

It is clear from this literature review that there is little to no formal research into the opinions of the public with regards to fanfiction.

To conclude, the literature reviewed above provided the research with a number of different perspectives as well as giving direction as to what needs to be investigated further. These perspectives give the research a guide of what is to be expected from data collection and analysis and gives the researcher a framework to refer back to.

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within a small sample. Hence, the researcher selected a participant selected from each age group that participated within the survey. There was also an even split of $n=3$ for both male and female participants.

3.7.4 Content Analysis

As mentioned in the methodology for the other data collection methods, the researcher used Gibbs' approach to coding to carry out the content analysis. These findings were then compared and contrasted to that of the other qualitative data.

3.7.5 Limitations and Ethical Considerations

A Limitation of this form of data collection was the small size of the sample, however, this was a supplementary sample. The usual confidentiality considerations applied, according to the Data Protection Act, including the need for the participants to be given accurate information and for the research to gain informed consent before starting the interviews. Also, the agenda design was formulated to include no questions that would purposefully cause psychological distress.

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not know whether or not it was fan fiction, as shown in figure 9, below.

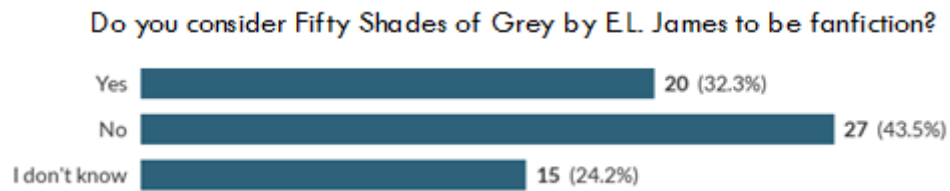


FIGURE 9

30.6% of the sample, or $n=19$ respondents said that knowing *Fifty Shades of Grey* was originally *Twilight* fan fiction would discourage them from purchasing the book, leaving 69.4%, or $n=43$ that said it would not, (as displayed in figure 9).

Would knowing that *Fifty Shades of Grey* was originally *Twilight* fan fiction discourage you from purchasing the book?

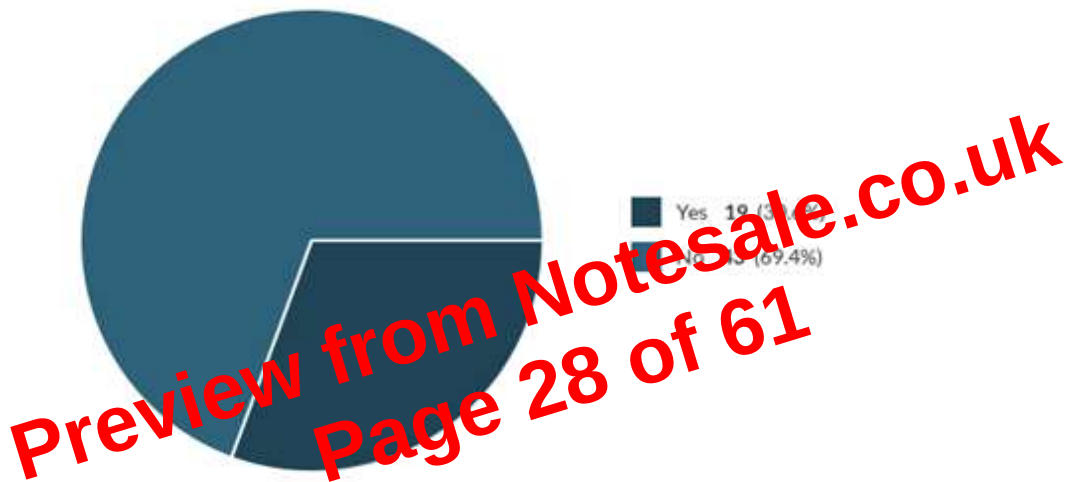


FIGURE 10

In contrast to the responses given on the *Twilight* question, a much larger proportion of the sample were indecisive on whether Jean Rhys' *Wide Sargasso Sea* was or was not fan fiction. Just 21% of respondents ($n=13$) made a decision, $n=6$ (9.7%) deciding yes, $n=7$ (11.3%) deciding no, (shown in figure 10, above).

This contrast in decisiveness is possibly because participants were more familiar with *Fifty Shades of Grey*, however, this is surprising considering that *Wide Sargasso Sea* is on a number of school, college and university syllabuses.

1&2 To compare historical attitudes to fan fiction to modern attitudes and to collaborate views on fan-fiction in the form of a literature review

It is difficult to measure how well these particular objectives have been fulfilled. The literature review did provide a useful background for the study by collaborating the views of authors and academics, but as aforementioned in the limitations section (3.2.3).

4 To investigate the laws surrounding intellectual property and copyright and how these coincide with ethical issues

This objective has only been briefly covered. The results of the survey, semi-structured interviews and the data collected from the cyber-ethnography shows that participants

think that authors should be allowed to take legal action against fan authors. As the study progressed it became apparent that the legal implications

5 To conduct primary research in order to collect new data and opinions around the ethics of fan fiction from a more generalised perspective

The researcher collected a wealth of both primary and secondary research for this study. This objective has been fulfilled, the only thing that can be questioned is the reliability of the generalisation due to the samples of participants not being diverse enough, as detailed in the methodology section.

6 To draw conclusions on whether the fan fiction is truly ethical from the research conducted

The researcher compiled the information together at the end of the study in summary, however, as with all inductive study, there is always the risk that the results will be inconclusive. This was the case with this study, but the research should be of value when compiled with future research.

5.3 Possible Recommendations to the Book Trade

From the data collected, it appears that the majority of the sample either do not object to fan authors profiting from their fiction or they are indifferent to the issue. From both the poll and survey results it seems apparent that there is a market for fan

fiction, even without the guises that have been applied to *Fifty Shades of Grey*, but this market would be niche, at least to begin with. This niche market would need a very targeted and cost-effective campaign in order to gain popularity before it could be expanded. In this case, publishers could perhaps market fan fiction as a new genre.

Furthermore, high literature fan fiction appears to have never yielded a negative response. Hence, there is a market for high quality fan fiction, such as Jean Rhys' *Wide Sargasso Sea*, the only issue with this approach being the grey area between what is and is not high literature.

There could also be a refining of the intellectual property laws to include fan fiction, as the guidelines are, at best, vague and the clarity of laws would possibly help to eradicate ethical grey areas.

As a side note, if a publishing house was able to acquire fanfiction.net or archiveofourown.com and somehow develop a membership system to create revenue, as the popularity of these sites would ensure there was some profit. However, it could not be guaranteed that a move away from free content would not dramatically decrease the popularity of the site.

For all these recommendations to work, there would almost certainly need to be a less prejudicial attitude to fan fiction, possibly some widespread dissemination of good quality fan fiction to cancel out the overwhelming amount of bad media coverage that it has received since the *Fifty Shades of Grey* phenomena began.

5.4 Suggested Further Research

Whilst somewhat insightful, the findings of this did not totally answer the broad research question, "Is fan fiction ethical?"

Further research could include a repeat of the survey that was conducted within this study on a larger and more diverse sample in order to generate more generalizable data. These surveys could be distributed in paper form so that they do not favour the technologically literate.

Also, to support the aforementioned recommendations research could be conducted to determine whether fan fiction is more ethical if it distinguishes itself as fan fiction by either crediting the original author or by being published in a fan fiction genre.

A study into the ethics of fan fiction

28% complete

Page 3: About You

2 How old are you? * Required

Please enter a whole number (integer).

Your answer should be no more than 3 characters long.

3 Are you male or female? * Required

☐ Male

☐ Female

4 What is your occupation? * Required

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42% complete

Page 4: Defining 'Fanfiction'

8 What does the word fanfiction mean to you? * Required

9 Do you consider *Fifty Shades of Grey* by E.L. James to be fanfiction? * Required

- ☐ Yes
- ☒ No
- ☐ I don't know

10 Do you consider *Wide Sargasso Sea* by Jean Rhys to be fanfiction? * Required

- ☐ Yes
- ☒ No
- ☐ I don't know

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Appendix 4 – Semi-Structured Interview Agenda

Interview details:

Face to face, semi-structured interview

Recorded?	Yes	Notes taken?	Yes
Approximate time:		15 minutes	

Introduction - (have the participant read through the information sheet)

Part A) Awareness of fan fiction:

- 1) Before taking part in my survey, were you aware of fan fiction?
- 2) Do you currently read any fan fiction? If so, where and how?
- 3) Which fan fiction titles, if any, are you familiar with?
- 4) Do you think that fan fiction is published? Is it sold in book stores?

Part B) Profiting from fan fiction:

- 5) Do you think that it is ethical for fan fiction authors to earn money from their stories?
Why/why not?
- 6) Would knowing a book was originally fan fiction stop you from purchasing it?
Why/Why not?

- 7) Should people be able to write fan fiction if they DO NOT profit from it?

Part C) Protection for authors:

- 8) Are there laws against people using other people's ideas as their own?
- 9) Should authors be able to take legal action against fan fiction writers? If yes, what sort of punishment do you think fan fiction authors should receive?

Thank you for taking part. Do you have any questions for me?

Appendix 5 – Interview Information Sheet

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this confidential and informal interview.

- The interview should last no longer than 15 minutes.
- With your permission I shall be recording today's interview.
- This interview is a follow up from the survey you completed about the ethics of fan fiction.
- You may stop the interview at any time if you no longer wish to participate and any previous data collected will be discarded.
- All data collected will be used and stored following the Data Protection Act.
- Only persons over 18 may participate.
- If you have any questions, please ask at any time.
- The interview is part of a final year project for a BA Publishing and English undergraduate degree in the Department of English and Drama at Loughborough University.
- For any further information, or if you wish to withdraw from this study after the interview is complete, please contact h.wilson-bettis-13@student.lboro.ac.uk

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Appendix 6 – Coding Templates

A6.1 Questionnaire Qualitative Data

What does fan fiction mean to you?

<i>Categorised answers</i>	<i>No. of times recorded</i>
Don't know/ Unintelligible answers	19
Mentioned fans specifically	23
Talks about alternate versions	11
Talks about adaptation of a published text	32
Mentions originality	1
Mentions unoriginality	1
Mentions a specific age group	1
Mentions real people as the subject of fan fiction	2
Mentions money in relation to fan fiction	2
Sexual references	1

Which fan fiction sources, if any, are you familiar with?

<i>Categorised answers</i>	<i>No. of times recorded</i>	<i>Analytical categorisation</i>
<i>Fifty Shades of Grey</i>	2	Physical form
Fanfiction.net	10	online
Reddit.com	1	
Archiveofourown.com	4	
Wattpad	1	
Tumblr	2	
deviantart.com	1	
4chan.org/	1	
Specifically themed websites	4	
apps	1	
None	9	n/a