
| RESEARCH ARTICLE

Favorite Magazines and Reading Topics Among Saudi Female College Students

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| ABSTRACT

This study aimed to explore the magazines and topics that female college students like to read, and the topics that senior and junior high school reading textbooks contain. Findings of questionnaire-surveys with female college students at King Saud University revealed that 77% of the students read women's magazines; 77% like to read about fashion and make-up; 66% read articles about movies, singers, and actors; 24% read poetry; 1-4% read religious, educational, literary, political, computer and internet, and historical articles. Analysis of the reading schoolbooks showed that 10% of the reading texts are devoted to Quranic verses and Prophet Mohammed's Hadiths; 29% are about Islamic history; 13% focus on general topics, and 11% deal with classical literature. It can be concluded that female college students like to read magazines and topics that prevail in satellite T.V. broadcasting and social media such as Instagram. Both magazines and satellite T.V. shows marginalize young people's local culture and distract them from vital social, and political issues. There is a discrepancy between the types of topics students read at school and those they like to read at home. Therefore, this study recommends that reading texts in the school textbooks be re-selected, re-constructed and re-designed in terms of layout, colors, pictures, paper quality, and choosing an attractive cover. It also recommends the utilization of online courses, blogs, mind-mapping software, mobile reading apps and audiobooks, digital reading, global topics and global culture, speed reading practice, and reading from multiple resources. High school and college students should be introduced to new books, magazines, and e-books. Extensive reading of serious topics should be started from the primary grades; reading texts should be diversified; developing students' appreciation skills and visiting book fairs, public libraries, publishing houses, cultural centers should be emphasized as well.

| KEYWORDS

Favorite magazines, female college students, reading interests, favorite reading topics, reading textbooks, extensive, digital reading.

| ARTICLE INFORMATION

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1. Introduction

In the past few years, the world has witnessed political, economic, social, technological, and cultural changes. The barriers between different countries and different cultures have been removed as a result of visual, audio and print media. The number of Arabic and international satellite channels and social media sites that cross continents and penetrate cultures, customs and social traditions have increased. Specialized satellite channels dedicated to news, sports, singing, movies, travel, women, marketing, and more have emerged. Specifically, there are many Arabic satellite channels and programs that focus on art and popstars and promote latest trends in fashion, beauty, jewelry, cosmetics, fitness, and competitions. Such channels and programs have become the favorite programs of young people. They watch them extensively and are influenced by what they watch and they try to imitate them.

On the other hand, the past few years have witnessed a boom in print media, including Arab and foreign newspapers and magazines. When we visit the magazine corner in many bookstores throughout the Kingdom, such as Jarir Bookstore, we find more than a hundred Arabic magazines, most of which are directed towards young people between the ages of fifteen and thirty-five, and we find English and Arabic magazines displayed side by side. In this day and age, the magazine industry has become a profitable industry due to its widespread circulation, the large numbers of magazines sold and distributed, and the consumer advertisements contained on their pages. Their purpose is no longer cultural, but has become promotional, entertainment, and propaganda. It is no longer of a general nature like before. Specialized magazines are available in various fields such as sports, cars, architecture, home decoration, food, children, medicine, family, gardens, the environment, and so on. With the advancement in the computer and software industry and the widespread use of the Internet and mobile devices, magazines specialized in computers and the Internet have emerged.

The magazine industry is becoming increasingly competitive with television, satellite channels, and social media. There has been an increase in pictures, advertisements, colors, and attractive production that dazzle the eye and captivate the mind. Many of them have created websites and social media pages that provide readers with selected content. Magazines offering articles in Arabic and English side by side have appeared. Some magazines have begun to imitate television programs in focusing on popstar, beauty, fashion, fitness, and sports topics. English magazines such as PC Magazine Newsweek, and Readers Digest started to publish Arabic versions editions, providing young people with all the ideas, information, and values contained in the original English magazines. Arab magazines began to provide much of the information and interests that English magazines present and focus on, imitating them in terms of direction, design, content, specialization, advertising, and promotion methods. Magazines have become more attractive than before due to the use of modern technologies in design, production, and printing, and because of the quality of their paper, the attractiveness of their colors, images, fonts and good production. Many of them use advertising, direct marketing, electronic marketing, price reductions, special issues, giveaways, prize draws, and accompanying giveaways to promote the magazines and attract readers.

Young people of both sexes are keen to buy and read modern magazines, or at least browse them. The importance of reading magazines stems from the fact that they provide students with information, develop their vocabulary, and improve their reading skills. In a study conducted by Rucker (1982), it was found that family subscription to magazines that appeal to students improved their reading ability. But the benefit from magazines depends on what the magazines offer, and the topics that young people read in them. Reading is the primary source of knowledge and a means of teaching and learning.

With the political, economic, social, cultural, and technological changes that have occurred, a cultural gap has emerged between developed countries and Arab countries. According to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics¹, the illiteracy rate in the Arab world exceeds 24%. According to a UN Report on Human Development in the Arab World², the average person reads four pages a year and one new title is published each year for every 12,000 people. The number of books written in Arabic and translated decreases year after year. In addition to the lack of suitable reading material and the lack of a reading audience. The results of a questionnaire administered to students at an Arab university showed that 20% of students do not read at all except for their academic courses, 20% read references in their field of specialization only, 26% read less than an hour a day, about 35% read between one and two hours, and 2% read more than four hours a day (Al-Nabaa Informatics Network³). In addition, the Human Development Report in the Arab World issued by the United Nations in 2002 stated that the total number of books translated in Arab countries combined is 330 books per year. This total is equivalent to one-fifth of what Greece translates (a small country with a population of ten million people). If we know that the number of magazines printed in Arab countries combined does not exceed 550 magazines in Arabic and 140 magazines in English (Ammar & Al-Khoury, 1996). In 2023, only 200 Arabic magazines are available⁴. By contrast, the number of magazines in a country like Taiwan has increased from 3,400 magazines in 1988 to 5,700 magazines Nowadays.

The pressures that Arab countries are exposed to, and the economic, political and social conditions that Arab societies are experiencing require that Arab youth acquire advanced information and knowledge that keeps up with scientific and technological advancements and meet the demands of a rapidly developing era and make them capable of advancing their

¹ [Illiteracy in the Arab world - UNESCO Digital Library](#)

² en.wikipedia.org.

³ www.annabaa.org Thursday 22/10/2003

⁴ [مجلات باللغة العربية](#)

countries and undertaking development tasks. This can only be achieved through self-education and reading. Reading is a tool for continuing and lifelong education, and a tool for human and social development.

2. Literature Review

In the past few decades, there have been many Arabic studies that attempted to identify the reading interests of students at the primary, middle, secondary, and university levels in terms of the topics that the students prefer to read. For example, Al-Naqa (1971) conducted a study on 600 secondary school students in Egypt and found that the students prefer to read newspapers and magazines, and that 44.1% of secondary school students read well. The students prefer to read more about religion, spiritual values, Palestine, Zionism, history, politics, literature, social problems, and education. They prefer to read less about agriculture, industry, economics, government departments, legislation, and labor.

In Iraq, Al-Khamisi (1981) conducted a study with 824 students in 12 middle and high schools in Baghdad to identify the topics the students prefer to read. He found that 50.49% of the students prefer to read about marital relations. 53% prefer psychological topics, such as adolescents and their problems, psychological and mental illnesses, and readings in psychology. 43% prefer to read about interpretation of the Qur'an, the Prophet's Hadiths, and Islamic scholars, history of religions, religious obligations, and acts of worship followed by social problems and social change, problems of the Iraqi family, the status of women and their role in modern society, causes of crime and ways of handling them, and social customs and traditions in the different societies (41%). 24% read about sports such as track and field games, sports clubs, youth centers and their activities, Swedish gymnastics, scouts, bodybuilding, wrestling and boxing. Another 24% read topics about ancient history, Arab-Islamic history, national and international historical monuments, and contemporary world history.

In another study in Iraq, Khudair (1988) conducted a study with 658 male and female students in twelve middle schools in Baghdad to identify their reading preferences. Results of a questionnaire revealed that 68.5% of the students preferred literary topics; 57.7% preferred sports and athletic topics; 50.15% preferred religious topics; 29.12% preferred mathematics and inventions; 18.09% preferred mental health topics; 16.46% preferred to read history; 12.46% preferred to read about wars; 11.09% preferred to read about politics; 10.94% preferred to read about geography, and 8.21% preferred to read about social problems and changes.

At the United Arab Emirates University, Mustafa (1991) conducted a study on 334 male and female students and found that 43.8% practiced free reading on a regular basis, and 23.3% practiced reading irregularly. The students preferred to read fiction, followed by emotional, religious, historical, police, and scientific topics in that order. By contrast, religious topics were more common among female students, followed by emotional, fiction, historical, scientific, and detective stories. Male students preferred economic, scientific, religious, mathematical, political, historical, literary, and social topics, while female students preferred to read religious, social, political, economic, mathematical, literary, scientific, and historical topics in that order.

As for readers' favorite newspapers and magazines, the Riyadh Business Journal (1992) surveyed a sample of individuals who frequently visit newspaper and magazine stands in bookstores, grocery stores, and the information center at the Chamber of Commerce, in addition to a sample of media workers. Results showed that 55% of the families read newspapers regularly, 38% read newspapers irregularly, and 7% do not read newspapers at all. Most participants spend 15 to 30 minutes reading newspapers, and 30 to 60 minutes reading magazines. Thirty-three local, Arab and foreign newspapers and magazines were the most widely circulated magazines with Al-Yamamah magazine as the most circulated magazine, followed by Al-Majalla, Al-Wasat, Al-Watan Al-Arabi, and Sayidaty respectively.

At the secondary school level, Sunni (1997) reported that 68% of female students were keen on reading daily newspapers. 82% preferred to read general magazines such as "Sayidaty" and "Asharq Al-Awsat". The most popular magazines among the students were Sayidaty (73%), Al-Sharq Al-Awsat (26%), Al-Majalla (11%), Al-Faisal (9%), Al-Sharq (9%), Al-Dawa (7%), Iqra (6. %), Al-Yamamah (6%), Al-Arabiya (4%), Al-Arab (3%), Al-Yaqa (2%), Kul al-Nas (1%), al-Majalis (0.5%), Sports and Youth (0.3%), Zahrat Al-Khaleej (0.3%), Al-Usrah (0.3%), Nisf Al-Dunya (0.3%). The topics that female secondary students liked to read in magazines were women-related topics, such as childcare, cooking, home decoration, and fashion (46%), social topics 37%, literary topics 28%, and artistic topics, such as drawing, sewing, needlework, and music (12%). Medical topics accounted for 11%, entertainment topics (10%), religious topics (7%), political topics (5%), and sports topics (3%).

Likewise, Mustafa (1991) found that students preferred to read "Al-Ittihad" newspaper, followed by "Al-Bayan," "Al-Khaleej," "Al-Hadaf", "Zahrat Al-Khaleej" and "Al-Islah" in that order. Female students preferred to read Al-Khaleej, Al-Ittihad, Al-Bayan newspapers; and "Zahrat Al-Khaleej", "Sayidaty," "Sports and Youth," "My Family," and "Al-Nahda," magazines respectively.. Mustafa (1991) reported numerous factors that affected reading preferences and the extent to which university students practice free (extensive) reading such as gender, academic major, academic level, participation in extracurricular activities, and academic achievement.

In Kuwait, a positive and statistically significant correlation was found between reading preferences and female students' intelligence and the encouragement they received from their family and school. The highest correlation was between reading interest and family encouragement, followed by the correlation between reading interest and school encouragement. The weakest correlation was between reading interest and the students' intelligence (Al-Qurashi, 1985).

In middle schools in Dubai, the average student's reading interest and practice was less than average. A positive, significant correlation was detected between the students' reading interest, educational level, nationality, achievement in the Arabic language, and the general achievement level and the students' GPA. But there were no statistically significant differences attributable to the students' gender (Nazzal, 1998). Primary and middle school female students' attitudes towards reading were more positive than male students' attitudes. High achievers' attitudes were more positive than low and average achievers' attitudes. Primary school students' attitudes were more positive than middle school students. No statistically significant differences in attitudes towards reading were found due to the family's socio-economic status (Al-Sartawi, 1996).

To identify the family, social, and school factors that affect male and female secondary students' attitudes toward free reading in the Gulf Cooperation Council countries, namely Saudi Arabia, Oman, the Emirates, Bahrain, Qatar, and Kuwait, survey results by Al-Hajji (2002) demonstrated that 16.2% of the subjects liked to read newspapers and magazines; 11.6% liked to read poetry; 9.3% read fantasy stories; 9.3% read religious texts; 9.2% read adventure stories, and 8% read riddles and puzzles; 7.2% read sports articles; 7% read tales and fables; 6% read historical novels; 4.7% read about peoples' customs and traditions; 4.5% like scientific topics, and 3.8% like historical topics. Statistically significant differences were detected between free reading, intrinsic motivation, family attitudes, social attitudes, and students' attitudes towards school and education.

In recent years, results of a survey study of 172 male and female adult Arabs with different ages, educational levels and areas of specialty, Al-Jarf (2023c) and Al-Jarf (2022d) demonstrated that 71.5% of the adult Arabs read paper books; 15% prefer to listen audiobooks; 13.5% use reading technologies; the majority read less than an hour a day; 16% read an hour a day; and 13% read whenever they can. Some read 10 pages a day; others finish three chapters/articles a week; 15% listen to audiobooks while driving, running errands, walking, working out, and cooking; 14% read before bedtime; 5% read during wait times; 4% read before they start work; 3% read during their break at work; 3% read in the afternoon; 3% read after sunset prayer, and over the weekend. Some carry their Kindle device with them and read anywhere. No significant differences were found among respondents in terms of gender, area of specialty, educational level, the type of material read, reading technologies and applications they use, how much time they allocate to reading, how they motivate themselves to read, how they reduce distractions, their reading rituals and how they interact with the reading material, where they read.

In addition, some recent studies explored digital reading habits among children under the age of 12 in Saudi Arabia. For example, (Al-Jarf, 2023b) reported that children in Saudi Arabia use a smart phone to access apps, games, cartoons, and YouTube videos. About 41% of the children in the sample use an iPad or tablet and few use their parents or older siblings' laptops. Children under age 6 use touch screen devices to read English and Arabic letters, numeracy and words. None of the children in the sample uses an e-reader such as Kindle. 36% of the children in grades 1-3 use touch screen devices in learning to read and 64% use them for games and entertainment. Children in grades 4-6 do not use those devices for reading purposes at all. Older children feel that reading, educational, and language learning apps are boring. Despite the advancements in digital reading, most parents and children in Saudi Arabia still prefer print books and stories. Electronic reading games, mobile audiobooks, storybooks, glossy magazines, picture books and, reading lessons with a digital, human-like character, children's digital libraries, online book clubs, and WhatsApp remote reading are not used.

As for educated adults, 71.5% read traditional printed books and 28.5% read digitally and use digital reading technologies. 15% listen to audiobooks, 6.5% use Kindle, and 7% use e-Ink, eBooks, Audible, Storytel, Feedly, text-to-speech software (Read Aloud, Natural Reader Pro and Kurzweil 1000), Artificial Intelligence (AI), Instapaper, Raindrop, Evernote, Pocket, Siri, Sibawayh Reader, Tarteel, Wajeez, and Screen Readers such as VoiceOver, JAWS, Window Eyes, HAL and Thunder by blind students. Digital readers use smart phones, iPads, tablets, and computer screens and are familiar with digital document formats such as Pdf, Mobi, Epub, AZW and IPA. The percentage of educated Arabs who use digital reading and reading technologies and apps is very small, taking into consideration that many Arab people have access to the Internet and have a smart phone, a laptop or desktop computer and should be able to access a wide range of reading apps, reading technologies, and digital resources. It was concluded that many educated Arabs are not familiar with digital reading, eBooks, e-libraries, online reading resources, reading technologies and applications (Al-Jarf, 2023a).

Results of prior Arabic studies show that the students' reading preferences and interests vary from one decade to another, from one country to another, from one educational level to another, and vary according to gender (male, female) and specialization. It appears that students' reading interests were more serious in the past than in the present. Students' interest in reading scientific,

political, and religious topics has been decreasing. All studies relied on questionnaire-surveys to collect data about reading interests. As a result, some studies, such as the study of the Riyadh Trade Journal, did not mention the sample size, nor the percentage of male and female participants, nor the names of the thirty-three most widely circulated magazines. Al-Naqa's study (1971) did not include the number of respondents.

Due to the importance of reading in the academic and professional lives, it is necessary to explore the reading habits, interests, skills, and competence among students of all ages and academic levels every decade or so to explore the status of and changes in students' reading preferences and habits and the factors that affect them. Therefore, this study attempted to answer the following questions: (i) What types of magazines do female university students prefer to read? (ii) What kinds of topics do female university students prefer to read? (iii) What types of topics do reading textbooks assigned to middle and high school grades in the Kingdom focus on in order to compare what female students read at home and at school?

3. Methodology

3.1 Study Samples

A random sample of 345 female students in levels one through eight, i.e., 20% of the total number of female students at the College of Languages and Translation and female students at the Colleges of Education, Arts, Business, Science and Agriculture, at King Saud University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, who were enrolled in a general English course that is part of the university requirements. The students' ages ranged between 18-22 years.

The second sample consisted of all the pages in a randomly selected issue of the "Sayidaty", "Zahrat Al Khaleej", "Laha", "Kalam Al-Nas", "12-20" and "Fawasil" magazines. This sample constituted 10% of the magazines that female students read.

The third sample consists of all the reading lessons and reading passages in the reading textbooks for the 3 middle and 3 secondary grades in the Kingdom.

3.2 Research Instruments

To identify the magazines and magazine topics that female college students in the sample like to read, an open-ended questionnaire-survey which consisted of two questions was used: (i) Which Arabic magazines do you like to read in your free time? (ii) What topics do you like to read in magazines?

To classify the topics of the articles included in the magazines (Sayidaty, Hiya, Zahrat al-Khaleej, Kalam Al-Nas, 12-20, and Al-Faisal), and the reading textbooks, the researcher used the Dewey Decimal Classification, which consists of the following categories: (1) Generalities, (2) Philosophy and related disciplines, (3) Religion, (4) Social Sciences, (5) Languages, (6) Pure Sciences, (6) Applied Sciences, (7) Arts, (8) Literature, (9) History, Geography and Related Sciences.

3.3 Data Analysis

The magazines that female students read were classified into the following thematic groups: (1) Islamic (religious) magazines such as Al-Mujtamaa, al-Dawa, Al-Ussrah, and Al-Balagh; (2) Literary magazines; (3) Poetry magazines such as Al-Mutafiliq; (4) Women's entertainment magazines such as Laha, Zahrat Al-Khaleej, Sayidaty, Laha, al-Jameela; (5) General cultural magazines such as Al-Arabi, Al-Ma'rifa, Al-Majalla Al-Arabiyyah, Al-Faisal, Iqraa, and Al-Yamamah; (6) Political magazines such as Al-Majalla; (7) Medical and food magazines; (8) Sports magazines; (9) Scientific and technological magazines; (10) Computer and Internet magazines; (11)) Historical magazines; (12) Children's magazines such as Majid, Al-Shibl, and Mickey. The percentage of female students who read each type was calculated.

Secondly, the researcher calculated the total number of pages devoted to art, artists (singers and actors), fashion, beauty, jewelry, home decoration, cooking, family and social topics, childcare, poetry, health and Islamic topics, and advertisements in a randomly selected issue of "Sayidaty," "Zahrat al-Khaleej," "Laha", "Kalam An-Nas," and "12-20" magazines. The percentages of pages in each category in each magazine were calculated.

Thirdly, the reading topics in the textbooks were classified into the following categories: (1) The Holy Qur'an and the Prophet's Hadiths; (2) Islamic history such as prominent Muslim companions, leaders, and scholars; (3) general topics; (4) stories of ancient Arab; (5) Arabic; (6) history and the geography of the kingdom; (8) scientific topics; (9) flora and fauna; (10) the Arab and Islamic worlds; (11) contemporary Arabic literature (12) Arab and international organizations; (13) foreign well-known figures. The percentages of texts under each category in the reading textbooks for the six grades combined were calculated because the goal of the study is to identify the general classification of reading topics and not a detailed analysis of each book for each grade separately.

3.4 Validity

A colleague who holds a doctorate degree in library and information sciences analyzed the content of the magazines and classified them, and another colleague who holds a doctorate degree in Arabic language and literature analyzed the content of reading textbooks and classified the reading topics. The results of their analyzes were compared with the researcher’s analysis. The inter-rate agreement was 95%. and minor discrepancies were solved by discussion.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Magazines Preferred by Female College Students

The results of the questionnaires showed that the students read 60 Arabic magazines and 7 English magazines. 18% of the students read one magazine, 27% read two magazines, 24% read three magazines, 15% read four magazines, and 10% read five magazines (see Table 1). The results of the study presented in Table (2) show that 77% of the students in the sample read women’s entertainment magazines such as “Sayidaty,” “Laha,” and “Zahrat Al Khaleej.” As for serious general culture magazines, such as “Al-Arabi,” “Al-Ma’rifa,” and “The Arab Magazine.” “Al-Faisal,” “Iqra,” and “Al-Yamamah” are read by 9%; political magazines such as “Al-Majalla” are read by 3%; magazines of a religious nature such as “Society” and “Al-Dawa” are read by 3%; and children’s magazines such as Mickey and Majid are read by 1.6%; medical magazines are read by 1%; Internet and computer magazines are read by another 1%; and 2% do not read magazines at all.

Table 1: Number of Magazines Read by the Sample of Female Collee Students and Their Percentages

Number of Magazines Read	Percentage of female Students Readers	Number of Magazines Read	Percentage of female Students Readers
One magazine	%18	Five magazines	%10
Two magazines	%27	Six magazines	%3.5
Three magazines	%24	Seven magazines	%2
Four magazines	%15	Ten magazines	%0.5

Table 2: Classification of Magazines and Reading Materials that Female College Students Prefer and Percentages of Student Readers of Each

Types of Magazines	% of Readers
• Women's magazines (Sayidaty, Laha, Zahrat Al Khaleej, Al-Jameela, Hiya	%77
• General serious cultural magazines (Al-Ma’rifa, Iqraa, Al-Yamamah, Al-Arabi, Al-Faisal, Al-Majalla Al-Arabiyya)	%9
• Islamic magazines (Al-Mojtamaa, Al-Dawa, Al-Ussrah)	%3
• Political magazines (Al-Majalla)	%3
• Health/medical journals (Alternative Medicine, Food, Nutrition World)	%2
• Children's magazines (Majid, Mickey)	%1.6
• Computer and Internet magazines	%1
• Sports magazines	%1
• Unspecified type	%2
• English magazines	%5
• Online magazines	%0.5
• Books	%0.5
• Novels	%0.5
• Newspapers only	%1
• Don't read magazines	%2

Table (3) shows that the most popular magazine is "Sayidaty" read by 48% of female students, followed by "Laha" (36%), "Zahrat Al-Khaleej" (32%), "Al-Fasil" (27%), and Al-Jameela (16%), and Hayat (16%), and Hiya magazine (10%).

The topics that female college students like to read in magazines are makeup and fashion (77%), art topics (66%), poetry (24%), stories (20%), public health as medical consultations, nutrition, diet, and sports (20%), social issues (16%), family problems (10%), religious topics (4%), educational and pedagogical topics (3%), literary topics (2.6%), political topics (2%), computers and the Internet, historical topics and Arabic and global events, and childcare (1% each) (see Table 4).

Table 3: Popular Magazines Among Female College Students and the Percentage of Students Preferring Each

Magazine Titles	% of Respondents	Magazine Titles	% of Respondents
• سيدتي Sayidaty	%48	• 12 - 21	%8
• لها Laha	%36	• ليلة خميس Laylat Khamees	%6.5
• زهرة الخليج Zahrat Al-Khaleej	%32	• المختلف Al-Mukhtalif	%6
• فواصل Fawasel	%27	• كل الأسرة Kul Al-Usrah	%5
• الجميلة Al-Jameela	%16	• كل الناس Kul al-NAs	%5
• حياة Hayat	%16	• تحت العشرين Under Twenty	%4
• هي Hiya	%10	• الأسرة Al-Usrah	%3

Table 4: Popular Reading Topics Among Female College Students and the Percentage of Student Readers for Each

Favorite Reading Topics	% of Respondents
• Fashion and beauty	%77
• Art topics	%66
• poetry	%24
• Stories	%20
• Public health (medical consultations, nutrition, diet and sports)	%20
• Social issues	%16
• Family problems	%10
• Crimes	%6
• Home decoration	%5
• Women's issues	%5
• Interviews with writers and thinkers	%5
• Psychological (girls' problems, teenage experiences, test yourself)	%5
• Social news	%4
• Islamic (religious)	%4
• Educational/pedagogical	%3
• Book Corners	%3
• Literary	%2.6
• Political	% 2

• Historical	%2
• Computer and internet	%1
• Childcare	%1
• Arab and international events	%1

Results of the content analysis of the randomly selected issues of "Sayidaty," "Laha," "Zahrat al-Khaleej," "Kalam al-Nas," and "12-20" magazines showed that the percentages of topics contained in each magazine are as follows:

- **Sayidaty Magazine** (256 pages): 29% for beauty and fashion, 20% for art, 5% for home decoration, 4% for social problems, 2.6% for marriage, 4% for children, 2% for health and medical issues, technology, general information, Islamic topics, and stories, peoples' customs, poetry, corners of some writers and others.
- **Laha Magazine** (132 pages): 35% for art, 25.5% for fashion and beauty, 4% for home decoration, 4% for cooking, 3% for poetry, 3% for tourism, and the rest of the pages are devoted to various topics, i.e., a page for each of the following topics: technology, Islamic, social issues, psychological tests, child care, foreign celebrities, horoscopes, medical and health topics, readers' letters and more.
- **Zahrat Al Khaleej Magazine** (226 pages): 23% for beauty and fashion, 15% for art, 7.5% for topics about children, 2.6% for home decoration, 2.6% for cooking, social topics, 2.6% for popular poetry, and the rest of the pages are devoted to various topics (Islamic, social, psychological issues, the Internet and technology, did you know, horoscopes, medical and health topics, readers' letters, crossword puzzles, etc.) (1 to 4 pages each).
- **Kalam Al-Nas** magazine (127 pages): 86% for beauty and fashion, and the rest of the pages are devoted to a variety of topics.
- **12-20 Magazine** (82 pages): 25% for art, 27% for science and technology, 12% for sports, 12% for medical and psychological problems, 11% for advertising, 3.6% for social problems, and 3.6% for poetry. The rest of the pages include personality tests, beauty, fashion, nutrition, history, and readers' mail (one page for each).

The results of the content analysis showed that the magazines contain issues and topics such as: *runaway wives, what kind of driver are you, the perfume of words, the ember of perfume, the perfume of a cloud, the charming eyes, a girl in a whirlpool, a marriage in crisis, true love, the strangest cases of divorce, horoscopes, dating, readers' letters, crossword puzzles, children's pictures, popular poetry, light poetry, two-page stories, films and cinema*. Magazines rely on excitement and attention-grabbing titles and content. They also rely on short topics; some of them use titles in foreign languages next to Arabic, such as "Beaute, A La Mode, Health." They present negative examples for female readers about marital life and draws their attention indirectly to beauty and accessories, even in the titles of poems and literary articles.

Moreover, the results of the content analysis of magazines showed that advertisements and promotional materials occupy a large amount of space in these magazines, many of which occupy entire pages, and the space allocated to images exceeds the space allocated to text. Technology advertisements focus on mobile phones, cameras, and televisions. Many advertisements promote cars, cigarettes, perfumes, and makeup. They focus on international brands of makeup and jewelry. The models in the products advertised in the magazines are foreign. Some foreign celebrities advertise foreign touristic places such as Malaysia, and foreign hotels.

It was noted that the magazines that female students prefer provide young students with a shallow culture and divert their thinking and attention away from current issues and the current situation that Arab countries are experiencing. It is noted that the magazines and topics that female students tend to read are of the light type that aims to entertain and pass time, not educate.

4.2 Reading Topics in the Reading Textbooks

Analysis of the topics of the reading lessons showed that excerpts of the Holy Qur'anic and Prophet's hadiths constitute 10% of the topics in the reading textbooks for the six grades combined. Islamic history topics constitute 29%, general topics 13%, and stories of ancient Arab heritage 11%, Arabic poetry 9%, topics about history and geography of the Kingdom 8%, scientific topics 6%, flora and fauna 6%, Arab and Islamic worlds 4%, contemporary Arabic literature 2%, Arabic and international organizations 1%, and foreign well-known figures 1 % (see Table 5).

Table 5: Percentages of the Topics in the Reading Textbooks for All Grade Levels Combined

Reading Topics	Percentage of Lessons
● Islamic history	%29
● General topics	%14
● Stories about ancient Arab heritage	%11
● The Holy Qur'an and the Prophet's Hadiths	%10
● Arabic poetry	%9
● History and geography of the Kingdom	%8
● Scientific topics	%6
● Animals and plants (fauna and flora)	%6
● The Arab and Islamic worlds	%4
● Contemporary Arabic Literature	%2
● Arabic and international organizations	%1
● Foreign well-known Figures	%1

5. Discussion

Results of the current study indicate that female university students prefer women's entertainment magazines that focus on news about Arab and foreign singers and actors, male and female broadcasters, beauty, fashion, popular poetry, short stories, real-life and social stories, magazines that focus on religious, political, scientific, health culture, historical, and technological topics in that order. In addition, the reading textbooks have almost no influence on female students' attitudes, reading interests and preferences. After being exposed to the national reading curricula that focus on religious and Islamic issues for twelve years, the curriculum has not succeeded in making these topics the focus of reading interests of female students as the percentage of students who read religious topics does not exceed 4%. Similarly, the reading textbooks have not succeeded in making scientific, technological, and political topics, and even topics related to childcare the focus of female students' reading interests.

Moreover, many topics in the reading textbooks are mere repetitions of what female students study in the religion, history, civic education, literature and poetry courses. Whoever reads those topics feels that he/she is living in the past. The reading textbooks do not contain contemporary readings that address current global issues and introduce students to the world in which they live. Even scientific and general topics are approached from a historical angle and are written in a rigid style that makes the students feel outdated and unrelated to reality or the age in which they are living. The reading textbooks lack diversity in the reading skills that should be developed in the students, lack diversity in style, topics, specializations, and sources from which they were selected. They lack diversity in design, layout, color, fonts, and images that support the reading texts.

It seems that female university students are reluctant to read scientific, political, and historical topics because they are not accustomed to reading serious texts in school and have not acquired the reading skills necessary for extensive reading, such as text organizing skills, skills of recognizing coherence in text, and inferencing the meaning of difficult vocabulary from context. Therefore, if they read such topics, they will have comprehension problems. In a study conducted by Al-Jarf (2004) and Al-Jarf (2020) on a sample of female freshman students at King Saud University, the students reported that they find it difficult to understand topics and vocabulary that they frequently heard/read in the media, such as: Hamas, logistics, military convoy, weapons of mass destruction, parliaments, Senate, House of Commons, House of Representatives, Nazism, pluralistic societies, ethnic pluralism, unipolarity, municipal appropriation strategy, national dialogue, money laundering, nationalisms, privatization,

human rights, democracy, spokesperson, diplomatic immunity, redeployment, road map, New World Order, European Union, political alliances and globalization. The students stated that they did not know anything about the First and Second World Wars, United Nations organizations such as UNESCO, UNICEF, NATO, the European Union, Muslim minorities in the world, which countries in the world speak the Arabic language, the regions where wars and famines occurred; and when the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Findings of the current study are consistent with findings of Sunni's study (1997) which showed that the most popular magazine among female secondary school students was the women's magazine *Sayidaty* (73%), and the least popular magazines are serious cultural/educational magazines such as *Al-Da'wa* (7%), *Iqra* (6%), *Al-Yamamah* (6%), *Al-Arabiya* (4%), *Al-Arab* (3%), *Al-Yaqatha* (2%), *Kul Al-Nas* (1%), *Al-Majales* (0.5%), *Sports and Youth* (0.3%), *Zahrat Al Khaleej* (0.3%), *Al-Ussrah* (0.3%), *نصف العالم* Half the World (0.3%). However, it differs from them in the order of topics that female students like read and their percentages.

The results of this study agree with the results of Mustafa's study (1991) in terms of the magazines that female students prefer, but they differ in the topics they like to read. The researcher found that female students preferred to read "*Zahrat Al-Khaleej*" magazine, then "*Sayidaty*," "*Sports and Youth*," "*My Family*," and "*Al-Nahda*," respectively. Female students prefer to read religious, social, political, economic, sports, literary, scientific, and historical topics, respectively, while female students in the sample of the current study tend to read topics on makeup and fashion (77%), actors and singers (66%), and poetry (24%), stories (20%), public health (medical consultations, nutrition, diet, and sports) (20%), social issues (16%), family problems (10%), religious topics (4%), educational and pedagogical topics (3%), and literary topics (2.6%), political topics (2%), computers and the Internet (1%), historical topics (1%), Arab and international events (1%), and childcare (1%).

The results of this study are partially consistent with the results of the study of Al-Hajji (2002), which found that 16.2% of male and female students at the secondary level in the Gulf Cooperation Council countries like to read newspapers and magazines, and that 11.6% like to read poetry, 9.3% read fiction, and 9.3% read religious topics, 9.2% read adventure stories, 8% read riddles and puzzles, 7.2% read about sports, 7% like tales and legends, 6% read historical novels, 4.7% prefer to read about peoples customs and traditions, and 4.5% like science, and 3.8% like history.

In addition, findings of the current study are inconsistent with findings of the Riyadh Commerce Magazine questionnaire (1992), which revealed that the most popular magazine among adult male and female readers was "*Al-Yamamah*," followed by "*Al-Majalla*" and "*Al-Wasat*," "*The Arab World*" and "*Sayidaty*" magazine in that order.

All of the studies mentioned above agree that the least popular topics among male and female students prefer are scientific and historical topics.

By contrast, the current findings differ from findings of studies conducted in foreign countries such as China by Liu (1996) in which he found that the most popular book among Chinese children was "*Thousand Whys*," which sold 75,000 copies. When the children were asked why they liked this book, they answered because it increases their knowledge. Children in China often check out books from the library to do their homework, obtain information and prepare for exams.

In the United States, Mitchell and Terry (1996) pointed out that female secondary school students' attitudes towards reading for self-development, to succeed in studying, and for pleasure are more positive than male students' attitudes. Both male and female students obtained the highest scores on the reading to succeed in studying scale. High school sophomore students had more positive attitudes towards self-development than third year students in middle school, although the students' scores on the reading for pleasure and free reading remained stable across the different grades. Overall, students valued reading highly because it helps them succeed in school, but valued reading for pleasure less, and valued free reading the least. In the current study, it can be inferred from the topics that female students' main goal is reading for entertainment and passing time, not gaining knowledge, information, self-development, and success in their studies.

6. Recommendations and Conclusion

Given the importance of reading in life-long education, self-learning, self-development, and creating an educated, well-informed generation that contributes to the process of social, cultural, and technological development, the study surveyed female college students' opinions about the magazines and topics they prefer to read. It also analyzed the content of the reading textbooks assigned by the Ministry of Education to find out the topics taught to female students in school, as they form the basis for developing a passion for reading among the students as a means of learning and acquiring knowledge in the later stages. The study found that reading textbooks do not contain topics that are appropriate for the age in which the students live. The reading topics completely contradict the topics that the students read outside of school, and that the magazines and topics that female students like to read develop their superficial knowledge and are far from current global issues. The favorite magazines among

female students are those about beauty, fashion, art, and artists, and showing women as beautiful fashionista whose main interest is in following the latest fashion and distracting young people from current issues in the Arab world. If we want to raise an educated, aware, and productive generation, we must re-structure the reading curricula at all levels, monitor our media and the topics and ideas they transmit, and monitor our magazines and the topics they contain. To encourage female students' purposeful extensive reading, this study recommends the following:

- Re-selecting the topics included in reading textbooks for grades 6-12 so that they do not duplicate the topics they read in their religion, history, literature, and poetry courses, in addition to choosing contemporary topics with a global dimension that are related to human values, international organizations, contemporary issues, global history, and students' acquaintance with other cultures (Al-Jarf, 2004; Al-Jarf, 2020).
- Paying attention to reading textbooks' layout in terms of colors, pictures, paper quality, choosing an attractive cover, diversifying reading texts so that they include articles from different information sources such as newspapers, magazines, encyclopedias, etc., and diversifying the writing style of the texts (classification, definition, mentioning causes and results, comparison, enumeration, narration of events, persuasion, description of process, description of parts and structure, etc.).
- Adding a course on reading and searching skills in each grade in which students practice searching for reading topics in websites, magazines, and books and setting a time for reading and discussing what they students have read.
- Encouraging extensive reading of serious topics, starting from the primary grades, by training female students to read books on various topics that match their age, writing a report about them, discussing them in class, introducing students to interesting magazines and books in different specializations, and encouraging each student to keep a record of the books he/she has read, and appreciating students who read diligently with prizes and extra credit.
- Conducting reading campaigns to raise students and teachers' awareness of the importance of reading.
- Conducting book reading competitions, summarizing them, and preparing reports about them as an extracurricular school activity and as Summer Center activities. The students may participate in collecting, preparing and delivering school radio materials. Forming reading clubs and reading groups under the teachers and librarians' supervision. Students create their own magazines, websites and blogs where they post the topics they have written and display new books of their choice.
- Encouraging students to visit book fairs and publishing houses, cultural centers and public libraries in order to read some of the books available there.
- It is necessary for magazines to contain a page dedicated to introducing readers to the meanings of new terms and new information commonly used in the media on a daily basis and to test readers' ability to recognize and understand them as in the Word Power page in the Reader's Digest magazine.
- Establishing a corner for books and reading in every classroom and a library in every school, providing school libraries with interesting, attractive, and illustrated books, novels, and magazines about other cultures. In addition, new book titles can be announced on television channels and in daily newspapers. The Ministry of Education may publish a special periodical or bulletin for male and female students and another one for teachers, telling them about the importance of free reading and introducing them to new books.
- Developing the students' ability to read fast with comprehension, training them to read a specific topic from several paper and electronic resources, and developing their ability to summarize and organize a text, and inferring the meanings of difficult words from the context. Such skills would help the students read and understand long specialized texts in the scientific, educational, and technological fields instead of reading short, light magazine articles.
- Integrating digital reading in the school curriculum, raising parents and teachers' awareness of digital reading devices, reading apps and websites, eBooks, and designing mobile reading apps with interactive features to encourage older children to read Arabic fiction and short stories.
- Offering a course on global culture and encouraging female students to read global topics related to the most important global events, world history, and global educational, health, political, and technological systems (Al-Jarf 2020).
- Integrating global topics into history, geography, literature, and social studies courses (Al-Jarf, 2003a; Al-Jarf, 2003b).
- Encouraging female students to read texts and books in various disciplines such as global art, literature and children's stories (Al-Jarf, 2015; Al-Jarf, 2011).
- Developing female students' awareness of global topics by incorporating speaking and reading activities and using a blogs for engaging the students in extensive reading about the latest global events, posting a summary of what they have read and discussions what they have read in the blog (Al-Jarf, 2022b; Al-Jarf, 2022a).
- E-reading using e-course platforms such as Blackboard, Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Skype where students read what they like outside of class and posting a written summary in the e-course of what they have read (Al-Jarf, 2019; Al-Jarf, 2013; Al-Jarf, 2009a; Al-Jarf, 2007).

- Using mobile reading applications such as mobile audiobooks, where students choose the books that they prefer to listen to, followed by a discussion of the content of the books orally and in writing. The students can engage in collaborative group activities to discuss what they have read (Al-Jarf, 2022c; Al-Jarf, 2021d; Al-Jarf, 2021a; Al-Jarf, 2012).
- Mind-mapping software can be used to help the students relate a central idea or topic in a text to related subtopics or details, help them understand the organizational structure of a text, and locate signaling devices. A mind-map begins with a word or image that symbolizes the topic of the reading text in the middle of the screen. While reading the text paragraph by paragraph, main branches are added for each paragraph topic. Sub-branches are added for each important detail related to a particular topic (main branch). Colors are used for the main and minor branches (Al-Jarf, 2021f).
- Students should not limit themselves to the reading material of a particular course and teachers should not delete parts of the assigned textbook in order to make it easy for the students, because the more students read, the faster they will read, thus reading becomes an easy task, not a chore (Al-Jarf, 2021c).
- It is necessary for extensive reading to be part of the curriculum and extracurricular activities in the stages that precede the university, i.e., the primary, middle, and secondary levels, so that reading becomes a habit for female students (Al-Jarf, 2019a; Al-Jarf, 2019b; Al-Jarf, 2009b; Al-Jarf, 2009c).
- To develop students' appreciation skills after reading, students can collect and analyze inspirational quotes, advice, and books on self-development (Al-Jarf, 2021e; Al-Jarf, 2021b).
- Conducting surveys every few years to identify the reading interests of male and female students in all educational levels, to identify the changes occurring in their reading habits and interests and the new trends among young people, and to develop appropriate plans for modifying such trends and inclinations of young people in order to achieve the desired educational goals. Furthermore, a comparison of college students reading habits, interests and skills in English and Arabic still open for further investigation by future studies.

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