every effort was made to frame questions in an impartial voice and in a manner that, as far as possible, was not leading. Taking into account Davidson and Cave's (1990, p.32) recognition of how difficult it is to pose questions relating to readership of New Zealand fiction in a neutral way, a number of differently worded and differently focused questions, both closed and open, were employed in an attempt to accurately capture attitudes and allow readers to explain their answers.

4. Results

This section presents the results of the study which are discussed in Section 5. Section 4.1 presents the quantitative data from the questionnaire's closed questions using descriptive statistics, as well as the results of the chi-square tests which found significant associations between variables. The tables displaying the data associated with each question were exported directly from Qualtrics and the accompanying graphs were created in Microsoft Excel. Section 4.2 describes the main trends observed in the qualitative data from the questionnaire's open questions using excerpts from the comments submitted. Finally, Section 4.3 summarises the study's main findings.

4.1 Closed questions

QUESTION 1: Attitudes towards reading books for pleasure

#	Answer		Response	%
1	I don't read books		2	0%
2	I don't like it at all		1	0%
3	I don't like it much		3	1%
4	I quite like it	■	50	9%
5	I really like it	■	490	90%
	Total		546	100%

Statistic	Value
Mode	I really like it
Total Responses	546

QUESTION 2: Books read per year

#	Answer	Response	%
1	None	2	0%
2	1 - 2 books per year (Approx. 1 book every 6 months to 1 year)	10	2%
3	3 - 6 books per year (Approx. 1 book every 2 to 4 months)	31	6%
4	6 - 12 books per year (Approx. 1 book every 1 to 2 months)	62	11%
5	12 - 24 books per year (Approx. 1 to 2 books per month)	102	18%
6	24 - 48 books per year (Approx. 2 to 4 books per month)	151	27%
7	48+ books per year (More than 4 books per month)	199	36%
	Total	557	100.0%

Statistic	Value
Mode	48+ books per year
Total Responses	557

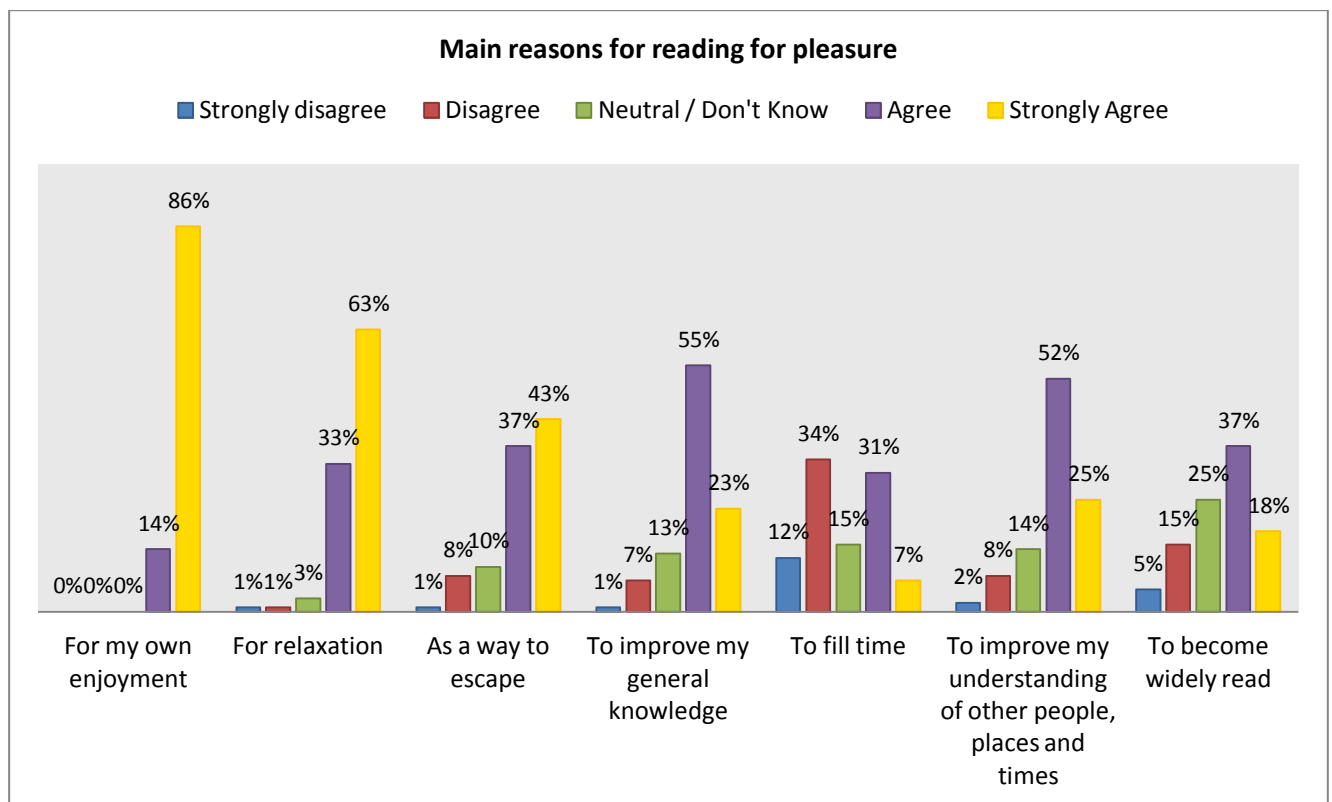
QUESTION 3: Mix of fiction and non-fiction usually read

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Only fiction, never non-fiction	40	7%
2	Mainly fiction, some non-fiction	350	63%
3	Even mix of fiction and non-fiction	105	19%
4	Mainly non-fiction, some fiction	55	10%
5	Only non-fiction, never fiction	3	1%
	Total	553	100.0%

Statistic	Value
Mode	Mainly fiction, some non-fiction
Total Responses	553

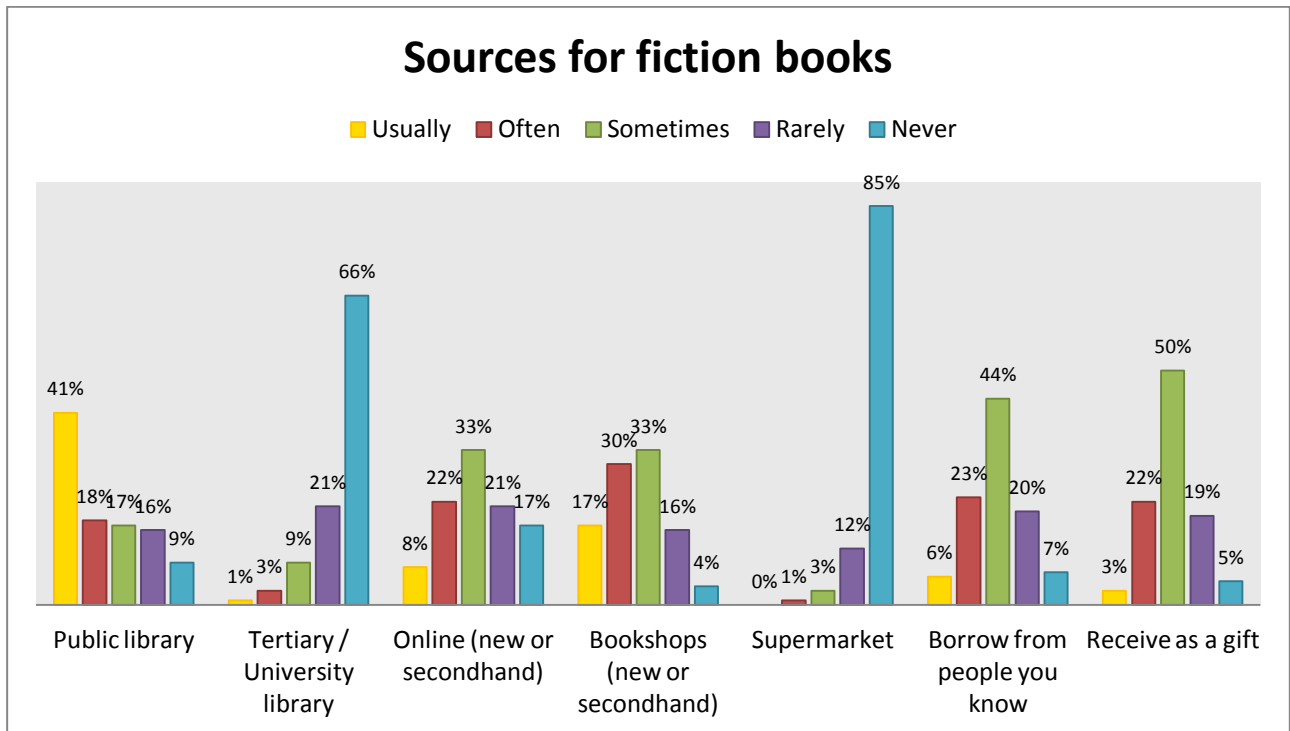
QUESTION 4: Main reasons for reading for pleasure

#	Question	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neutral / Don't Know		Agree		Strongly Agree		Responses	Mode
1	For my own enjoyment	2	0%	0	0%	1	0%	73	14%	462	86%	538	Strongly Agree
2	For relaxation	3	1%	5	1%	15	3%	175	33%	335	63%	533	Strongly Agree
3	As a way to escape	5	1%	43	8%	55	10%	196	37%	227	43%	526	Strongly Agree
4	To improve my general knowledge	6	1%	39	7%	70	13%	293	55%	122	23%	530	Agree
5	To fill time	63	12%	180	34%	81	15%	166	31%	38	7%	528	Disagree
6	To improve my understanding of other people, places and times	8	2%	42	8%	73	14%	276	52%	132	25%	531	Agree
7	To become widely read	26	5%	81	15%	131	25%	198	37%	97	18%	533	Agree



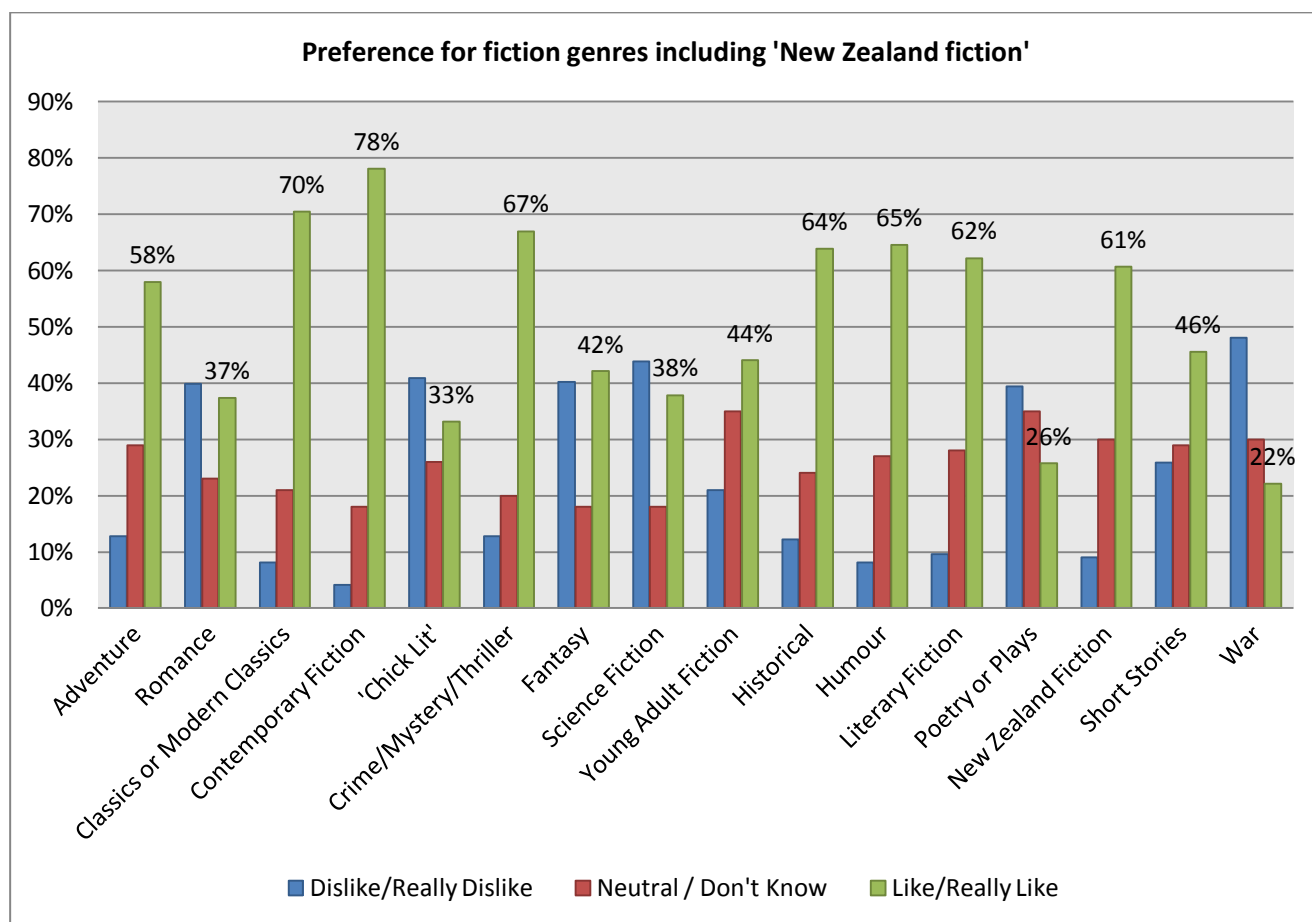
QUESTION 5: Usual sources for obtaining fiction

#	Question	Usually		Often		Sometimes		Rarely		Never		Responses	Mode
1	Public library	219	41%	96	18%	91	17%	84	16%	46	9%	536	Usually
2	Tertiary / University library	7	1%	17	3%	44	9%	107	21%	338	66%	513	Never
3	Online (new or secondhand)	43	8%	114	22%	171	33%	109	21%	89	17%	526	Sometimes
4	Bookshops (new or secondhand)	93	17%	158	30%	177	33%	83	16%	23	4%	534	Sometimes
5	Supermarket	0	0%	4	1%	14	3%	62	12%	438	85%	518	Never
6	Borrow from people you know	33	6%	124	23%	233	44%	106	20%	36	7%	532	Sometimes
7	Receive as a gift	17	3%	118	22%	264	50%	102	19%	28	5%	529	Sometimes



QUESTION 6: Attitudes towards reading fiction genres

#	Question	Really Dislike		Dislike		Neutral / Don't Know		Like		Really Like		Responses	Mode
1	Adventure	5	1%	61	12%	151	29%	248	48%	51	10%	516	Like
2	Romance	60	12%	147	28%	118	23%	155	30%	39	8%	519	Like
3	Classics or Modern	9	2%	33	6%	111	21%	266	51%	99	19%	518	Like
4	Contemporary Fiction	4	1%	18	3%	93	18%	229	44%	181	34%	525	Like
5	'Chick Lit'	77	15%	136	26%	135	26%	123	24%	50	10%	521	Dislike
6	Crime/Mystery/Thriller	16	3%	51	10%	106	20%	189	36%	162	31%	524	Like
7	Fantasy	79	15%	129	25%	92	18%	132	25%	86	17%	518	Like
8	Science Fiction	93	18%	134	26%	95	18%	118	23%	78	15%	518	Dislike
9	Young Adult Fiction	30	6%	79	15%	182	35%	148	28%	81	16%	520	Neutral
10	Historical	19	4%	45	9%	125	24%	237	45%	97	19%	523	Like
11	Humour	3	1%	39	8%	142	27%	277	53%	58	11%	519	Like
12	Literary Fiction	16	3%	34	7%	147	28%	208	40%	116	22%	521	Like
13	Poetry or Plays	71	14%	133	26%	180	35%	103	20%	30	6%	517	Neutral
14	New Zealand Fiction	15	3%	32	6%	158	30%	236	45%	80	15%	521	Like
15	Short Stories	39	8%	95	18%	148	29%	193	37%	43	8%	518	Like
16	War	87	17%	163	31%	155	30%	95	18%	20	4%	520	Dislike



Chi-square tests: attitudes towards New Zealand fiction

There were significant associations ($p < 0.05$) between attitudes towards reading New Zealand fiction (Q6) and a number of different variables. These associations seemed to indicate that a relationship existed between the variables identified and attitudes towards New Zealand fiction (see Appendix F for cross-tabulations and Appendix H and I for graphs displaying attitudes to New Zealand fiction by demographic variables and readers characteristics).

Variable	Chi-square	Inferred relationship
<i>Age</i>	$\chi^2(6) = 0.795190978$, $p = 0.007798008$	Positive attitudes towards reading New Zealand fiction are more likely to be held by older readers.
<i>Ethnicity</i>	$\chi^2(2) = 0.016070258$, $p = 0.008002934$	Positive attitudes towards reading New Zealand fiction are more likely to be held by readers who identify as one or more of 'New Zealand European', 'New Zealander', 'Pakeha' or 'Maori'.
<i>Country of birth</i>	$\chi^2(2) = 0.023780719$, $p = 0.011819949$	Positive attitudes towards reading New Zealand fiction are more likely to be held by New Zealand-born readers.
<i>Region</i>	$\chi^2(2) = 0.036662939$, $p = 0.01816447$	Negative attitudes towards reading New Zealand fiction are more likely to be held by Auckland-based readers.
<i>School attendance in New Zealand</i>	$\chi^2(2) = 0.088809672$, $p = 0.043433374$	Positive attitudes towards reading New Zealand fiction are more likely to be held by readers who attended school in New Zealand.
<i>Experience of New Zealand fiction at school</i>	$\chi^2(6) = 0.000887129$, $p = 1.45404E-11$	Negative attitudes towards reading New Zealand fiction are more likely to be held by readers who did not enjoy the New Zealand fiction they studied at school.
<i>Fiction to non-fiction reading ratios</i>	$\chi^2(6) = 0.403550376$, $p = 0.001177782$	Negative attitudes towards reading New Zealand fiction are more likely to be held by readers who read 'only fiction' rather than a combination of fiction and non-fiction.
<i>Dislike of certain fiction genres</i>	<u>Literary fiction</u> $\chi^2(4) = 1.70707E-09$, $p = 3.64259E-19$ <u>Short stories</u> $\chi^2(4) = 4.29993E-13$, $p = 2.31118E-26$ <u>Plays/poetry</u> $\chi^2(4) = 4.32264E-06$, $p = 2.33565E-12$	Negative attitudes towards reading New Zealand fiction are more likely to be held by readers who do not enjoy reading traditionally 'highbrow' fiction genres.
<i>Level importance placed on certain aspects when choosing fiction</i>	<u>Book reviews</u> $\chi^2(4) = 0.009684643$, $p = 1.16863E-05$ <u>Literary merit</u> $\chi^2(4) = 0.008842854$, $p = 9.74575E-06$ <u>Literary prizes</u> $\chi^2(4) = 0.002215458$, $p = 6.13079E-07$	Negative attitudes towards reading New Zealand fiction are more likely to be held by readers who place little or no importance on a fiction book's literary prestige when choosing fiction.

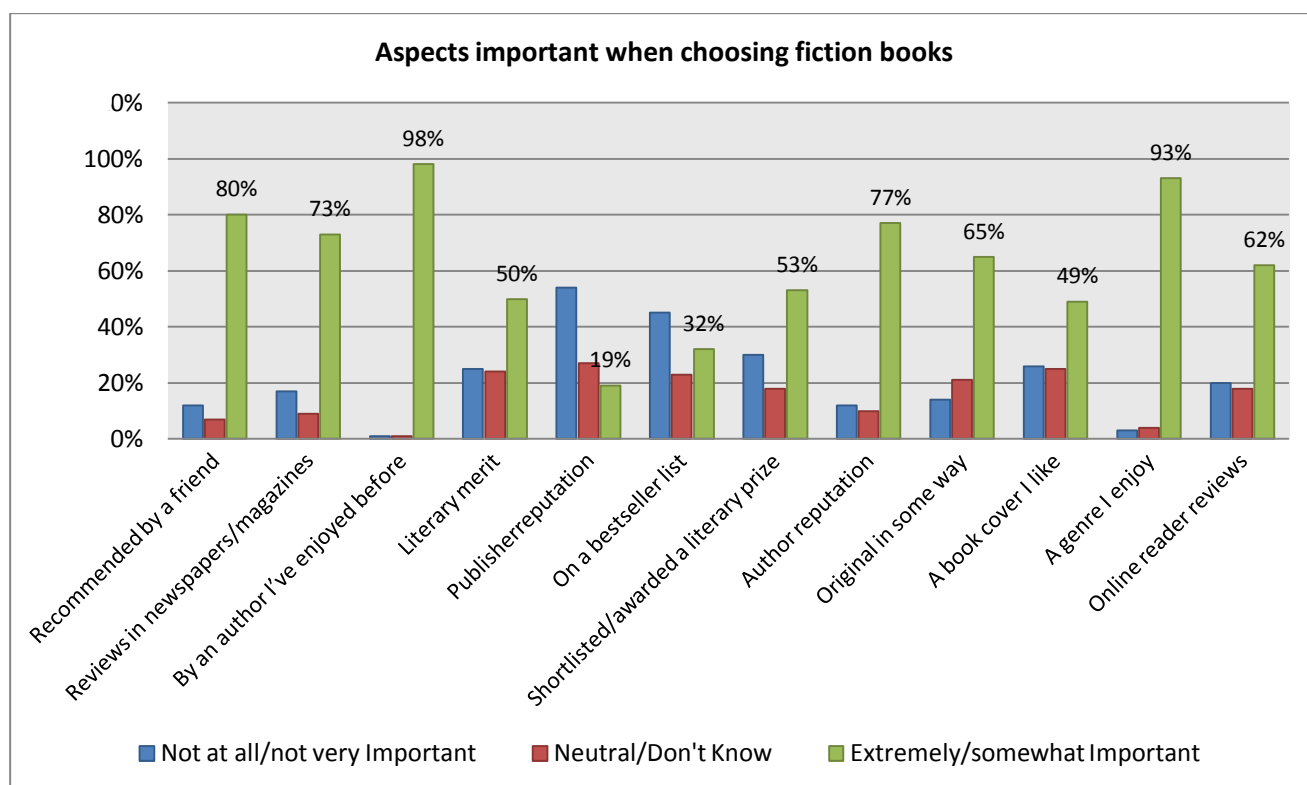
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Chi-square tests: attitude towards New Zealand fiction (continued)

Variable	Chi-square	Inferred relationship
<i>Level of agreement with 'to become widely read' as a main reason for reading</i>	$\chi^2(4) = 0.05190567$, p = 0.000331004	Negative attitudes towards reading New Zealand fiction are more likely to be held by readers who do not personally consider becoming 'widely read' to be a motivation for reading for pleasure.
<i>Level of agreement regarding 'thought provoking' as an aspect important to personal enjoyment of fiction</i>	$\chi^2(4) = 0.009329768$, p = 1.08468E-05	Negative attitudes towards reading New Zealand fiction are more likely to be held by readers who do not feel a book's ability to challenge their ideas or make them think is important for their enjoyment of fiction.
<i>Level of agreement regarding 'gripping plots' and being 'easy to read/not too complicated' as aspects important to personal enjoyment of fiction</i>	<u>Gripping, fast-moving plot</u> $\chi^2(4) = 0.642658437$, p = 0.041792574 <u>Easy to read/not too complicated</u> $\chi^2(4) = 0.411117425$, p = 0.018443391	Negative attitudes towards reading New Zealand fiction are more likely to be held by readers who feel that a gripping plot or being easy to read are qualities that are important for their enjoyment of fiction.

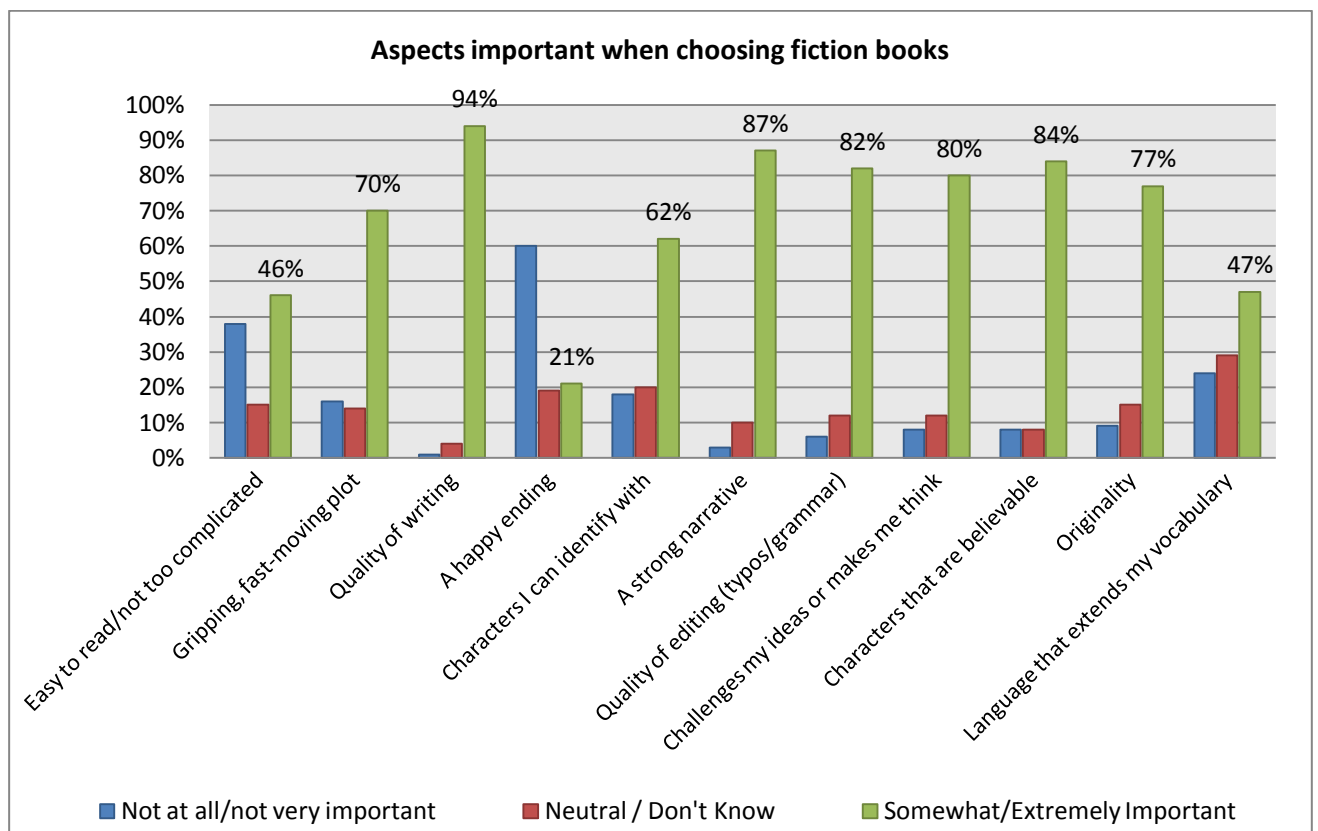
QUESTION 7: Aspects considered important when choosing new fiction

#	Question	Not at all Important		Not Very Important		Neutral / Don't Know		Somewhat Important		Extremely Important		Respo-nses	Mode
1	It was recommended by a friend	17	3%	49	9%	37	7%	343	65%	81	15%	527	Somewhat Important
2	It has good reviews by newspapers or magazines	18	3%	76	14%	50	9%	325	62%	59	11%	528	Somewhat Important
3	It is by an author I've enjoyed before	0	0%	7	1%	4	1%	235	45%	281	53%	527	Extremely Important
4	It has literary merit	38	7%	96	18%	125	24%	206	39%	60	11%	525	Somewhat Important
5	The publisher has a good reputation	101	19%	182	35%	139	27%	91	17%	10	2%	523	Not Very Important
6	It is on a bestseller list	66	13%	169	32%	123	23%	152	29%	16	3%	526	Not Very Important
7	It was shortlisted or awarded a literary prize	55	10%	103	20%	93	18%	239	46%	35	7%	525	Somewhat Important
8	The author has a good reputation	23	4%	42	8%	54	10%	327	62%	81	15%	527	Somewhat Important
9	It is original in some way	20	4%	53	10%	111	21%	250	48%	86	17%	520	Somewhat Important
10	It has a book cover I like	49	9%	89	17%	130	25%	223	43%	31	6%	522	Somewhat Important
11	It is in a genre I enjoy	3	1%	9	2%	21	4%	305	58%	186	35%	524	Somewhat Important
12	It has good reviews from other readers online (blogs, websites or social media)	27	5%	81	15%	96	18%	277	53%	45	9%	526	Somewhat Important



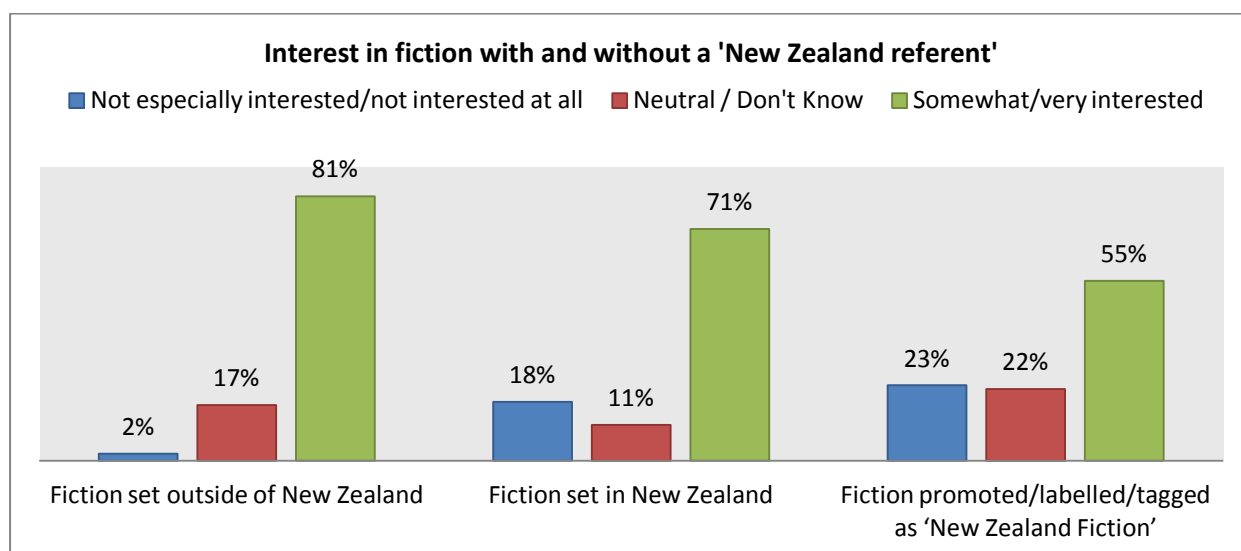
QUESTION 8: Elements important to enjoyment of fiction books

#	Question	Not at all Important		Not Very Important		Neutral / Don't Know		Somewhat Important		Extremely Important		Responses	Mode
		Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%		
1	Easy to read / not too complicated	46	9%	147	29%	78	15%	201	40%	32	6%	504	Somewhat Important
2	Gripping, fast-moving plot	5	1%	74	15%	73	14%	246	49%	108	21%	506	Somewhat Important
3	Quality of writing	0	0%	7	1%	22	4%	198	39%	280	55%	507	Extremely Important
4	A happy ending	120	24%	183	36%	97	19%	86	17%	19	4%	505	Not very Important
5	Characters I can identify with	15	3%	75	15%	99	20%	235	46%	83	16%	507	Somewhat Important
6	A strong narrative	2	0%	17	3%	50	10%	286	57%	151	30%	506	Somewhat Important
7	Quality of editing (typos, grammar)	6	1%	23	5%	59	12%	174	34%	246	48%	508	Extremely Important
8	Challenges my ideas or makes me think	2	0%	40	8%	60	12%	261	51%	146	29%	509	Somewhat Important
9	Characters that are believable	6	1%	34	7%	43	8%	223	44%	202	40%	508	Somewhat Important
10	Originality	3	1%	40	8%	74	15%	277	55%	113	22%	507	Somewhat Important
11	Language that extends my vocabulary	34	7%	88	17%	148	29%	188	37%	49	10%	507	Somewhat Important



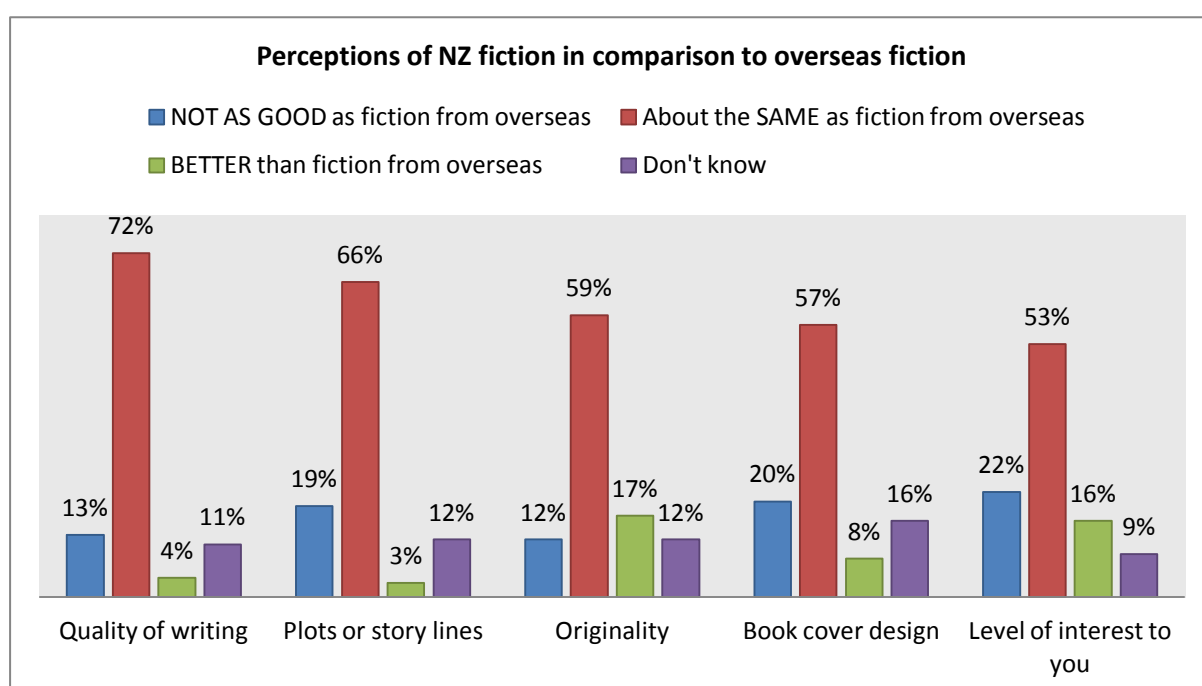
QUESTION 9: Interest in fiction types with/without a New Zealand referent

#	Question	Not Interested at all		Not Especially Interested		Neutral / Don't Know		Somewhat Interested		Very Interested		Responses	Mode
1	Fiction set in New Zealand	16	3%	75	15%	56	11%	246	48%	115	23%	508	Somewhat Interested
2	Fiction set outside of New Zealand	0	0%	11	2%	85	17%	304	60%	106	21%	506	Somewhat Interested
3	Crime or mystery novels set in New Zealand	38	8%	108	21%	93	18%	200	40%	67	13%	506	Somewhat Interested
4	Crime or mystery novels set outside New Zealand	31	6%	91	18%	77	15%	184	37%	119	24%	502	Somewhat Interested
5	Historical fiction set in New Zealand	33	7%	80	16%	105	21%	215	43%	70	14%	503	Somewhat Interested
6	Historical fiction set outside New Zealand	16	3%	88	17%	89	18%	221	44%	93	18%	507	Somewhat Interested
7	Fantasy or science fiction by a New Zealand writer	115	23%	135	27%	83	16%	125	25%	49	10%	507	Not Especially Interested
8	Fantasy or science fiction by writers from overseas	106	21%	129	26%	66	13%	121	24%	82	16%	504	Not Especially Interested
9	New Zealand poetry	129	25%	168	33%	90	18%	98	19%	23	5%	508	Not Especially Interested
10	Fiction nominated or awarded a New Zealand Book Award	27	5%	66	13%	84	17%	234	46%	97	19%	508	Somewhat Interested
11	Fiction nominated or awarded an international literary prize	19	4%	72	14%	88	17%	224	44%	105	21%	508	Somewhat Interested
12	Fiction promoted, labeled or tagged specifically as 'New Zealand Fiction'	25	5%	90	18%	114	22%	221	43%	59	12%	509	Somewhat Interested



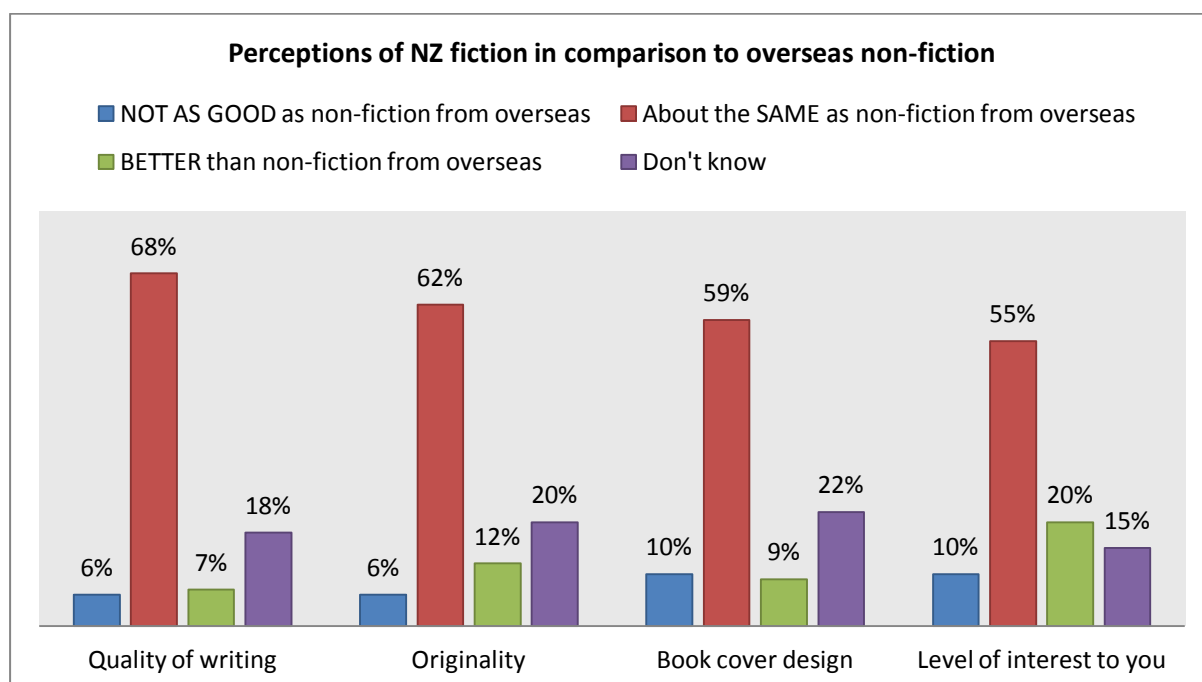
QUESTION 10: Perceptions of New Zealand fiction in comparison to fiction from overseas

#	Question	NOT AS GOOD as fiction from overseas		About the SAME as fiction from overseas		BETTER than fiction from overseas		Don't know		Responses	Mode
1	Quality of writing	64	13%	365	72%	21	4%	57	11%	507	About the same
2	Plots or story lines	95	19%	335	66%	14	3%	62	12%	506	About the same
3	Originality	59	12%	299	59%	87	17%	60	12%	505	About the same
4	Book cover design	99	20%	285	57%	40	8%	79	16%	503	About the same
5	Level of interest to you	112	22%	267	53%	80	16%	46	9%	505	About the same



QUESTION 11: Perceptions of New Zealand non-fiction in comparison to non-fiction from overseas

#	Question	NOT AS GOOD as non-fiction from overseas		About the SAME as non-fiction from overseas		BETTER than non-fiction from overseas		Don't know		Responses	Mode
1	Quality of writing	33	6%	346	68%	38	7%	91	18%	508	About the same
2	Originality	30	6%	316	62%	59	12%	102	20%	507	About the same
3	Book cover design	49	10%	300	59%	46	9%	112	22%	507	About the same
4	Level of interest to you	48	10%	276	55%	102	20%	78	15%	504	About the same



QUESTION 12: Frequency of browsing the New Zealand fiction sections in libraries, bookstores or bookseller websites

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Never		49	10%
2	Rarely		107	21%
3	Sometimes		162	32%
4	Often		127	25%
5	Very Often		55	11%
	Total		500	100%

Statistic	Value
Mode	Sometimes
Total Responses	500

QUESTION 13: Frequency of deliberately seeking out fiction books written by New Zealand authors

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Never		55	11%
2	Rarely		137	28%
3	Sometimes		176	35%
4	Often		91	18%
5	Very Often		40	8%
	Total		499	100%

Statistic	Value
Mode	Sometimes
Total Responses	499

Chi-square tests: frequency of deliberately seeking New Zealand fiction

There was a significant association ($p < 0.05$) between reported frequency of deliberately seeking out New Zealand fiction (Q13) and fiction to non-fiction reading ratios ($\chi^2(6) = 0.638469372$, $p = 0.004276044$). This seemed to indicate that 'only fiction' readers deliberately seek out New Zealand fiction less frequently than those who read a combination of fiction and non-fiction (see Appendix F for cross-tabulations).

QUESTION 14: Attitudes regarding the importance of separate sections in libraries, bookstores or bookseller websites

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Not at all Important		57	11%
2	Not Very Important		82	16%
3	Neutral / Don't Know		64	13%
4	Somewhat Important		206	41%
5	Extremely Important		91	18%
	Total		500	100%

Statistic	Value
Mode	Somewhat Important
Total Responses	500

QUESTION 15: Text responses explaining why the respondent's answer to Question 14 was selected

#	Answer	Text responses given in answer to Q15	% of those who answered Q14 who also answered Q15
1	Not at all Important	52	91%
2	Not Very Important	70	85%
3	Neutral / Don't Know	41	64%
4	Somewhat Important	151	73%
5	Extremely Important	78	86%
	Total	392	78%

QUESTION 16: Readers who studied New Zealand fiction (novels, short stories, poetry or plays) at either primary or secondary school in New Zealand

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Yes		340	68%
2	No		29	6%
3	I can't remember		74	15%
4	I did not attend school in New Zealand		57	11%
	Total		500	100%

Statistic	Value
Mode	Yes
Total Responses	500

QUESTION 17: Impressions regarding New Zealand fiction studies at school

#	Answer	Response	%
1	I didn't like any of it	14	3%
2	I didn't like most of it	33	8%
3	I liked some of it	146	36%
4	I liked most of it	92	22%
5	I liked all of it	45	11%
6	I can't remember / Don't know	81	20%
	Total	411	100%

Statistic	Value
Mode	I liked some of it
Total Responses	411

QUESTION 18: Overall preference regarding fiction written by New Zealand authors and non-New Zealand authors

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Prefer written by New Zealand authors	23	5%
2	Prefer written by non-New Zealand authors	178	36%
3	No preference	293	59%
4	Don't know	3	0%
	Total	497	100%

Statistic	Value
Mode	No preference
Total Responses	497

Chi-square tests: overall preferences

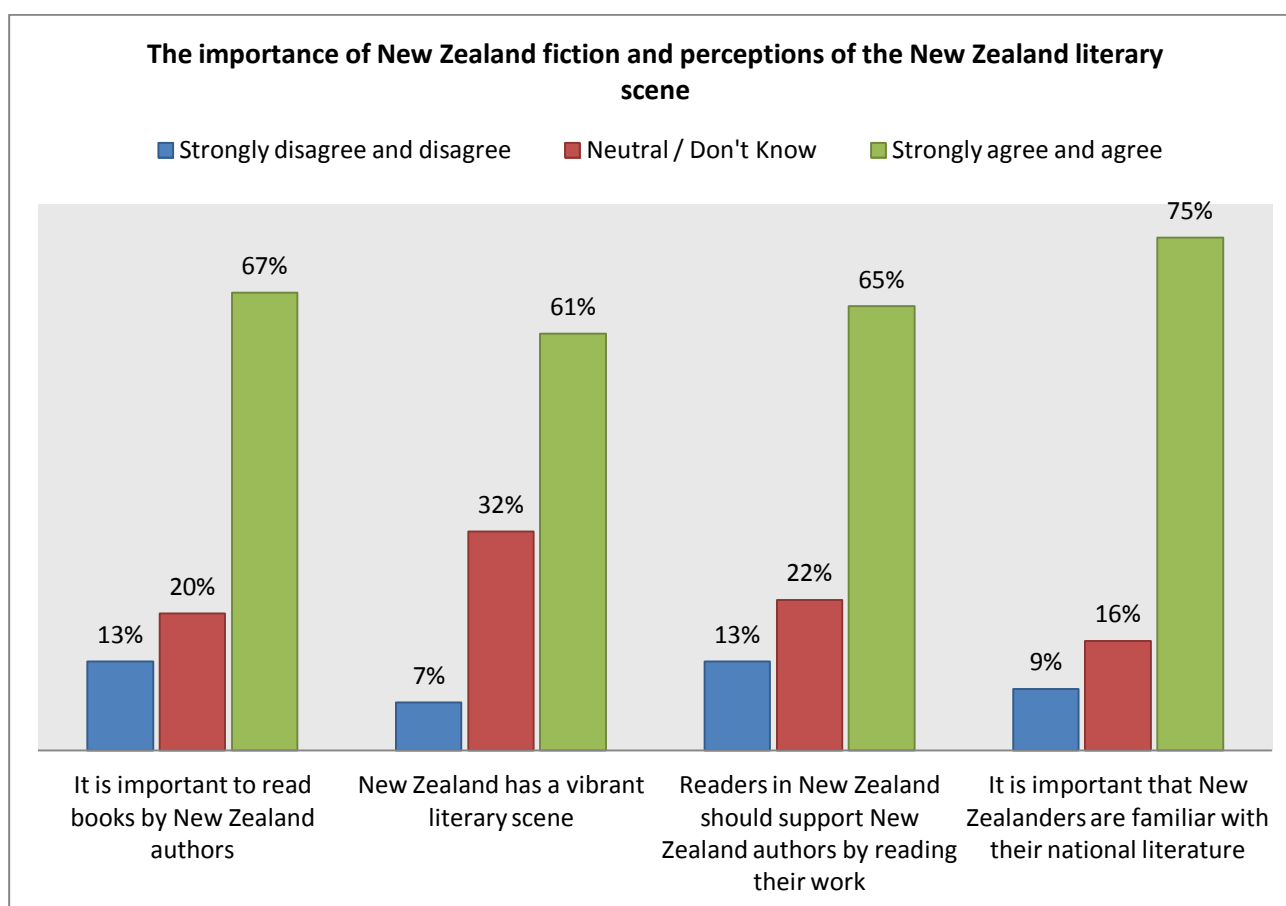
There was a significant association ($p < 0.05$) between reported preferences regarding New Zealand fiction and non-New Zealand fiction (Q18) and enjoyment of New Zealand fiction at school ($\chi^2(6) = 0.010656046$, $p = 2.5108E-08$). This seemed to indicate that readers who did not enjoy the New Zealand fiction they studied at school are more likely to have a strong preference for non-New Zealand fiction (see Appendix F for cross-tabulations).

QUESTION 19-22: Text responses explaining why the respondent's answer to Question 18 was selected

#	Answer	Text responses given in answer to Q19-22	% of those who answered Q18 who also answered Q19-22
1	Prefer written by New Zealand authors	21	91%
2	Prefer written by non-New Zealand authors	156	88%
3	No preference	272	93%
4	Don't know	3	100%
	Total	452	91%

QUESTION 23: Perception of the importance of New Zealand fiction and perceptions of the New Zealand literary scene

#	Question	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral / Don't Know		Agree		Strongly Agree		Responses	Mode
1	It is important to read books by New Zealand authors	22	4%	43	9%	100	20%	253	51%	81	16%	499	Agree
2	New Zealand has a vibrant literary scene	9	2%	26	5%	158	32%	230	46%	77	15%	500	Agree
3	Readers in New Zealand should support New Zealand authors by reading their work	19	4%	47	9%	110	22%	246	49%	78	16%	500	Agree
4	It is important that New Zealanders are familiar with their national literature	11	2%	34	7%	78	16%	275	55%	101	20%	499	Agree



Chi-square tests: level of agreement regarding the importance of New Zealand fiction

There were significant associations ($p < 0.05$) between attitudes towards reading New Zealand fiction (Q23) and a number of different variables. These associations seemed to indicate that a relationship existed between the variables identified and beliefs regarding the importance of reading (Q23.1) and

being familiar with New Zealand fiction (Q23.4) and supporting New Zealand authors (Q23.3) (see Appendix F for cross-tabulations).

Variable	Chi-square	Inferred relationship
<i>Ethnicity</i>	$\chi^2(2) = 0.007287589$, $p = 0.003637164$	Readers who identify as one or more of 'New Zealand European', 'New Zealander', 'Pakeha' or 'Maori' are more likely to believe it is important to read New Zealand fiction.
<i>Country of birth</i>	$\chi^2(2) = 0.001670107$, $p = 0.000834705$	New Zealand-born readers are more likely to believe it is important to read New Zealand fiction.
<i>Region</i>	$\chi^2(2) = 0.023292703$, $p = 0.011578795$	Auckland-based readers are least likely to believe it is important to read New Zealand fiction.
<i>School attendance in New Zealand</i>	$\chi^2(2) = 0.008730667$, $p = 0.004355819$	Readers who attended school in New Zealand are more likely to believe it is important to read New Zealand fiction.
<i>Dislike of certain fiction genres</i>	<u>Literary fiction</u> $\chi^2(4) = 0.000400004$, $p = 1.99977E-08$ <u>Short stories</u> $\chi^2(4) = 0.077371584$, $p = 0.000729273$ <u>Plays/poetry</u> $\chi^2(4) = 0.063740992$, $p = 0.000497202$	Readers who do not enjoy reading traditionally 'highbrow' fiction genres are less likely to believe it is important to support New Zealand authors by reading their work.
<i>Level importance placed on certain aspects when choosing fiction</i>	<u>Book reviews</u> $\chi^2(4) = 0.015213627$, $p = 2.87855E-05$ <u>Literary merit</u> $\chi^2(4) = 0.010576804$, $p = 1.39344E-05$ <u>Literary prizes</u> $\chi^2(4) = 0.003784137$, $p = 1.78771E-06$	Readers who place little or no importance on a fiction book's literary prestige when choosing fiction are less likely to believe it is important to support New Zealand authors by reading their work.
<i>Level of agreement with 'to become widely read' as a main reason for reading</i>	$\chi^2(4) = 0.476396892$, $p = 0.024242307$	Readers who do not personally consider becoming 'widely read' to be a motivation for reading for pleasure are less likely to believe that it is important that New Zealanders are familiar with their national literature.
<i>Level of agreement regarding 'thought provoking' as an aspect important to personal enjoyment of fiction</i>	$\chi^2(4) = 0.073535545$, $p = 0.000659592$	Readers who do not feel a book's ability to challenge their ideas or make them think is important for their enjoyment of fiction are less likely to believe it is important to support New Zealand authors by reading their work.

QUESTION 24: Length of time since readers last read a fiction book by a New Zealand author

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Never	6	1%
2	More than 10 years ago	9	2%
3	Between 5 – 10 years ago	17	3%
4	Between 1 – 5 years ago	86	17%
5	Between 6 months – 1 year ago	76	15%
6	Between 1 month – 6 months ago	126	25%
7	Between 1 week – 1 month ago	81	16%
8	During the past week	53	11%
9	Don't know / I can't remember	46	9%
	Total	500	100%

Statistic	Value
Mode	Between 1 week – 1 month ago
Total Responses	500

QUESTION 25: Frequency of reading fiction books by New Zealand authors

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Never	17	4%
2	Rarely	124	25%
3	Sometimes	229	47%
4	Often	112	23%
5	Don't Know	8	2%
	Total	490	100%

Statistic	Value
Mode	Sometimes
Total Responses	490

Chi-square tests: frequency of reading New Zealand fiction

There were significant associations ($p < 0.05$) between reported frequency of reading New Zealand fiction (Q25) and a number of different variables. These associations seemed to indicate that a relationship existed between the variables identified and frequency of reading New Zealand fiction (see Appendix F for cross-tabulations).

Variable	Chi-square	Inferred relationship
<i>Age</i>	$\chi^2(6) = 0.2994738$, $p = 0.0005003$	Older readers are more likely to read New Zealand fiction frequently.
<i>Ethnicity</i>	$\chi^2(2) = 0.01174319$, $p = 0.005854391$	Readers who identify as one or more of 'New Zealand European', 'New Zealander', 'Pakeha' or 'Maori' are more likely to read New Zealand fiction frequently.
<i>School attendance in New Zealand</i>	$\chi^2(2) = 0.104940294$, $p = 0.051117352$	Readers who attended school in New Zealand are more likely to read New Zealand fiction frequently.
<i>Experience of New Zealand fiction at school</i>	$\chi^2(6) = 42.2882149$, $p = 1.61288E-07$	Readers who did not enjoy the New Zealand fiction they studied at school are less likely to read New Zealand fiction frequently.
<i>Fiction to non-fiction reading ratios</i>	$\chi^2(6) = 1.5852944$, $p = 1.585294398$ 0.0463712	Readers who read 'only fiction' are less likely to read New Zealand fiction frequently.
<i>Dislike of certain fiction genres</i>	<u>Literary fiction</u> $\chi^2(4) = 2.28738E-05$, $p = 6.54011E-11$ <u>Short stories</u> $\chi^2(4) = 1.29047E-05$, $p = 2.08163E-11$ <u>Plays/poetry</u> $\chi^2(4) = 1.2124E-05$, $p = 1.8374E-11$	Readers who do not enjoy reading traditionally 'highbrow' fiction genres are less likely to read New Zealand fiction frequently.
<i>Level importance placed on certain aspects when choosing fiction</i>	<u>Book reviews</u> $\chi^2(4) = 0.0086456$, $p = 9.31642E-06$ <u>Literary merit</u> $\chi^2(4) = 0.004736076$, $p = 2.79938E-06$ <u>Literary prizes</u> $\chi^2(4) = 0.00991021$, $p = 1.2236E-05$	Readers who place little or no importance on a fiction book's literary prestige when choosing fiction are less likely to read New Zealand fiction frequently.
<i>Level of agreement regarding 'thought provoking' as an aspect important to personal enjoyment of fiction</i>	$\chi^2(4) = 0.1795071$, $p = 0.0037948$	Readers who do not feel that being made to think or having their ideas challenged is important for their enjoyment of fiction are less likely to read New Zealand fiction frequently.
<i>Level of agreement regarding 'gripping plots' and being 'easy to read/not too complicated' as aspects important to personal enjoyment of fiction</i>	<u>Gripping, fast-moving plot</u> $\chi^2(4) = 0.437415115$, $p = 0.020699404$ <u>Easy to read/not too complicated</u> $\chi^2(4) = 0.17899825$, $p = 0.003773914$	Readers who feel that a gripping plot or being easy to read are qualities that are important for their enjoyment of fiction are less likely to read New Zealand fiction frequently.

QUESTION 26: Text response inviting readers to submit additional comments on the topics covered

Statistic	Value
Total Responses	136

QUESTION 27: Gender

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Male	70	14%
2	Female	423	86%
	Total	493	100%

Statistic	Value
Mode	Female
Total Responses	493

QUESTION 28: Age

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Under 18	5	1%
2	18 – 24	38	8%
3	25 – 29	78	16%
4	30 – 34	61	12%
5	35 – 39	72	15%
6	40 – 44	47	9%
7	45 – 49	40	8%
8	50 – 54	51	10%
9	55 – 59	37	7%
10	60 - 64	32	6%
11	65 – 69	21	4%
12	70+	16	3%
	Total	498	100%

Statistic	Value
Mode	25-29
Median	35-39
Total Responses	498

QUESTION 29: Country of current residence

#	Answer	Response	%
1	New Zealand	475	96%
2	Other	20	4%
	Total	495	100%

Statistic	Value
Mode	Yes
Total Responses	495

QUESTION 30: Region of those currently living in New Zealand

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Northland	8	2%
2	Auckland	149	31%
3	Waikato	17	4%
4	Bay of Plenty	22	5%
5	Gisbourne	11	2%
6	Taranaki	7	2%
7	Manawatu-Wanganui	17	4%
8	Hawke's Bay	24	5%
9	Wellington	151	32%
10	Tasman	4	1%
11	Malborough	2	0%
12	Nelson	6	1%
13	Canterbury	26	6%
14	West Coast	14	3%
15	Otago	10	2%
16	Southland	6	1%
	Total	474	100%

Statistic	Value
Mode	Wellington
Total Responses	474

QUESTION 31: Country of birth

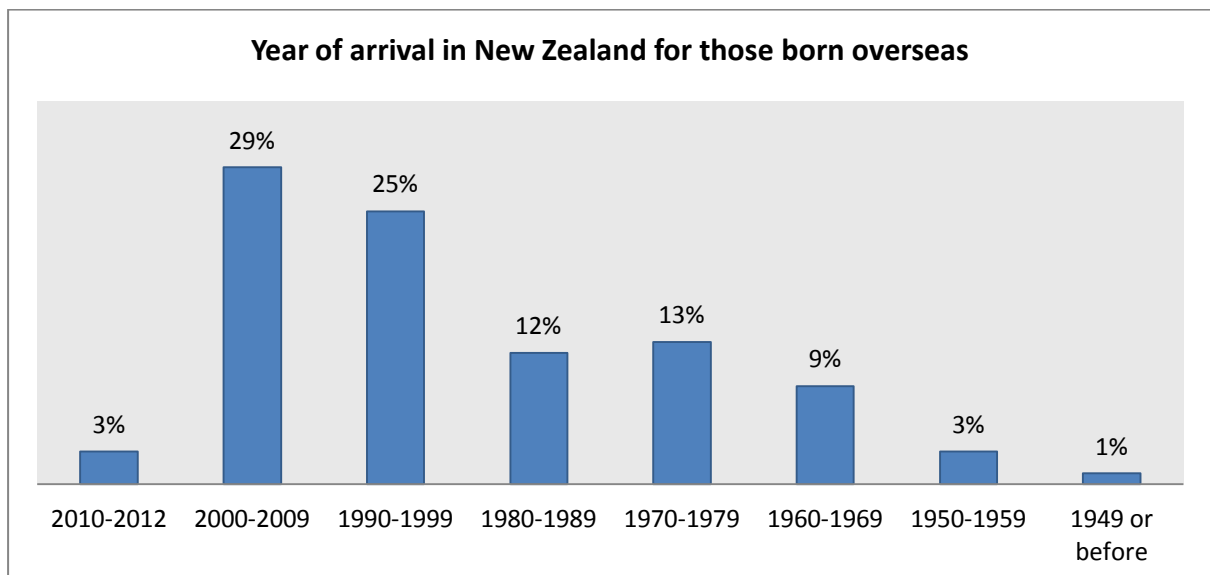
#	Answer	Response	%
1	New Zealand	403	81%
2	Other	95	19%
	Total	498	100%

Statistic	Value
Mode	Yes
Total Responses	498

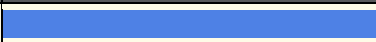










QUESTION 32: Year of arrival in New Zealand (readers born overseas)

#	Answer	Response	%
1	2010-2012	3	3%
2	2000-2009	28	29%
3	1990-1999	24	25%
4	1980-1989	12	12%
5	1970-1979	13	13%
6	1960-1969	9	9%
7	1950-1959	3	3%
8	1949 or before	1	1%
	Total	93	100%

Statistic	Value
Mode	1990
Total Responses	93



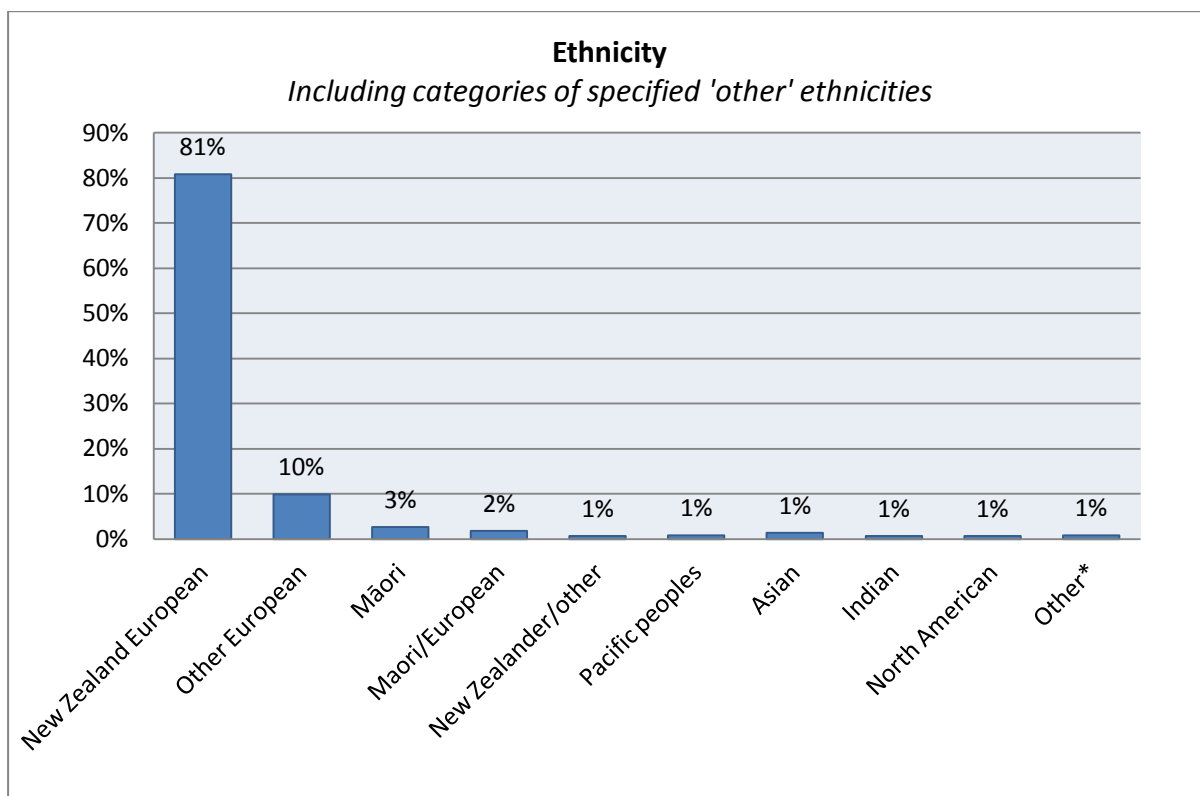
QUESTION 33: Ethnicity

#	Answer		Response	%
1	New Zealand European		390	79%
2	Other European		40	8%
3	Māori		13	3%
4	Other (please specify)		43	9%
5	Chinese		4	1%
6	Indian		3	1%
7	Cook Island Maori		2	0%
8	Niuean		1	0%
9	Samoan		1	0%
10	Tongan		0	0%
11	Japanese		0	0%
	Total		497	100%

Statistic	Value
Mode	New Zealand European
Total Responses	497

Categories of specified responses for 'Other'

	Overall category	Response	%
1	New Zealander/Pakeha	12	28%
2	Maori/European	9	21%
3	Other European	9	21%
4	Asian	3	7%
5	North American	3	7%
6	South African	2	5%
7	New Zealander/Argentinean	1	2%
8	New Zealander/Fijian	1	2%
9	New Zealander/North American	1	2%
10	Eurasian	1	2%
11	Middle Eastern	1	2%
	Total	43	100%



* Other = South African, Eurasian and Middle Eastern.

QUESTION 34: Highest completed qualification

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Some secondary school	10	2%
2	Secondary school qualification (e.g. NCEA, School Certificate, University Bursary etc.)	59	12%
3	Trade qualification	12	2%
4	Polytechnic / technical college qualification	60	12%
5	Teachers certificate / diploma	25	5%
6	Undergraduate university qualification	155	31%
7	Postgraduate university qualification	175	35%
	Total	496	100%

Statistic	Value
Mode	Postgraduate university qualification
Total Responses	496

QUESTION 35: Personal annual income

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Less than \$10,000		62	13%
2	\$10,000 – \$19,999		49	10%
3	\$20,000 – \$29,999		46	10%
4	\$30,000 – \$39,999		38	8%
5	\$40,000 – \$49,999		75	16%
6	\$50,000 – \$59,999		65	14%
7	\$60,000 – \$69,999		52	11%
8	\$70,000 - \$89,999		48	10%
9	\$90,000 - \$119,000		27	6%
10	\$120,000 or more		20	4%
	Total		482	100%

Statistic	Value
Mode	\$40,000 – \$49,999
Total Responses	482

QUESTION 36: Respondents who submitted their email addresses for the draw to win a \$50

Bookseller Book Token

Statistic	Value
Total Responses	453

QUESTION 37: Respondents who submitted their email addresses in order to receive a short summary of research findings

Statistic	Value
Total Responses	341

4.2 Open questions

Readers were asked to give a free-text response to the following questions:

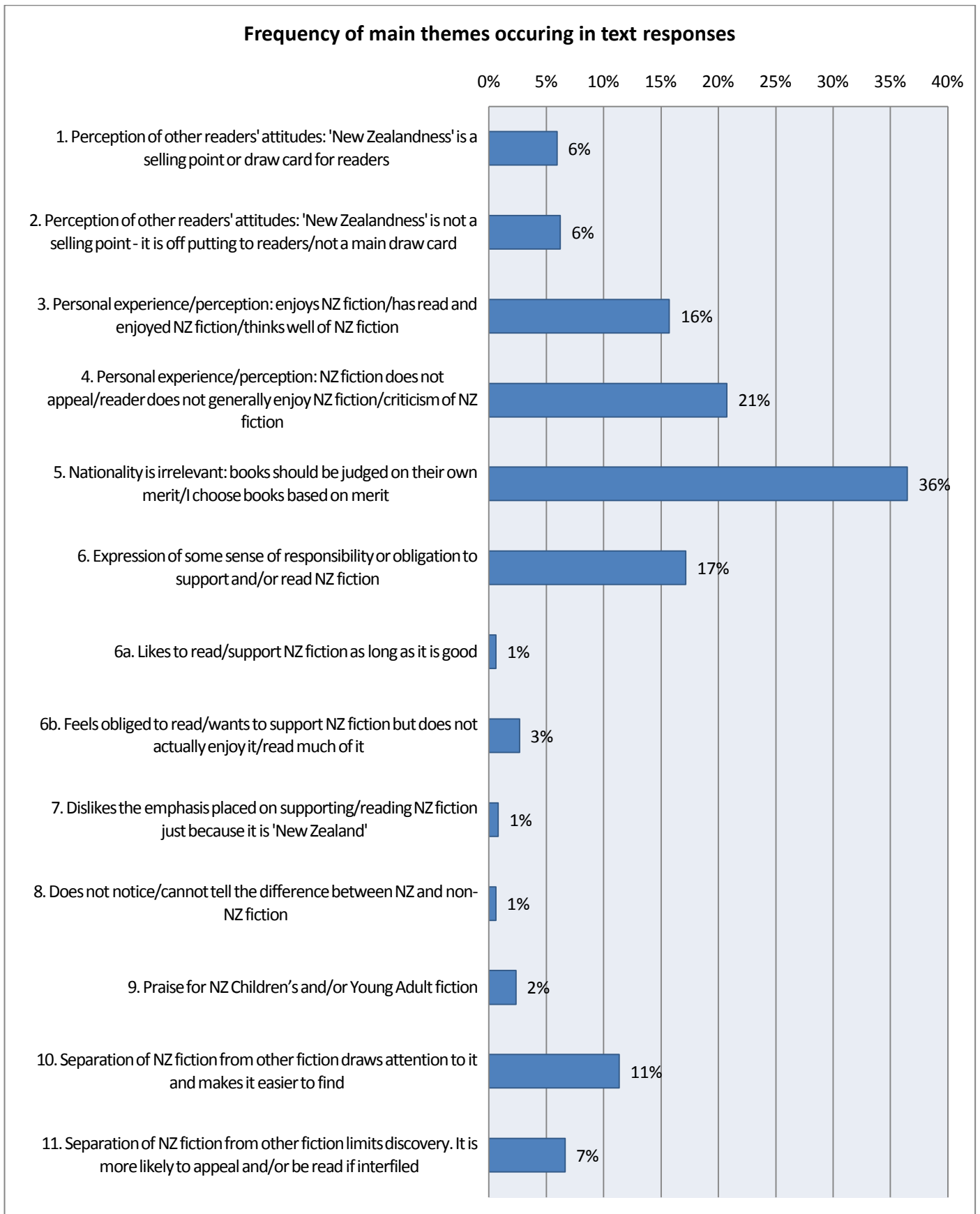
- *Do you feel it is important to have separate sections for New Zealand fiction in libraries, bookstores or bookseller websites? Why or why not? (Q15)*
- *Overall, when choosing fiction to read for your own pleasure, do you generally prefer books written by New Zealand authors or non-New Zealand authors? Why do you feel this way? (The options available for selection were: 'Prefer New Zealand authors'; 'Prefer non-New Zealand authors'; 'No preference'; and, 'Don't know'). (Q19-21)*
- *Is there anything else you would like to say about the topics covered in this questionnaire? (Q26)*

A total of 979 text responses submitted in response to the three open questions helped to illuminate what lay behind attitudes towards New Zealand fiction as reported via the closed questions. As not everyone chose to leave text responses, the comments are not representative of the views of the entire research population, but rather serve to supplement and give shape to the findings of the quantitative data. Neither did every participant who commented focus on the same issues and as such, it should be noted that not every participant's point of view is represented regarding the main themes identified below.

Four main themes were identified as recurring frequently in the text responses:

- (a) Favourable attitudes towards and enjoyment of New Zealand fiction.
- (b) Less favourable attitudes towards New Zealand fiction, ranging from wholly negative to criticism of a single aspect.
- (c) The view or opinion that books should not be read or judged because of where they are written, i.e. nationality of an author is, or should be, irrelevant. This was expressed both as a personal mode of operating such as "I do not choose books based on nationality", and as a general principle for how readers in general 'should' approach books, i.e. "books should be judged on merit".
- (d) Ideas regarding the importance of New Zealand fiction and the role or position it occupies as viewed by New Zealand readers.

The frequency with which these ideas were mentioned by participants across the three open questions is shown in the graph below and the table in Appendix G.



4.2.1 Enjoyment of New Zealand fiction

23% of the 979 comments made throughout the questionnaire contained a favourable view of New Zealand fiction in terms of personal experience and opinions on how New Zealand fiction was generally viewed by other readers.

4.2.1.1 Reader perceptions of how other readers view New Zealand fiction

27% of the favourable remarks contained the opinion that New Zealand readers were generally drawn to New Zealand fiction. Reasons for this were based around the idea that a book's "New Zealandness", either in the form of subject matter or simply by virtue of being "homegrown", was a selling point. It was proposed that anything "NZ made" appeals to kiwi pride, that New Zealand fiction is unique and different from overseas fiction and also that New Zealand fiction is more "relatable" and easier to "identify with":

"Kiwi's love NZ made"

"We pride ourselves on Kiwi made and Kiwi owned"

"We all as NZers enjoy supporting the home team, reading about ourselves..."

"There are ways in which NZ books appeal that are difference from non-NZ books, e.g. local relevance, desire to support local etc."

"We... write in a different style than over seas people and vice verser" (sic)

4.2.1.2 Personal views on New Zealand fiction

71% of the positive comments contained reference to personal opinions of New Zealand fiction. Being able to identify and relate to both settings and culture was one of the most common reasons given for personally enjoying or being interested in New Zealand fiction and for preferring it over non-New Zealand fiction. Being able to learn about one's own culture through fiction was also seen as interesting. Typical comments included:

"I enjoy books set in NZ, I enjoy being able to relate to places"

"I like NZ fiction, I can relate to it"

"More drawn to NZ settings"

"The settings and content of NZ books has (sic) a special closeness and familiarity"

"It is nice to have fiction that you have some actual connection with"

"More likely to be on my wave length"

"We are a unique country with unique points of view"

"They tell a story that is uniquely ours."

"Reading New Zealand authors helps me feel proud, helps me feel vulnerable, helps me grow"

"It gives insight into the New Zealand character, and our place in the world, which I'm still grappling with in my own mind"

"I am an immigrant to this country. New Zealand literature taught me more about this nation's psyche than any history book ever could."

"I want to read about my own country and culture, especially books which have Maori content"

"Of more interest, I understand and know more places, people"

"because I want to be literate in our culture"

New Zealanders living overseas

Many New Zealanders currently living overseas felt New Zealand fiction had a special resonance for them:

"I currently live in the UK, and it please me to read stuff from home"

"I live in Canberra... I return to Dunedin on holiday and go into all the bookshops and libraries looking for New Zealand fiction and non-fiction to read."

"I live overseas and have done so since 2000. When I come home... I love buying NZ fiction and nonfiction. It helps me be a little closer to home and often reaffirms my Kiwiness... the bottom line for me, is the NZ fiction and nonfiction is important to me as a Kiwi. I'd like to see even more."

Appreciation for the growth of New Zealand fiction

Several people stated they appreciated being able to read New Zealand fiction because when they first began to read for pleasure, New Zealand-written fiction was not widely available or celebrated.

"I feel anchored to my culture and society by reading and learning about it. In a way it is a commitment, it is something I appreciate and that I can grow from, the world of my country is not something I know intrinsically all the time. How can I? I grew up with far too much overseas fiction and while I still value access to fiction and non-fiction from overseas I cannot grow from it and make connections in the way I can with the literature that represents my wider world."

"I grew up on a "diet" of mainly English literature, and somehow had the impression that New Zealand efforts, and even New Zealand culture in general, were second-rate. So it is now always satisfying to me to experience just how good our writers (and other artists) are."

The importance of quality

Several of those who stated they preferred New Zealand fiction did so with a caveat: as long as it was "good".

"Of course it is all dependent on the quality of the writing, but it is comparable I prefer the frisson that recognizing local places and events evokes"

"I'd prefer to support local if everything else is even"

"Quality of writing, plot or subject, cover, typography etc are all important - but if all things were equally the same between a NZ and a non-NZ book, I would probably choose the NZ one."

Comments on the quality of New Zealand fiction usually involved a comparison with the rest of the world:

"NZ fiction is as good as overseas fiction and can hold its own"

"the quality of writing is on par with the rest of the world"

"they [New Zealand and non-New Zealand fiction] are of equal standard"

Different approaches to New Zealand fiction

Many readers suggested they viewed 'New Zealand fiction' as a genre or book type in its own right, and commented that they read New Zealand fiction for different reasons than they read other fiction:

"I am interested in NZ fiction for different reasons than other fiction. Fiction dealing with issues and culture relating to NZ is more interesting to me, as I am more likely to identify with aspects of the book."

"I feel that non-NZ authors produce a better-quality of writing. When I choose NZ authors, I usually do so for their depiction of some aspect of life in NZ, rather than for the quality of writing."

"I also find that New Zealand books form a distinct genre and if I want to read a book based in New Zealand that might give me insight into my own country, it is helpful for them to be in the same section"

4.2.2 Criticism of New Zealand fiction

30% of the 979 comments made throughout the questionnaire included less favourable attitudes towards New Zealand fiction in terms of personal experience and opinions on how New Zealand fiction was viewed by other readers in general.

4.2.2.1 Reader perceptions of how other readers view New Zealand fiction

21% of the less favourable comments pertained to New Zealand fiction's general "bad reputation" as perceived by respondents. A common remark was that "many people think they don't like New Zealand fiction" or think "that stuff's not as good". Many put this down to the effect of 'cultural cringe':

"I think there's a bias against NZ fiction – we have a sort of cultural cringe & tend not to want to read things set in New Zealand"

"In many ways I think there are parallels between the NZ music industry and the NZ publishing industry – both lack the money, influence, talent pool and audience of the international publishers and face a certain 'cultural cringe' from consumers."

"New Zealand authors can hold their own in quality and range; unfortunately they can suffer a bit from cultural cringe – 'If they are local, they can't be the best'"

Separation only results in segregation

Many felt that this general bias was a good reason why New Zealand fiction should not be shelved in a separate section. 27% of the 122 who commented on why it was not important to have a separate section were of the opinion that separating New Zealand fiction only served to reinforce “the stigma of NZ writers not being that good”. Several respondents thought the very act of separating out New Zealand from general fiction was “patronizing” to New Zealand authors, suggesting that their work was so inferior it needed “special treatment” in order to compete with international authors. Many of those who were against a separate section felt that separating it out implied, or would automatically cause others to think, that the separation was because New Zealand fiction was inferior rather than because it was something to be celebrated:

“I think by shelving NZ Fiction separately you risk isolating our writers’ fiction and the general public may not find it, or perceive it as of high a quality as fiction from overseas.”

“A lot of people will never take from that [New Zealand] section because they think they will be of a less quality”

Many readers also stated that they personally would be “more likely to pick out a book by a NZ author if it was included in the general section” either because they were “not in the habit of looking in the NZ fiction section” or because they would be “more likely to read it if I didn’t know it was NZ specifically”.

Consequently, interfiling New Zealand fiction with mainstream fiction was seen by many as a way to “give it a chance” by hijacking stereotypes and allowing people to discover “by accident” New Zealand books that appealed to them for other reasons and which they may have disregarded if they were confined to the New Zealand section.

4.2.2.2 Personal views on New Zealand fiction

79% of the less favourable comments related to people’s personal dislike or lack of interest in New Zealand fiction. Many simply stated that in general they found New Zealand fiction “less interesting” than fiction from overseas, or that overseas fiction was “better written” or had “better stories”. Others, however, went into greater detail to describe what they had encountered in New Zealand fiction that contributed to their opinion.

Disappointing experiences

Many readers felt they had been disappointed by New Zealand fiction too many times in the past to be able to think well of it:

"I have read some books by NZ authors because they had rave reviews in the media, only to find them boring and badly written or badly edited."

"I want to read a well-written book with a good plot and characters, regardless of which country the author comes from. Unfortunately I've been really disappointed in New Zealand literature in the past."

"We have some superb authors and very popular ones too, but reading is very much a personal preference and much as I have persevered in the past, I do tend to be slightly biased towards New Zealand fiction and tend simply not to seek it out. Occasionally I will read something, and 9 times out of 10 will feel some sense of disappointment with the story or the character development."

"I don't read much New Zealand fiction because I am quite biased against it. A few badly written, overly booker-prize-winning-type novels have turned me against them."

"I haven't enjoyed reading NZ fiction in the past so I don't seek it out and perhaps even exclude it from my reading choices... Perhaps I should give it another try."

Only one reader commented that an experience of New Zealand fiction at school had influenced their perceptions later life:

"I find it less interesting reading about settings and character types of New Zealander's, compared to reading about foreign characters / lifestyles / scenarios... I had to study Keri Hulme in high school and it has typecast NZ fiction for me!"

Characterising New Zealand fiction

Frequently stated impressions of New Zealand fiction were that it was quite "dark and depressing", "dreary", "intense", "solemn" and "dwelling on misfortune". It was also viewed as "boring and slow moving" or "less 'active'". One reader wrote "I don't seem to have found an unputdownable NZ novel yet". Another said: "In my opinion the weight and tone of many books written in this country is depressive and unhealthy."

New Zealand fiction was frequently described as “highbrow” “too literary”, “extremely literary”, “worthy”, “serious”, or “overly sincere, slightly pious and heavy handed” and thus outside the sphere of interest for the average reader.

“I feel that the authors here are writing with the aim of being included as a school text and thus does not hold wide appeal for the leisure-reading market.”

“I think NZ fiction writers try to be too literary rather than just telling a good story”

“It would be great to see more NZ fiction that is aimed at the leisure reader, telling a story or creating characters and with a storyline that just happens to be set here.”

“too much of their own agenda/political bias showing through rather than the ‘entertainment value’, I tend not to look in the NZ section as I have very rarely found anything there to interest me.”

“I find non-New Zealand authors to be much lighter handed and up beat”

In a similar vein, another frequent comment was that the types of fiction that readers particularly enjoyed reading, often specific genres, were not written by many New Zealand authors.

“So often NZ authors are not providing me with the kind of reading experience I want - light, escapism, humour, romance etc.”

“There isn't as many NZ authors who write in the thriller genre so the choice is not so great” (sic)

“because they [non-New Zealand authors] write the genres I am most interested in, Sci fi/fantasy in New Zealand isn't really all that great”.

“I really like Vanda Symon's [a New Zealand crime writer] books. I would like to see more of that sort of fiction available from NZ authors.”

“there do not appear to be too many thriller/mysteries by kiwi authors in my experience, so I don't make a point of seeking them out.”

Several said that if a New Zealander were to write something they were interested in they would be happy to read it:

“If a NZ author writes something I like then I’ll read it - until then I’ll stick with the internationals”

“If there was more interesting fiction published in New Zealand I would read more of it.”

“If there were a wider selection available, I would definitely read more of them.”

In many cases New Zealand fiction was also seen as not living up to the same literary standards as overseas fiction. For instance:

“I generally feel that the writing from my favourite non-NZ authors is better than NZ authors. I am most interested in the quality of the writing and I feel there is a depth, a cleverness in the writing that we don’t often get from NZ authors.”

“Sometimes books set in NZ are a bit off (as is NZ TV!)

“I feel that non-NZ authors produce a better-quality of writing. When I choose NZ authors, I usually do so for their depiction of some aspect of life in NZ, rather than for the quality of writing”

In terms of quality of writing, New Zealand fiction was perceived as “poorly written and excessively verbose”, “laboured and dull” and “pretentious”. Readers felt New Zealand authors were “try hard” or “try too hard to be clever”. Examples of commonly expressed opinions include:

“In general NZ writers get more involved in the style or theme that they forget about the plot and the characters”

“uninteresting and/or badly drawn characters”

“I have generally found the New Zealand fiction books that I have read to be quite ‘try hard’ in that the authors don’t hold on to their own voice and go out of their way to sound ‘literary’” (sic)

“NZ authors tend to get caught up in their own heads and forget that they are trying to get into ours. The writing tends to reflect their political bias and often seems convoluted.”

“NZ has some fantastic writers, but sometimes I feel like they write for one another rather than for the general public. A lot of modern NZ fiction feels a bit self-conscious and show-offy to me, and that puts me off it.”

“Generally speaking I find NZ writers have very similar styles and it often seems they're trying hard to be 'different' or meaningful rather than it happening naturally.”

“I like reading books that are well written and have good plots. My experience of NZ adult fiction is that it's not that great.”

“I find that the standards overseas authors must meet in order to be considered for publication are greater than those New Zealand authors must reach- New Zealand is so desperate for recognition and prestige that it will publish or promote things of lesser quality in order to be able to claim another published writer.”

“My experience with New Zealand authors when I have deliberately read them is that there is a preponderance of over-written, prize-aimed books, so now I prefer not to look and just enjoy them when I find the good ones.

Many felt that New Zealand fiction lacked variety and, while what was produced in New Zealand was not necessarily of lesser quality, was of lesser appeal due limited scope and outlook. For instance:

“I think the quality of NZ writing is world class. I think the variety within that group of amazing writers is narrow. Non NZ writing allows me to travel, to connect with being a person first and foremost. Not a nationality.”

“I am not originally from New Zealand. NZ books tend to be preoccupied with the scenery and quite restricted in their choice of topic.”

Others felt New Zealand fiction was “insular” or contained a lot of “small town thinking”. In contrast, overseas fiction was seen as “more open minded, more worldly” and offering a “broader world

view” or “a more mature view of the world”. One reader commented that, “New Zealand writing/publishing tends a bit to the 'safe' side.”

In contrast to those who said they enjoyed New Zealand fiction *because of* the local referent and the sensations of familiarity and connection it provoked, New Zealand based settings and subjects were also cited by many as the reason they avoided New Zealand fiction. One reader wrote:

“I have a sense that NZ writing can be a bit 'dark and moody', and largely set in rural/coastal settings which I feel are a bit too familiar to want to read about.”

Escapism was mentioned frequently, as was the desire to learn about other places. Typical comments include:

“I read for pleasure and to escape from the dreariness of everyday life. Much of the New Zealand fiction I have experienced has been set in New Zealand and in communities akin to the ones in which we live - there is not much escape there.”

“Escapism doesn't happen when I can't make up the scenery or setting in my head of places I haven't been”

“I like to read things that don't remind me of everyday NZ life”

“I read to escape from NZ”

“I like to experience another culture/nations. We have some fantastic authors and really quality stories, I am just not interested in a NZ flavour on what I read.”

“I want to read something that is more 'worldly' – I am already familiar with NZ and its society, so why shouldn't I branch out and learn something different?”

Many also commented that they actually related better to fiction set overseas as opposed to New Zealand:

“I can't relate to a lot of NZ writing - it doesn't reflect the place I live in to me so I might as well read about a place that's completely different.”

“They [fiction by overseas writers] reflect my experience/culture much more, sadly, despite setting their stories half-way around the world from me. I like characters and stories I can relate to. I've lived my whole life in NZ... How is it that I can't relate to anything I find written by a NZer? Actually, the stories I read are about personal issues we all can relate to, not just one issue that a few people can relate to.”

New Zealand fiction was also seen as overly “New Zealand”, preoccupied with its nationality and described as having a “nationalistic agenda”. For example:

“I often feel that New Zealand authors are too eager to demonstrate their nationality in their writing.”

“full of NZ colloquialisms which seem too put-on and overly conscious of their 'uniqueness' rather than actually natural.”

“I'm interested in books with strong plot and characters, and sometimes NZ books are so overcome with their New Zealandness that these get forgotten”

In addition to quality of writing and style, the production side of New Zealand fiction books was also viewed as inferior to international fiction, particularly editing and book covers:

“Some NZ books are very under edited. We seem keen to publish books by popular authors without reigning them in. Drives me crazy.”

Perhaps there's less competition to be published in NZ so we let books of a lesser quality through”.

“There is just so much more out there to read that... hasn't been thrust into publication unedited and unquestioned simply because it's by one of the few 'known' NZ writers”

“clumsily written, badly edited and full of typos”

“The final product doesn't seem as polished as overseas products in terms of appearance (including typeset) and editing.”

"If the same work were in a general area and not identified as NZ, I may miss it or fail to choose it due to the (usually poor) NZ cover."

New Zealand publishing

Many voiced their opinions about the New Zealand publishing industry:

"I for one am not intending to bother with the NZ publishers when I finally finish my manuscript and try to get published. I simply don't fit their narrow specs and have heard of many who have come to the same conclusion and been quickly picked up by UK and US publishers."

"There is a club which you can gain access to by writing in a certain style, certain topics, going to certain masters type courses, tipping the write hats... There are no poles, debate, diversity in the NZ scene. There is lot of local back-patting among a small established group, while new authors have to carve a name overseas before they can be deemed worthy of publicity here."

"It's a pity that some authors have to be published overseas before they get recognised by NZ publishers"

"The heavy bias towards literary fiction instead of popular seems naive if they want books to sell, which is surely their main aim as a business."

"Perhaps our editors aren't as good... or maybe they have a very narrow view of what should be published here."

Many also felt the definition of a "New Zealand writer" and who was chosen for recognition was very narrow and should be expanded, citing cases of New Zealand based writers who have had success overseas but are barely known in their own country and not recognized as "New Zealand" authors. Nalini Singh, a successful paranormal romance novelist, was mentioned often as a writer who has achieved international fame yet is hardly ever celebrated as a "New Zealand author":

"I want to see more people recognise NZ authors - e.g. Nalini Singh is an NZ-based author, but she is rarely shelved in NZ sections. I want to see NZ authors more readily showcased in bookstores, on websites + in libraries."

*"I do think the NZ literary scene is quite picky in the authors it chooses to celebrate. I remember a couple of years ago discovering that Nalini Singh, who was a New York Times bestseller author, was a New Zealander. And you couldn't even *buy* her books in New Zealand. They've been released here since, but she'd had at least 10 books published overseas before then. Which is of course better than just being published in New Zealand, but you can hardly say we celebrate New Zealand authors when we ignore half of them. Maurice Gee's daughter is also a writer but you'd have to special order her books to read them here."*

4.2.2.3 Praise for Children's and Young Adult fiction

Many said they didn't enjoy New Zealand adult fiction but had really enjoyed New Zealand-written children's and young adult fiction when they were younger or enjoyed reading it to their children now. One reader felt that the survey had fallen down as there was "no mention of our wonderful children's literature."

"I like reading books that are well written and have good plots. My experience of NZ adult fiction is that it's not that great... I remember enjoying Maurice Gee's and Margaret Mahy's youth fiction when I was a teenager though."

"I tend to select books based on plot or genre; nationality of the author is of secondary concern as to whether I'll enjoy it or not. Although when reading YA I will often (re)read NZ authors."

"Mainly I tend to stick to authors I know and most tend to be from overseas. The exception being children's books- I always try to find NZ written books for my kid"

"I haven't enjoyed the style of any (adult) NZ writers yet... NZ-authored children's books are awesome."

"I think New Zealand has a wealth of children's authors and I fully support them and frequently buy their books for my children. I just think there are few well written books of the genres I enjoy that have been written by New Zealand authors."

"Read more Y/A from NZ than overseas."

"I know I read a lot of kid's books by New Zealand authors like Sherryl Jordan and Tessa Duder when I was younger but I don't think I have ever come across any adult NZ books that particularly appeal to me... The Alex books were fantastic and as good as anything similar from overseas."

"Although we do have World class authors they are not always to everyone's taste. Some of our authors of children's books are however world class."

4.2.3 Books should stand on their own merit – nationality is irrelevant

The idea that books should stand on their own merit regardless of author nationality, was the concept repeated most often across the text responses, mentioned a total of 357 times. It was mentioned most frequently in response to the open questions about overall preference (Q19-21) by those who stated they had no preference regarding New Zealand and overseas fiction. In this case it usually referred to personal choice with the reader stating that nationality was not something he or she actually considered when choosing books. Common short responses included,

"A book is a book"

"A good book is a good book regardless of where it was written"

"I'm just looking for a good read, don't really care where the author is from"

"Want a good book and it does not matter who wrote it"

"I read to be entertained. The country of the writer is not a reason to make a choice."

Many also said it "shouldn't" be a factor either:

"All authors should be judged on their merits"

"I think a book should stand by its merits - not if it came from a particular country. I select a book because it appeals to me. Not because it's an NZ book (or not). I suppose people might be interested to know they are reading an NZ book but don't believe that should necessarily be why they choose to read it."

50% of the 357 comments which emphasised merit over nationality stated that nationality was of "less", "secondary" or no importance compared to the other much more significant criteria by which they generally choose books. Criteria mentioned included quality of writing, genre, subject matter, plot, characters and character development, originality, blurbs, good reviews, recommendations

from friends, enjoyment of the author's previous novels or simply if it "looks good" or "interesting". It was frequently mentioned that just being "New Zealand" fiction was not reason enough to read something. Common refrains included:

"The story and quality of writing is more important than where the author is from"

"I either like a book or I don't. The nationality of the author is irrelevant to me"

"being set in, or by a New Zealander, is not enough of a draw card. It's got to be in a subject or genre I'm interested in."

"NZ fiction in general doesn't appeal to me for the sake of it"

"I don't feel any particular need to seek out or read NZ fiction or non-fiction. I'll read anything, if it's interesting, and don't really care what the country of origin is"

"It's more what I feel like reading at the time/what interests me rather than which nationality the author is"

Comments emphasising merit over nationality were often given in isolation and not accompanied by any particular view on New Zealand fiction. However, despite stating a belief that nationality was not of primary importance, many did acknowledge that they did have personal preferences for, or take particular enjoyment in, certain qualities that they felt tended to be more or less present in either New Zealand or non-New Zealand fiction. Likewise some acknowledged that they were less attracted to New Zealand or non-New Zealand fiction, for particular reasons such as those outlined above (see sections 4.2.1 and 4.2.2). Others stated that they made a particular effort to stay abreast of what was published locally even though this was not the main consideration when choosing books:

"I look for a story or subject that is of interest to me, not where the author is from. That said I do make an effort to read a range of NZ authors"

"I like to keep up with my reading of work by local authors but I'm mainly looking for a good story, so whether the author is local or not is not usually a primary driver"

"I tend to check the NZ stuff to see if there is anything that interests me but ultimately a good read is a good read regardless of the nationality of the author"

Other readers noted that they read a lot of New Zealand fiction yet they did not actively give preference to it or choose it based on its 'New Zealandness':

"I tend to read a lot of local books because I know or know of the authors and have heard about their books, but I don't set out to read those books over international titles."

"By this [choosing "No Preference"] I guess I mean that I just read- much of it happens to be by NZ authors, and I think if I hadn't read any NZ stuff for a while I would hunt it out, otherwise just from having 'no preference' I seem to encounter a good range of writing from across the world"

Exposure and visibility

Similarly, some readers felt that their preference for non-New Zealand fiction was mainly due to exposure, availability or the fact that, by not making an active choice to seek out New Zealand fiction their personal interests did not lead them to read any.

"Probably easier to obtain non-NZ authors, especially if books borrowed from friends and family."

"It just seems to be that I go for authors recommended by others and they are non NZers."

"I don't search for NZ authors or fiction and it is filed separately in an area I don't generally go to in the library"

"Haven't found any NZ authors that I have latched on to. But then haven't specifically tried either."

"Personally I have never read any New Zealand fiction that has really grabbed me, but I have nothing negative to say about it in general. All my favourite writers just happen to be American, and therefore I personally would seek out similar American authors, but if a great New Zealand book was recommended to me then I would have a look."

“I have a better knowledge of non- NZ authors' oeuvre so I gravitate towards overseas authors and those similar to them. However if I read an NZ author I enjoy I will seek out more titles by them”

“I wonder if it has something to do with my perception or exposure to New Zealand fiction... I take less risks reading new New Zealand fiction than I would with new International fiction. I read well-known NZ authors but I would only read new NZ fiction if recommended to me by a friend.”

“Most of the fiction I read does tend to be written by non New Zealand writers but I selected No Preference because I do not deliberately seek out this kind of writing nor do I try to snub NZ writers... I guess at the end of the day when reading for pleasure concerns about where the book was written takes a back seat to my enjoyment.”

A few said they would try to seek out or read more New Zealand fiction as a result of completing the questionnaire:

“This questionnaire has made me realise how one-eyed I am and I will have to rethink about expanding my horizons. I will now read some NZ authors (although I don't know the name of any except Janet Frame).”

“Made me think - I really should read more NZ fiction and will make more effort in future.”

“Yes, I certainly need to read more books written by NZ authors”

4.2.3.1 Separate sections as special treatment

The idea that all books should be treated the same regardless of nationality was also voiced by readers who were against having a separate section in bookshops or libraries for New Zealand fiction. These readers generally felt either that New Zealand fiction *was* “good enough to stand on its own merit” and therefore would not be harmed by being shelved with the rest of the fiction or that, if it wasn't good enough, it didn't deserve to be given special treatment simply because it was written by a New Zealand author. For example:

“New Zealand authors can hold their own in quality and range... However, there is no way that I think they should be given preference.”

“Our writing should be compelling enough to find an audience on its own merits, not as a special case”

“A NZ book needs to stand on its merits and be read for its own merits rather than just because it is a ‘New Zealand book’.”

“I’m not specifically going to seek out a book because it’s by an NZ writer, in the same way I won’t see a film just because it’s an NZ film.”

“I never get why we need to promote authors as “NZ”, perhaps it’s a national pride thing. Same for artists and their works of art. The way people value and enjoy the end work should be how it makes them feel, not how old, what gender, what race, or indeed what nationality the author/artist is. That’s pretty weird to me.”

“We’re so ridiculously proud of any NZ book that gets mentioned in the international media, that it’s kind of embarrassing, as well as raising the point of - why are we so proud? Why don’t we just expect that NZ fiction is as good as international fiction...”

4.2.4 A sense of responsibility or obligation to support and/or read New Zealand fiction

17% of the 979 text comments expressed a sense of obligation or responsibility towards reading or supporting New Zealand fiction and New Zealand authors.

The most significant finding regarding this theme was the fact that comments advocating the importance of reading New Zealand fiction came from nearly every type of reader, from those who really enjoyed and frequently read New Zealand fiction to those who didn’t, as well as those who were neutral or expressed no strong feelings either way. This trend was supported by the results pertaining to the questions about the importance of reading and supporting New Zealand fiction. In fact, a large proportion (43%) of those who stated they didn’t like New Zealand fiction in Question 6 still thought it was important for New Zealanders to be familiar with their national literature. Even amongst those who felt New Zealand fiction was of a lower standard than overseas fiction (according to Question 10), the majority still felt that it was important to read and support it (see Appendix J, K and L).

The range of comments made about the importance of supporting and/or reading New Zealand fiction reflect this trend. At one end of the scale were those who said they really liked New Zealand fiction as well as feeling it was important to support New Zealand authors.

"I like to support NZ authors and I enjoy reading anything written in NZ"

"I prefer to support NZ authors but also I can relate better to their writings."

"I think this [overall preference for New Zealand authors] is mainly because I like to try to support any creative endeavours of New Zealanders, but also because I enjoy seeing New Zealand people, places and lifestyles reflected in film, literature and art."

Others talked about supporting New Zealand writers as being an important reason in itself for actively reading or seeking out New Zealand fiction:

"I like to support NZ writers by reading their work"

"I like to read NZ fiction, to support NZ authors, but there are books I enjoy and books I didn't enjoy in both categories."

In many cases supporting New Zealand fiction was associated with patriotism or seen as an extension of buying "New Zealand made":

"I'm pro-NZ"

"I definitely feel supportive of local authors and somewhat patriotic if I read one of their books"

"I'm always pleased to discover a good book by a New Zealand author"

"I like to support local"

"To support fellow Kiwis"

"I like to support New Zealand industries"

At the other end of the scale were those who said that, although they thought it was important to support New Zealand fiction, they didn't personally enjoy reading it, seek it out very often or believe it was of the same standard as overseas fiction. For example:

“while one wants to be loyal to NZ authors it is most infuriating to have 'trite' story lines, poor editing, and then expect a discerning (??) to be blindly loyal.”

“I think it is important for NZ readers to support NZ authors - but in saying that, I resent spending my hard-earned on a book/ author that I don't enjoy. And so far, I have not found a New Zealand author whose books 'grab' me enough to keep returning to.”

“I think it is important to foster and encourage writers and help deliver their work into the hands of readers... However, for all that, I sometimes feel like I don't put enough effort into reading New Zealand authors”

“I do feel that it's important that NZ fiction is purchased and read to support our authors but I personally don't enjoy reading it.”

“While it is easy to have good intentions to support NZ authors, in practice I don't actively seek NZ literature.”

“Reading for me is about escapism so NZ fiction doesn't often fulfil that need. I do feel a read urge though to support NZ authors and I do try to.”

“I do believe that we should be educating people about authors in NZ, but at the same time I understand why they don't perhaps get as much attention as international writers... I don't think that the quality is quite at the standard of some non-NZ writers, writers that possibly have been brought up with a stronger sense of language, vocabulary, good literature, classics. I think there are a couple of NZ writers that are getting there, but we still have a long way to go. I think it is a national shame that we don't celebrate the wonder of reading more (and the arts in general), we don't celebrate literature, we don't have intense and in-depth discussions about writing that we might see in such culture capitals as London or New York.”

One reader described how their approaches to New Zealand fiction and international fiction differed in an effort to actively support it New Zealand fiction:

“Given the size of our talent pool I accept that there is not a huge amount of NZ writing that interests me. However, I do actively support NZ writers, preferring to buy NZ books and not borrow them from the library as I do with other books. I will also persist with an NZ book that I may not have with a book of similar quality from an overseas author so

that I can participate in the discussion/conversation nationally about the book, with a view to supporting NZ authors/authorship generally. I am very likely to more actively promote an NZ book that I have enjoyed more than I would a book from an overseas author."

The general tone of many respondents' comments suggested that they had immediately jumped to the conclusion that the research was being conducted from an overtly "pro" New Zealand fiction angle. This was reflected throughout the comments in the way that many seemed to assume that it was simply 'a given' that New Zealand fiction should be supported:

"We all agree that NZ writing is important, but a distressing number of people don't read a lot of it. Maurice Gee, Fiona Kidman, CK Stead (etc) are world class but we should all buy and read more of their books."

Several people actually said they felt bad for not liking or reading New Zealand fiction more or for not knowing much about it. One reader even apologised for making negative comments:

"Sorry if my comments seem too negative!"

"I have read embarrassingly few books by NZ authors!!"

"I feel bad about this, but I haven't actually read much NZ fiction that I've enjoyed. There are a couple of exceptions, but it is often predictable and 'worthy'."

"I feel quite bad making those comments about NZ fiction - I do enjoy some of what I read - it's just not what I usually choose, and if I do choose it - it's not because of the author being from NZ - it's because the book looks good on its own merits."

"The previous questions really made me think... I feel like I should go out and hunt for a great New Zealand fiction now...but if we're that great, why would it be a hunt?"

In a similar vein to those who felt books should be judged mainly on merit, many, even those who *did* feel it was important to support New Zealand fiction, felt uncomfortable with the concept of blanket loyalty and emphasised that merit should be the primary reason for pride and support:

"I think New Zealand literature is important but I think the subject matter and how well it is written is more important than any literary nationalism."

"Whilst I think it is important to promote New Zealand literature, I would prefer to just read a good book, regardless of country of origin. I feel that when a book is promoted as "New Zealand" literature, it suggests this is only thing to recommend the book? Not 'it's a good book, and it happens to be by a New Zealander'."

"I want to read NZ fiction and enjoy it, but NZ fiction that isn't particularly good shouldn't be promoted just because it's NZ. It's important to balance quality and local representation because NZ does have quality."

"It's important to... be proud of NZ books because they're good, rather than because they're ours."

"...should I support/buy/read New Zealand fiction simply because they are New Zealand authors, or should I read them because they are good books? Surely a good book should be read by all not just the people of the same country."

"I have enjoyed NZ fiction and nonfiction in the past, but I don't feel there needs to be so much hype around NZ books. It kind of sets up expectation and then the books often fail to deliver. Why do we want to do that to our own authors? If there are two new books by authors I don't know, sitting in a bookshop, and one has a NZ author sticker on it, I want to choose the one with the plot or content that interests me, not because of some obligation to support a NZ author over an international one."

Reading and supporting New Zealand fiction was seen as important for a number of reasons. It was viewed as a way of "encouraging", "fostering", "appreciating" and "celebrating" New Zealand writers, or "giving them a leg up so to speak."

"There are some great NZ authors and titles and it must be hard for them to compete on the world market so we need to support them in NZ."

"I think it is very important to nurture New Zealand writing, especially New Zealand fiction... Faced with blockbusters like Dan Brown, Lee Child, Jodi Picoult etc., it's difficult to get the same amount of publicity for a local writer who probably writes better than these examples but will receive a tiny proportion of attention by media and, subsequently, readers."

Support was viewed as important by many in order to increase the quality of New Zealand writing, to help it “grow” and “develop”. One person remarked that:

“As much as I am not particularly committed to NZ literature, I think it will only ever be able to get better if it is nurtured and encouraged, so I support any initiative designed to do that.”

New Zealand fiction was also seen as an important part of New Zealand’s heritage as well as an important tool for cultural expression, communication and education. It was repeatedly referred to using terms such as “our stories” and “our voice” or as “uniquely ours”:

“Having strong New Zealand authors is important to the future of our nation.”

“Everyone should read some books from their own country, as it may broaden their own horizons”.

“I think reading NZ books is an important part of knowing who we are and where we have come from as well as knowing what a multicultural society we have become.”

“every nation has a cultural identity, and should hold on to it, and support both its contemporary and historic fiction and nonfiction traditions.”

“I think it is important for New Zealanders to read work set in New Zealand for both educational reasons but also to support New Zealand writers so that we develop a wealth of literary resources in New Zealand.”

“I think New Zealand has world-class writers who help us to understand our culture - including Maori and Pacific, New Zealand Asian and other cultures in New Zealand. I would like to see more New Zealand historical works published including fictional works. As a teacher I can make connections to New Zealand literature and help students make connections to their own lives and explore the lives of others.”

“I do believe NZ Fiction should be compulsory at Year 11 in NZ Schools., as part of the Level 1 Literacy qualification.”

“I think our children, from pre-schoolers through University, should be well-immersed in NZ as well as international literature. Language in its various forms, and the way in which we, as NZ-ers, use it, distinguish us, and if we have a knowledge, love of and pride

in NZ literature, we can have a worthy sense of belonging to our own place in the world, despite the small size of our country and population.”

4.2.4.1 The importance of differentiation

New Zealand readers were strongly supportive of separating and/or identifying New Zealand fiction in libraries and bookshops. The majority (59%) of those surveyed felt it was important to have separate sections for New Zealand fiction in libraries, bookstores or online, 28% felt it was not important and 13% were neutral. 17% of those who commented that separate sections were not felt some form of ‘New Zealand’ identification should still be used.

48% of the 229 who commented in favour of separate sections felt it was an important way of supporting and promoting New Zealand fiction and encouraging New Zealand writers. 46% argued that it served to “attract attention” to New Zealand fiction and made it “easier to find”. Readers felt that without a separate section New Zealand fiction would get “lost” or “swamped” by all the other fiction or that people might not be able to tell which books were by New Zealander authors. Some said that they wanted to support New Zealand authors or that they “feel supportive” of them but would be unlikely to seek them out unless they were well promoted and highly visible. Like the comments regarding the importance of supporting New Zealand fiction in general, these particular views were voiced from both a personal perspective and from the perspective of those who were not avid readers of New Zealand fiction but who nonetheless felt it was important.

“I like to browse a New Zealand section in shops and libraries as a way of getting to know New Zealand writers. I remember feeling very disappointed when our local library did away with their New Zealand section.”

“if there were no separate section I would likely not notice many NZ works because they'd get buried or swamped by all the international authors.”

“I want to support New Zealand authors, and I know many of my friends and family do also. However, if there is not a separate section, I tend to lose enthusiasm for seeking them out... I would probably not read new New Zealand authors, if it wasn't for seeing them in the New Zealand fiction section.”

“I can see how others may like the opportunity to browse what is available”

“although I don’t personally read NZ fiction I know that a lot of people do and shelving together makes it accessible”

“I think it is important to differentiate New Zealand authors from other authors, in order to promote and highlight the work that is being produced. Although I don't personally focus specifically on NZ writers/works, I think it [a New Zealand section] ... may help to support the literary industry within New Zealand.”

“NZ fiction is important even I don’t seek to read it for pleasure and think country should proudly display its authors [sic].”

Like those who felt that reading and supporting New Zealand fiction was linked to national pride and identity, many also saw a separate section as a way of reinforcing this. It was frequently commented that separation was particularly important in order to showcase local writing to tourists.

“There is so much overseas fiction I think it is important to highlight what we have from NZ. Also tourists like to see something from the country they are visiting.”

“I think it's extremely important to have a New Zealand Fiction section in bookstores for tourists who might be browsing and interested to see what New Zealand fiction has to offer.”

“Highlight NZ products, not only for kiwi's to appreciate, but also for tourists.”

“Kiwis are very big on pride and separating NZ from overseas shows that pride. It is also easier for overseas tourists to differentiate our local talent. Even locals need that visual as well.”

Whether or not people felt that New Zealand fiction should be shelved separately or interfiled, the idea of identification was seen as vital by many. Even amongst those who felt strongly that separating New Zealand fiction was detrimental to how it was perceived by readers, as well as those who felt that ‘New Zealandness’ isn’t (or “shouldn’t” be) a consideration when choosing books, many felt that it was still very important for New Zealand books to be identified or highlighted in some way. 15% of those who commented on the issue of separate sections offered an alternative to separate shelving that would still ensure New Zealand books were drawn attention to in some way. Stickers or labels were suggested 39 times as a way of doing this in libraries (with many noting that this was the case at their local library), while double shelving (a copy of New Zealand fiction books in

both a New Zealand section and in the main sections) was suggested on 15 occasions as a tactic for bookshops.

“So long as the book is marked NZ fiction, then a separate section is not required”

“Don't need to be in separate sections but books need to be identified with a NZ label”

“As long as the item is identified in some way as NZ fiction e.g. with a genre labels (so people looking specifically for NZ fiction can see it) you don't need a separate section.”

“Something needed to identify and promote NZ authors, settings, etc. Books will probably get borrowed more if interfiled. As long as they have some identifying sticker or similar and are easily found, probably better to interfile. But harder to find if specifically looking for NZ author, title etc if interfiled. Pluses and minuses for both ways.”

“New Zealand fiction should be identified, but not necessarily shelved in a separate area. Prime consideration should be on quality of writing, etc., not on country of origin”

“Books should stand on their own merits... I decided that all the NZ books in our library are marked with an NZ sticker on the spine.”

“Let the reader decide whether the book is worth reading or not. Where the author comes from shouldn't make a difference but it is good to promote NZ authors by identifying an NZ author.”

“I think there are pro's and con's to separating NZ fiction out. Ideally, I'd like NZ fiction to be both mixed in with general fiction AND also displayed separately.”

“Having NZ stuff set aside is important partly for national identity and pride and fostering our own, and partly to help tourists! But having NZ stuff interspersed with general fiction in a bookshop or library helps people find things by browsing that they might not otherwise seek out. So I think it'd be ideal to have the stock in both places.”

A few others suggested promoting New Zealand fiction using periodic promotional displays, shelving New Zealand books at the ends of the mainstream shelving (presumably corresponding to genre), or through booklists of New Zealand fiction produced by staff.

4.3 Summary of main findings

4.3.1 General trends

- Readers professed to enjoy and want to support New Zealand fiction to a greater extent than they reported actually reading it. Despite 68% of readers claiming to have read a New Zealand fiction book within the past year, 61% professing to like or really like reading New Zealand fiction, and 75% agreeing that “it is important that New Zealanders are familiar with their national literature”, only 23% of readers reported that they often read New Zealand fiction.
- The majority of readers felt it was important to read New Zealand fiction, support New Zealand authors and become familiar with New Zealand literature, including those who felt nationality was irrelevant to their own choice of fiction. 57% of the 232 readers who stated they had no preference regarding New Zealand or international fiction and commented that nationality was irrelevant or that they personally chose books for other reasons, felt that it was important to have separate New Zealand fiction sections. The majority of these readers also thought it was important to read New Zealand fiction (68%), support New Zealand authors (64%).
- The majority of readers also felt that fiction by New Zealand authors should be identified as ‘New Zealand’ in some way in libraries, bookstores and online bookseller websites. 59% thought it was important to have a separate New Zealand section and 17% of those who felt it was not important to have a separate section commented that New Zealand fiction should still be identified as ‘New Zealand’ even when it was interfiled, such as by using ‘NZ’ stickers, or that it should be double shelved in both the main section and a New Zealand section.
- For the most part the importance of reading and supporting New Zealand fiction was attributed to a sense of responsibility, duty, or the idea that it would do the reader ‘good’ in some way, rather than simply for the sake of entertainment or enjoyment. Many saw reading New Zealand fiction as something they actively tried to do, some to the extent that they would persevere with a New Zealand book where they might have given up on an international book.
- Only 26% of those surveyed said they often deliberately sought out New Zealand fiction. 35% said they sometimes did, while the remaining 39% said rarely or never. A small majority said they often browsed the New Zealand fiction section (36%) while 32% reported they sometimes did, and 31% said rarely or never.

- Although the majority of readers (between 53-72%) rated both New Zealand fiction and non-fiction as “about the same” as their overseas counterparts, there was a marked difference in the degrees to which people felt New Zealand fiction and New Zealand non-fiction were “not as good” or “better” than what was produced overseas. Overall, New Zealand fiction fared worse than non-fiction in the comparison.
- Overall, reader interest levels dropped concerning all fiction types that contained a New Zealand referent and rose for those that did not.
- ‘New Zealand fiction’ was in the top two of fiction genres that readers were least concerned about or held no opinion on. 30% of readers felt neutral towards New Zealand fiction. The others in this category included ‘War’ (30%) and ‘Poetry and/or Plays’ and ‘Young adult fiction’ (both 35%).
- Praise for New Zealand fiction centred on the familiarity of its settings and subjects and ‘uniqueness’ in portraying the New Zealand experience rather than quality of writing or entertainment value.
- Criticism of New Zealand fiction was generally based on a perceived lack regarding quality of writing and production, as well as a lack of variety in terms of subject matter and style. An over emphasis on nationalistic concerns and a tendency to be ‘highbrow’ or ‘too literary’ with little that appealed to the leisure reader were also frequently mentioned as being off putting.
- Many who had reservations about New Zealand adult fiction were much more enthusiastic in their praise of New Zealand children’s and young adult fiction. Several said they had enjoyed a lot of New Zealand fiction as children but had not found any New Zealand adult fiction that interested them.

4.3.2 Findings relating to demographic variables

- Overall, the readers who showed the greatest interest in New Zealand fiction were:
 - Aged 50+
 - NZ European/Pakeha/New Zealander or Maori
 - Born in New Zealand
 - Living outside the regional area of Auckland

- Readers who showed the least interest in New Zealand fiction were:
 - Aged 29 or under
 - Other European, Indian or Asian
 - Born overseas
 - Living in Auckland

- There was very little difference between the attitudes and practices reported by men and women, although women did seek out and browse New Zealand sections at least 10% more frequently than men.

- In contrast to the findings of *The Cultural Experiences Survey*, no significant variation in attitudes was found regarding level of education (Statistics New Zealand, 2003). University educated readers actually reported liking, seeking out and reading New Zealand fiction the least of all the levels of education, while those whose highest level of education was a teaching degree or diploma both read and sought out New Zealand the most frequently. Those who held a high school qualification or below actually reported that they liked New Zealand fiction the most. These variations were minor and not supported by the chi-square test.

4.3.3 Findings relating to experience of New Zealand fiction at school

- Those who had mainly negative experiences of New Zealand fiction at school also liked and read New Zealand fiction less overall. Of those who did not like most or any of the New Zealand fiction they studied at school, 72% preferred “Non-New Zealand authors” compared to only 20% of readers who liked most or all of what they studied. However, regardless of whether their experience was negative or positive, readers who had attended school in New Zealand read, liked and wanted to support New Zealand fiction to a greater extent than those who had not attended school in New Zealand.

4.3.4 Findings relating to reader characteristics and preferences

- Those who reported that they read only fiction and no non-fiction liked, read and sought out New Zealand fiction to a lesser extent than those who read a mixture of fiction and non-fiction. Those who read only non-fiction actually reported liking New Zealand fiction more than the only-fiction readers.

- Those who disliked or really disliked reading genres of fiction that are traditionally thought of as 'highbrow' or elite such as 'Literary fiction', 'Poetry and Plays', 'Short Stories' also reported liking and reading New Zealand fiction less frequently, and felt it was less important to support, than those who liked or really liked to read these genres.
- Those who reported they considered aspects such as literary merit, reviews in newspapers and magazines or whether a book was awarded or shortlisted for a literary prize when choosing fiction books also reported that they both liked and read New Zealand fiction more than those who felt such aspects were unimportant. These readers also thought it was more important to read and support New Zealand fiction.
- A similar trend was observed in readers who agreed that one of the main reasons they read was 'to become widely read', as well as readers who felt that having their ideas challenged or being made to think enhanced their enjoyment of a fiction book.
- In contrast, those who felt 'a gripping, fast moving plot' and being 'easy to read' were important aspects to their enjoyment of a fiction book reported both liking and reading New Zealand fiction to a lesser extent than those who did not feel these aspects were important.

5. Discussion

The results confirm that the majority of readers do view New Zealand fiction as differing in some way from overseas fiction, though the ways in which it is perceived as different vary. Primarily, New Zealand fiction was viewed by the majority of readers as a distinct category of fiction which should be identified as 'New Zealand' in libraries and bookshops, whether interfiled or separately shelved, and which New Zealand readers should make a conscious effort to read and become familiar with. The text responses show that the strongest impetus for this differentiation, as well as for making an effort to read New Zealand fiction, was the wish to support New Zealand writers. However, despite 68% of all readers claiming to have read a New Zealand fiction book within the past year, 61% professing like reading New Zealand fiction and 75% agreeing that "it is important that New Zealanders are familiar with their national literature", only 23% of readers reported that they often read New Zealand fiction.

The relatively low percentage of readers stating they regularly read New Zealand fiction is consistent with both Nielsen BookScan industry figures concerning sales of New Zealand fiction and the results of *The Cultural Experiences Survey* which found that around 20% of book buyers were very interested in New Zealand books (Meechan, 2011; Statistics New Zealand, 2003). What, therefore, can be said to account for the inconsistency between the low levels of practice reported by those surveyed and their professed high levels of interest and intention?

Based on the findings of this study, I suggest this discrepancy is due a tension existing between specific approaches to reading New Zealand fiction and overall approaches to reading for pleasure, as indicated by the quantitative results and further illuminated by the text responses. This tension involves a conflict between national sympathies, including a general desire to support and nurture the arts in New Zealand, and the reality that reading for pleasure is essentially an activity undertaken for enjoyment and entertainment, whatever additional motivations may be attached.

The results suggest that a key factor contributing to this tension may be the fact that New Zealand fiction, as it is perceived by readers, is not always easily incorporated into usual reading practices and, for many, reading it often represents a departure from general reading habits. Readers frequently stated they read and appreciated New Zealand fiction for its 'New Zealandness', including its relevancy to the New Zealand context and depiction of New Zealand society, as well as out of a desire to "make an effort" to support local authors. Conversely the same quality – 'New Zealandness' – was also frequently mentioned as a reason for lack of interest, often because it was felt to hold little potential for escapism. The recurrence of this attitude in the comments was

supported by the drop in interest levels measured for fiction set in New Zealand as well as works specifically labelled as 'New Zealand'. In addition, those who reported that they read only fiction liked, read and sought out New Zealand fiction to a lesser extent than those who read a mixture of fiction and non-fiction. Those who read mainly non-fiction were actually more interested in New Zealand fiction than the only-fiction readers, further corroborating the viewpoint identified in the comments that New Zealand fiction is frequently viewed as informative or educational rather than entertainment.

In addition, the results confirm that New Zealand fiction is still viewed by many as predominately literary, "highbrow" and "worthy", with little on offer for the leisure reader. These perceptions echo the criticism of Sturm (1998) and Wevers (2004) who note the almost exclusive focus of New Zealand publishing on literary fiction in the past. Genre lovers largely discounted New Zealand genre endeavours believing there were too few examples available to make them worthwhile pursuing or that what was available was not good quality. Those who enjoyed reading 'light' fiction also lamented the lack of New Zealand-written examples. Testing for apparent relationships between general reading preferences and interest in New Zealand fiction revealed that those who disliked traditionally 'highbrow' genres such as literary fiction, poetry and short stories were also much less inclined towards New Zealand fiction and reported reading it to a lesser extent than those who stated they enjoyed such genres. Similarly, those who felt 'a gripping plot' or being 'easy to read' were important factors to their enjoyment of fiction also liked and read New Zealand fiction to a lesser extent than those who felt such factors were unimportant. Criticism of New Zealand fiction's overly literary propensity was also repeatedly combined with the view that it was generally "dark", "depressing", "dreary", "intense", and "serious" in its subject and themes.

Cultural cringe was also perceived as being a factor in other readers' dismissal of New Zealand fiction though this was not corroborated by the answers to the question asking readers to rate the quality of New Zealand fiction in comparison to overseas. Most rated New Zealand fiction as no better or worse than overseas fiction in terms of overall quality. However, New Zealand fiction did not measure up to international fiction to the same degree as readers felt New Zealand non-fiction matched international non-fiction. A number of critical comments focussing on lower standards of writing, editing and packaging also support this finding and suggest that, although many view New Zealand fiction as "on par with the rest of the world", a proportion of readers do perceive quality fiction as a rarity rather than a norm in New Zealand.

As well as delineating the “shape” of NZ fiction as it is perceived, the results indicate there is a single common view shared by the majority of readers irrespective of actual preferences. Regardless of the degree to which readers reported they enjoyed New Zealand fiction or how ‘good’ they perceived it to be, most readers believed it was still important that it was read and “supported”. For example, of those who felt the quality of writing in New Zealand fiction was not as good as overseas, 50% still felt it was important to support New Zealand writers by reading their work and 55% thought it was important to be familiar with New Zealand literature. Of those who reported rarely or never reading New Zealand fiction, 47% felt it was important to support New Zealand writers and 57% thought it was important to be familiar with New Zealand literature.

Across the text responses the importance of reading and supporting New Zealand fiction was typically attributed to a sense of responsibility, duty, or the idea that it would do the reader or society ‘good’ in some way rather than simply for the sake of entertainment or enjoyment. Reading New Zealand fiction was posited as both a social good, in that it served to support New Zealand authors, aid the development of the literary scene and foster a cultural identity; and as a personal good connected with self-improvement, a way of becoming “literate in our culture” and conversant in “our stories”. Overall, the wish to read and support New Zealand fiction, however earnest, was largely framed as an ‘effort’. Many spoke of reading New Zealand fiction as a conscious choice and something they actively tried to do, some to the extent that they would persevere with a New Zealand book where they might have given up on an international book.

These approaches to reading are very different from the general motivations measured near the beginning of the survey where readers reported their main reasons for reading for pleasure were ‘for my own enjoyment’ (86% strongly agreed; 14% agreed) and ‘for relaxation’ (63% strongly agreed; 33% agreed). They are also somewhat at odds with the 357 comments asserting that “a good read” was more important than author nationality and that factors such as genre, story and quality of writing were of much greater significance when choosing a fiction book. That is not to say that reading a New Zealand fiction book cannot be both pleasurable and relaxing, or that the storyline of a New Zealand novel will not be appealing for its own sake; rather that, whatever the outcome, if the main driver to read a particular type of book does not align with basic principles governing how and why the majority of fiction is generally chosen, it is perhaps hardly surprising that only 23% of readers actually read New Zealand fiction ‘often’ in spite of their good intentions. As one reader put it, “I guess at the end of the day when reading is for pleasure, concerns about where the book was written takes a back seat to my enjoyment.”

Numerous comments drew attention to the underlying tension between reading New Zealand fiction because it was a 'good' thing to do and reading for enjoyment. Readers stated they wanted to support New Zealand fiction, or believed it was important to support it, but that they did not really enjoy reading it or felt bad for not reading more of it. Others were frustrated by the emphasis they felt was generally placed on supporting New Zealand fiction because it was 'New Zealand' rather than because it was good. Some said they wanted to support New Zealand authors but would probably forget to seek out New Zealand-written works unless they were highly visible. People who made negative or even only slightly critical comments often went on to justify or explain their views in much greater depth than most of those who were positive or expressed no particular opinion. In many cases it seemed to have been assumed or taken for granted that the survey was being conducted from a view point that was "pro" New Zealand fiction rather than from a neutral standpoint. All such comments suggested that reading and being supportive of New Zealand fiction was the culturally acceptable attitude, one that many people felt they should aspire to.

The historical and cultural context in which New Zealand literature has developed, as discussed in the literature, can be seen to play a part in the creation of this dichotomy (Sturm, 1998; Mercer, 2010; Wevers, 2004; Perry, 2004). The role of literature in the process of "nation-building" is considered by Anderson (2006) in *Imagined communities*, his seminal treatise on the origins of nationalism. Regarding the New Zealand perspective, Sturm (1998) and Wevers (2004) argue that the traditional focus of New Zealand publishing on 'literary' fiction, as well as works concerned with cultural expression, was a symptom of colonial insecurity and bound up with aspirations to foster a distinctive national identity and develop a national canon, aims which were both underpinned and reinforced by government funding structures. The results of this study show that, regardless of the extent to which such a focus has abated in the current market, this legacy lingers on in the perception of readers. Consecrated as a symbolic good, with little in the way of popular fiction to even the balance, New Zealand fiction appears largely inaccessible to the average reader.

Bourdieu's theory of habitus provides a framework for understanding how this condition has been internalised, and in turn enacted, by the individual. Essential to Bourdieu's concept is the idea that habitus is dependent upon the position occupied in the 'field' or social world. People occupying different positions, subjected to different experiences and cultural and social circumstances will therefore have a different habitus, while those occupying similar positions will have a similar habitus.

Habitus can account for the differences in attitudes towards New Zealand fiction between readers who were born in New Zealand, and identify as New Zealanders or Maori, and those born overseas. Overall, New Zealand-born readers were found to like, read and show a desire to support New Zealand fiction to a greater degree than those born overseas and it can be postulated that this is as a result of the cultural context in which habitus was formed. For example, those who were schooled in New Zealand, regardless of whether they had a positive or negative experience of New Zealand fiction at school, were more inclined than those who did not attend school in New Zealand to like, read and believe it is important to read New Zealand fiction. As Mills (1959) suggests, this apparent relationship demonstrates the importance of understanding the intersection of biography and history.

Bourdieu views the production and acquisition of habitus as a process whereby culture and practice are inherited by generations both collectively and individually:

“The habitus, a product of history, produces individual and collective practices – more history – in accordance with the schemes generated by history. It ensures the active presence of past experiences, which, deposited in each organism in the form of schemes of perception, thought and action, tend to guarantee the ‘correctness’ of practices and their constancy over time, more reliably than all formal rules and explicit norms.” (Bourdieu, 1990, p.54)

In light of this view, individual attitudes to New Zealand fiction can be seen as products of history, inherited, internalised, enacted and reinforced through habitus’ interaction with the field. Enduring cultural cringe can be viewed similarly.

In the same vein, habitus also helps account for differences in tastes and approaches regarding types of fiction which have been internalised as a result of social structures, circumstances and experiences, both in a wide sense regarding the influence of the family environment, class and education and in a more focussed sense such as Ross (2000a) describes, in terms of the accumulation of a lifetime of reading encounters, all of which contribute to ingrained approaches and practices of reading.

The acquisition of habitus entails that readers who have been socialised in environments where the reading of certain types of books results in the acquisition of cultural capital are likely to relate to and interact with fiction in a different way to those with different experiences or exposure. For

example, readers whose habitus has predisposed them to value the cultural capital associated with the consumption of symbolic goods (i.e. readers who read for reasons additional to pleasure such as “to become widely read” and who consider factors such as literary merit or prize winning status when choosing fiction books) were also found to like and read New Zealand fiction more. In contrast, those readers who stated they read primarily for pleasure, without these additional considerations, both liked and read New Zealand fiction the least. The positioning of NZ fiction as ‘elite’, as well as the symbolic status conferred upon it of a ‘national good’, appear to have rendered it most appealing to people who have developed a propensity to read partly with the aim of acquiring cultural capital.

Ross (1999) and Usherwood and Toyne (2002) observe how enthusiastic readers view reading as an important part of their personal identity. The strong levels of support for New Zealand writers and the emphasis placed on the importance of reading New Zealand fiction appear to suggest that, for the enthusiastic readers who make up the majority of the sample, the desire to read, enjoy and be proud of what is produced by writers in their own country is an extension of this. Many of the comments do suggest that encouraging and nurturing the literary scene is connected to the wider goal of supporting “any creative endeavours of New Zealanders”. Given that New Zealand society is one that tends to identify on a national level with sporting achievements rather than achievements in the arts, this is perhaps viewed as even more critical many.³ As one reader put it,

“I think it is a national shame that we don't celebrate the wonder of reading more (and the arts in general), we don't celebrate literature, we don't have intense and in-depth discussions about writing that we might see in such culture capitals as London or New York.”

Yet, despite expressed levels of enthusiasm, the results suggest that many struggle to align New Zealand fiction with their wider reading tastes and that the impetus to read and support something because it is a ‘good’ thing to do, regardless of how sincerely this belief is held, is difficult to sustain. The findings indicate this is due to a number of factors, the most pervasive being that nationality is not a main driver for choosing fiction and therefore requires a conscious choice and adjustment in practices in order for it to be considered.

³ A recent survey examining how New Zealanders view their national identity found that the national achievements New Zealanders tended to be most proud of were related to sports, politics and famous New Zealanders such as Sir Edmund Hilary (ResearchNZ, 2011). The music industry was mentioned by 1% of those surveyed but there was no mention of any literary or other arts related achievements.

6. Concluding remarks

6.1 Conclusions

The aims of this study were to establish how New Zealand fiction is viewed by readers in New Zealand, particularly in comparison to fiction from overseas, as well as how New Zealand fiction fits into general reading preferences and practices.

The results suggest that attitudes to New Zealand fiction are not always as straightforward as 'negative' or 'positive': more is at stake than simply personal interest or enjoyment and, in light of issues raised in the existing literature, the main findings of the study were a combination of both expected confirmations and unanticipated outcomes.

Less favourable opinions and impressions about New Zealand fiction echoed the criticism in both the academic and media-based literature on the topic. In comparison to international offerings New Zealand fiction is viewed as too dark, too 'New Zealand' focused, too 'literary' or over written and generally lacking in variety regarding subjects, genres and styles. The low percentage of readers who actually read New Zealand fiction 'often' was also in line with previous findings. The most unanticipated result however, was the tremendous amount of support expressed for New Zealand writers and the degree of importance readers placed on both reading New Zealand fiction and celebrating it. Furthermore, these sentiments were felt by a much wider range of readers than actually reported an interest in, or enjoyment of, New Zealand fiction. Regardless of personal tastes, preferences or opinions about quality, the majority of readers felt supporting and reading New Zealand fiction was important.

The incompatibility of these two findings was illuminated by the many comments which acknowledged tensions felt between the desire and willingness to support New Zealand fiction and a sense of disappointment or disillusionment with the experience of actually reading it. It was also highlighted by comments which stated that, despite a desire to support New Zealand fiction, readers generally selected books according to more universal factors such as genre, subject and style which were felt to be more important when evaluating and choosing fiction to read.

6.2 Implications and suggestions for further research

The implications of these findings are two-fold and of importance to various stakeholders in New Zealand's book industry, including publishers, libraries, booksellers and writers. On the one hand they suggest that readers in New Zealand are perhaps more open to New Zealand fiction than generally believed and that there are significant gaps in the market in terms of what is currently produced. On the other hand they suggest that the force of feeling is so strong precisely *because* what is produced does not cater for a particularly wide range of reading interests. As a result, it has been characterised in readers' minds as 'in need' of support – a reason for reading that, however earnestly undertaken, is largely disconnected from the more reflexive motives of pleasure, personal interest or entertainment. There are implications also for the way New Zealand fiction is presented and promoted in libraries and bookshops and opportunities to expand the definition of what constitutes a 'New Zealand writer'.

Suggestions for further research include:

- A similar study using a broader sample and including a wider range of reader types and demographics, particularly regarding ethnicity, region, education and income.
- An exploration of the preferences and practices of genre readers in New Zealand. For instance, is there really a market for New Zealand-written popular fiction and what form would this take? How important is the escapism of non-New Zealand settings to different genre types?
- How and why is New Zealand children's fiction viewed differently from New Zealand adult fiction?
- How and why is New Zealand non-fiction viewed differently from New Zealand fiction?

Appendix A. Participant information sheet



Participant Information Sheet

INFO 580 Study: Reading in New Zealand

Researcher: Pia White, School of Information Management, Victoria University of Wellington

IMPORTANT NOTE: Try using Internet Explorer if you have problems accessing the survey via another browser.

I am a Master of Information Studies (MIS) student at Victoria University of Wellington. As part of this degree, I am undertaking an INFO 580 Research Project to complete my studies. The project explores reading preferences and attitudes of adults in New Zealand. I am inviting any adult (aged 16+) to participate in this survey.

This research project has been approved by the School of Information Management's Human Ethics Committee. The questionnaire should take between 10-15 minutes to complete. To thank you for participating, I am offering you the chance to enter a prize draw to win a \$50.00 Booksellers Book Token, accepted in over 350 bookshops nationwide. You can choose to enter this draw on the last page of the questionnaire.

By submitting the questionnaire, you are agreeing to participate in this research. The questionnaire has been designed to be anonymous and only grouped responses will be presented in the report. All email addresses or contact details you provide will be removed from completed surveys before the responses are analysed, therefore it will not be possible for you to be identified personally. All materials collected will be kept confidential. No other person but myself and my supervisor, Dr Brenda Chawner, will see the questionnaires. This research project will be submitted to the School of Information Management in June 2012 and a copy will be placed in the University Library's institutional repository. The findings of this research may also be published in scholarly journals or presented at a conference. All questionnaires and related data will be destroyed and/or deleted from computer storage 2 years after completion of the research.

A short summary of the findings will be written and participants can register their interest in receiving a copy of this at the end of the survey.

If you have any questions or would like more information about the project, please contact me at whitepia@myvuw.ac.nz. You can also contact my supervisor, Dr Brenda Chawner, at the School of Information Management at Victoria University of Wellington, PO Box 600, Wellington; phone: 0800 116 299 extn. 5780; email: brenda.chawner@vuw.ac.nz.

The survey will close at 5pm Friday 18 May, 2012.

Thank you for participating in this study.

Pia White

Master of Information Studies (LIBS) Candidate

School of Information Management, Victoria University of Wellington

Email: whitepia@myvuw.ac.nz

Appendix B. Survey questionnaire

Reading in New Zealand: Survey Questionnaire

Block 1

Thank you for taking the time to answer this survey.

When answering this questionnaire, please think ONLY about the BOOKS you read FOR PLEASURE (because you want to) in your own leisure time.

- DO NOT count the books you read for your job or for study.
- DO NOT count reading magazines or newspaper.

You can use the arrow buttons at the bottom of each screen to move back and forth through the survey.

The progress bar at the bottom of the screen will chart your progress.

Q1

How do you feel about reading books for pleasure?

- I don't read books
- I don't like it at all
- I don't like it much
- I quite like it
- I really like it

Q2

Roughly, how many books do you USUALLY read for pleasure EACH YEAR?

- None
- 1 - 2 books per year (Approx. 1 book every 6 months to 1 year)
- 3 - 6 books per year (Approx. 1 book every 2 to 4 months)
- 6 - 12 books per year (Approx. 1 book every 1 to 2 months)
- 12 - 24 books per year (Approx. 1 to 2 books per month)
- 24 - 48 books per year (Approx. 2 to 4 books per month)
- 48+ books per year (More than 4 books per month)

Skip Logic: If None Is Selected, Then Skip To End of Block

Q3

Please select the option below that best describes the types of books you USUALLY read.

- Only fiction, never non-fiction
- Mainly fiction, some non-fiction
- Even mix of fiction and non-fiction
- Mainly non-fiction, some fiction
- Only non-fiction, never fiction

Skip Logic: If Only non-fiction, never fiction Is Selected, Then Skip To End of Block

Q4

For each of the following please select the option that best describes your position.

The MAIN REASONS I read for pleasure are...

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral / Don't Know	Agree	Strongly Agree
For my own enjoyment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
For relaxation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
As a way to escape	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To improve my general knowledge	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To fill time	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To improve my understanding of other people, places and times	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To become widely read	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q5

For each of the following please select the option that best describes your position.

HOW OFTEN do you obtain fiction from the following sources?

	Usually	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Public library	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tertiary / University library	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Online (new or secondhand)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bookshops (new or secondhand)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Supermarket	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Borrow from people you know	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Receive as a gift	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q6

For each of the following please select the option that best describes your position.

WHAT TYPES of fiction do you like to read?

	Really Dislike	Dislike	Neutral / Don't Know	Like	Really Like
Adventure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Romance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Classics or Modern Classics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Contemporary Fiction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
'Chick Lit'	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Crime / Mystery / Thriller	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fantasy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Science Fiction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Young Adult Fiction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Historical	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Humour	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Literary Fiction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Poetry or Plays	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
New Zealand Fiction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Short Stories	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
War	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q7

For each of the following please select the option that best describes your position.

HOW IMPORTANT are the following aspects to you when CHOOSING a new fiction book to read?

	Not at all Important	Not Very Important	Neutral / Don't Know	Somewhat Important	Extremely Important
It was recommended by a friend	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
It has good reviews by newspapers or magazines	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
It is by an author I've enjoyed before	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
It has literary merit	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The publisher has a good reputation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
It is on a bestseller list	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
It was shortlisted or awarded a literary prize	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The author has a good reputation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
It is original in some way	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
It has a book cover I like	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
It is in a genre I enjoy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
It has good reviews from other readers online (blogs, websites or social media)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q8

For each of the following please select the option that best describes your position.
HOW IMPORTANT are the following elements to your ENJOYMENT of a fiction book?

	Not at all Important	Not Very Important	Neutral / Don't Know	Somewhat Important	Extremely Important
Easy to read / not too complicated	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gripping, fast-moving plot	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quality of writing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A happy ending	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Characters I can identify with	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A strong narrative	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quality of editing (typos, grammar)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Challenges my ideas or makes me think	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Characters that are believable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Originality	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Language that extends my vocabulary	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q9

For each of the following please select the option that best describes your position.
HOW INTERESTED are you in reading the following types of fiction?

	Not Interested at all	Not Especially Interested	Neutral / Don't Know	Somewhat Interested	Very Interested
Fiction set in New Zealand	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Crime or mystery novels set outside New Zealand	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Historical fiction set outside New Zealand	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fiction nominated or awarded an international literary prize	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
New Zealand poetry	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fantasy or science fiction by a New Zealand writer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Crime or mystery novels set in New Zealand	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fiction promoted, labelled or tagged specifically as 'New Zealand Fiction'	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fiction set outside of New Zealand	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fantasy or science fiction by writers from overseas	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fiction nominated or awarded a New Zealand Book Award	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Historical fiction set in New Zealand	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Block 2

Q10

For each of the following please select the option that best describes your position.

On the following points, how would you GENERALLY rate New Zealand FICTION in comparison to FICTION from overseas?

	NOT AS GOOD as fiction from overseas	About the SAME as fiction from overseas	BETTER than fiction from overseas	Don't know
Quality of writing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Plots or story lines	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Originality	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Book cover design	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Level of interest to you	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q11

For each of the following please select the option that best describes your position.

On the following points, how would you GENERALLY rate New Zealand NON-FICTION in comparison to NON-FICTION from overseas?

	NOT AS GOOD as non-fiction from overseas	About the SAME as non- fiction from overseas	BETTER than non-fiction from overseas	Don't know
Quality of writing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Originality	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Book cover design	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Level of interest to you	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Block 3

Display This Question:

If

Please select the option below that best describes the types of books you USUALLY read...Only non-fiction, never fiction

Is Not Selected

And

Roughly, how many books do you USUALLY read for pleasure EACH YEAR? ...None

Is Not Selected

Q12

HOW OFTEN do you browse the NEW ZEALAND FICTION SECTIONS in libraries, bookstores or bookseller websites?

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Display This Question:

If

Please select the option below that best describes the types of books you USUALLY read ...Only non-fiction, never fiction

Is Not Selected

And

Roughly, how many books do you USUALLY read for pleasure EACH YEAR? ...None

Is Not Selected

Q13

How OFTEN do you deliberately seek out FICTION BOOKS written by NEW ZEALAND AUTHORS?

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Display This Question:

If

Please select the option below that best describes the types of books you USUALLY read ...Only non-fiction, never fiction

Is Not Selected

And

Roughly, how many books do you USUALLY read for pleasure EACH YEAR? ...None

Is Not Selected

Q14

HOW IMPORTANT do you think it is to have separate sections for NEW ZEALAND FICTION in libraries, bookstores or bookseller websites?

Not at all Important	Not Very Important	Neutral / Don't Know	Somewhat Important	Extremely Important
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Display This Question:

If

Please select the option below that best describes the types of books you USUALLY read ...Only non-fiction, never fiction

Is Not Selected

And

Roughly, how many books do you USUALLY read for pleasure EACH YEAR? ...None

Is Not Selected

Q15

WHY do you feel this way? Please explain in your own words.

Block 4

Q16

Did you study any New Zealand fiction (novels, short stories, poetry or plays) at either PRIMARY or SECONDARY SCHOOL in New Zealand?

- Yes
- No
- I can't remember
- I did not attend school in New Zealand

Display This Question:

If

Did you study any New Zealand fiction (novels, short stories, poetry or plays) at either PRIMARY or SECONDARY SCHOOL in New Zealand? ...Yes

Is Selected

Or

Did you study any New Zealand fiction (novels, short stories, poetry or plays) at either PRIMARY or SECONDARY SCHOOL in New Zealand? ... I can't remember

Is Selected

Q17

How did you feel about the New Zealand fiction you studied at school?

- I didn't like any of it
- I didn't like most of it
- I liked some of it
- I liked most of it
- I liked all of it
- I can't remember / Don't know

Block 5

Display This Question:

If

Please select the option below that best describes the types of books you USUALLY read ...Only non-fiction, never fiction

Is Not Selected

And

Roughly, how many books do you USUALLY read for pleasure EACH YEAR? ...None

Is Not Selected

Q18

OVERALL, when choosing fiction to read for your own pleasure, do you GENERALLY PREFER books written by NEW ZEALAND AUTHORS or by NON-NEW ZEALAND AUTHORS?

- Prefer written by New Zealand authors
- Prefer written by non-New Zealand authors
- No preference
- Don't know

Display This Question:

If

OVERALL, when choosing fiction to read for your own pleasure, do you GENERALLY PREFER books written by NEW ZEALAND AUTHORS or by NON-NEW ZEALAND AUTHORS? ...Prefer written by New Zealand authors

Is Selected

And

Roughly, how many books do you USUALLY read for pleasure EACH YEAR? ...None

Is Not Selected

Q19

Please briefly explain, as best you can, WHY you generally prefer NEW ZEALAND authors.

Display This Question:

If

OVERALL, when choosing fiction to read for your own pleasure, do you GENERALLY PREFER books written by NEW ZEALAND AUTHORS or by NON-NEW ZEALAND AUTHORS? ... Prefer written by non-New Zealand authors

Is Selected

And

Roughly, how many books do you USUALLY read for pleasure EACH YEAR? ...None

Is Not Selected

Q20

Please briefly explain, as best you can, WHY you generally prefer NON-NEW ZEALAND authors.

Display This Question:

If

OVERALL, when choosing fiction to read for your own pleasure, do you GENERALLY PREFER books written by NEW ZEALAND AUTHORS or by NON-NEW ZEALAND AUTHORS? ...No preference

Is Selected

And

Roughly, how many books do you USUALLY read for pleasure EACH YEAR? ...None

Is Not Selected

Q21

Please briefly explain, as best you can, WHY you have NO PREFERENCE regarding NEW ZEALAND and NON-NEW ZEALAND authors.

Display This Question:

If

OVERALL, when choosing fiction to read for your own pleasure, do you GENERALLY PREFER books written by NEW ZEALAND AUTHORS or by NON-NEW ZEALAND AUTHORS? ... Don't know

Is Selected

And

Roughly, how many books do you USUALLY read for pleasure EACH YEAR? ...None

Is Not Selected

Q22

Please briefly explain, as best you can, WHY you are unsure about your preference regarding NEW ZEALAND and NON-NEW ZEALAND authors.

Block 6

Q23

For each of the following please select the option that best describes your position.
To what extent do you agree / disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral / Don't Know	Agree	Strongly Agree
It is important to read books by New Zealand authors	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
New Zealand has a vibrant literary scene	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Readers in New Zealand should support New Zealand authors by reading their work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
It is important that New Zealanders are familiar with their national literature	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q24

Approximately HOW LONG AGO did you read a fiction book by a New Zealand author?

- Never
- More than 10 years ago
- Between 5 – 10 years ago
- Between 1 – 5 years ago
- Between 6 months – 1 year ago
- Between 1 month – 6 months ago
- Between 1 week – 1 month ago
- During the past week
- Don't know / I can't remember

Q25

On average, HOW FREQUENTLY do you read fiction by New Zealand authors?

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Don't Know
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Block 7

Q26

Is there anything else you would like to say about the topics covered in this questionnaire?
Please feel free to record any additional comments here:

Block 8

Q27

What is your gender?

- Male
- Female

Q28

What is your age?

- Under 18
- 18 – 24
- 25 – 29
- 30 – 34
- 35 – 39
- 40 – 44
- 45 – 49
- 50 – 54
- 55 – 59
- 60 - 64
- 65 – 69
- 70+

Q29

Do you currently live in New Zealand?

- Yes
- No

Display This Question:

If

Do you currently live in New Zealand? ...Yes

Is Selected

Q30

Which region do you live in? Please select the option from the list below that most closely reflects where you live.

- New Zealand European
- Other European
- Māori
- Samoan
- Cook Island Maori
- Tongan
- Niuean
- Chinese
- Japanese
- Indian
- Other (please specify)

Block 9

Q31

Were you born in New Zealand?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Display This Question:

If

Were you born in New Zealand? ...No

Is Selected

Or

Were you born in New Zealand? ...Don't know

Is Selected

Q32

In what year did you first arrive in New Zealand to live? Please select an answer from the list below.

- I have never lived in New Zealand
 - 2012
 - 2011
 - 2010
- (drop down list 1900-2012)

Block 10

Q33

To which ethnic group do you belong?

- New Zealand European
- Other European
- Māori
- Samoan
- Cook Island Maori
- Tongan
- Niuean
- Chinese
- Japanese
- Indian
- Other (please specify)

Q34

What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- Some secondary school
- Secondary school qualification (e.g. NCEA, School Certificate, University Bursary etc.)
- Trade qualification
- Polytechnic / technical college qualification
- Teachers certificate / diploma
- Undergraduate university qualification
- Postgraduate university qualification

Q35

What is your personal annual income?

- Less than \$10,000
- \$10,000 – \$19,999
- \$20,000 – \$29,999
- \$30,000 – \$39,999
- \$40,000 – \$49,999
- \$50,000 – \$59,999
- \$60,000 – \$69,999
- \$70,000 - \$89,999
- \$90,000 - \$119,000
- \$120,000 or more

Block 11

Q36

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

You are welcome to invite other readers to complete the survey by sending them the URL:
<http://is.gd/readnz>

By completing this survey you are eligible to enter the prize draw to win a \$50 Bookseller Book Token.

If you wish to enter the draw please enter your name and email address below.
All names and email addresses will be removed before data is analysed to preserve your anonymity.

Full name:

Email address:

Q37

If you are interested in receiving a short summary of research findings, please enter your email address below.
All email addresses will be removed before data is analysed to preserve your anonymity.

Email address:

SUBMIT

Appendix C. Messages inviting organizations and businesses to participate

1) Email to PUBSIG, the New Zealand Public Libraries discussion list.

Subject: Study: "Reading in New Zealand" | WIN! a \$50 book voucher (Victoria University of Wellington, School of Information Management)
From: Pia White
Sent: Thursday, 26 April 2012 10:01 a.m.
To: PUBSIG-L@LISTSERV.CCC.GOVT.NZ

I would like to invite all public libraries in New Zealand to participate in a nationwide survey about reading attitudes and preferences.

I am a Master of Information Studies (MIS) student at Victoria University of Wellington. My final research project explores reading preferences and attitudes of adult readers in New Zealand. I have created an anonymous 10-15 minute online survey questionnaire which I am inviting any adults (aged 16+) to complete. All participants are given the chance to win a \$50 Booksellers Book Token, accepted in over 350 bookshops nationwide.

As public libraries are such an important service to those who read for pleasure, I am very keen to get as many responses as possible from your patrons. I believe the results will provide a valuable insight into the attitudes and preferences of readers in New Zealand and I would greatly appreciate any exposure that raises the profile of the study.

If you would like to give the patrons of your library the opportunity to participate in this survey please feel free to post the survey link to your website, blog, social media and/or e-newsletter. I would also be very happy to send you flyers to display in your library, or a colour web banner for online purposes - please contact me at whitepia@myvuw.ac.nz for more information.

As readers yourselves I would also love to hear from YOU!

To complete the survey, please click on this link: <http://is.gd/readnz>
(Please note: if you have problems accessing the survey, try using a different browser such as Internet Explorer)

The survey will close at 5pm Friday 18 May, 2012.

If you have any questions or would like more information, please do not hesitate to contact me. Please also feel free to spread the word by forwarding this email to friends, family or colleagues.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Kind regards,

Pia White

Master of Information Studies (LIBS) Candidate

School of Information Management, Victoria University of Wellington

Email: whitepia@myvuw.ac.nz

2) Email to New Zealand Booksellers (similar also sent to the New Zealand Book Council)

Subject: INFO 580 Study: Reading in New Zealand (Victoria University of Wellington, School of Information Management)
From: Pia White
Sent: Tuesday, 24 April 2012 12:47 p.m.
To: info@booksellers.co.nz

Dear Booksellers New Zealand,

I am a Master of Information Studies (MIS) student at Victoria University of Wellington. My final research project explores reading preferences and attitudes of adult readers in New Zealand. I have created an anonymous 10-15 minute online survey questionnaire which I am inviting any adults (aged 16+) to complete. I am also offering all participants the chance to win a \$50 Booksellers Book Token.

I am writing to ask if Booksellers New Zealand would be willing to help me promote the survey on the Booksellers New Zealand website or anywhere else you feel appropriate, such as your email newsletter, Facebook or Twitter? I would greatly appreciate any exposure that raises the profile of the questionnaire and allows me to reach a significant number of New Zealand readers. I believe the results will provide a valuable insight into the attitudes and preferences of readers in New Zealand.

As the survey includes a chance to win a Booksellers Book Token, I would also love to extend an invitation to your Members to promote the survey to their customers, perhaps in *The Read* newsletter, on the Members area of your website or any other avenue you deem appropriate.

To complete the questionnaire yourself, please click on this link or copy and paste it into your browser:

<http://is.gd/readnz>

(Note: the survey functions best when accessed through Internet Explorer)

The survey will close at **5pm Friday 18 May, 2012.**

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you would like more information or if you would like to preview some of the web banners I have prepared.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please let me know if there is someone else I should be contacting regarding this.

Kind regards,

Pia White

Master of Information Studies (LIBS) Candidate

School of Information Management, Victoria University of Wellington

Email: whitepia@myvuw.ac.nz

3) Facebook message sent to New Zealand bookshops on Facebook

From: Pia White

To: Unity Books Wellington (Facebook page)

Dear Unity Books Wellington,

I am a Master of Information Studies (MIS) student and my final research project explores reading preferences and attitudes of adults in New Zealand. Would you consider promoting a short online survey on the Unity Books Facebook page? I have had a great response from Library patrons so far but I would really like to hear more from book buyers! I would also be grateful if you would consider posting it to your Twitter account as well. I am offering all participants the chance to win a \$50 Booksellers token which, I believe, are accepted by your store.

Many thanks,

Pia White

(whitepia@myvuw.ac.nz)

For your convenience, I have provided suggested wording for a post but of course you are welcome to change it!:

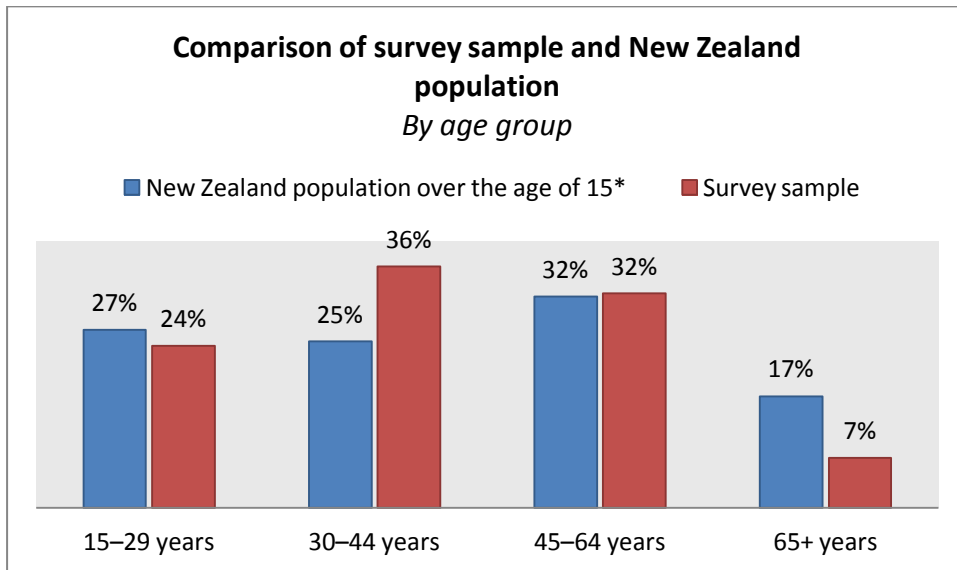
WIN a \$50 Bookseller Token! Take part in a short anonymous survey on reading! Go to:
<http://is.gd/readnz> | Participants must be aged 16+ | Closing date: 18 May 2012 | Researcher: Pia White, School of Information Management, Victoria University of Wellington | Contact: whitepia@myvuw.ac.nz

Appendix D. Survey flyers

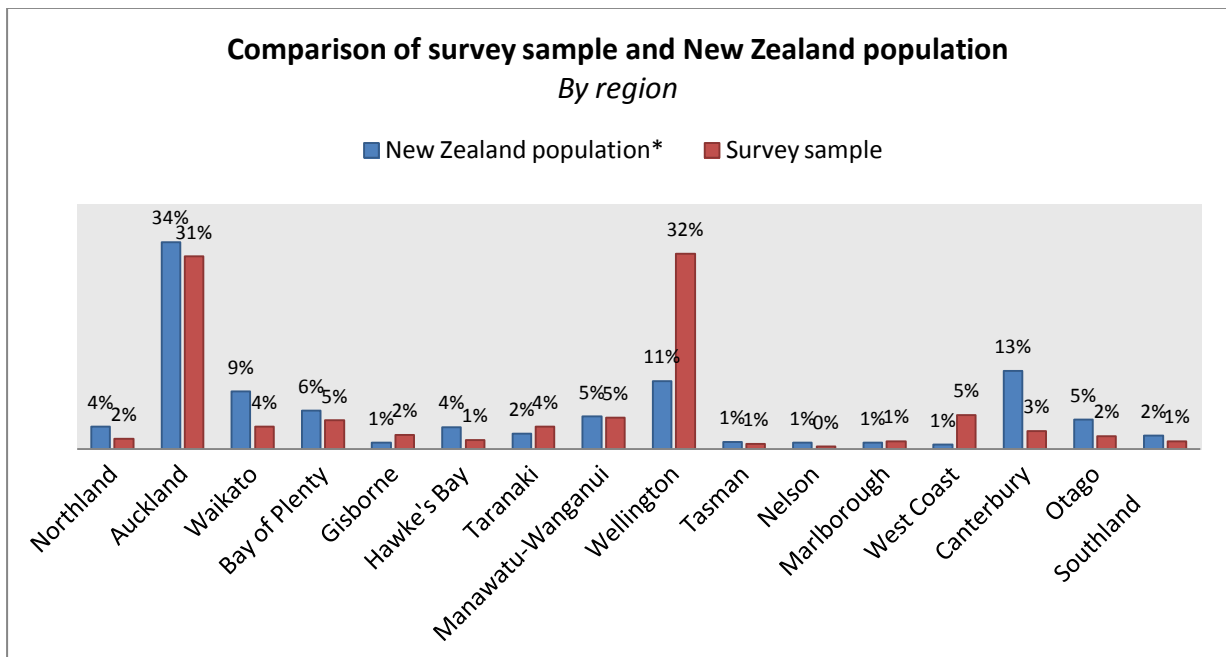
Bookmarks were printed in colour on an A4 sheet (5 to a page) and trimmed to size.

The flyer is a vertical rectangle with a white background. At the top, the text 'Like to READ?' is written in a large, bold, yellow font with a black outline. Below this, the word 'WIN' is in a large, bold, red font. Underneath 'WIN', '\$50' is written in a very large, bold, red font. Below '\$50', the text 'Bookse/lers®' is in a red font, with a small 'NZ' in a circle to the right. Below 'Bookse/lers®', the word 'TOKENS!' is in a large, bold, red font. In the center, the text 'Go to:' is in a black font. Below 'Go to:', the URL 'http://is.gd/readnz' is written in a blue font and underlined. Below the URL, the text 'to complete a short questionnaire.' is in a black font. Below this, the text 'Survey closes:' is in a bold black font, followed by '5pm Friday 18 May, 2012' in a bold black font. Below that, the text 'Participants must be aged 16 or over.' is in a black font. Below this, the text 'For more information contact Pia White whitepia@myvuw.ac.nz' is in a black font. At the bottom, the text 'This research has been approved by the School of Information Management's Human Ethics Committee.' is in a black font. In the bottom left corner, there is a logo for 'Reading in NZ' which consists of the words 'Reading in' above an open book with 'NZ' on the pages. In the bottom right corner, there is the logo for 'VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON' which includes a crest and the text 'TE WHARE WĀNANGA O TE ŌPŌKO O TE IKA A MĀUI' above the crest.

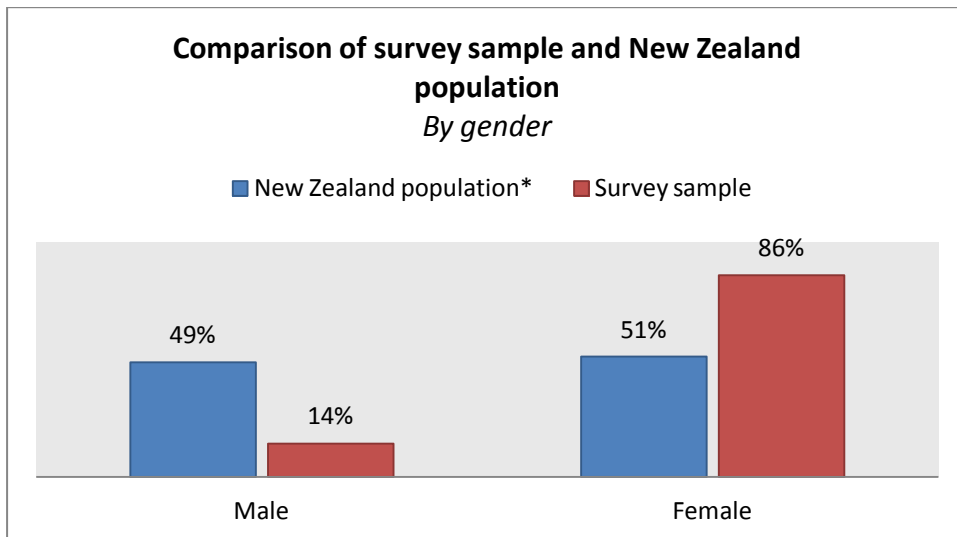
Appendix E. Comparison of the study's survey sample with New Zealand population data



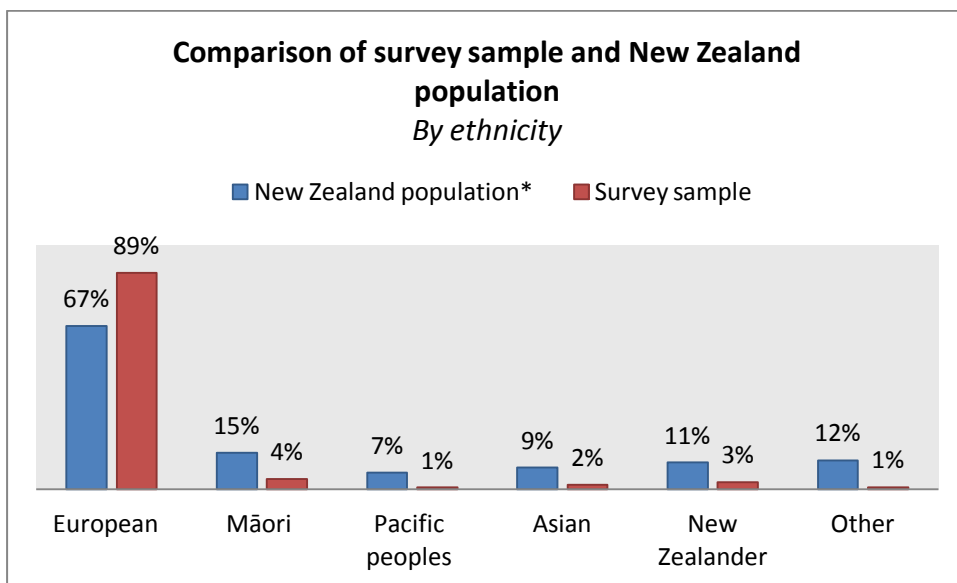
*Population data retrieved from Statistics New Zealand (2012).



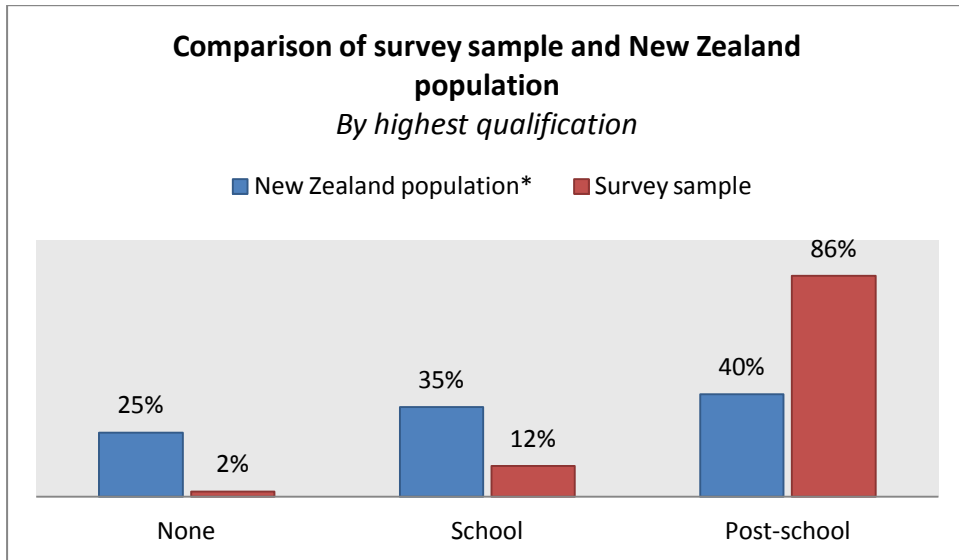
*Population data retrieved from Statistics New Zealand (2012).



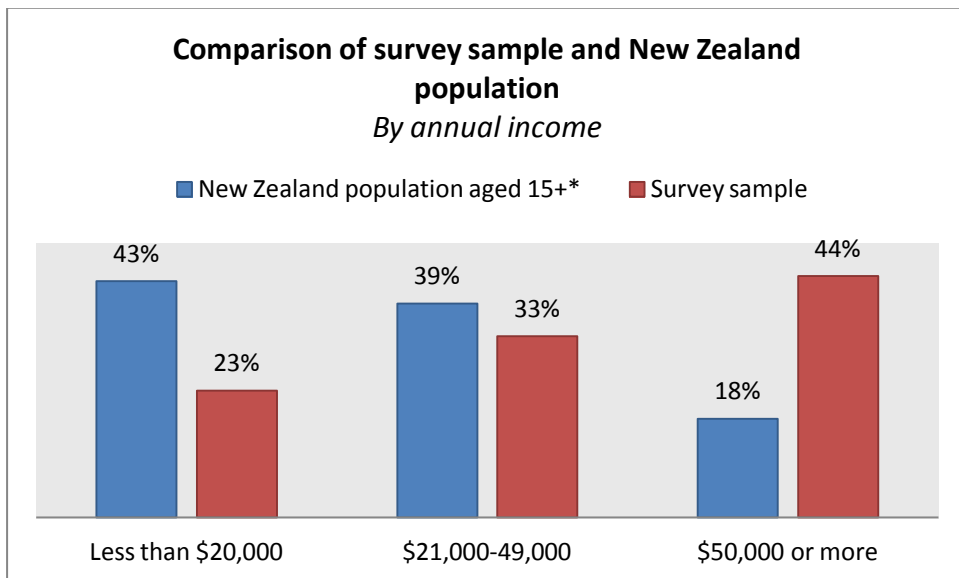
*Population data retrieved from Statistics New Zealand (2006a).



*Population data retrieved from Statistics New Zealand (2006b).



*Population data retrieved from Statistics New Zealand (2006c).



*Population data retrieved from Statistics New Zealand (2006d).

Appendix F. Cross-tabulations used for the chi-square test

What follows are the cross-tabulations for which significant associations ($p < 0.05$) were found using the chi-square test, as outlined in the Results section (4.1).

1. Age

Attitudes towards New Zealand fiction

	Under 18 - 29	30 - 39	40 - 49	50+	Total
Dislike / Really Dislike	14	14	7	8	43
Neutral / Don't Know	42	47	23	32	144
Like / Really Like	63	71	56	112	302
Total	119	132	86	152	489

Frequency of reading New Zealand fiction

	Under 18 - 29	30 - 39	40 - 49	50+	Total
Never / Rarely	45	44	21	29	139
Sometimes	56	56	40	77	229
Often	15	24	23	50	112
Total	116	124	84	156	480

2. Ethnicity

Attitudes towards New Zealand fiction

	New Zealand European/New Zealander/ Pakeha and/or Maori	Other ethnicity	Total
Dislike / Really Dislike	32	10	42
Neutral / Don't Know	118	26	144
Like / Really Like	272	30	302
Total	422	66	488

Level of agreement with the statement "It is important to read books by New Zealand authors"

	New Zealand European/New Zealander/ Pakeha and/or Maori	Other	Total
Disagree / Strongly Disagree	50	13	63
Neutral / Don't Know	79	21	100
Agree / Strongly Agree	300	33	333
Total	429	67	496

Frequency of reading New Zealand fiction

	New Zealand European/New Zealander/ Pakeha and/or Maori	Other ethnicity	Total
Never / Rarely	110	29	139
Sometimes	200	29	229
Often	104	8	112
Total	414	66	480

3. Country of birth

Attitudes towards New Zealand fiction

	Born in NZ	Born overseas	Total
Dislike / Really Dislike	31	12	43
Neutral / Don't Know	108	36	144
Like / Really Like	257	45	302
Total	396	93	489

Level of agreement with the statement "It is important to read books by New Zealand authors"

	Born in NZ	Born overseas	Total
Disagree / Strongly Disagree	43	21	64
Neutral / Don't Know	75	25	100
Agree / Strongly Agree	284	49	333
Total	402	95	497

4. Region

Attitudes towards New Zealand fiction

	Auckland	Rest of NZ	Total
Dislike / Really Dislike	20	23	43
Neutral / Don't Know	48	87	135
Like / Really Like	78	209	287
Total	146	319	465

Level of agreement with the statement "It is important to read books by New Zealand authors"

	Auckland	Rest of NZ	Total
Disagree / Strongly Disagree	26	38	64
Neutral / Don't Know	38	56	94
Agree / Strongly Agree	85	230	315
Total	149	324	473

5. Experience of New Zealand fiction at school

Attitudes towards New Zealand fiction

	I didn't like most/I didn't like any New Zealand fiction at school	I liked some New Zealand fiction at school	I liked most of it/I liked all New Zealand fiction at school	I can't remember / Don't know	Total
Dislike / Really Dislike	13	17	2	2	34
Neutral / Don't Know	16	52	22	27	117
Like / Really Like	17	75	113	47	252
Total	46	144	137	76	403

Overall preference regarding New Zealand and overseas fiction

	I didn't like most/I didn't like any New Zealand fiction at school	I liked some New Zealand fiction at school	I liked most of it/I liked all New Zealand fiction at school	I can't remember / Don't know	Total
Prefer written by New Zealand authors	0	8	7	7	22
Prefer written by non-New Zealand authors	33	63	28	26	150
No preference	13	73	102	45	233
Total	46	144	137	78	405

Frequency of reading New Zealand fiction

	I didn't like most/I didn't like any New Zealand fiction at school	I liked some New Zealand fiction at school	I liked most of it/I liked all New Zealand fiction at school	I can't remember / Don't know	Total
Never / Rarely	24	45	17	27	113
Sometimes	13	74	68	29	184
Often	8	22	49	18	97
Total	45	141	134	74	394

6. Attendance of a New Zealand school

Attitudes towards New Zealand fiction

	I attended school in New Zealand	I did not attend school in New Zealand	Total
Dislike / Really Dislike	37	6	43
Neutral / Don't Know	122	24	146
Like / Really Like	276	26	302
Total	435	56	491

Level of agreement with the statement "It is important to read books by New Zealand authors"

	I attended school in New Zealand	I did not attend school in New Zealand	Total
Disagree / Strongly Disagree	53	12	65
Neutral / Don't Know	82	17	99
Agree / Strongly Agree	306	26	332
Total	441	55	496

Frequency of reading New Zealand fiction

	I attended school in New Zealand	I did not attend school in New Zealand	Total
Never / Rarely	119	21	140
Sometimes	201	27	228
Often	106	6	112
Total	426	54	480

7. Fiction to non-fiction reading ratios

Attitudes towards New Zealand fiction

	Only fiction / never non-fiction	Mainly fiction / some non-fiction	Even mix of fiction and non-fiction	Mainly non-fiction / some fiction	Total
Dislike / Really Dislike	7	23	10	7	47
Neutral / Don't Know	16	93	28	21	158
Like / Really Like	10	218	63	25	316
Total	33	334	101	53	521

Deliberate seeking of New Zealand fiction

	Only fiction / never non-fiction	Mainly fiction / some non-fiction	Even mix of fiction and non-fiction	Mainly non-fiction / some fiction	Total
Rarely / Never	22	113	34	23	192
Sometimes	4	120	32	20	176
Often / Very Often	5	87	30	9	131
Total	31	320	96	52	499

Frequency of reading New Zealand fiction

	Only fiction / never non-fiction	Mix of fiction and non-fiction	
Never / Rarely	13	124	137
Sometimes	9	220	229
Often	4	108	112
Total	26	452	478

8. Enjoyment of fiction types/genres: Literary fiction

Attitudes towards New Zealand fiction

	Dislike / Really Dislike Literary fiction	Neutral / Don't Know	Like / Really Like Literary fiction	Total
Dislike / Really Dislike	14	15	18	47
Neutral / Don't Know	24	71	61	156
Like / Really Like	12	59	244	315
Total	50	145	323	518

Level of agreement with the statement "Readers in New Zealand should support New Zealand authors by reading their work"

	Dislike / Really Dislike Literary fiction	Neutral / Don't Know	Like / Really Like Literary fiction	Total
Disagree / Strongly Disagree	18	17	28	63
Neutral / Don't Know	14	37	58	109
Agree / Strongly Agree	15	83	220	318
Total	47	137	306	490

Frequency of reading New Zealand fiction

	Dislike / Really Dislike Literary fiction	Neutral / Don't Know	Like / Really Like Literary fiction	Total
Never / Rarely	25	58	51	134
Sometimes	13	58	156	227
Often	5	19	87	111
Total	43	135	294	472

9. Enjoyment of fiction types/genres: Short Stories

Attitudes towards New Zealand fiction

	Dislike / Really Dislike Short Stories	Neutral / Don't Know	Like / Really Like Short Stories	Total
Dislike / Really Dislike	37	4	4	45
Neutral / Don't Know	52	62	44	158
Like / Really Like	44	82	187	313
Total	133	148	235	516

Level of agreement with the statement "Readers in New Zealand should support New Zealand authors by reading their work"

	Dislike / Really Dislike Short Stories	Neutral / Don't Know	Like / Really Like Short Stories	Total
Disagree / Strongly Disagree	26	13	23	62
Neutral / Don't Know	36	34	38	108
Agree / Strongly Agree	65	91	162	318
Total	127	138	223	488

Frequency of reading New Zealand fiction

	Dislike / Really Dislike Short Stories	Neutral / Don't Know	Like / Really Like Short Stories	Total
Never / Rarely	58	41	35	134
Sometimes	57	67	103	227
Often	8	26	76	110
Total	123	134	214	471

10. Enjoyment of fiction types/genres: Poetry/plays

Attitudes towards New Zealand fiction

	Dislike / Really Dislike Poetry/plays	Neutral / Don't Know	Like / Really Like Poetry/plays	Total
Dislike / Really Dislike	37	5	5	47
Neutral / Don't Know	77	59	22	158
Like / Really Like	89	116	105	310
Total	203	180	132	515

Level of agreement with the statement "Readers in New Zealand should support New Zealand authors by reading their work"

	Dislike / Really Dislike Poetry/plays	Neutral / Don't Know	Like / Really Like Poetry/plays	Total
Disagree / Strongly Disagree	39	17	8	64
Neutral / Don't Know	50	32	27	109
Agree / Strongly Agree	105	115	94	314
Total	194	164	129	487

Frequency of reading New Zealand fiction

	Dislike / Really Dislike Poetry/plays	Neutral / Don't Know	Like / Really Like Poetry/plays	Total
Never / Rarely	83	36	17	136
Sometimes	79	86	61	226
Often	22	35	50	107
Total	184	157	128	469

11. Importance of aspects when choosing fiction books: book reviews

Attitudes towards New Zealand fiction

	Not Very Important / Not at all Important	Neutral / Don't Know	Somewhat Important / Extremely Important	Total
Dislike / Really Dislike	19	5	23	47
Neutral / Don't Know	36	17	105	158
Like / Really Like	38	28	249	315
Total	93	50	377	520

Level of agreement with the statement "Readers in New Zealand should support New Zealand authors by reading their work"

	Not Very Important / Not at all Important	Neutral / Don't Know	Somewhat Important / Extremely Important	Total
Disagree / Strongly Disagree	24	5	36	65
Neutral / Don't Know	27	11	71	109
Agree / Strongly Agree	40	27	253	320
Total	91	43	360	494

Frequency of reading New Zealand fiction

	Not Very Important / Not at all Important	Neutral / Don't Know	Somewhat Important / Extremely Important	Total
Never / Rarely	44	12	81	137
Sometimes	31	19	178	228
Often	10	9	92	111
Total	85	40	351	476

12. Importance of aspects when choosing fiction books: literary merit

Attitudes towards New Zealand fiction

	Not Very Important / Not at all Important	Neutral / Don't Know	Somewhat Important / Extremely Important	Total
Dislike / Really Dislike	21	10	16	47
Neutral / Don't Know	47	50	61	158
Like / Really Like	64	64	186	314
Total	132	124	263	519

Level of agreement with the statement "Readers in New Zealand should support New Zealand authors by reading their work"

	Not Very Important / Not at all Important	Neutral / Don't Know	Somewhat Important / Extremely Important	Total
Disagree / Strongly Disagree	33	10	22	65
Neutral / Don't Know	29	30	50	109
Agree / Strongly Agree	65	76	178	319
Total	127	116	250	493

Frequency of reading New Zealand fiction

	Not Very Important / Not at all Important	Neutral / Don't Know	Somewhat Important / Extremely Important	Total
Never / Rarely	56	35	46	137
Sometimes	47	56	125	228
Often	19	21	70	110
Total	122	112	241	475

13. Importance of aspects when choosing fiction books: literary prizes

Attitudes towards New Zealand fiction

	Not Very Important / Not at all Important	Neutral / Don't Know	Somewhat Important / Extremely Important	Total
Dislike / Really Dislike	28	7	11	46
Neutral / Don't Know	54	34	70	158
Like / Really Like	74	51	189	314
Total	156	92	270	518

Level of agreement with the statement "Readers in New Zealand should support New Zealand authors by reading their work"

	Not Very Important / Not at all Important	Neutral / Don't Know	Somewhat Important / Extremely Important	Total
Disagree / Strongly Disagree	35	9	21	65
Neutral / Don't Know	36	28	45	109
Agree / Strongly Agree	79	48	191	318
Total	150	85	257	492

Frequency of reading New Zealand fiction

	Not Very Important / Not at all Important	Neutral / Don't Know	Somewhat Important / Extremely Important	Total
Never / Rarely	63	22	52	137
Sometimes	55	47	126	228
Often	24	15	71	110
Total	142	84	249	475

14. Main reasons for reading: 'to become widely read'

Attitudes towards New Zealand fiction

	Disagree / Strongly disagree	Neutral / Don't Know	Agree / Strongly Agree	Total
Dislike / Really Dislike	15	7	25	47
Neutral / Don't Know	36	53	68	157
Like / Really Like	52	67	194	313
Total	103	127	287	517

Level of agreement with the statement "It is important that New Zealanders are familiar with their national literature"

	Disagree / Strongly disagree	Neutral / Don't Know	Agree / Strongly Agree	Total
Disagree / Strongly Disagree	16	7	22	45
Neutral / Don't Know	20	19	38	77
Agree / Strongly Agree	63	90	217	370
Total	99	116	277	492

15. Elements contributing to enjoyment of fiction books: 'Challenges my ideas or makes me think'

Attitudes towards New Zealand fiction

	Not at all Important / Not Very Important	Neutral / Don't Know	Somewhat Important / Extremely Important	Total
Dislike / Really Dislike	12	6	26	44
Neutral / Don't Know	14	23	116	153
Like / Really Like	16	31	259	306
Total	42	60	401	503

Level of agreement with the statement "Readers in New Zealand should support New Zealand authors by reading their work"

	Not at all Important / Not Very Important	Neutral / Don't Know	Somewhat Important / Extremely Important	Total
Disagree / Strongly Disagree	13	6	46	65
Neutral / Don't Know	8	20	81	109
Agree / Strongly Agree	20	32	268	320
Total	41	58	395	494

Frequency of reading New Zealand fiction

	Not at all Important / Not Very Important	Neutral / Don't Know	Somewhat Important / Extremely Important	Total
Never / Rarely	19	22	96	137
Sometimes	14	25	188	227
Often	4	10	98	112
Total	37	57	382	476

16. Elements contributing to enjoyment of fiction books: 'Gripping / fast-moving plot'

Attitudes towards New Zealand fiction

	Not Very Important / Not at all Important	Neutral / Don't Know	Somewhat Important / Extremely Important	Total
Dislike / Really Dislike	9	5	30	44
Neutral / Don't Know	13	21	118	152
Like / Really Like	57	47	200	304
Total	79	73	348	500

Frequency of reading New Zealand fiction

	Not Very Important / Not at all Important	Neutral / Don't Know	Somewhat Important / Extremely Important	Total
Never / Rarely	13	14	110	137
Sometimes	41	41	145	227
Often	20	17	73	110
Total	74	72	328	474

17. Elements contributing to enjoyment of fiction books: 'Easy to read / not too complicated'

Attitudes towards New Zealand fiction

	Not Very Important / Not at all Important	Neutral / Don't Know	Somewhat Important / Extremely Important	Total
Dislike / Really Dislike	18	7	19	44
Neutral / Don't Know	43	22	87	152
Like / Really Like	130	49	124	303
Total	191	78	230	499

Frequency of reading New Zealand fiction

	Not Very Important / Not at all Important	Neutral / Don't Know	Somewhat Important / Extremely Important	Total
Never / Rarely	36	21	80	137
Sometimes	93	36	96	225
Often	53	16	41	110
Total	182	73	217	472

Appendix G. Text responses: frequency of recurring ideas/themes

Frequency of recurring ideas per section of the questionnaire

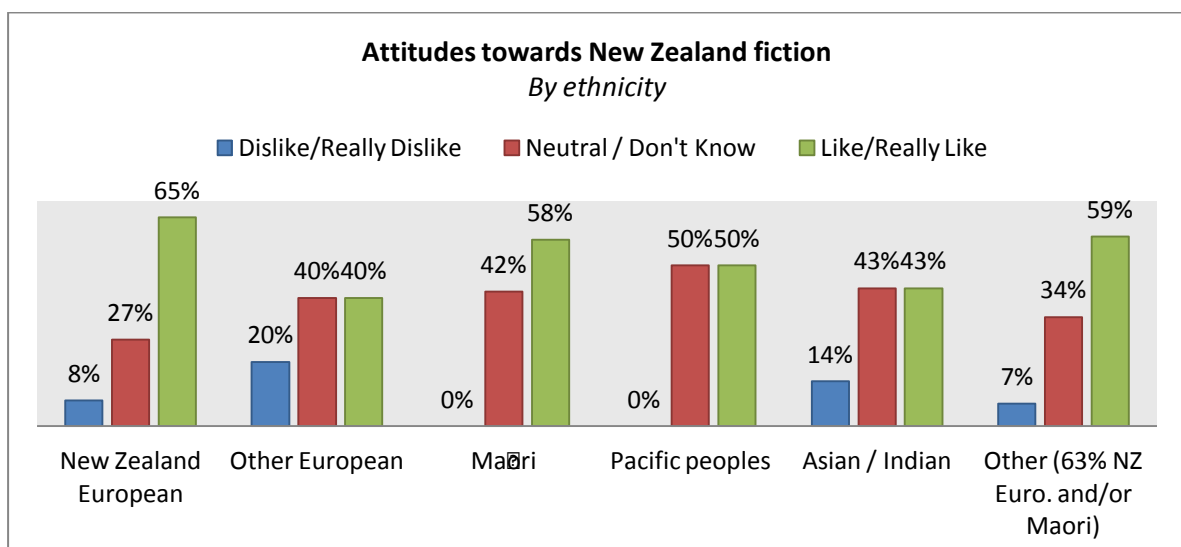
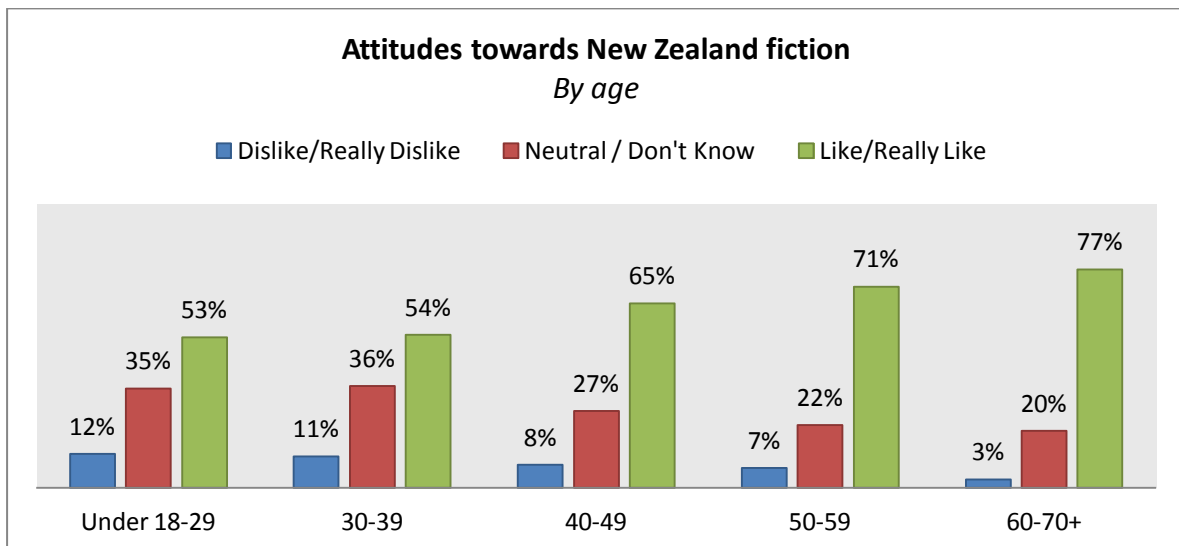
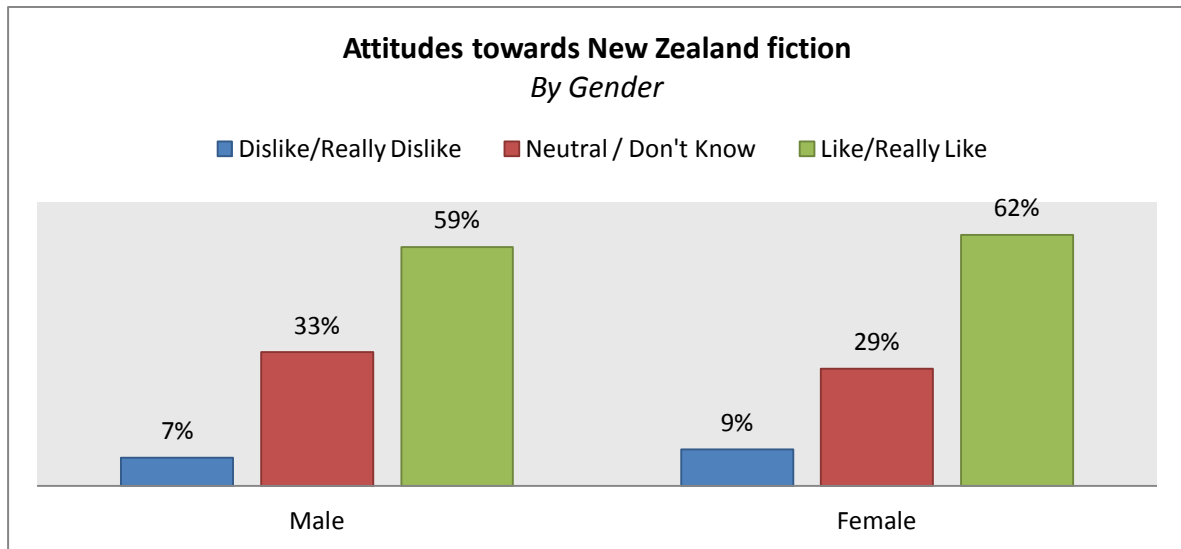
Darker pink = higher percentages; Lighter pink = lower percentages

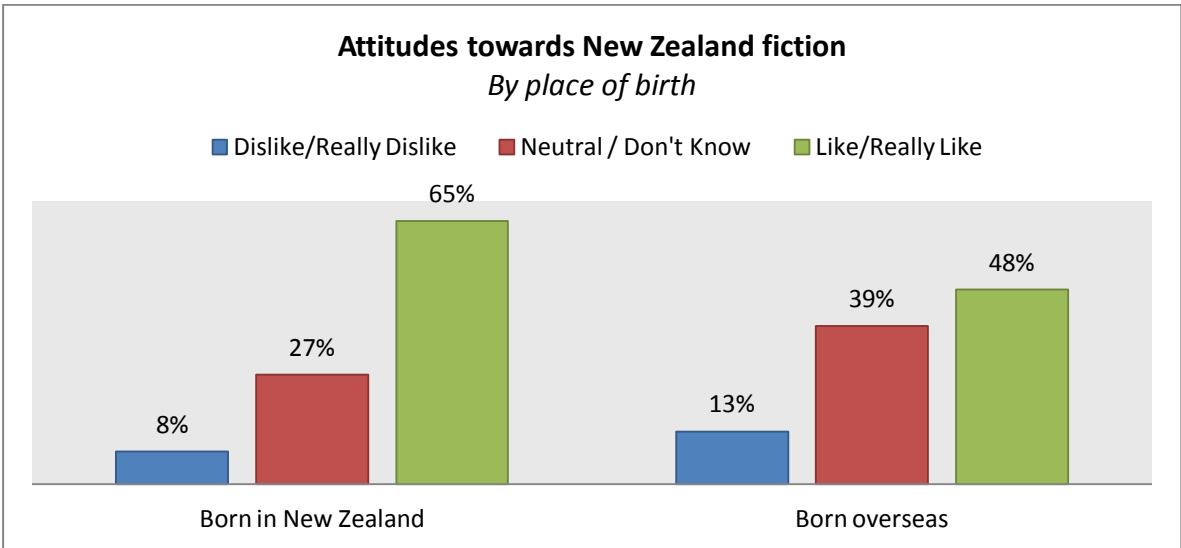
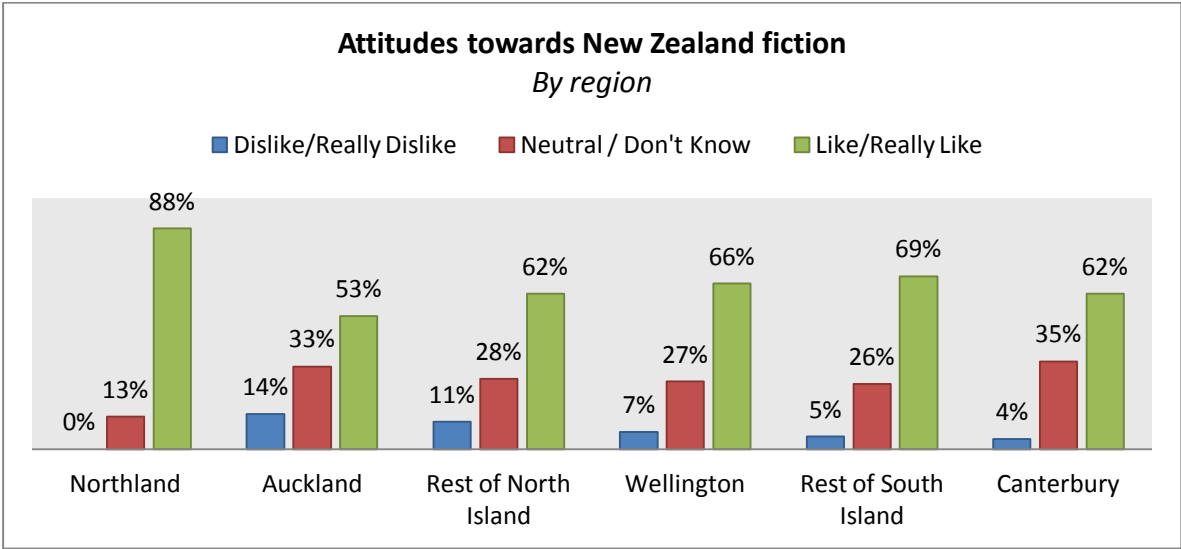
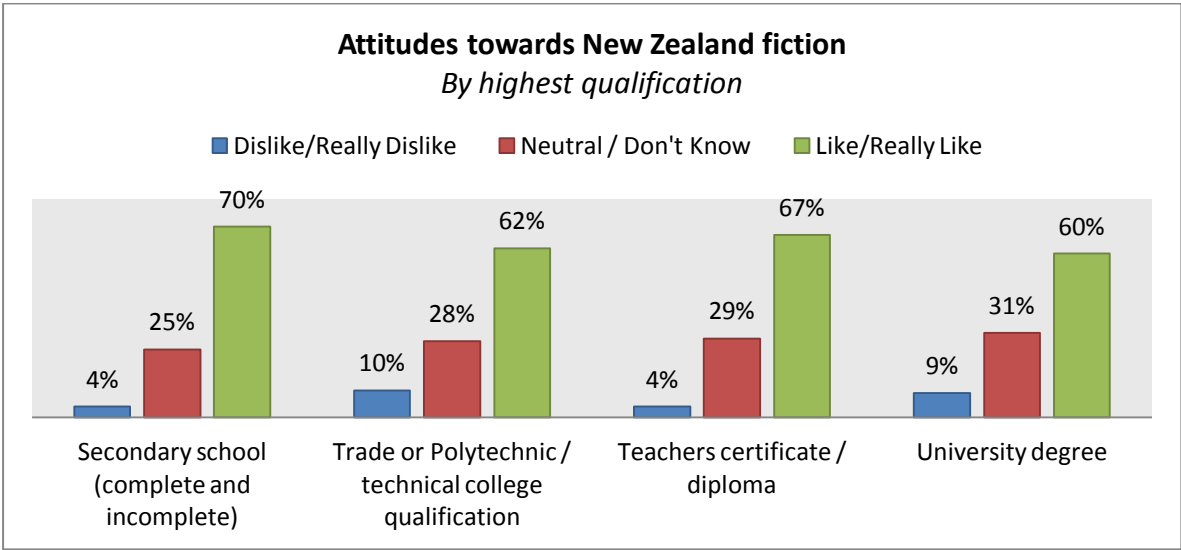
TOTAL number of comments submitted per section		Q15					Q19-22							Q26	TOTAL				
		122	229	41	21	156	272	3	135	979									
Categories of ideas/themes/opinions mentioned		Not important	% of 'Not important' comments	Important	% of 'Important' comments	Neutral/ Don't know	% of 'Neutral' comments	Prefer NZ fiction overall	% of 'Prefer NZ' comments	Prefer non-NZ fiction overall	% of 'Prefer non-NZ' comments	No overall preference	% of 'No preference' comments	Unsure about overall preference	% of 'Unsure' comments	Additional Comments	% of Additional comments	TOTAL no. of times idea occurred	% of total (979) comments submitted
		1	Perception of other readers' attitudes: 'New Zealandness' is a selling point or draw card for readers.	5	4%	53	23%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
2	Perception of other readers' attitudes: 'New Zealandness' is not a selling point - it is off putting to readers/not a main draw card.	33	27%	11	5%	12	29%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	5	4%	61	6%
3	Personal experience/perception: enjoys NZ fiction/has read and enjoyed NZ fiction/thinks well of NZ fiction.	4	3%	62	27%	3	7%	21	100%	4	3%	43	16%	0	0%	17	13%	154	16%
4	Personal experience/perception: NZ fiction does not appeal/reader does not generally enjoy NZ fiction/criticism of NZ fiction.	17	14%	19	8%	0	0%	0	0%	111	71%	17	6%	1	33%	38	28%	203	21%
5	Nationality is irrelevant: books should be judged on their own merit/I choose books based on merit.	77	63%	14	6%	11	27%	0	0%	2	1%	232	85%	2	67%	19	14%	357	36%
6	Expression of some sense of responsibility or obligation to support and/or read NZ fiction.	5	4%	110	48%	4	10%	11	52%	1	1%	16	6%	0	0%	21	16%	168	17%
6a	<i>Likes to read/support NZ fiction as long as it is good.</i>	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	2	10%	0	0%	4	1%	0	0%	0	0%	6	1%
6b	<i>Feels obliged to read/wants to support NZ fiction but does not actually enjoy it/read much of it.</i>	2	2%	13	6%	1	2%	0	0%	1	1%	1	0%	0	0%	8	6%	26	3%
7	Dislikes the emphasis placed on supporting/reading NZ fiction just because it is 'New Zealand'.	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	7	5%	8	1%
8	Does not notice/cannot tell the difference between NZ and non-NZ fiction.	2	2%	1	0%	1	2%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	33%	1	1%	6	1%
9	Praise for NZ Children's and/or Young Adult fiction.	3	2%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	5	3%	2	1%	0	0%	13	10%	23	2%
10	Separation of NZ fiction from other fiction draws attention to it and makes it easier to find.	0	0%	106	46%	5	12%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	111	11%
11	Separation of NZ fiction from other fiction limits discovery. It is more likely to appeal and/or be read if interfiled.	33	27%	16	7%	15	37%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	1%	65	7%
TOTAL		181	148%	405	177%	53	129%	34	162%	124	79%	315	116%	4	133%	130	96%	1246	

Darker pink = higher percentages; Lighter pink = lower percentages

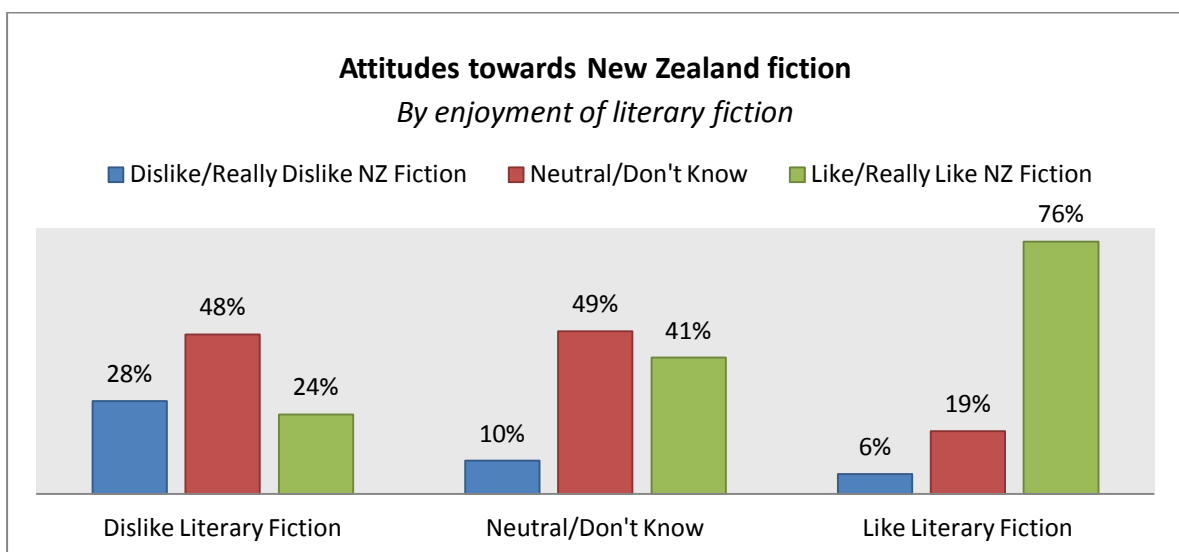
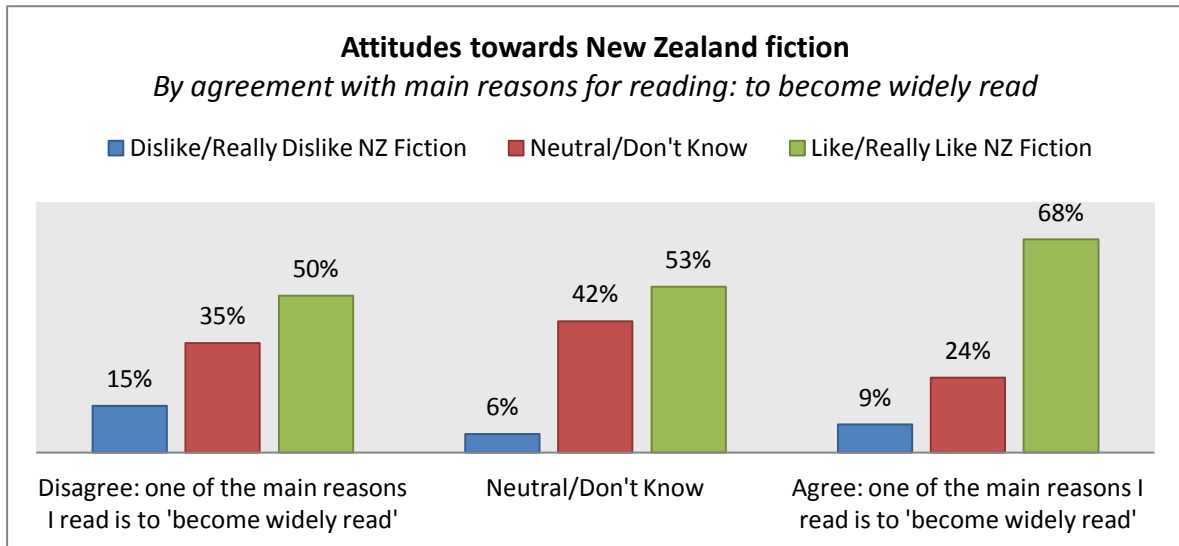
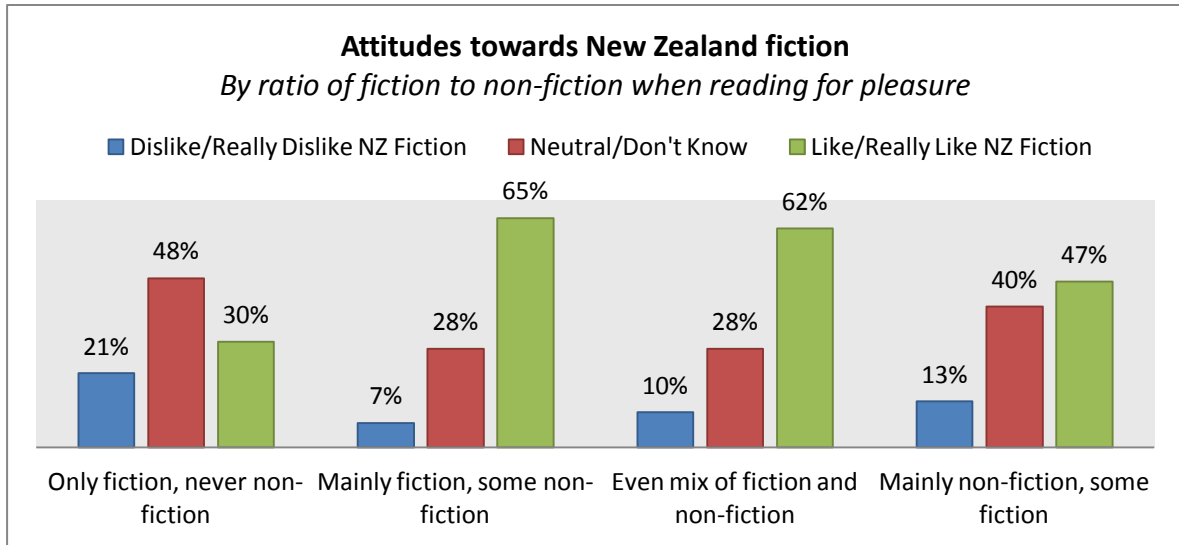
		Q15						Q19-22						Q26	TOTAL				
TOTAL number of comments submitted per section		122		229		41		21		156		272		3		135	979		
Promotional methods proposed as alternatives to separate sections		Not important	% of 'Not important' comments	Important	% of 'Important' comments	Neutral/ Don't know	% of 'Neutral' comments	Prefer NZ fiction overall	% of 'Prefer NZ' comments	Prefer non-NZ fiction overall	% of 'Prefer non-NZ' comments	No overall preference	% of 'No preference' comments	Unsure about overall preference	% of 'Unsure' comments	Additional Comments	% of Additional comments	TOTAL no. of times idea occurred	% of total (979) comments submitted
1	NZ identifying stickers even if interfiled	16	13%	11	5%	11	27%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	1%	39	4%
2	Double shelving - copies of books shelved in NZ section and interfiled with main fiction	1	1%	13	6%	1	2%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	15	2%
3	Displays to highlight NZ fiction	2	2%	0	0%	1	2%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	3	0%
4	Staff help	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	0%
5	NZ fiction booklists provided by staff	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	0%
TOTAL		21	17%	24	10%	13	32%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	1%	59	6%

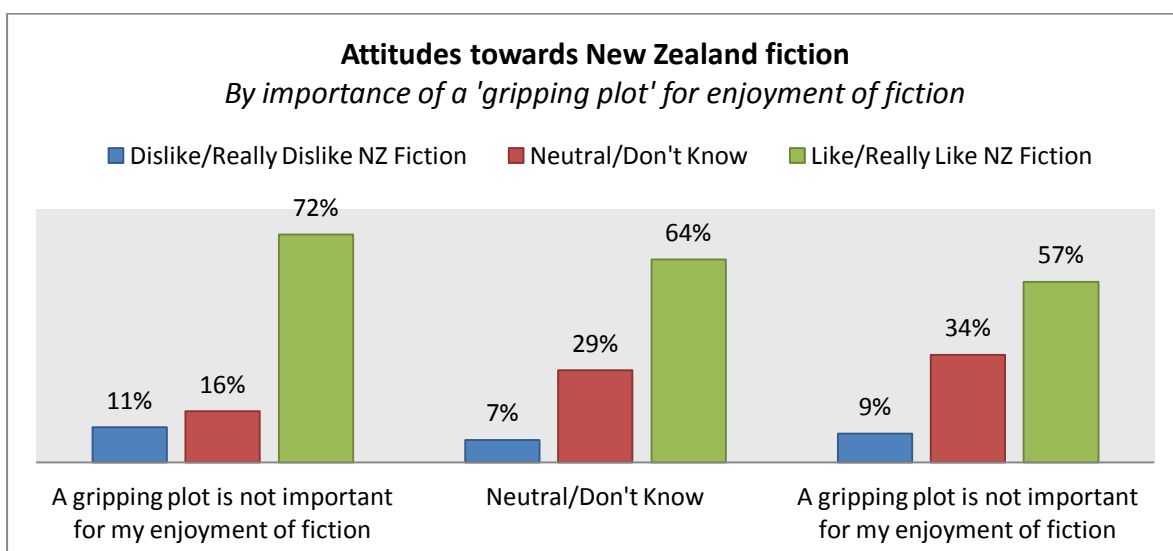
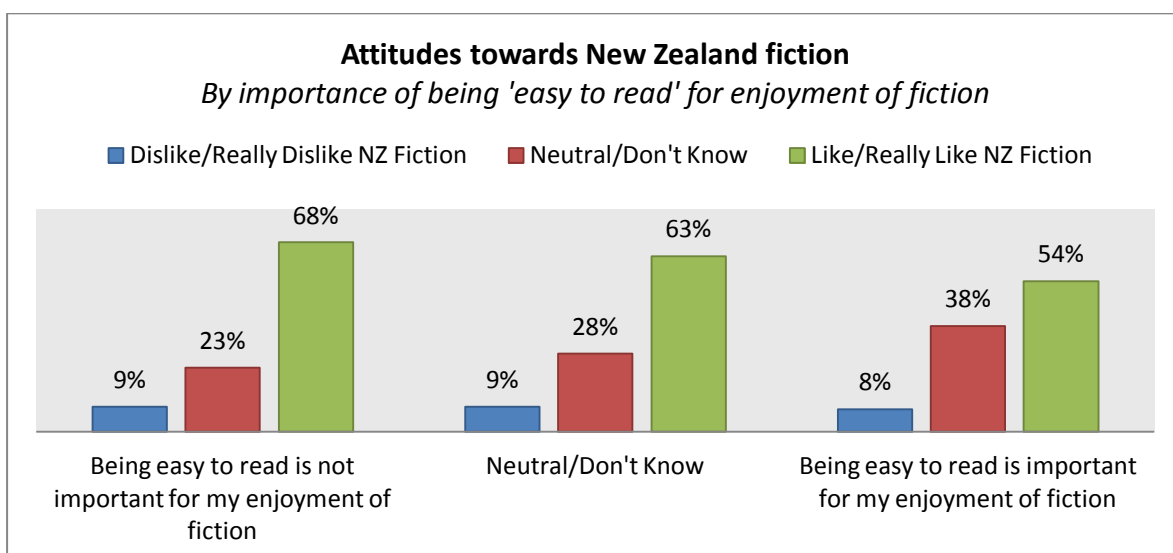
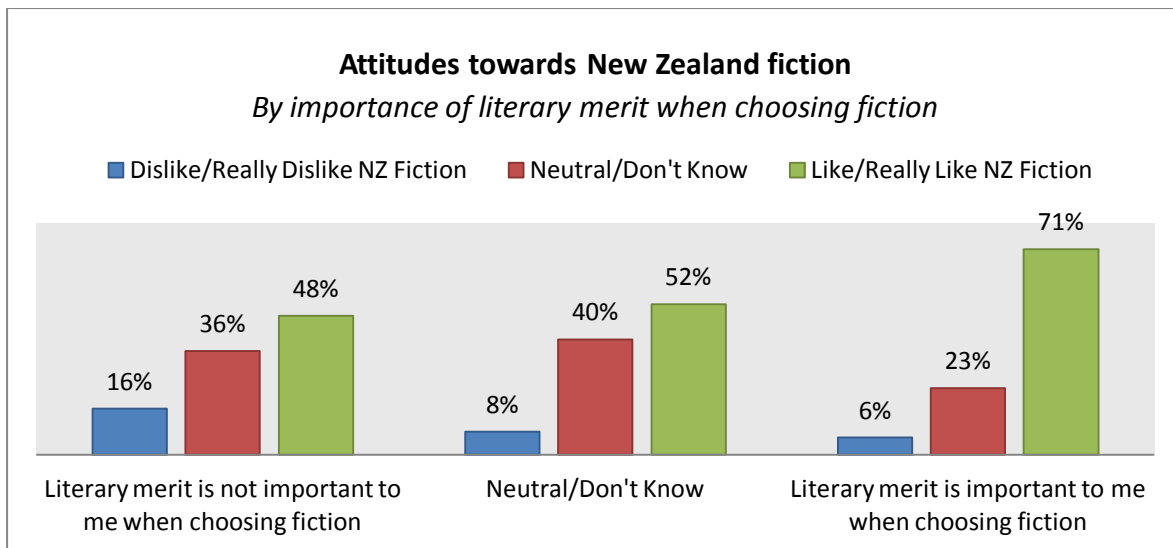
Appendix H. Attitudes towards New Zealand fiction by demographic variables





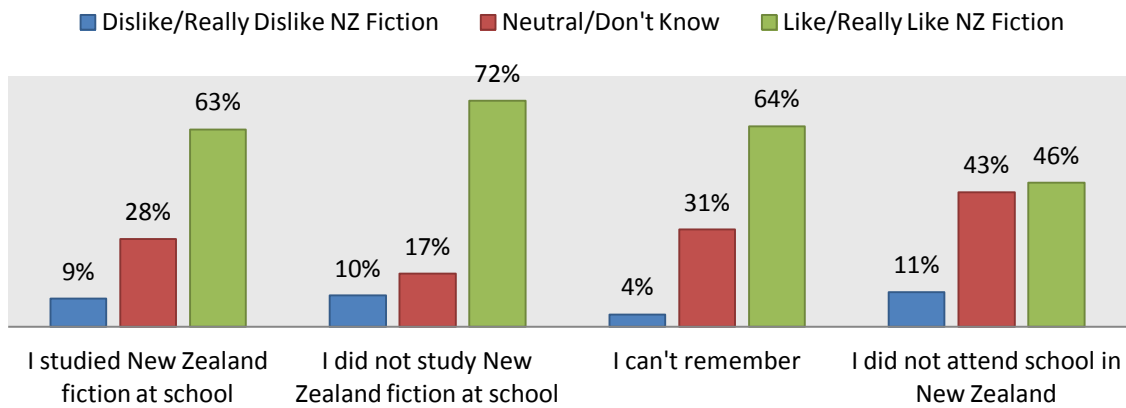
Appendix I. Attitudes towards New Zealand fiction by reader characteristics





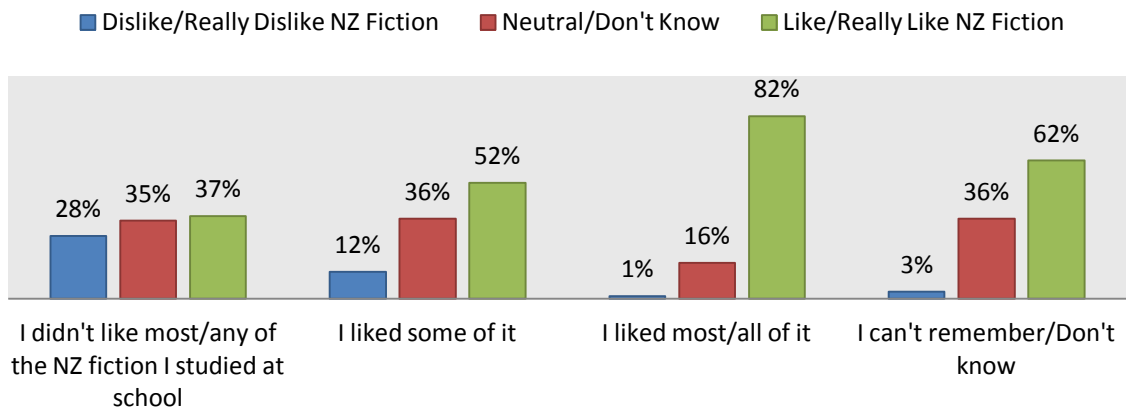
Attitudes toward New Zealand fiction

By school attendance in New Zealand



Attitudes towards New Zealand fiction

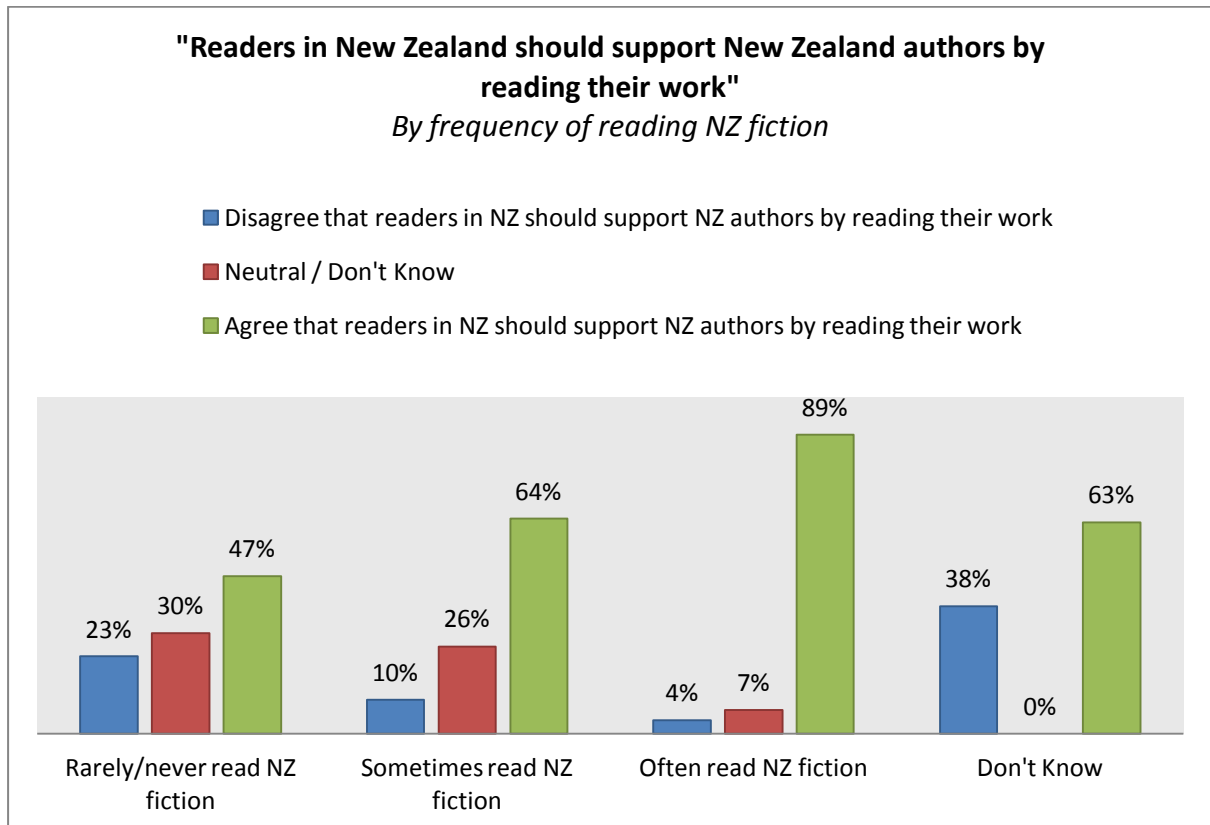
By enjoyment of New Zealand fiction at school



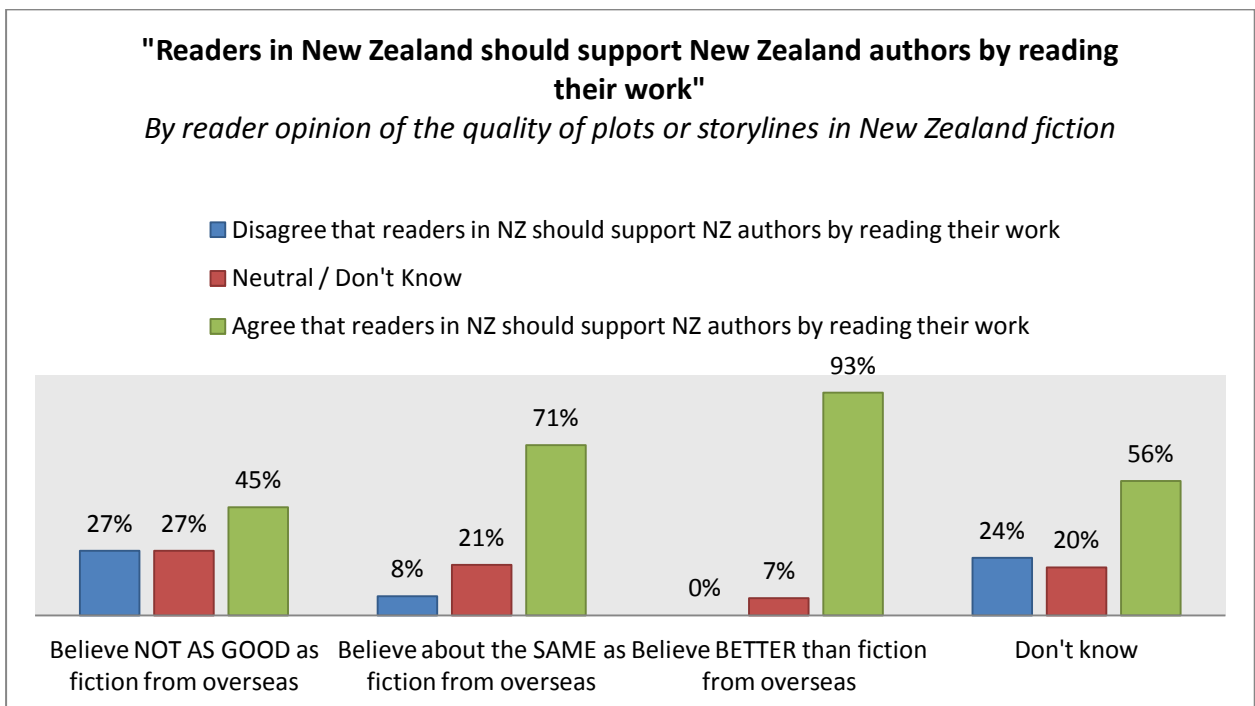
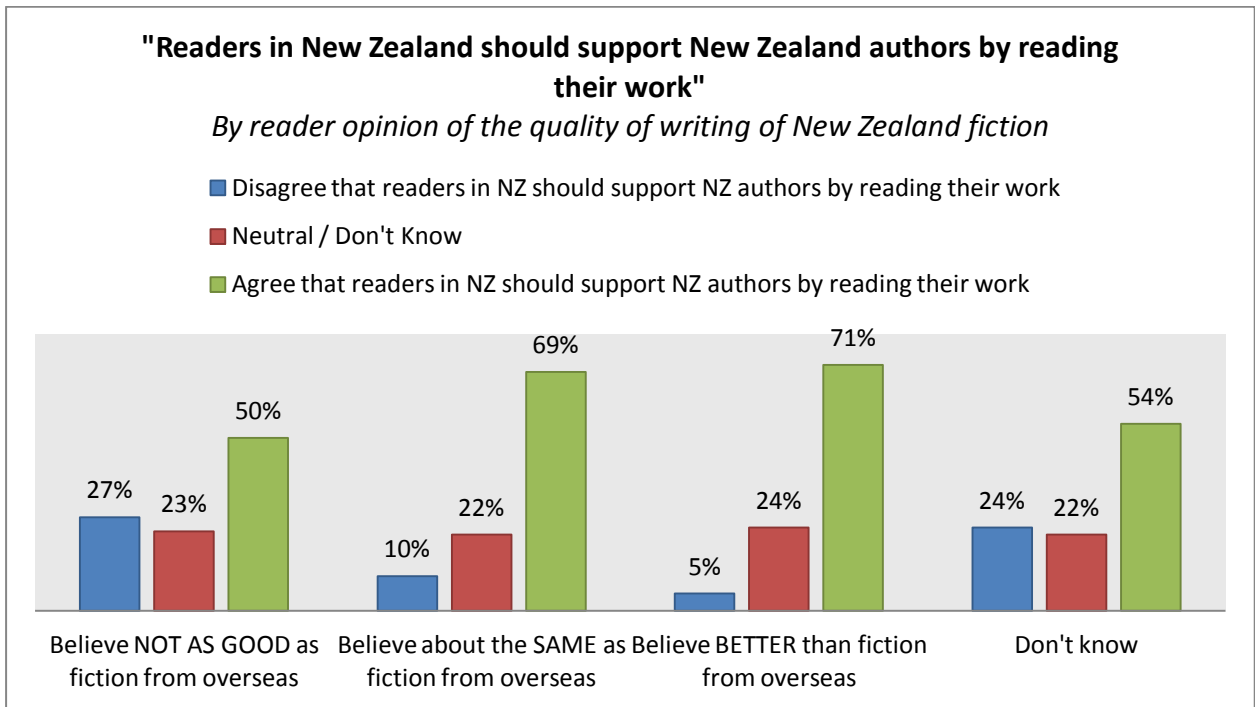
Appendix J. Enjoyment of New Zealand fiction: a comparison of attitudes regarding the importance of New Zealanders' familiarity with their national literature



Appendix K. Frequent and infrequent readers of New Zealand fiction: a comparison of attitudes regarding the importance of reading New Zealand fiction



Appendix L. Opinions concerning the quality of New Zealand fiction: a comparison of attitudes regarding the importance of reading New Zealand fiction



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