

Study finds link between deprivation and not reading

March 12 2014, by Jo Maxwell



The nationwide study, commissioned by Booktrust, reveals worrying indications that the UK is divided into two nations.

The 'page turners' – those who [read](#) daily or weekly and reap the benefits that books offer – make up 50 per cent of the population. Across the cultural divide, the 'button pushers', who prefer activities such as watching TV and DVDs, make up 45 per cent.

The study indicates links between deprivation and not reading books—those who never read live in more deprived areas, with a higher proportion of children living in poverty. Those who read less are also

more likely to be male, under 30, and have lower levels of qualifications, happiness, and satisfaction within their lives.

Viv Bird, Chief Executive of Booktrust, said: "This research indicates that frequent readers are more likely to be satisfied with life, happier and more successful in their professional lives. But there is a worrying cultural divide linked to deprivation. There will never be a one size fits all solution when it comes to social mobility, but reading plays an important role – more action is needed to support families."

Led by Professor Cathy Nutbrown from the University of Sheffield's School of Education, the research suggests that there are strong indicators of the importance of literacy, reading, and writing, among other factors, in contributing to positive social mobility. The study also suggests that reading 'rubs off' in the home, with families playing a crucial role in fostering a love of reading.

At the launch of the research findings today (11 March 2014), academics from the University attended a conference organised by Booktrust, an organisation which promotes the lifelong benefits of reading and writing, in a bid to kick start a national conversation about improving social mobility by encouraging reading earlier and more often.

Booktrust commissioned the University's School of Education to investigate the historical relationship between attitudes to reading and writing and [social mobility](#). The review draws on a range of literature, archive material, family interviews and data gathered using social media to explore this issue.

Provided by University of Sheffield

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