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CHILDREN'S LITERATURE, THEIR BOOKS AND READING INTERESTS: A STUDY IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN BAHRAIN

BY

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Dedication

To my beloved wife Mona and
my dearest daughter Wasan

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to assess the provision and quality of children's literature and books presented to Bahraini children of ages 6-12 at their homes, schools, public libraries and bookshops; to explore the values of children's literature and books and the effects they might have on children's lives; to identify children's preferences with respect to literature and related books in Bahrain; and to provide evidence and guidance to the appropriate authorities so that more informed decisions might be made concerning the provision of children's literature and their books in Bahrain.

To achieve these objectives, a quantitative and qualitative survey style research approach was adopted to collect information from people responsible for the provision of children's literature and those who are best acquainted with children's reading interests. Information was gathered from teachers, librarians, parents and authors and, through questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, from primary aged children.

From the findings of this study it was concluded that:

- There was a serious deficiency in the provision of good and suitable children's literature and books in Bahrain in general and in the primary schools in particular.

- Inadequacy of children's literature and related books in terms of quantity and quality has caused significant retardation in the development of Bahraini children's literary education and in meeting their reading needs and interests.

- There were differences in the reading habits of male and female children in Bahrain.

It was also concluded from the literature review that children's literature and books have great value in children's lives in addition to their significant contribution to children's educational, language, cognitive, personal and social development.

In the light of these conclusions, clear recommendations were offered as to the way ahead for future developments in:

- The provision of children's literature and books in Bahrain
- The provision of library services to children in Bahrain
- The production and publishing of children's books in Bahrain
- School environment and adults' role in encouraging children's reading interests

General recommendations with an objective to develop children's literature and books in the Arab world were also presented.

It is hoped that the findings and the implications of this study will contribute towards the development of children's literature and their books in Bahrain and towards improving educational practice in primary schools of Bahrain by use of literature-based programmes and teaching methods.

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The copyright of this thesis rests with the author. No quotation from it should be published without Mohamed Al-Nokhada's prior written consent and information derived from it should be acknowledged.

Declaration

This thesis results entirely from my own work and has not been previously offered in candidature for any other degree or diploma.

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Chapter 1

The Study Design

The Study Design

1.1- Introduction

Childhood, especially the part concerned with primary education is defined by Thafer and Al-Hammadi (1984) as the most crucial stage in life. They state that the care a child receives during this period helps in determining the profile of his or her personality and future path in life (p.224). Educators such as Kent (1982) believe that the skills taught and information gathered during the first years of children's education will serve them for the rest of their school days and will also lay the foundations upon which all future learning will stand (p.1).

Children's lives must be enriched with literature in a variety of ways in order to create in them a strong desire to learn, which will continue throughout their lifetime. The role of literature in the curriculum and in the lives of children is a central issue for language arts educators. Ruddell, R. (1992), demonstrated the importance of literature in contributing to children's education and in enriching their lives. He stated:

> "Literature represents life via language and offers students a range of experiences that not only equals but also surpasses their base of experience. Also, literature can serve to bring our past experiences into sharper focus, to elucidate the unexpressed, and to point to the not yet experienced. In addition, literature provides pleasure (in an aesthetic sense) through the joy of language and, also, by entertaining, stimulating, and lulling with persuasive combinations of words. Finally, literature provides understanding (in a cognitive sense) through insight into our own behaviour

> and explanation of possible causes; through an awareness of people and other living things, events, and ideas not present in the child's own life experience; and through expansion of the child's world by suggesting worlds not yet experienced." (Ruddell, 1992, p.614)

In this statement Ruddell is clearly stressing the value of literature not only in providing children with language experiences, but also with experiences of the past. This encourages the researcher to stress that valuable experiences can be provided to children in Bahrain through their heritage if the literature is developed and submitted to them in a stimulating and persuasive form.

Other language educators such as Barone, Eeds and Mason, 1995, also stressed that literature is very important in children's lives. According to them, "the subject of literature is life itself" (p. 30). In their article 'Literature, the Disciplines, and the Lives of Elementary School Children', they reported:

> "Literature provides an awareness of language as a powerful means of human expression by demonstrating the skilful use of imagery, drama, humour, and pathos. By creating instructional conditions in our classrooms that immerse our children in literature through reading and listening experiences; using literature to provide meaningful demonstrations of language in action; employing literature for real life purposes meaningful to the child; and providing opportunity for our students to assume responsibility for at least a portion of their literary experiences, we unleash the potential literature holds for developing language growth with our children."
>
> (Barone, Eeds and Mason, 1995, p. 30)

Thus, it is essential that teachers of primary education in Bahrain create instructional conditions in their classrooms using literature to provide children with meaningful demonstrations of language and with literary experiences. These instructional conditions as suggested by Barone, Eeds and Mason, include the use of drama, imagery, humour and pathos.

Stott, 1994, demonstrates the value of literature in the following statement:

> "Literature which feeds the imagination and the soul, is essential if one is to survive the deadening effects of inner winders. The poet is a hero; when we ignore him, we are ignoring one of the most vital people there are. Disaster follows when stories disappear, and the person who risks great personal danger, even death, to recover them is also heroic."
>
> (Stott, 1994, p. 244)

The Canadian critic Northrop Fry (1990) noted that:

> "As school children we were told that food, shelter, and clothing (to which was sometimes added fuel) are the basic human necessities. To these should also be added stories. Whenever a society is reduced to the barest primary requirements..., the arts, including poetry, stand out sharply in relief as ranking with these primary requirements." (Frye, 1990, p. 250)

Thus, "storying" the process of creating (as teller or author) and recreating (as listener, viewer or reader), appears to be a fundamental and uniquely human activity. Jane Yolen (1986), one of America's foremost children's authors, believes that "stories distinguish us from animals more than any opposable thumb" (p. 1). The British critic and educator, Barbara Hardy (1975) has expressed a similar idea:

> "Nature, not art, makes us all story-tellers. Daily and nightly we devise fictions and chronicles, calling some of them daydreams or dreams, some of them nightmares, some of them truths, records, reports, and plans. Some of them we call, or refuse to call, lies. Narrative imagination is a common human possession, differentiating us...from the animals."
>
> (Hardy, 1975, p. 7)

The Native American writer, Leslie Silko (1980), emphasised the importance of stories as helping individuals become members of a larger community. She asserts:

> "It's stories that make us into a community. There have to be stories. That's how you know; that's how you belong; that's how you know you belong." (Silko, 1980, p. 190)

The implications for children's literature are therefore considerable. It appears to be a medium wherein the child is enabled to move into different worlds and social roles. The previously demonstrated statements of educators and children's authors indicate the significant value of literature in children's lives and education. It is recognised as nurturing children's development including language, cognitive, personal and social development which are further discussed in section 3.4 of chapter 3.

The idea of conducting a field study, which would provide information about the literature available for children in Bahrain, developed from the researcher's professional interest in children's literature and books. The study includes fiction and non-fiction books and covers their provision in primary schools, public libraries and bookshops. The study has been designed to explore the qualities

people associate with good children's literature and good children's books, and to consider the ways in which literature might affect children's lives.

The researcher gathered the views of parents, teachers and children's librarians. Children and the authors of children's books were also interviewed.

1.2- The Significance of the Study

Children's literature, is one of the main influences forming the personality of the child by way of contributing to mental, social, emotional and linguistic growth. Literature helps to develop children's ability to comprehend, it widens their vision on life and expands their imaginative powers. This benefits not only the child, but also society as a whole, because children's lives are the basis for the future of their society (Najeeb, 1981, p.18, and Ja'afar, 1979, p.75).

These values stress the need for proper provision of literature and books for children in schools, public libraries and at home. The researcher conducted this research to study the provision of children's literature and their story books in Bahrain with particular reference to the provision in primary schools. This will be the first study to deal comprehensively with the provision of children's literature and books in Bahrain. To ascertain this, the researcher carried out a thorough investigation through the Centre of Research Studies administered by the Ministry of Education, which confirmed that there were no previous research studies in the same field. The researcher has also reviewed systems such as the Educational

Resources Information Centre (ERIC), the British Education Index (BEI) and the Bath Information and Data Services (BIDS), but none of them indicate any previous study in Bahrain in the field of children's literature and books.

This study should also be of value to those who are directly charged with the responsibility of providing, selecting and writing for the children in Bahrain such as parents, teachers, librarians and authors of children's literature. Clearly the more we obtain information and assess problems concerning the provision and quality of children's literature, the easier it is for us to reach appropriate solutions.

1.3- The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the present study is to assess the value accorded to children's literature and books in the light of previous theories and research studies; to study the availability, quality and value of children's literature and books in Bahrain; to determine the effect of children's literature and books on their educational development: to identify children's (male/female) preferences with respect to literature and books in Bahrain; to identify the problems that might face children in Bahrain in getting access to appropriate books; and to provide evidence and guidance to the appropriate authorities so that more informed decisions might be made concerning the provision of children's literature and books in Bahrain.

1.4- The Research Questions

The focus of the study can be formulated in the following questions which provide the basis for this thesis:

- What is literature?
- What is special about children's literature?
- What provision is made in Bahrain for children to have ready access to good literature and story books?
- What part might children's literature play in children's lives?
- How do male and female children engage with children's books and literature in Bahrain?
- Are there any differences in the reading habits of male and female children in Bahrain?
- What are the implications of the research for the development of children's access to literature and books in Bahrain?

1.5- Limitation of the Study

This study is limited to variables which are associated with the research questions. These variables are: primary schools in Bahrain (separate schools for male and female); children of primary education aged 6-12; primary school teachers; primary school librarians; parents of primary school children; authors of children's literature in Bahrain; and children's magazines, books (fiction/non-fiction) presented to children of ages 6-12 in Bahrain at their homes, schools and public libraries.

1.6- Methods of the Study

The research methodology and procedures for data collection are described in detail in chapter five however evidence for this study was collected from the following sources:

- The views, as represented through questionnaires, of 400 primary school children aged between 9-12, 200 male and 200 female.
- The views, as represented through questionnaires, of 60 teachers of primary school level in Bahrain.
- The views, as represented through questionnaires, of 20 librarians working in primary schools in Bahrain.
- The views, as represented through questionnaires, of 40 parents of primary school children.
- The views, as represented through data gathered from semi-structured interviews, of 60 children (30 male and 30 female) between the ages of 6-9.
- The views as represented through data gathered from semi-structured interviews, of children's authors in Bahrain.
- The researcher's observations across a variety of research sites: libraries, schools, homes, etc.
- Samples of the stories presented to children in Bahrain including fiction/non-fiction and translated foreign stories.
- Children's primary school textbooks.
- Photographs.

1.7- Hypotheses of the Study

Through this study the researcher will examine the following three hypotheses: (1) that the range of good quality books available to children in Bahrain is inadequate. (2) that the literature presented to children in Bahrain does not assist them in developing their reading interests. (3) that there are differences in the reading habits of male and female children in Bahrain.

1.8- Definitions of Terms

The following are definitions of terms, which appear frequently in the study:

- Children's literature books: These are books, which contain literary subjects for children such as stories, poetry, drama, etc.

- Children's local literature books: These are books containing literary subjects that have been written by authors of children's literature in Bahrain and which are produced and published indigenously.

- Primary education stage: This is similar to the term 'primary education level' used in England, for children aged 6-12.

- Primary stage children: This is also similar to the term 'primary level children aged 6-12' used in England.

- Children's literary level: This refers to the amount of literary activities regularly engaged in by children e.g. reading, writing stories, etc.

- Children's foreign literature: This consists of literary subjects written in languages other than the Arabic language and which are produced and published outside the Arab world such as the European, American and Russian literature.

- Suitable Children's books: These are books with contents that suit children's reading abilities and inclinations in terms of language simplicity and clarity of the ideas, also with a format that suit children in terms of illustrations and typography.

- Children's periodical magazines: These are magazines produced for children at regular intervals, for example, weekly, bi-weekly or monthly.
- Suwar: These are Qura'nic verses which offer instruction and advice for all Muslims.
- Shri'ah and Fiqh: Islamic law.
- Mullas: Teachers of Islamic religion.

1.9- Organisation of the Study

This study is organised as follows:

Chapter 1 of this thesis outlines the study design, which includes the significance and purpose, research questions, limitations, methodology, hypotheses and organisation of the study.

Chapter 2 gives the reader general information about the geography, history and economic background of Bahrain. It also reviews the historical background of education in Bahrain and the current educational system with particular focus on the educational provision in the primary schools of Bahrain.

Chapter 3 reviews the relevant available literature on children's literature and books covering four areas relevant to the research:

1. The provision of children's literature in the Arab world with reference to the situation in Bahrain.
2. An overview of children's literature and books.
3. The values of children's literature.
4. Children's reading interests.

Chapter 4 reviews the relevant research studies conducted in the field of children's literature and books. The review covers areas such as the values of children's literature, Children's reading interests and other significant aspect of children's literature.

Chapter 5 presents the empirical framework of the research study and describes the procedures and methodology employed in gathering and analysing data.

Chapter 6 presents and analyses the data gathered from the questionnaires given to children, teachers, librarians and parents, and from the results of the semi-structured interviews carried out with children aged 6-9 and authors of children's literature in Bahrain. The chapter also summarises the major findings of each of the questionnaires and the semi-structured interviews.

Chapter 7 discusses the major findings, which emerge from the analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data in relation to:

- The provision of children's literature and books in Bahrain.
- The provision of ready access to children's literature in Bahrain.
- The reading habits of male and female children in Bahrain.

Chapter 8 discusses the strength and weaknesses of the research and presents recommendations on the basis of the findings of this study.

The appendices present materials and instruments used in the study, in addition to a review of some storybooks presented to children in Bahrain.

Chapter 2

The State of Bahrain
A General Survey

The State of Bahrain
A General Survey

2.1- Bahrain - Its Geography, History and Economic Background

The state of Bahrain is composed of an archipelago of thirty-three islands and is located in the Arabian Gulf with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the west and Qatar to the east (see figure 2.1 on page 32). The majority of these islands are uninhabited, so there are no major problems of educational administration caused by a dispersed population.

Bahrain's total land area is about 692 square kilometres. The largest of the islands, representing 85% of the land area, is the island of Bahrain itself. There is found the capital city and primary port, Manama, the oil fields, and the oil refinery. There is also agriculture scattered throughout the island (see figure 2.2 on page 33).

The hot climate in Bahrain has a significant effect on educational provision in that the school day is shorter than in England and the summer holiday period is longer.

Bahraini Arabs constitute 70% of the total population, which is estimated at 358,857. However, due to Bahrain's geographic location and its status as a centre of commerce, especially after its independence in 1971, immigrants were attracted to the area and have affected the composition of the Bahraini population. At different stages in Bahrain's economic development from the age of pearl trading to the age of petrol and services, the origin of the visitors

from abroad has varied. The ethnic mix of the population had implications for education and literature. Many private schools of different cultures and origins have been founded in Bahrain to teach different educational curricula, such as the British, American, Indian and Pakistani curricula. Many of the Bahraini children are being admitted to these schools with an intention to acquire the various educational aspects in English to meet future demands. However, these children are, at the same time, exposed to literature that relates to other cultures and education systems.

The history of Bahrain dates back to 2,300 B.C. when the country had a civilisation of its own, under its ancient name 'Dilmon' as it was called by the Sumerians. In the Islamic era, the name of Bahrain referred to the Western Coast, from Basra to Oman. This was considered to be an autonomous region, characterised by a dialect and by traditions and customs that were similar throughout.

Bahrain had converted to Islam by the beginning of the seventh century A.D. It was a colony of Great Britain from 1880 until it became independent in 1971. Thus we see the two major influences on Bahraini culture. Islam gave Bahrain stability and its religious foundation and, whilst under the protection of Great Britain, Bahrain developed administrative and commercial structures using the English language as its means of communication. Education in Bahrain has also been influenced by Islam and the British Colonials. Islam introduced the teaching of Arabic reading and writing through the teaching of the Qura'an verses to children and adults. This was then developed during the British Colonial Period through the foundation of schools and the teaching of the various educational subjects such as science, geography, history, for example.

In the past, Bahrain was very well known for its pearls and these were its main source of income. It enjoyed prosperity during the Second World War because of the big harvest of pearls, which were sold for high prices in the markets of London, Paris and Bombay. Belgrave (1953) states that: "the pearl income for the year 1833 was estimated at Bahraini Dinar 240,000, 400,000 in 1835 and 303,941 in 1896" (p.43).

Another source of income that was widespread at that time was from agriculture. Some people also pursued crafts such as boat building, weaving and pottery. These continue to decrease rapidly because of the trends in the economy and because better opportunities and higher pay are to be found in more modern occupations. In 1930, as the pearl and other industries started to decline, the development of transit trade began gradually to grow. Increasing prosperity was soon enhanced by the expansion of the production of oil in the 1950's. The changes in work patterns and the rapid rise in wealth have had implications on education. The Bahraini people started to realise the importance of education for changing their work patterns and accordingly to increase their income. Many schools had been founded by the government in order to cater for the increasing number of children. Teachers from the different Arab countries were also attracted by the government to teach in these schools. For higher education, parents started to send their children to the developed countries in order to gain the most advanced types of education. Thus, this rapid development in educational provision in Bahrain and the invasion of the educational systems of different cultures has had its implications for literature provided to children. Many books are being imported for children from the various developed and

developing countries. Hence, children are being heavily exposed to literature of cultures other than the Bahraini culture.

The first oil well was discovered in 1932 and by 1935 there were 16 wells producing oil. The oil fields in Bahrain are rich in natural gas, which is used as a source of energy for running industries such as the Bahrain Oil Refinery and Alba Aluminium Industry. However, the production of oil has started to decline and the Government has become aware that in the future, oil cannot be the only source of income for the nation as it has been estimated that the Bahrain oil fields will be exhausted by the 1990s. It is therefore now encouraging the growth and expansion of the economy through industrialisation.

Bahrain has experienced a rapid development in its industrial potential. Oil has brought the country financial security. The educational system has tried to keep pace with these developments but there is a need for further advances if Bahrain is to try to meet educational standards appropriate to developed countries.

2.2- Historical Background of Education in Bahrain

According to the official reports of the Bahraini Government and those of the Department of Education, Al-Hidayah School for boys was the first school in Bahrain. It was opened in 1919 in the northern end of Muharraq. The curriculum was partly religious and partly adopted from the syllabi of some other Arab countries. The teachers were mostly brought from Egypt, Syria, Lebanon and later on some were brought over from Basra in Iraq. The first public school for girls was opened in the year 1928 in Muharraq. This was followed by the Ja'fariya school for boys in 1929. Then came the technical school,

which was built in 1937-38, and the 'Kulliyah', Manama Secondary School for boys that were inaugurated in 1940 (Al-hamer, 1965, p.9).

Historically, the Qura'nic (Kuttab) schools predated all other types of school, whether national, private or governmental. These schools (Kuttab) were run by local 'Mullas' in their houses, in corners of shops, and during the summer in lanes of the bazaars. Most of the Kuttab were co-educational and parents paid nominal fees. The programme consisted mainly of memorising the Qura'n and usually reading and writing plus the acquisition of a rudimentary knowledge of simple arithmetic. When a boy or a girl finished reading the whole Qura'n, then parents and friends joined in the most popular celebration called 'Al-Khatmeh'. In addition to Kuttab, there were other national and foreign schools operating separately. According to R.B. Winder, (1969):

> The first western-style schools in Al-Bahrain were founded by the American Mission, an independent group which began its operations in al-Bahrain in 1892 and which was adopted by the reformed church in America in 1894 (pp. 7-8).

The curriculum in these schools was limited to the teaching of English, arithmetic and advanced Arabic grammar. The structure of the public school system in Bahrain was originally based on the religious teachings of the Kuttab and generally the teaching programme of schools in their early days was dominated by religious subjects. Memorisation of Qura'nic (Suwar) verses was just one part of the syllabus, while the rest of the programme consisted of Shari'ah, Fiqh and the daily practices of Moslems such as fasting and praying. (Al-Hamer, 1965, p.11)

As a first stage in modernising educational administration, hitherto disparate systems had to be combined. Qura'nic schools have now disappeared although there is some reflection of their curriculum within the current requirements in state schools that Islam should be studied. Early government schools retain their original names but what happens within them has changed significantly. There is still a powerful cultural influence on retaining single-sex schools but the overall administration of these schools is now unified. (Al-khalifa and Al-Hamer, 1971, p.23)

The first teacher-training programme started in the form of a course in teaching methods in the early 1940s. In 1954, teacher training start as a stream in a secondary school. In 1966 a teacher training college for men was opened, followed by another for women in 1967. In 1968/69 the Gulf Technical College, which was jointly supported by Bahrain, Qatar, U.A.E, and Oman, was established. Its mission was to make a serious contribution to the development of a professional and semi-professional workforce throughout the Gulf area. (Al-Maskati and Al-Saleh, 1985, pp 13-14)

In 1978, the University College of Bahrain was established by an Amiri decree. Its mission was to provide training in the arts, science and education to undergraduate and postgraduate students. In 1986, both the Gulf Technical College and the University College of Bahrain were amalgamated into one institution, which is currently the University of Bahrain. (University of Bahrain Catalogue 1993/94, p.6)

Since the beginning of education in Bahrain until the establishment of the University College of Bahrain in 1978, literature was not a major aspect of the curriculum in any of the educational stages

adopted by the Ministry of Education. In fact, it was not even realised by the society of Bahrain to be an important factor in children and adults' lives. Thus the provision of literature, either in schools or in bookshops, was very scarce, although this provision has gradually developed in bookshops when books began to be imported from other Arab countries such as Egypt, Syria, Lebanon and Iraq, and also from western countries such as Britain and America, and from Russia.

Nevertheless, in 1978, the concerns of the Ministry of Education brought about a decision that a literature-based educational system was to be adopted in primary education. Therefore, the class-teaching system (which is explored further in section 2.4) was introduced by the University College of Bahrain to meet this objective by preparing specialist teachers in the field of children's literature. It is now important that the effects of this provision are examined and that we get a clear picture of the provision of literature in the primary schools of Bahrain. This study focuses on the provision in terms of quantity and quality.

2.3- The Current Educational System in Bahrain

The Ministry of Education had been constantly undergoing re-organisation and modifications until the structure of the ministry assumed the current format. The policy of the Ministry of Education in Bahrain according to Jiya Lal Jain, the General Secretary of the United Schools International (1986), "is based upon two fundamental principles of the state constitution. First, the provision of education for all children of school-going age throughout the country; second,

the improvement of the quality of education to meet the socio-economic development needs of the students" (p.26).

The educational system in Bahrain consists of basic education that includes six years of primary education and three years of intermediate education; and secondary education which lasts for a further three years, as is shown in table 2.1 on page 34. The curriculum at each stage of the basic education is divided into separate subjects, which are interrelated where necessary. Literature is not a major aspect of the curricula of these educational stages, except in some primary schools where the class-teaching system is applied in the first three years of primary education, and focus is being directed towards literature-based curricula.

At the earliest stage there is the nursery which takes care of babies from birth to three years of age. Kindergartens train infants from 3-6 years. Both nurseries and kindergartens fall outside the formal school educational system. However, kindergartens are supervised by the Ministry of Education and they follow its system and regulations, while nurseries come under the responsibility of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and are administered by private institutions. The researcher believes that the stage of kindergarten should be the base for primary education. The provision of literature in this stage should be adequate both qualitatively and quantitatively in order to prepare children well for primary education, especially when literature becomes an important part of its curriculum.

Religious education is an integral part of the educational system in Bahrain. It is carried out in a special institute administered by the Ministry of Education. Like general education, religious education

has three sections: primary, intermediate and secondary. The aims of education at this institute are similar to those of general education, but with special emphasis on religious studies. In this type of education, too, literature is not being considered adequately in the curriculum. Religious stories prevail in the literature being provided to children at these schools. The researcher believes that although religious stories contain good values for children, their prevalence disregard the different reading interests of children.

Higher education in Bahrain has undergone tremendous qualitative change in the last 20 years. In the mid-sixties specialised institutions like the College of Health Sciences, the Gulf Technical College, the Hotel and Catering Training Centre and the Teacher Training Institute offered courses of three years or less leading to diplomas rather than bachelor's degrees. In 1980, however, this system was overhauled when the University College of Arts, Science and Education began to offer bachelor's degree courses. The following year the Gulf Technical College became the Gulf Polytechnic and offered courses leading to bachelor's degree in engineering and business administration. In 1987, both the Gulf Polytechnic and the University College of Arts, Science and Education were amalgamated and became one institute, which is at present known as the University of Bahrain. Courses of the class-teaching system, where emphasis is given to children's literature, are currently run by the University of Bahrain with the objective of preparing teachers for primary education.

The Directorate of Adult Education in accordance with the Ministry of Education, organises literacy and adult educational programmes for two groups of both sexes: the first is for those who are illiterate

and the second includes those who have passed the stage of illiteracy and are interested in continuing their education. The duration of study in the adult education programmes is six academic years divided into the following three stages:

- The Literacy Stage (for the first two years)
- The Adult Education Stage (for the second two years)
- The Consolidation Stage (for the third two years)

In the researcher's point of view, literacy and adult education is very important in relation to the significant role adults (especially parents) play in developing children's literary education and reading interests. Illiterate parents may not realise the great value of literature, and if they do, they will not be able to read to their children or to enrich their lives with a good selection of literature. Thus, literacy and adult education should be given more attention by the concerned authorities in Bahrain and illiterate adults are to be encouraged to attend such programmes.

2.4- A Review of the Educational Provision in the Primary Schools of Bahrain

During the last few years, the Ministry of Education of Bahrain has paid great attention to the primary education stage, as it is the foundation for the succeeding stages. It has concentrated on matters related to the quality of education and not the quantity, since thousands of children are entering this stage every year.

The Ministry of Education has realised that the level of education at the primary stage is weak in regard to teaching aids, curricula, examinations and teachers. The primary stage was imbued with traditional thinking as far as educational practice was concerned. It aimed at instilling knowledge by memorisation, recitation and repetition, and relied on book learning at the expense of all other teaching methods and children's activities. Examinations were very rigid and old-fashioned in their methods and curricula and were not used for developmental objectives (Hammood, 1986, pp. 911). This problem has accordingly caused the failure rates to be higher. (Table 2.2 on page 35 shows the number of repeaters at final examinations of primary level by grade, cause of repetition, and sex, 1991-92).

The officials of the Ministry of Education felt that such a situation would create a great obstacle to educational development in Bahrain. They therefore decided to improve teaching aids in the primary stage by a system of class teaching, which was a fundamental change from previous practice. Before exploring further the class-teaching system, it is necessary to give brief background information on primary education in Bahrain.

Primary education is the first rung in the educational ladder; it starts at the age of six and lasts for six years. At present there are 95 primary schools in Bahrain, in addition to 19 primary intermediate schools (Ministry of Education, 1992, p.124). Education at this stage is not co-educational. Pupils are taught by teachers of the same sex. In 1992 there were 1,141 male teachers and 1,236 female teachers (ibid, p.124). A growing trend is for the development of boys' schools (ten in 1991/92) where the teachers and administrative staff are female. These schools have only the first four classes.

The main aims of primary education in Bahrain were stated in February 1982 by a sub-committee on primary education development, the Committee of Objectives and Curricula. To build up a series of objectives, the committee considered several elements that would shape the new desired image of primary education, paying particular attention to social, philosophical, educational and moral areas. The objectives proposed by the committee were:

- Developing children's religious beliefs and values that are fundamental to the Islamic creed and advising them of the correct behaviour to be followed.

- Developing children's positive attitudes towards their society in Bahrain and all Arab nations by getting them to realise their feelings of belonging. Also, getting them to realise the importance of the Arabic language and its role in building up the Arabic Islamic personality.

- Establishing a firm relationship between children's families and the primary school in order to create a positive interaction that encourages opportunities for growth.

- Helping children to form a positive attitude towards their families and a sense of belonging to them; also introducing them to the role of the family in building a united society.

- Making the environment, with all its natural and social supports, a field for children's activities and education as they gain experience by interacting with it.

- Developing children physically, mentally, morally, socially and emotionally and providing a basic general culture and the skills required by good citizens.

- Realising equality of opportunity between children according to their abilities by taking into consideration individual differences and the dissimilarities in their levels of maturity.

- Directing children's attention to self-reliance and guiding them by the provision of all that is needed to develop their personalities within society in order to help them overcome the problems they face.

- Training children at the primary stage in the correct scientific attitudes in order to make them appreciate the role of science and scientists in developing the human race.

- Developing children's mental ability by helping them move gradually from a world of tangible things to a world of symbols.

- Helping children acquire the fundamental skills of reading, writing and mathematics in order to enable them to use the Arabic language in reading, writing and self-expression and to use numbers in their daily life. Also, teaching children to form good habits, attitudes and skills such as close observation, careful listening and interest in learning to develop their talents and hobbies.

- Motivating children towards study and learning for its own sake and also giving them the opportunity to express feelings and emotions in a way that makes them socially acceptable by elders.

- Encouraging the development of children's motor skills through play as this is an important means of physical growth and encouraging healthy trends.

- Developing in children powers of self-expression in drawing, painting, music or any other skill related to the arts, to encourage their inventive and imaginative faculties.

- Developing children's positive attitudes towards work and workers by making them respect and appreciate their role in the fields of social and economic development.

(Al-Maskati and Al-Saleh, 1985, pp. 19-20)

All these objectives could be served by developing children's interest in books and literature. In fact, they strongly connect with the values associated with the experience of good literature. Thus, the need to realise these objectives justifies the need for an adequate provision of good literature for children in their schools, public libraries, homes and bookshops.

The evaluation system at the primary education stage is based upon the division of the academic year into two semesters. Promotion from one grade to another in the first three years of primary education is based on regular attendance, daily class-work and the assessment of the teachers and head-teachers to children's reading and handwriting abilities. In the case of low achievers, a special committee decides on promotion or otherwise. This committee is made up of Arabic language and mathematics teachers, class-teachers and head-teachers, besides curriculum specialists who act as advisers. In the last three years of primary school, evaluation is based on the mid and final semester examinations along with short tests and daily class work.

The Ministry of Education has established a system of subject teaching in its primary schools. The teaching system in these schools concentrates on an inflexible syllabus, which gives greater attention to theoretical rather than practical study. The subjects taught in the first three years of primary education are Arabic language, Islamic religion, science, mathematics, fine arts, physical education and music. In the second three years of primary education, pupils study English language, social subjects and home economics in addition to those subjects studied in the first three years. (Table 2.3 on page 36 shows the study plan for primary education 1991/92). This syllabus of primary education does not show any position for literature. Children are apparently involved in a very rigid syllabus that imposes certain routine subjects and topics for them to learn. It does not allow both teachers and children to be involved together in literary experiences either in their classrooms or in their school libraries, because their daily timetable is full of these routine subjects, which mostly follow the approach of information presentation.

Recently, the Ministry of Education has been paying more attention to the system of class-teaching in the first three years of primary education and relating the syllabus of the second three years to the new system. Class teaching is an educational technique that aims at realising objectives which are not so easily and completely attained by the educational system which until recently was standard in Bahrain. In this system the basic skills and information in the subjects of Arabic language, Islamic religion, mathematics and science are all prepared in one curriculum. For each subject there is a book with contents that mostly follow a practical rather than theoretical approach, and for each classroom there is a teacher who will mainly

teach the above mentioned four subjects, while the other subjects such as arts and music and physical education are taught by specialist teachers and in specialist classrooms. According to Al-Masakti and Al-Saleh (1985), class-teaching was first attempted in Bahrain in the year 1983/84 in two new model schools: one for boys (Badr Al-Kubra School) and the other one for girls (Hafsa Um Al-Mu'umenin School). The system was only applied in the first year of the primary stage and in five classrooms of both schools (p.26). In 1990/91, as stated in the report of the Ministry of Education (1992) the system was extended into 58 schools. It is intended to be expanded according to the availability of teachers, buildings and other facilities to cover all the primary schools in Bahrain by the year 1995 (p.8). It is also necessary to mention that the classrooms for this type of education are prepared in a way where a small library with few books is maintained and with an area for children to practise their literary activities such as drama, role-playing, etc. However, these classrooms still lack the provision of good children's literature and books.

The Ministry of Education started the class-teaching programme at the University of Bahrain in the year 1982/83 in order to prepare qualified teachers for this system. The courses studied by students of the class-teaching programme are as follows: education in which students have to undergo teaching practice starting from the third year of study in addition to theoretical studies in children's literature, Arabic, English, geography, mathematics, religion and science.

The course with which this thesis is concerned is that of Children's Literature. It is an introductory course to children's modern literature, which aims at enabling students to develop a critical approach based on literacy and educational criteria; exploring the values of literature

and linguistic skills; helping students select, write and present stories to children, making use of play, stage acting, puppet theatre and films as media for story-telling; and acquainting students with children's libraries, concentrating on their use, organisation, equipment and facilities.

The content of the course as described in the catalogue of the University of Bahrain (1995/94) is as follows:

- Introduction of children's literature, its aims, and a comparison between both children's and adult literature.
- The significance of children's literature in developing a child's aesthetic, creative, imaginative and linguistic skills.
- Forms of children's literature (story, play, and poem).
- Access to children's literature (radio and television; theatre and cinema; and books and magazines).
- The study of children's literature in the Arab world and comparing it with that in the developed countries.
- The study of children's literature in the developed countries such as England, America and France.
- A critical study of some of the literary texts presented to children in the first three years of primary education in Bahrain (p.267).

The researcher, as a lecturer of a children's literature course, tried to link the content of the course with the content of this thesis. The researcher discussed the definition of children's literature and the comparison between both children's and adults' literature with literature specialists and educationalists. The significance of children's literature in nurturing a child's life and in contributing to his or her aesthetic, creative, imaginative, linguistic skills and educational development was also discussed. Furthermore, the researcher presented the situation of children's literature in the Arab

world with particular reference to the situation in Bahrain and reviewed some of the storybooks and literary texts presented to children undergoing primary education in Bahrain.

2.5- The Summary

From the previous presentation of the educational system in Bahrain, it has been concluded that, as Bahrain has developed so has children and adults' education. With regard to early education in Bahrain, this used to be concerned with basic literacy and Arab culture. However, to keep pace with the developed civilisations, a complex system of provision of education has now been implemented at the primary stage that is no longer restricted to a parochial interest in Bahraini culture. Children's literature has become a critical part of the syllabus of primary education since it plays a significant role in developing a child's aesthetic, creative, imaginative and linguistic skills. This emphasises the need for an analytical study of the literature presented to children in Bahrain to ensure availability of the right literature. Thus, before considering what needs to be developed in the literature presented to children in Bahrain we need to consider the value of children's literature and its effectiveness in developing children's educational levels.

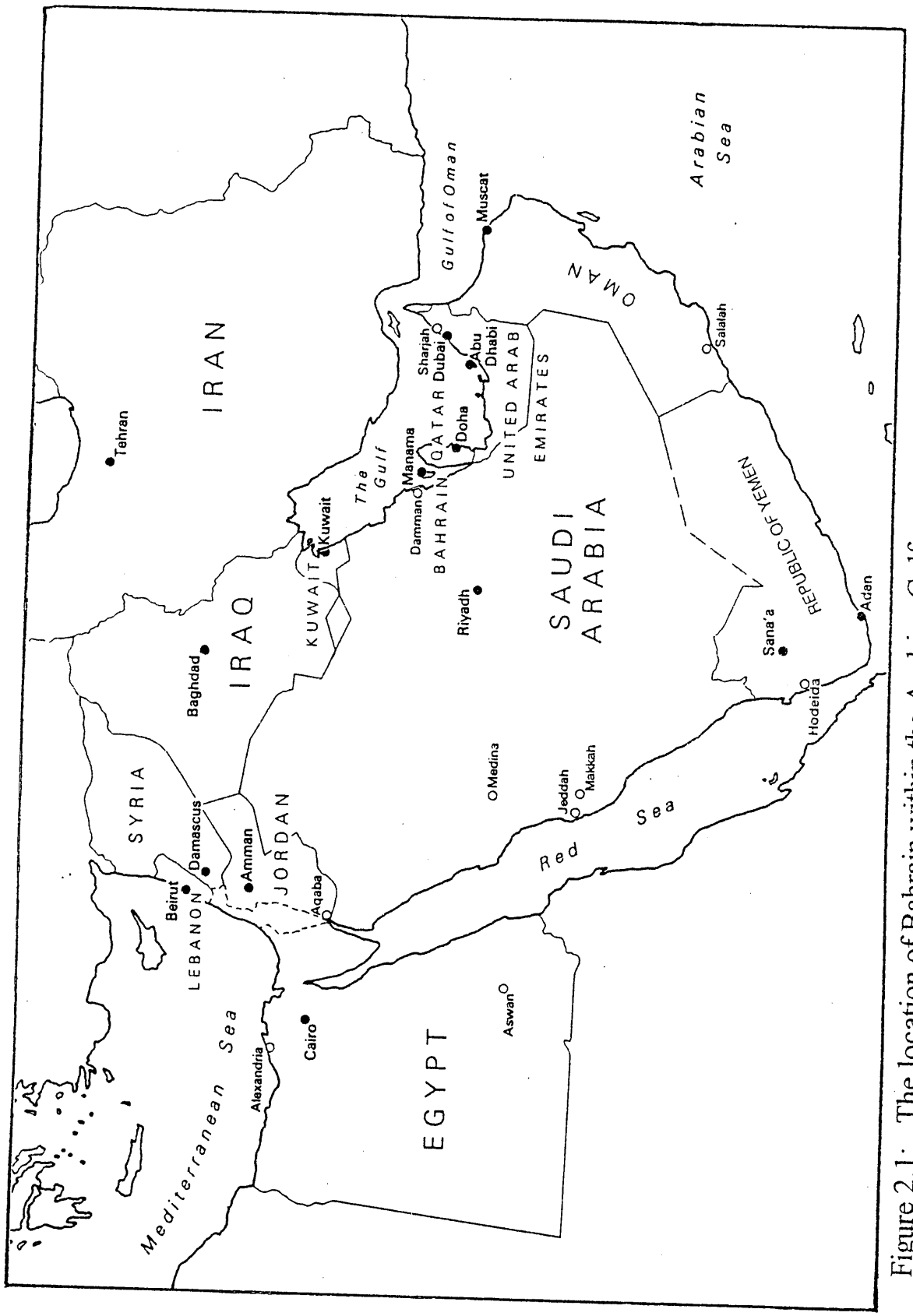
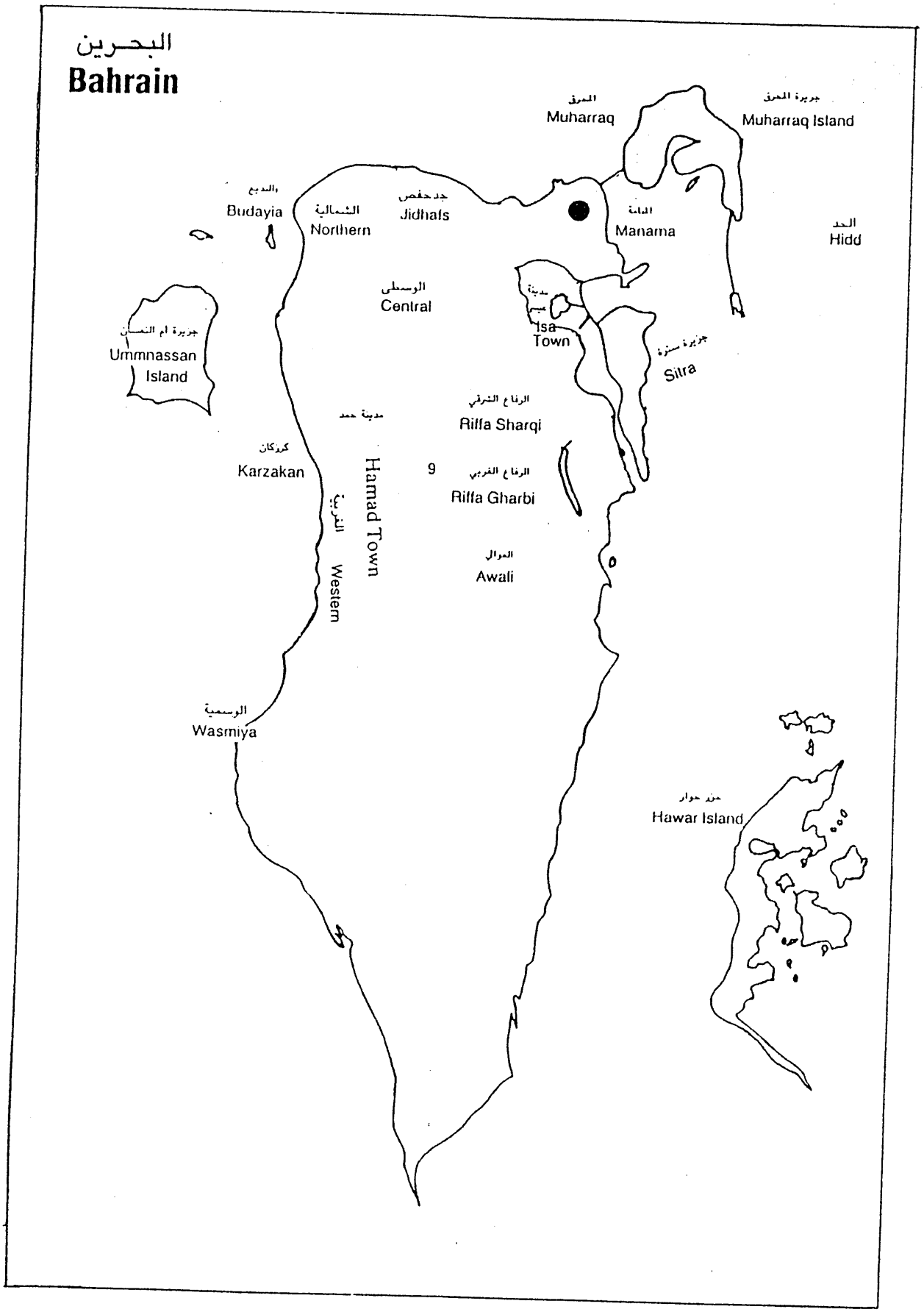


Figure 2.1: The location of Bahrain within the Arabian Gulf.

Figure 2.2: Map of Bahrain.



Brief Description of the Education System in Bahrain

The educational system in Bahrain consists of Basic Education which includes primary intermediate stages, and secondary education, as is shown in the following chart.

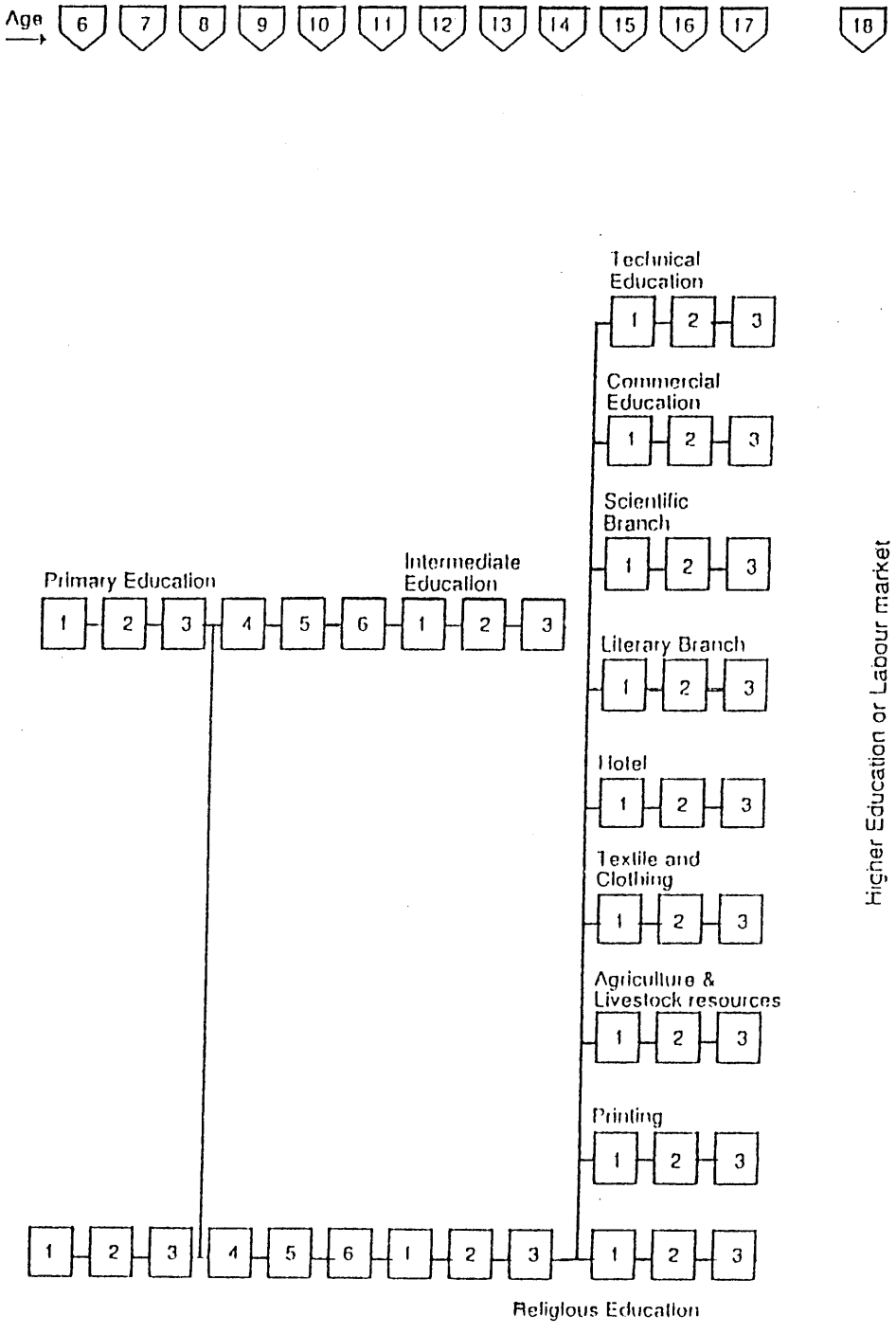


Table 2.1:

Source: Ministry of Education, (1992)
Development of Education in Bahrain During 1989/92,
(Bahrain, Arabian Printing Press) P. 7

Table 2.2:

Source: Ministry of Education, (1992)
Educational Statistics 1991/92,
(Bahrain, Al-Hashimi Printing Press) P. 90

No. of Repeaters at Final Examinations of Primary Level by grade cause of Repetition and Sex

Cause of Repetition	Sex	Total	6th	5th	4th	3rd	2nd	1st
Fail	Male	2132	293	445	414	376	312	292
	Female	2079	149	316	462	387	373	392
Absense	Male	61	12	15	7	12	5	10
	Female	14	—	1	2	1	1	9
Others	Male	156	5	16	32	39	38	26
	Female	251	6	42	25	50	54	74
Total	Male	2349	310	476	453	427	355	328
	Female	2344	155	359	489	438	428	475

Table 2.3:

Source: Ministry of Education, (1992)
Development of Education in Bahrain During 1989/92,
(Bahrain, Arabian Printing Press) P. 93

الخطة الدراسية للمرحلة الابتدائية للعام الدراسي ١٩٩٢/٩١
The Study Plan for Primary Education 1991/92

Classes الصفـــــوف						المواد الدراسية Subjects
السادس 6th	الخامس 5th	الرابع 4th	الثالث 3rd	الثاني 2nd	الأول 1st	
2	2	2	3	3	3	Religious Education التربية الدينية
7	7	7	8	9	9	Arabic Language اللغة العربية
5	5	5	-	-	-	English Language اللغة الانجليزية
5	5	5	5	5	5	Mathematics الرياضيات
3	3	3	2	2	2	Sciences & Technology العلوم والتكنولوجيا
2	2	2	2	1	1	Social Studies المواد الاجتماعية
1	1	1	-	-	-	Family Education* التربية الأسرية
2	2	2	2	2	2	Art Education التربية الفنية
2	2	2	2	2	2	Physical Education التربية الرياضية
1	1	1	1	1	1	Songs & Music الأناشيد والموسيقى
30	30	30	25	25	25	Total المجمـــوع

* التربية الأسرية : في مدارس البنات فقط ، أما مدارس البنين تخصص الحصة مؤقتاً للأعمال اليدوية ضمن منهج التربية الفنية .

* Family Education: in girls Schools only. The period for boy's Schools is allocated for Handicraft temporary within the Art Education.

Chapter 3

Review of the Literature

Review of the Literature

3.1-Introduction

Before presenting the detailed report on the investigation carried out by the researcher in a sample of 20 primary schools in Bahrain, it is first necessary to outline the theoretical paradigms, which have provided the foundations for this study. This chapter, therefore, reviews the relevant available literature on children's literature and books covering five areas relevant to the research. These areas of the literature review are: (1) the provision of children's literature in the Arab world with reference to the situation in Bahrain, (2) an overview of children's literature and books, (3) the values of children's literature, and (4) children's reading interests. The review of the literature is both international and regional. The term 'international literature' refers to sources of information obtained from countries outside the Arab world, and the term 'regional literature' refers to sources within the Arab world. Previous research studies relating to the areas of the literature review will be discussed in chapter four.

3.2-The Provision of Children's Literature in the Arab world with Reference to the Situation in Bahrain

In our contemporary world, the civilisation of nations is measured according to the extent of care they grant to their children's education. Therefore, matters related to children's education are given priority in the research studies and programmes carried out by the different institutions either in the developed or in the developing countries such as the Association of the Arabic Child's Education, the Centre for Developing Arabic Books, the Arabian Office for Education, the UNESCO and the International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY).

Children's literature is one of the artistic forms, which assists children to develop an image of a particular society. It is one of the main influences forming the personality of the child by way of contributing to his or her mental, social, emotional, linguistic and educational growth (Al-Hiti, 1986, p.75). Educators stress that literature in the form of stories, poetry, drama and songs helps to develop children's ability to comprehend, widens their vision of life and expands their imaginative powers (Najeeb, 1988, p.18, and Jaffar, 1984, p.75).

The school is the place where children are provided with the best opportunities to develop mentally, socially, emotionally and educationally through being taught positive values present in different forms of literature (Qenawi, 1983, p.30). Consequently, the role of the primary education stage emerges to meet children's developmental needs and the continuously increasing demands of

modern life. By enriching their lives in a variety of ways with literature, which is full of moral values will create in them a strong desire to learn that will continue throughout lifetime.

Nevertheless, some Arab researchers such as Al-Maqaleh (1989) found that children's literature in the Arab world is suffering from many different problems most of which are related to the quality. He added that quantity is no longer a major problem since the number of children's authors has recently increased in the Arab world. But, he maintains, the problem exists in the absence of constructive criticism of such writings, and also in the absence of national censorship which has led to the provision of a retarded literature that contradicts the social changes and the desire for development (Al-Maqaleh, 1989, p.36). The term "retarded literature" is used by Al-Maqaleh to refer to old stories and superstitions re-written by some of the present authors of children's literature. These according to him do not keep pace with the rapid social changes and developments in the Arab world.

The real situation regarding children's literature in the Arab world has been clarified through the recommendations submitted by the conferences held to discuss critical problems facing children's literature. One of these conferences was that of the Association of the Arabic Child's Education which was held in Cairo in 1992 and through which the necessity to carry out study analysis of the contents of children's stories was called for in order to identify the direct and indirect or the positive and negative values in them (Rashid, 1992, p.182). Another conference was that of the Chain of Regional Studies organised by the Centre for Developing Arabic Books, General Organisation of the book (1990), about the values in

children's education, through which the participants, who were children's authors, stressed the necessity to use stories as an aid to develop children's imaginations and create in them the right values (ibid, p.320). Also participants in the Conference of Children's Books in the Arabian Gulf Countries which was organised by the Arabic Office for Education in association with the UNESCO (1988) in Bahrain, realised that commercial vision prevails over educational values when writing for children. Therefore they agree on the necessity to give more attention to children's books especially schoolbooks to attract children to read (UNESCO, 1988, pp. 127-128).

In 1981 the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World at Beirut University College in Lebanon, together with the Lebanese Section of the International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY), evaluated Arabic books for children available in Lebanon. This revealed a plethora of poor translations, which had no bearing on the lives, and culture of Arab children. Despite the earlier efforts, there was a scarcity of good books that addressed the needs of the young. In 1983, a programme of research and action was launched by the Institute which involved research into the vocabulary, language structures, style and concepts familiar to children between the ages of 2 and 12 and also into their reading preferences, which proved similar to children universally. (Ministry of Culture, Egypt, 1986, pp. 30-38)

Workshops were organised for writers and illustrators, and manuscripts suitable for publication were produced. In 1994 the Institute received the IBBY Asahi Award for its efforts in promoting reading among children in Lebanon.

In the 1980s developments also took place in Egypt and children's books benefited from the involvement of Mrs. Suzanne Mubarak, wife of the Egyptian President, who become Chair of the Egyptian Section of IBBY when it was formed in 1987. She established the Suzanne Mubarak Awards for children's books to encourage a new generation of writers. Awards have also been made to poets writing for children.

The same intellectual-political climate that prevailed in Lebanon was also to be found in Syria. Suleiman El Issa, writer of poems, plays and stories, used a language through which he can arouse national consciousness among the young. Other Syrian writers such as Abdullah Abd, Adel Abu Shanab and Zacharia Tamer were more concerned about the messages they intended to convey than the language and style. Consequently their writings were difficult for children to read and understand. Iraq saw a boom in children's literature in the decade following the 1960s when foreign experts were called in to advise local writers on how to produce good books for children. All this unfortunately came to a halt at the time of the Iran-Iraq war in 1980, followed by the Gulf War and the blockade imposed on Iraq (ibid. pp. 30-38).

Thus, the need to encourage more writers and illustrators to work in the field of children's literature and their story books remains, and there is also a need for a good network of children's libraries if books are to reach all children. Meanwhile, there are many magazines, which are a comparatively low-cost way of getting good quality material to as many children as possible. *Sandouk El Donia,* founded in Egypt in 1978, offers the Arab child a magazine promoting national ideals and providing general knowledge. *Majalati,*

established in Iraq in 1969, is a general-interest magazine for 5 to 14-year-olds. The Syrian *Ousama*, also founded in 1969, contains both fiction and information. *Majed*, a weekly periodical published in Abu Dhabi in United Arab Emirates for 6 to 16-year-olds since 1979, is available in most Arab countries and aims to raise a generation of mature readers who 'believe in God and a unified Arab world'. Further details about "*Majed*" are found in section 6.3.5 of chapter six.

The co-operative attitude that appears to prevail in Arab countries is a great advantage, opening up a viable market for the publication of children's literature. One can conclude that children's literature in the Arab world is attracting significant attention locally and internationally.

The negative aspects of literature for children in the Arab world has had negative effects on the provision of literature for children in Bahrain since Bahrain imports most of its books from countries such as Egypt, Lebanon, Syria and Iraq. Children's literature in Bahrain emerged during the mid-seventies when a few attempts by some concerned authors were made to issue magazines, newspapers and some educational supplements until they reached the stage of writing and publishing short stories or collections of stories. In writing such stories, the authors depended on their personal interests and their individual efforts without any support from the relevant authorities.

In her thesis "Educational Values in Children's Stories in Primary Schools in Bahrain", Isha Ghuloom (1991) stressed that the number of stories being written/published for children in Bahrain is very small. This situation, according to her is a result of the slow

movement of general education in the region and in the Arab world as a whole, where children's literature is still experiencing many problems. When she conducted her analytical study of the contents of some of the curricula books taught to children in primary schools in Bahrain, Isha found that the stories, which are included in these books, are not selected on the basis of values and suitability. She added that, before being published, the literature in these books is subject to many amendments by the concerned authorities so it finally loses its artistic features and consequently it lacks those values that determine the quality children's literature. (Ghuloom, pp. 6-7)

Major deficiencies with regard to quantity and quality of children's literature books in Bahrain were identified by respondents of the survey conducted by the researcher for this study. The findings of the survey carried out with teachers, librarians, parents and children from primary schools in Bahrain are fully reported in chapter six. However it is appropriate to present here the findings which relate to the provision of children's literature and books in Bahrain with particular reference to the provision in primary schools. The findings of the questionnaire for the teachers indicated that children's literature and books are not adequately provided in terms of quantity and quality to Bahraini children particularly in school libraries. This lack of provision as the teachers indicated, includes locally produced and imported children's books. (Chapter six, pp 241- 242)

In their responses to the open-ended questions of the questionnaire, the primary school librarians sampled for the study stated that there is a lack of provision of children's literature books in their school libraries. They added that most of the books available are textbooks

such as history, geography, religion and science. The analysis of their responses to questions 1-5 of part one of the questionnaire indicated that the approximate total number of story books available, including books imported from other Arab countries, foreign literature translated into Arabic language and the locally written literature books, is very low (20%) in comparison to the total number of books available in these libraries. Most of the librarians (88%) asserted that there is a lack of public libraries in some areas of Bahrain, and if they exist, they do not have the required quantity and quality of books suitable for Bahraini children. (Chapter six, pp 268 - 269)

The Bahraini authors of children's literature with whom the researcher conducted his study interviews, presented their opinions in respect of the provision of children's literature in Bahrain and in primary schools in particular. They declared that children's literature and books written and published by Bahraini authors are very few if compared to the total number of children-readers in Bahrain. They added that locally produced literature and books do not satisfy children's needs and reading interests. The authors also stated that the primary school textbooks do not present literary subjects and accordingly do not assist in developing children's reading interests and in expanding their imaginations. Moreover, they stated that there is a lack of co-ordination and co-operation between them and the responsible governmental and public authorities in the process of selecting or presenting suitable literature to children in Bahrain. (Chapter six, pp 323 - 324)

Another important fact stated by Bahraini authors of children's literature is that children in Bahrain are facing problems in accessing

their literature, such as high costs of books, the negative role of parents and the poor quality of the presented literature. (Chapter six, pp 325 - 326)

In the light of the deficiencies indicated by samples of the present study in the provision of suitable children's literature in Bahrain, the researcher intended to review some of the storybooks presented to children in bookshops and school libraries. Although the number of stories selected by the researcher was not representative of all story-books presented to children in Bahrain, the researcher wished to gain an idea of the kind of books available to children. It also seemed important that a reader, who was not familiar with the books presented to children in Bahrain, should have the opportunity to consider some examples.

For this review, the researcher selected some of the stories presented to children in Bahrain including fiction/non-fiction stories, foreign stories translated into Arabic language and a story from the sixth primary grade textbook. After reviewing the stories, the researcher summarised them and discussed each of them from his point of view with regard to their values, negative features and format, in order to determine the effectiveness of their content in children's educational development. To ascertain the reliability of the translation of these stories from Arabic to English, the researcher submitted the stories together with the summaries written in English to two English Language lecturers at the University of Bahrain for them to check and ensure the accuracy of the translation. (See appendix B on page 426)

The deficiencies in the provision of suitable children's literature in Bahrain have caused significant retardation in the development of Bahraini children's literary education. In the following sections, the researcher will attempt to examine the nature of suitable literature for children and the ways in which it affects their lives in the light of the opinions and points of views of national and international educationalists and specialists in children's literature. This presentation of the significance of children's literature may be of great value for concerned adults and responsible authorities in assisting them to take positive steps towards the provision of quality children's literature in Bahrain.

3.3-An Overview of Children's Literature and Books

Alan Davies (1973) defines literature in the following statement:

> "At its widest, literature refers to anything written (usually printed) relating to a special subject or matter in hand. At its narrowest, literature refers to a special kind of writing rather than to a special subject so we venerate it as an art form since it is presenting words in their best order " (p.8).

Charlotte S. Huck (1979) also defines literature in her book, *Children's Literature in the Elementary School.* She states:

> "Literature is the imaginative shaping of life and thought into the forms and structures of language. The province of literature is the human condition, life with all its feelings, thoughts and insights" (p.4).

Clearly, the word "literature" is used very widely and loosely, but both definitions assert that literature is the presentation of any subject matter in a special kind of writing, mostly in an imaginative way.

However in this study, the researcher is mainly concerned with children's literature that has also been defined as such by educationalists and scientists. Diana Hutchcroft (1981) defines children's literature as stories and poems children read for themselves, those we read to them as teachers and parents, and those that they make up for themselves and share with their friends (Hutchcroft, p.217). Helen Huus (1981) similarly defines children's literature in the following statement:

> "Literature for children includes such writings prepared especially for them, plus writings they have appropriated as their own. It includes those literary works children can read for themselves or can understand at their levels of maturity" (Huss, p. 1).

These two definitions of children's literature indicate that the standard of the language used for children is different from that used for adults. They stress that an easier and more understandable language is to be used in children's literature in accordance with children's levels of maturity. Thus, the researcher found it important to explore the ways in which children's literature is distinctive and the criteria by which children's literature is deemed to be good or bad according to the views of a variety of specialists, educationalists and psychologists. The significance of this exploration is to assist the concerned authorities in Bahrain to identify the ways in which they can make decisions about good books for children. Differences in criteria for adult and children's literature are discussed by James Smith (1967) in his book, *A Critical Approach to Children's Literature*. Smith defines children's literature in terms of children as undeveloped adults. He believes that the criteria relevant to adult literature and the criteria relevant to children's literature differ

markedly in important ways (p. 15). The reasons for these differences, as he explains, are as follows:

1. Most children have had more limited experience, in both kind and amount, than most adults.

2. Most children, besides having a more limited range of experience, have a more limited range of language than most adults.

3. Not only is the child reader limited in the amount and kind of experience he or she can comprehend and the language about it which he or she can take in, but he or she is also limited in his or her ability to attend to those experiences over lengths of time.

4. Besides having a shorter attention span than older persons, the child normally cannot manipulate as many elements at once. He or she finds it difficult to attend to more than one or two developing ideas or lines of action at the same time, to trace out relations between numerous people, places and events.

5. Children are less inclined than older persons to worry over probability, over the question, 'Is this thing likely to happen, or at least to happen in this way?' for them, certain expectations and conventional ways of thinking are not yet firmly established. (ibid, pp. 18-20)

Smith appears to view a number of important ways in which children and adults read differently and he stresses that this is an important reason for children's writers and adults' writers to write in different ways. He also suggests that we do not blithely operate by a single standard but that we go to the trouble of thinking somewhat differently in certain particulars about literature for the young and

literature for adults. However, this is only one view of children's literature and childhood. It presents childhood as being an inadequate and immature from of adulthood. It is a deficit model and implies that they are unable to cope with a range of experiences and the complex use of language in their literature.

Some specialists as McDowell (1973, pp. 50-63) and Huck (1979, pp. 4-6) believe that children's literature is distinct from adults' literature in terms of its features. They maintain that while children's literature is part of literature as a whole, there are some clear distinctions between children's and adult fiction. McDowell, for instance, describes his 'child in the book' when he claims that:

> "Children's books are generally shorter; they tend to favour an active rather than a passive treatment, with dialogue and incident rather than description and introspection; child protagonists are the rule; conventions are much used; the story develops within a clear-cut moral schematism which much adult fiction ignores; children's books tend to be optimistic rather than depressive; language is child-oriented; plots are of a distinctive order, probability is often disregarded; and one could go on endlessly talking of magic, and fantasy, and simplicity, and adventure."(ibid., pp.50-63)

Barbara Lehman (1991) differentiates between children's literature and adults' literature in terms of children's preferences. She concludes from the study she conducted to investigate the characteristics of children's books that children prefer books with some predictability, an optimistic tone and a lively pace. These characteristics, she claims, distinguish children's fiction from adults'

fiction (The Reading Research and Instruction Journal, 1991, pp. 1-17). Furthermore, Lehman asserts:

> "... thanks to the work of cognitive theorists like Jean Piaget, we know that children's whole view of the world is qualitatively different from that of adults, creating a situation in which some children's books enrapture the critics and leave children cold" (ibid, p. 1).

It is clear that there is an important distinction to be made between identifying features and characteristics of children's literature as McDowell and Lehman are doing, and trying to show that there are particular rules to follow in order to write effectively for children as Smith tends to do. In the researcher's point of view, most of the very best writers succeed by breaking many of the rules rather than by following them. Hence, the approach which seeks to identify features and characteristics of children's literature is much more helpful and positive than the approach which seems to describe children's fiction as inadequate when compared to adult fiction and that children's books are for incomplete, undeveloped human beings.

On the other hand, some literary critics of children's books argue that children's literature is part of adults' literature. Townsend (1971) claims that there is no such thing as 'children's literature', there is just 'literature' (Top of the News, vol. 27, p. 378). Jason Epstein (1969) argues that there is no difference in principle between good children's literature and good literature:

> "The criterion generally applied by the experts is: 'Is this a book for children?' But the only relevant question.... is 'Is this a book at all?'. The question 'Is this a book for children?' can properly be decided only by the children themselves as they fumble and experiment

> among what is available. And if a child decides ... to read the Greek tragedies, then Greek tragedy is, for him or her, a suitable book. If it bores and confuses him or her, he will soon enough turn to something that suits him or her better...." (Epstein, 1969, in Egoff, Stubbs and Ashley, 1973, p.88).

Consequently, according to Epstein, the task of teachers and librarians and the experts who advise them is simple. It has nothing to do with 'being alert' to all that goes on within a 'child's world', or with 'surrounding him or her with books', or with meeting 'the reading needs of the young child'. For it is absurd to suppose that the 'reading needs' of a child who is able to read by him or herself are, in principle, different from those of an adult (ibid, p.89). Epstein is taking the purist point of view: literature for children has the same standards as all literature, and the child's reading needs is the same as those of the adult. His implied view is that there is far too much fuss about literature for children.

These literary critics of children's literature (Townsend and Epstein) make two assumptions about the nature of children's literature: (a) that children's literature involves the same elements and hence the same criteria for literary quality as adult literature, and (b) that no literary criteria, or at least none meriting the serious attention of responsible, mature adults, can be applied to children's books. The first view makes it almost impossible for one to deal sensitively and realistically with children's reading. People who share this view pay no attention whatsoever to the children who will read the book and so do not consider the various needs that reading may in part meet; they do not look into special conditions shaping the creation of a literature for children. They simply select what they

already regard as good adult literature and thereby turn their backs on almost all writings more or less intended for children, for these do not normally meet adult criteria for literary excellence, and when measured against adult literary criteria, they make a poor showing. The second view that children's books call for no criteria at all, or at least none which merit the serious attention of mature adult minds is equally disastrous to the wise selection and use of children's books.

It is significant that many literary people, who are thoughtful, sophisticated, and widely-read, and many persons who quite uninformed and unaware of literature should have in common a feeling of carelessness about children's literature as 'literature'. Yet the study of children's literature and books can be intellectually and aesthetically sound, for the assumption that children's literature is a literary wasteland and the assumption that it involves the same criteria of literary excellence as adult literature are both unreasonable.

In the light of the previously presented views of children's literature and adults' literature, the researcher believes that adults' and children's literature share common features which make both categories "literature", such as their objectives, the medium (language) and its creative forms, whereas on the other hand, children's literature has its own distinctive features which mark it as different from adults' literature such as the simplicity of language, the subject matter and methods of presentation.

The researcher's view is supported by Dr. Hanoora (1987) who reports that children's and adults' literature are alike in their objectives in the sense that they both express peoples' feelings and

emotions and reflect different pictures of life. Hanoora adds that language is the media used in both children's and adults' literature to present these feelings and emotions in the form of a story, prose, poem, play, etc. (Hanoora, pp. 14-15). On the other hand, Dr. Abu Ma'al (1988) stresses that children's literature is to be distinguished from adults' literature through certain distinctive features such as:

- The degree of complexity of the language presented in children's literature must be different from that presented in adults' literature. Since the child is still in the stage of developing his or her vocabulary, the writer should select clear and simple language for children to read and understand easily.

- The subject matter of children's literature should be distinct from that of adults' literature and be selected and presented in a way that corresponds to children's age ranges and experiences.

- The way of presenting children's literature is different from that of presenting adults' literature, in that it must consider children's abilities to attend to the experiences presented to them and their span of concentration (Abu Ma'al, pp. 12-20).

In the same context, Margaret Marshall (1988) defines children's literature as "the written word which collectively embraces features such as: subject matter, characters and setting, style of writing and use of vocabulary presented from an angle which matches the child's perspective" (p. 71).

Marshall defines subject matter as suitable when it is treated in such a way that a child, at his or her stage of knowledge and development, can relate to it. With regard to characters in children's literature,

Marshall discusses the presence of a child character in children's literature and suggests that the author's characterisation of the child's emotions is a crucial factor, and that child characters are not necessarily a distinctive factor unless shown in relationship to the adult world or adult behaviour patterns. In terms of language appropriate to children's literature, Marshall believes that, for children language, vocabulary and sentence structure should involve the choice of simple words and short sentences to aid the children understanding.

With regard to style and setting in children's literature, Marshall stresses the relevance to the reader's experience, that is, what the reader brings to the text or picture from his or her own experience, whether physical, emotional or social (pp. 60-70).

Smith (1967) too, believes that good children's literature may differ from good adult literature in certain interesting but limited ways. He reports that in good children's literature there will be: some restriction of the range of experience described by the author to types of experience comprehensible to the young; a less complex combination of language, character, plot and theme; a narrower range of language, though not less ingenuity and flexibility within that range; a greater reliance on action within the plot to fulfil the author's purpose; and a fuller integration of visual patterns with the verbal patterns. However, Smith found that there were some similarities between children's literature and adults' literature, which, according to him, are as significant as the differences. In this context, he states that good children's writing, like adult writing, tends to have a high degree of; unity; concreteness, particularity, specificity; appropriateness of the form, organisation and language to the

content; a formal pattern that is in itself appealing in some ways; an absence of unnecessary action (p.6).

These characteristics of children's literature, both those peculiar to it and those shared with adult literature, need to be considered, not as good in themselves, but rather as contributing to the heightening of the reader's experience, the creation in him or her of the sense of wonder which is an essential criterion for good literature.

Nevertheless, however children's literature is defined, as part of or apart from literature as a whole, parent and teachers have to make decisions about suitable literature for children. The term 'suitable' often means different things not only in different countries, but also in different communities and to different people. Some people describe suitability in terms of moral content, some in terms of the appropriateness of themes or educational quality and some in terms of psychological and/or linguistic development. Margaret Marshall (1988) defines its meaning in the Western countries as "morally suitable" in the sense that certain themes are considered to be taboo in order to protect children from those aspects of adult life thought to be corrupting, unpleasant or sexual (p. 61). 'Suitable' may also refer to the educational relevance, where a book may be thought to cover a theme or be written in a style that children cannot understand until a certain stage of mental, physical or reading development has been reached.

Writers and publishers may be aware that the child's conceptual development, his or her likely experience of places, people, events and emotions may all be common to a broad age group, as may his or her stage of reading development. Chambers (1980) suggested that a book is 'suitable' for children when the author has written in a way

that includes the reader, where the meaning is explicit as well as implicit, when the author helps the child reader to negotiate, to develop the ability to receive the text as a literary reader does rather than make use of it for non-literary purposes (Chambers, pp. 250-328).

In his book *The Art of Writing to Children*, Ahmed Najeeb (1985) interprets suitability of children's literature in terms of the child's psychological and/or linguistic development. He considers literature 'suitable' for children when it conforms to the child's level of psychological and linguistic development. Thus he suggests that books for children and young people should be shorter than those for adults, in order to match the likely concentration span of a maturing reader (p.48). However, concentration can directly be related to interest and involvement. Of course this means that a text must be accessible to the child, but it also means that the context developed through the child's engagement with the text must be rewarding. There are children who can concentrate for long periods in very noisy and distracting classrooms when they are captivated by a book. Concentration is not just an aspect of development; it is a feature of the quality of the engagement between the reader and the text.

Educationalists such as Jean Little (1990) stress the addition of the term 'good' to suitability when selecting literature books for children. According to her, 'good' children's literature books are those reflecting and satisfying children's basic needs: the need to love and to be loved, the need to belong, the need to achieve, the need for change, the need to know and the need for beauty and order (p.79).

In order to cope with the complexity of criteria, some authorities such as Sutherland and Arbuthnot (1991, pp. 35-44), Huck (1979, pp. 6-15) and Marshall (1988, pp. 230-242) suggest that certain criteria related to the nature of the plot, setting, theme, characterisation, style and format of a literary work are to be considered when evaluating and selecting books for children, bearing in mind that the experience which the evaluator has of literature and children provides a basis for comparison between adults' and children's books and helps towards recognising what is suitable for children. Huck (1979) states that:

> "... only when teachers and librarians are knowledgeable about both children and books can they ever hope to bring the two together for a meaningful experience of literature" (p.6).

In their description of the above factors as they relate to good children's stories, Sutherland (1991), Arbuthnot (1991), Huck (1979) and Marshall (1988) present common points of view and explanations. The plot is considered by them to be of prime importance in any work of fiction. It is an element of good writing. If a book does not have a substantial plot, it will not hold children's interest for long. The plot is defined by Sutherland and Arbuthnot (1991) as "a series of actions that move in related sequence to a logical outcome; if there is no sequence or interaction, the book may have a series of episodes rather than a plot or a story line" (p. 42). Huck (1979) similarly defines the plot of a children's story as "a plan of action; it tells what the characters do and what happens to them. It is the thread that holds the fabric of the story together and makes the reader want to continue reading" (p. 6). A well-constructed plot, according to Huck, is organic and interrelated in that it grows logically and naturally from the actions and the decisions of the

characters in given situations (ibid, p. 7). In stories for the very young the plot is usually simple, with no subplot, whereas older readers can both understand and enjoy the complexity of a story with many threads (Sutherland and Arbuthnot, 1991, p. 42). The researcher's point of view in this context is that it is a mistake to suggest that children do not enjoy complexity or that they cannot appreciate different levels of meaning. At every level of reading the reader has to make interpretations, has to predict and has to infer. No text, however simple, is immediately accessible. In every reading, the reader has to make the text meaningful and that means interpreting the text.

The setting of a story (the time and the place of action) are considered to be a second important element of good children's books. It is stressed that limitations of children's understanding of time and distance must be taken into consideration in evaluating books meant for them; that is when the settings of the books are familiar and within the child's experience they are more comprehensible (Huck, 1979, pp. 7-8, and Sutherland and Arbuthnot, 1991, pp. 38-40). Nevertheless, the researcher believes that texts do not have to be comprehensible in terms of the child's everyday experience of life, for if so, there would be no place for dragons or witches or talking animals in children's books. Clearly their literary experiences are just as important, and knowing the way giants behave in fairy stories is a requirement of making sense of, say, Jack and the Beanstalk. Our knowledge of giants comes not from everyday life, but from literature.

The third factor to be considered when evaluating children's books is the theme of the story. The theme is defined as " the central core

of a story, its meaning, often its message. It gives readers a vision, through fiction, of the author's perception of human experience" (Sutherland and Arbuthnot, 1991, p.42). Huck (1979) similarly defines the theme of a book as the element that reveals the author's purpose in writing the story (p. 8). In some fiction the author may be explicit or even didactic in stressing the theme, but Sutherland and Arbuthnot (1991) find the message is usually less effective if it is explicit; it is the implicit, they stress, that is more often effective and memorable. They further explain that a theme such as the strength of family love or the wisdom of accepting what we cannot change, especially if it emerges naturally through characters and events, is far more likely to be absorbed and remembered than homilies on those themes by the author. If they are simply there, intrinsic to the story, readers discover themes for themselves and become involved rather than receiving a lecture (p. 43).

True characterisation, a fourth factor, is considered as another hallmark of fine writing. The people portrayed in children's books are believed to be as convincingly real and lifelike as the next-door neighbours. The credibility of characters depends upon the author's ability to show their true natures, their strengths and their weaknesses. In revealing character, Huck (1979) reports that an author may simply tell about the person through narration, record the character's conversation with others, describe the thoughts of the character, show the thoughts of others about the character, or show the character in action (p. 9).

In addition to realism in characterisation, it is stressed that there should be consistency in character portrayal. This consistency according to Huck (1979) should not conform to a pattern but to the

true nature of the character as the author has presented him or her (p.9). Sutherland and Arbuthnot (1991) wrote in this context that the characters should develop naturally and behave and talk in ways that are consistent with their age, sex, background, ethnic group and education (p. 40). Another aspect of sound characterisation is growth and development. If a character is a major character, he or she must play a dynamic role; if the character changes, the change should be logical for the sort of person the author has drawn (ibid, p. 40). This suggests that the change in a character should be gradual and convincing rather than mercurial and unrealistic.

The style of writing is reported to be another factor to be considered when adults evaluate children's books. Huck (1979) defines an author's style of writing as his selection and arrangement of words in presenting the story. Thus it is individual and unique (p.11). Sutherland and Arbuthnot (1991) argue that the style is very difficult to define; however, they define it as the author's choice of words, the sentence patterns (simple or involved structure, long or short sentences, arrangement of the words within the sentences), the imagery used and the rhythm of the sentences (p.43).

In the style, as in the theme of a book, Huck, (1979), suggests that there should be an appropriateness and integrity. A good writing style is one, which is appropriate to the plot, theme and characters, both creating and reflecting the mood of the story. It should mirror the setting of the story and the background of the characters through the language pattern utilised by the author. Sometimes the language patterns change to help create the action of the story (Huck, 1979, pp. 11-12). It is asserted that when appropriateness and integrity are

absent, we often find pedestrian writing, flagrant repetitiveness, stiff dialogue, a gross exaggeration of humour or fantasy, conflict between realism and fantasy, didacticism, superciliousness or a use of language that is poorly chosen for the genre of the book or for the characters in it (Sutherland and Arbuthnot, 1991, p. 44).

However, Huck (1979) stresses that the tastes of children place some demands on the writer's style. Children tend to want action in their stories and prefer a style that has movement rather than too much description or introspection, but they can appreciate figurative language, provided the comparisons are within their background of understanding. Children also demand conversation in their stories. They feel as Alice did when she looked into her sister's book and said, "What's the use of a book without pictures or conversation?" They dislike a story that is too sentimental, and they see through the disguise of the too moralistic tales of the past (pp. 12-13).

The format of a book is a sixth factor recognised to be important when adults evaluate books for children. The format of a book includes its size, shape, the design of pages, illustrations, typography, quality of paper and bindings. Frequently, some small aspect of the format, such as the book cover will be an important factor in a child's decision to read a story. Although illustrations are not essential in books for older children, they may enrich the interpretation of the story and should be carefully planned and integrated with the text. The typography should be large enough for easy reading by the age level for which it is intended. The space between the lines should be sufficient to make the text clear. The quality of the paper must also be considered. The binding should be durable and practical, one that

can withstand the use of many interested, but frequently grimy hands (Huck, 1979, pp. 13-14). However, a book should never be selected on the basis of format alone, without an accompanying evaluation of its content.

In summary, it is suggested that the basic considerations for the evaluation of fiction for children are a well-constructed plot with sufficient action, a significant theme, authentic setting, convincing characterisation, appropriate style and attractive format. Nevertheless, not all books will achieve excellence in each of these areas. Some books are remembered for their fine characterisations, others for their exciting plots, and in others the quality of the setting takes precedence. Moreover, there are fine books that do not measure up to every standard of good literature but that may have particular values for a particular child, or whose strengths outweigh their weaknesses. Indeed, there can be no hard and fast rule about any of the elements of fiction, since there are good books in which almost any of these elements may be omitted. We might be able to say why a book is good but there is no formula for writing a good book or a convincing character. Marshall, (1988), believes that the writer's angle of vision and the uniting of his mind with the mind of the child, is what causes a book to catch the interest of a child. (Marshall, p.71) This suggests that when the writer recaptures the childlike vision or is in tune with contemporary childhood's needs and interests, then the result is a book, which enables the child to see life and to acquire insight. Thus, wide reading at all levels and careful observation of children's reactions to books and of their individual and special interests will also help adults make wise choices in guiding young readers.

Specialists of children's literature such as Louise Giddings (1992), suggest that adults who are responsible for planning educational experiences for children must have knowledge of child development in order to select books that enhance literary experience. He added that information about developmental levels can help tell us something about children and also something about the types of literature they are likely to enjoy at a particular age (Giddings, p.19). However, caution is important since groups and individuals differ and interest patterns change over time; two children of the same age may differ markedly in their tastes, their ability to comprehend, their reading interests and their reading responses. Knowledge of the characteristics of children at various developmental levels may have an obvious value for professionals responsible for book selection.

Developmental psychologists seek to discover what children are like at various stages of maturity. Erik Erikson's (1964) psychosocial theories are concerned with the development of individual identity and also with the individual's ability to function in society. Such theories are based on the belief that development consists of a series of psychosocial crises that individuals must successfully resolve if they are to mature. Those conflicts involve the person's struggle to achieve individuality and, at the same time, to learn to function in society. According to Erikson every individual moves through an orderly sequence of stages with each successive stage being more complex. Maturation occurs as the individual progresses from one stage to another. At each stage the individual is faced with a psychosocial conflict which must be resolved before moving on to the next stage of development (Sutherland and Arbuthnot, 1991, pp. 23-26).

Jean Piaget's (1932) method of study with regard to children's developmental levels depends to a large extent on observations and the classification of behaviour. He viewed intellect and affect as inseparable, like two sides of a coin, believing that human emotion, or affect, evolves from the same primary processes as cognitive development. Piaget's observations of children's behaviour led him to believe that development proceeds through four major stages and that all children move through these stages in sequence, though not necessarily at the same pace (ibid, pp. 26-29).

These theories of Erikson and Piaget may have implications for the selection of literature because they suggest something about children's interests and needs at various stages of development, and also help to identify cognitive and verbal skills, which may influence an individual's ability to deal with literary works.

However, Peter Hunt (1992) criticises Piaget's theory of development. He believes that Piaget's particular genius was always more concerned with the development of children's logical thought than with the development of their imagination. He adds that once presented with interesting stories written at their own level, many children often prove to be more advanced than Piaget ever estimated in terms of their understanding of ordinary human thoughts, feelings and behaviour. Ideas of empathy, individual psychology or comparative justice, according to Hunt, could all make sense even to a very young audience once described in the context of a lively story involving characters around the same age and stage as their readers (p. 166).

Hunt adds that, as various post-Piagetian psychologists were to discover, even children under six are capable of making intelligent comments on their favourite stories, at times showing evidence of quite complex reasoning ability. The same children, faced with Piaget's more abstract questions, might indeed have seemed bewildered simply because they could not understand or identify with the way things were being put to them. One serious limitation of Piaget's theories, seen by Hunt, was their neglect of children's feelings for narrative as opposed to logic, as Piaget himself always saw children principally as lone explorers of the inanimate world. These post-Piagetian psychologists, by contrast, believe that children often find social situations a good deal easier to comprehend than Piaget believed, and that at times they can manifest a certain social sophistication in their understanding much in advance of their comprehension of the non-social world (ibid, p.167).

The work of the Russian psychologist, Vygotsky (1962) affected the work of the post-Piagetian psychologists. His principal argument was that the true significance of language as the essential tool for learning had hitherto been overlooked. For Vygotsky, play and language represented the most fundamental of human attempts to transcend the here and now in order to construct symbolic models for a better understanding of the nature of the world we live in. Because of a child's highly developed social sense, as Vygotsky put it, the different cultural associations surrounding the use of language will often mean as much to him or her as the actual meaning of individual words. One child, for example, will quickly learn that language in all its variety is something to be relished and encouraged; another will, equally quickly, soon understand the reverse if this happens to be

true. This realisation that others' opinions may be different from one's own is an essential step in Vygotsky's outline of how young brains best develop. As he saw it, the more different hypotheses an individual is aware of, the more able that individual then becomes to understand complex situations that demand to be looked at from a number of points of view. (Hunt, 1992, pp. 166-167).

In summary, the previous discussion of the nature of children's literature clearly presents different views and beliefs. Some of these views identify children's literature as part of literature as a whole and see it as involving the same elements and criteria as adult literature. Other opinions view children's literature as a separate entity with its own features, which differ markedly from those of adult literature. However, the researcher's point of view which is supported by some authorities (already discussed) is that children's literature and adults' literature share common features which define both categories as literature and that children's literature has distinctive characteristics which mark it as different from adult literature.

Certain criteria for selecting suitable literature for children have also been discussed through the presentation of different views. Some of these views describe suitability in terms of moral content, some in terms of the appropriateness of themes or educational quality and some in terms of psychological and / or linguistic development. The significance of this section is to identify the ways in which we as educationalists; teachers, librarians and parents make decisions about the suitability of particular books for children.

3.4-The Values of Children's Literature

Children are likely to acquire various values, attitudes and behaviours as a result of their exposure to literature. Rudine Sims (1982) asserts that the "literature we choose helps to socialise our children and to transmit to them our values" (p. VII) Sutherland and Arbuthnot (1991) state that:

> "...all good literature deals with values. Children who read widely and hear stories read and told cannot help but interact with story characters involved in decision making, in formulating personal values, in learning to empathise with the difficulties of people the world over" (p. 30).

Aidan Chambers (1984) lists different aspects of the value of literature, which he most frequently came across. He states that:

> " Reading literature:
> helps extend a child's experience and knowledge of life;
> helps a child's personal growth - you discover yourself in literature and therefore learn to understand more about yourself;
> helps a child learn to spell, and to use the mother tongue with more facility;
> entertains by passing the time pleasurably and in a socially acceptable way (a child who reads a lot is often said to be a "good" child because while he is reading he doesn't "get into trouble);
> helps a child's spiritual development; teaches a child how - and how not - to behave;
> stretches the imagination;
> challenges and changes us;
> gets us into the closest possible contact with another person - the author;
> allows us to experience all kind of human possibilities, from murder to childbirth,

> without suffering the consequences of undergoing the experiences in real life;
> is a game-playing activity in which we try out various possible solutions to life-problems and see how they might be worked out before having to tackle them in reality" (pp. 6-7).

Literature and literature-related activities have been recognised as nurturing child development, which includes language development, cognitive development, personality development and social development. With regard to language development, Diana Hutchcroft (1981) acknowledges that literature plays a crucial role in fostering this. She states:

> "Good narrative, well read or told, is possibly the greatest stimulus to concentrated listening" (p. 217).

and,

> "Throughout the school, Tom and the class had been read to at least once daily, from a wide range of books. From this, and from much spoken work in the class, he had developed resources, language that enabled him to express his inner self" (ibid, p. 100).

In writing of children's use of the transactional mode, Hutchcroft claims that:

> "If good non-fiction is read aloud to children as well as the more usual stories and poems, it helps them to become familiar with the type of language used in this more formal style" (ibid, p. 112).

In the Report of the Commission on Reading in the U.S.A. (1985) it is maintained that "the single most important activity for building the

knowledge required for eventual success in reading is reading aloud to children" (p. 123). It was also stressed that:

> "There is no substitute for a teacher who reads children good stories. It whets the appetite of children for reading and provides a model of skilful oral reading. It is a practice that should continue throughout the grades" (ibid, p. 51).

While it is not the purpose of this thesis to give a detailed description of language acquisition, it is appropriate to discuss the role literature plays in developing the linguistic ability of children. Teale (1988) demonstrates the value of literature in offering rich encounters with vocabulary. He reports that being read to early in life has a positive influence on a child's literacy development. It enhances awareness of print and what it means, as it involves the modelling of reading as an enjoyable and desirable activity, building familiarity with texts and concepts of print, text structure and a metalinguistic awareness of print and an ability to talk about text as text (Teale and Sulzby, 1988, p. 78).

In a fifteen-year longitudinal study, Gordon Wells (1986) presented even more convincing evidence showing the long-term effects of reading aloud to children. For example, one child, Rosie was not read any stories before her entrance to school. Another, Jonathan, had more than 5,000 stories read to him before he began school. A sad but predictable fact emerged - all through his elementary school years, Jonathan remained at the top of his grade level in school achievement while Rosie remained at the bottom. Six years of schooling could not erase the differences shaped during those early formative years. In conclusion, Gordon Wells found that

the most crucial factor in determining a child's success in school was related to one main literacy event in the home during the pre-school years: being read stories (Wells, 1986, pp. 125-162). A child who is read stories from infancy to school age understands many things about reading and books. He or she has enjoyed literature in the most general and widely accepted sense - through narrative, the tale itself.

Wells (1986) goes further to explain the ways in which literature can make successful and effective contribution to children's language development. He stated:

> "First, in listening to stories read aloud at the age of 2,3, or 4-long before they can read themselves-children are already beginning to gain experience of the sustained meaning-building organisation of written language and its characteristic rhythm and structures. So, when they come to read books for themselves, they will find the language familiar.
>
> Second, through stories, children vicariously extend the range of their experience far beyond the limits of their immediate surroundings. In the process, they develop a much richer mental model of the world and a vocabulary with which to talk about it. As a result, as the content of the curriculum expands beyond what can be experienced firsthand in the classroom, children who have been read to find themselves at a considerable advantage.
>
> Stories can also provide an excellent starting point for the sort of collaborative talk between children and parents, as the parent helps the child to explore his or her own world in the light of what happens in the story and to use the child's own experience to understand the

> significance of the events that are re-counted. Such talk and the stories that give rise to it also provide a validation for the child's inner storying-that internal mode of meaning making which is probably as deeply rooted in human nature as is language itself". (ibid, pp. 151-152)

What is so important about listening to or reading stories, as Wells explained, is that, through this experience, the child is beginning to discover the symbolic potential of language: its power to create possible or imaginary worlds through words, by representing experience in symbols that are independent of the objects, events, and relationships symbolised and that can be interpreted in contexts other than those in which the experience originally occurred.

This stresses the need to expose children to literature not only at the primary education age, but also from a child's early years at home. Parents are to play this role effectively in order to give children meaningful experiences with language and text that will prepare them for the expanded experiences of their school curriculum.

All of these studies show the effect of planned exposure to literature on improving language or reading facility in children. They evidently confirm that reading to children increases their language development and that those children who have a high linguistic competence are the ones who have been exposed too much literature. Therefore, on the basis of these research studies, all teachers, librarians and parents should feel a responsibility to read aloud to children every day, for literature offers the child creative and qualitative opportunities to extend and enrich his or her language development.

Louise Giddings (1992) reviewed literature for its contributions to the theory and practice of literature-based reading instruction. She concludes that there is a growing emphasis on using literature for reading instruction. Giddings adds that the reports seem to indicate that the use of children's literature in the teaching of reading has a positive effect on students' achievement and attitudes toward reading, and that there is a growing number of articles on literature-based reading programmes that inspire educators to focus more on literature in the classroom (p.18).

Literature-based reading instruction is a topic of considerable discussion among educators today. A number of writers have defined literature-based reading instruction in the light of their observations and research. Hiebert and Colt (1989) conclude that literature-based reading instruction involves a total reading programme with various combinations of teacher and student interaction and with a selection of literature so that children develop as thoughtful, proficient readers (pp. 14-20). Tunnell and Jacobs (1989) speak of literature-based reading instruction as a process which primarily uses 'real' books to teach and foster literacy (pp. 470-477). Zarrillo (1989) defines literature-based reading instruction as a practical student activity using novels, informational books, short stories, poems and plays. He insists that the literature should not be re-written for instructional purposes and that it supplants rather than supplements the basal reading textbook (pp. 22-29). In *Literature-Based Reading Programs At Work,* Hancock and Hill (1987) state that literature-based reading instruction refers to teachers planning, carrying out, and evaluating reading programmes that are based on using real books rather than basal reading schemes (p. 1).

Bernice Cullinan (1989) surveyed state department reading and a language arts director to find out what is happening in literature-based reading programmes. In her article "*Latching on to Literature*", in the School Library Journal, Cullinan gives a brief conclusion as follows:

> "The whole-language movement, which includes the heavy use of literature in reading programmes, is a grass roots effort led by the already convinced: teachers and librarians who observe children learning to love to read through literature. The movement is grounded in three basic beliefs: that children learn to read by actually reading, that reading is a part of language learning, and that learning in any one area of language helps learning in other areas. To advance these beliefs, we must provide many books at all levels and provide unlimited opportunities for children to read suitable materials that support their desire to read" (p. 27).

She adds:

> "I learned that the best way to teach was to use an integrated literature-based language and reading programme. Since then, I've never learned a better way to teach" (ibid, p. 27).

Nevertheless, the reaction in the UK to this approach of teaching reading is different. The 'Literacy Hour' framework will be introduced in all English primary schools from September 1998 to provide a daily period of dedicated literacy teaching time for all pupils where different demands on children and teachers will be made and more emphasis on the decoding process will be put. In the national literacy strategy report (1998), it is stressed that there should be a strong and systematic emphasis on the teaching of phonics and other word level skills, and that pupils should be taught to:

"- discriminate between the separate sound in words;
- learn the letters and letter combinations most commonly used to spell those sounds;
- read words by sounding out and blending their separate part;
- write words by combining the spelling patterns of their sounds." (Df EE, P.4)

The researcher believes that an emphasis on the decoding process is very important for developing children's reading skills, however, children's interest and love of reading may not be developed through such a strategy only, but also through enjoyment and pleasure of reading literature. Therefore, there should be an emphasis on both the literacy and the literary strategies. The first strategy will enable children to read and write with confidence, fluency and understanding while the second strategy will develop the habit of reading in children. Both strategies must, of course, serve the reader's concern to make sense of the text.

Teachers' use of literature can be a highly effective approach to stimulate children's writing. Reading good literature to children and encouraging them to read is immensely rewarding to both the teacher and the children. Hearing and reading good language enables children unconsciously to learn to think, awakens ideas, and gives impetus to more varied and skilful expression of their thoughts. As stressed by Green and Petty (1959) "literature gives pleasure, excitement, and access to our heritage, as well as a framework for interpreting the world. It challenges the imagination and enriches experience; both elements are essential for effective writing" (p. 178).

Dorothy Strickland (1973) investigated the effect of special literature programme emphasising oral language activities related to the literature on the oral language and reading readiness of linguistically different kindergarten children. She concludes that "the literature language programme was successful in expanding the language repertoire of the children in this study" (pp. 79-86). The Bullock Report (1975) maintained that literature is the child's most rewarding form of encounter with language because "it helps to shape the personality, refine the sensibility, sharpen the critical intelligence ... it is a powerful instrument of empathy, a medium through which the child can acquire his values" (p. 124).

For those children who have difficulty in reading independently, exposure to literature will come primarily from hearing it shared in the classroom by the teacher and the other children. It is especially important for those children who have experienced frustration in reading to enjoy stories read aloud by others. The enjoyment offered by literature can lead to the development of a love of reading. According to Huck (1979) the primary purpose of a literature programme "is to encourage children to discover delight in books, to give them the opportunity to experience literature, and to enter into and become involved with a book " (pp. 708-711). Thus, for children to discover delight in books, adults have got to make appropriate choices about the provision of books, libraries and reading opportunities. Any literature programme in schools must get children excited about reading, 'turned on' to books and 'tuned into' literature. One of the best ways to interest children in books is to surround them with many of the finest books; give them time to read and a teacher who regularly reads to them; expose them to a wide variety of

literature, prose and poetry, realism and fantasy, contemporary and historical fiction, traditional and modern; provide time for children to talk about books, to share them with others and to interpret them through various creative activities. Another way that children can show their response to a book is through interpretative activities, for example, involving children in dramatising a story read to them. Some children might prefer to retell the story; others might want to read other books to compare with it. These creative activities would all add to the interpretation of the book and deepen the child's response to it.

Children's personality development - emotionally and conceptually, including their feeling of self-worth is another positive aspect of literary experience. Donna Norton (1983) supports the idea that children's books can play a very important role in their personality development. She maintains that children being exposed to a range of experiences of literature can overcome fear, develop trust, overcome the desire to have only their own way, and develop acceptable interaction with both peers and adults (p. 15). According to Rosalin Engle (1976) "image readiness begins at birth and involves all the actions and interactions between children and the members of their environment. Literature becomes an influence in the child's life as soon as others are willing to share it and the child responds" (p. 17).

Literature can also be used to help children understand their feelings, identify with characters who experience similar feelings and gain new insights into how others have coped with similar problems. Joan Glazer (1981) identifies four ways in which literature contributes to emotional growth. First, it shows children that many of

their feelings are also common to other children and are both normal and natural. Second, literature explores the feeling from several viewpoints, giving a fuller picture and providing the basis for naming that emotion. Third, actions of various characters show options for ways to deal with particular emotions. Fourth, it makes clear that one person experiences many emotions, and that these sometimes conflict (p. 113).

Self understanding as well as understanding others has been identified as another value of literature. In this context Diana Hutchcroft (1981) claims that "the reason why stories and poems are so important is that they are a major means of learning about life, a person's emotions, and morality" (p. 218). She adds:

> " In experiencing stories and poems, children can project themselves into other people doing other deeds, and so they learn to understand other people and their characters and motives, and they learn to be more sympathetic"
> (p.219).

Charlotte Huck (1979) adds that literature can show children how others have lived and matured, no matter what the time or place. As children gain increased awareness of the lives of others, as they vicariously try out other roles, they may develop a better understanding of themselves and those around them (p. 703). Donna Norton (1983) also demonstrates that literature can contribute considerably toward an understanding of the cultural heritage in the following statement:

> "Literature plays a strong role in understanding and valuing our cultural heritage in addition to understanding and enjoying our literary heritage. Developing positive attitudes toward

> our own culture and those of others is necessary for both social and personal development" (p. 5).

Therefore, literature that can illustrate the contributions and values of many cultures is to be carefully selected in order to foster children's appreciation of the heritage of ethnic minorities. Adults working in the field of children's literature illustrate the role it plays in nurturing and expanding the imagination. In his research study about the significance of children's literature in contributing to children's early primary education, Al-Nokhada (1987) concludes that literature takes children into imaginative worlds that stimulate additional creative experiences as they tell or write their own stories and interact with each other during creative drama. The researcher adds that both well-written literature and the illustrations found in picture books can stimulate children's aesthetic development. Children enjoy and evaluate these illustrations as well as explore the media used as they create their own illustrations (pp. 203-213).

Charlotte Huck (1979) supports the idea that literature develops children's imagination. She states that "literature opens windows for children that they never knew existed; it helps them to entertain new ideas, and to see the world from a new perspective which is derived as the child has vicarious experiences through literature" (p. 702). Jon C. Stott (1994) in the periodical *Children's Literature in Education* demonstrates the value of literature part of which is the development of children's imagination. He states that "good writing may transport the child to other places and other periods of time, and expand his or her life space. Identification with others is experienced as the child enters an imaginary situation with his or her emotions

tuned to those of the story" (p. 243). Aidan Chambers (1983) describes this process as follows:

> "Whether his reading takes him to another land, another time period, or an imaginative country of the mind, the young reader will return home enriched by these vicarious experiences. He will then see himself and his immediate world in a new way. Reading gets us out of our own time and place, out of ourselves; but in the end it will return us to ourselves, a little different, a little changed by this experience" (p. 8).

Another aspect of the value of literature discovered by educators of children is that it opens doors to knowledge and expands children's interests. According to Hall, Ribovich and Ramming (1979):

> " Literature can broaden children's knowledge as they explore other ways of living in different times and places through the eyes of characters both similar to and different from themselves. Books also can offer vicarious experiences which extend children's knowledge of the world in which they live" (p. 232).

This leads to the conclusion that the many books available to children can relay new knowledge. We can help children select books that will give them some experience of thinking about values. Further, we can take note of their responses and can encourage young readers to observe the actions of story characters and think through the motivations for, and consequences of, their actions. Children can then talk about similar situations in their own lives and determine whether the outcome was good or whether they would behave differently if given another chance.

The formerly described value of children's literature positively asserted the significance of literature in the education and upbringing of children. It has been greatly emphasised that literature contributes to the shaping of the child's personality, forming his or her positive attitudes, helping his or her maturity and building up his or her self-confidence. The fictional genre responds to children's needs, feeds their imagination and develops their thinking and emotional maturity. Therefore, educational and artistic values should play a fundamental part in recommendations regarding children's literature either for the school curriculum or reading at home.

Reports and recommendations regarding the use of children's books for the purpose of enhancing the school curriculum are numerous. Educators and specialists such as Levstik (1990, pp. 848-853) and Moss (1991, pp. 26-32) report that children's books might be used across the elementary curriculum to facilitate more effective content acquisition. They further explore specific recommendations that children's books could be utilised to teach the content of elementary social studies. Historical fiction, for example, can have beneficial effects on children's historical understanding, and some authors like Egan (1983, pp. 66-80) and Hirsch (1988, pp. 1-15) have suggested that historical myths, legends, and literature should be used to introduce children to the study of history.

The primary school can play an important and effective role in this field, as it deals with children in their formative years. Because the individual is presented with values early in life, educational and literary values, which are implanted at this stage, can have a great effect on the child's personality in the future.

3.5 - Children's Reading Interests

Literature can both develop and extend children's interests. Teachers and librarians need to know the current interests of children they serve, so that they might better provide books to meet their needs or might better make books relevant to children's interests through the reading of the texts. Many books may not be accessible to children because the language is too challenging or the plot is too convoluted or the theme is too complex. However, it is through grappling with language, unravelling plots and making sense of themes, that teachers help to develop children's interests in these books. It is also useful to know what children of a particular age level generally like, recognising, however, the danger of stereotyping children's interests without regard to their backgrounds, reading abilities or personal needs. It was obvious from the information collected by the researcher regarding children's reading interests (through the research study he conducted with children of age group 6-12, and their teachers, librarians and parents) that children have different interests and different purposes in reading. For example, when he conducted the semi-structured interview with children of age 6-9, the researcher recorded the following statements by children as to why they choose a particular book or books to read:

- *"I chose the book because I like adventure books"*
- *"The cover looked exciting and attractive"*
- *"I saw the story on television"*

These and many other statements provide some clues to the broad preferences in children's reading. Reasons for choice include the above and a liking for other books by the same author; continuing to read through a series; and the general appearance of the book which

encompasses not only the cover picture but also how easy the book looks in terms of size and density. Benton and Fox (1985) explain how children choose their reading material, as follows:

> "Children ... flit along the shelves, sampling as they go. The cover, the publisher's blurb, the illustrations, a couple of sentences randomly tested, come into play with the previous literary experiences..." (p. 11)

However, the collection of accurate information in this regard may not be easy in that children do not always remember authors and titles from their recent readings. They may feel conditioned by the circumstances in which they are asked about books and give answers they think the questioner wants to hear, or they may simply be unable to formulate or articulate the reasons for their choice (Marshall, 1988, p. 212).

In some countries individual librarians and teachers attempt to find out which books and categories of reading interest children depending on purposes and targets set by children for reading. But, as Wray (1990) argues, "it will not be sufficient to encourage children to be more precise in their purpose setting if teachers actually do this for them" (p. 109). On the other hand, some countries such as Britain and America undertake large-scale surveys to assess national or regional readership and compare possible geographical, sex, age, and social status or ability differences. Examples of these surveys include the Whitehead Report survey conducted in England and Wales in 1971 and the Children's Reading Choices Project carried out at the University of Nottingham in 1994/95. The study conducted by the researcher-related children's reading interests to gender and to age. The results obtained in relation to gender indicated that:

- Female children read more than male children did.
- Female children prefer to read fictional stories more than male children.
- Male children prefer to read adventure stories more than female children.
- Female children prefer to read social stories more than male children.
- Both male and female children prefer fiction stories rather than non-fiction.
- Both male and female children like to read children's magazines.

The difference in interests between the different age variables of children was also questioned by the researcher through the questionnaire for parents. The difference in children's interest in fiction books was not found to be significant between their age variables; however, a high significant difference in interest in non-fiction books was found between age variables, where children of ages 8-12 were shown to be more interested in these than those of ages 6-8. The majority of children were found to be interested in reading magazines, with a non-significant difference between their age variables.

All the previously presented results obtained by the researcher give some clues as to children's reading interests. However, there have been many investigations into children's reading preferences and the factors that attract children to books. These investigations are centred upon Britain and the USA. There are, so far, no published studies of children's reading interests in Bahrain and this means that the following investigations provide a valuable source of background material.

The Whitehead Report, a large-scale survey of a sample of eight thousand children in England and Wales in 1971 and published in

1977 as *Children and Their Books*, gave a very detailed questionnaire to the children in the selected schools. The findings revealed a number of apparent preferences; for example, the most widely read books at age ten were listed as *Black Beauty*, *Treasure Island*, *Swiss Family Robinson* and *The Secret Seven*, while the twelve-plus to fourteen-plus age groups indicated a waning interest in school, pony, animal and science and technology books, and a preference for detective, historical, pets and poetry (Whitehead, Maddren, Capey and Wellings, 1977). These findings indicate some similarities with those findings of the researcher, especially through the responses of the parents sampled for the study. It was found that children of ages 8-12 were more interested in reading non-fiction books than those of ages 6-8. It is therefore obvious that as they grow older, children tend to read non-fiction subjects such as science and technology.

Wray and Lewis (1993) conducted a survey study of 464 junior school children in order to explore some aspects of their views about, and experiences of, reading. As part of that survey, Wray and Lewis were trying to find out what these children were actually reading in school and what their reading preferences were. The children in the survey, ranged in age from seven to eleven-year-olds, were each given a short questionnaire to complete to indicate what they liked reading best. It was found that the majority of children (361) chose fiction books, with some children mentioning individual books and others individual authors. Many children, however, specified a genre of book rather than a specific book. The fiction genres specified by more than one child included adventure stories (mentioned by 24 children), ghost 'spooky' books (9), murder/detective (9), horror (8) and fairy tales (5). Other children specified magazines (18 children),

poetry books (20) and reading-scheme books (11). Four children claimed to like all books, one child liked books at home, and one specified *The Bible*. The range of genres mentioned increased with age. For example, in one school the seven-year-old class used the genre terms: adventure books, fairy tales, poetry, mystery books, animal books, and myths and legends. The eleven-year-olds did not mention fairy tales or myths and legends, but their list had grown to include adventure, poetry, mystery, horse and pony books, horror, funny books, joke books, teenage books, murder, fantasy, war, hobby books and choose-your-own-adventure books (pp. 251-263).

This study clearly indicates that most children prefer to read fiction books varying in subject matter between the different age ranges. This finding conforms to that of the researcher that not only indicates different fiction subject-matter preferred by different age ranges but also according to gender. One of the major messages arising from Wray and Lewis's study is that looking at what children are reading and choosing to read is of vital importance in offering them a wide range of literature.

The Children's Reading Choices Project carried out at the University of Nottingham in 1994-5, (pp. 2-14) aimed at collecting evidence to improve understanding of the complex nature of literacy in the 1990s and at providing information to enable parents, teachers and the book trade to promote wider reading. To accomplish this project a national questionnaire survey was conducted with 7,976 children of 10, 12 and 14 years old in 110 primary schools and 59 secondary schools in 1994. To supplement the questionnaire, follow-up interviews were conducted in 1995 with over 1% of the sample in

different schools throughout England. The following were the major findings of the survey project on children's voluntary reading habits as they compared to the 1971 study of Whitehead and as they relate to the researcher's findings.

1. Over the last two decades book reading has increased for 10-year-olds of both sexes, and for 12-year-old girls. It has remained at the same level for 12-year-old boys and for 14-year-old girls. It has declined for 14-year-old boys. Thus, for boys a statistically significant increase at 10 becomes neutral at 12 and there is a significant decrease at 14. For girls a statistically significant increase at 10 and 12 becomes neutral at 14.

2. The average number of books read by children in the four weeks prior to the survey was 2.52, while in the 1971 study the average number of books read by children in the previous four weeks was 2.40.

3. Most children read regularly, but there is a tendency towards fewer books being read as children get older.

4. More girls than boys read books regularly.

5. There is a clear pattern of decline in the amount of book reading from higher to lower socio-economic groups.

6. Children have very eclectic reading tastes. For both boys and girls this eclecticism increases with age. 14-year-old boys read a wider range of books than 12 year olds. This is also true for girls.

7. Children of any one age are reading books of markedly different levels of sophistication in terms of language, plot and subject matter.

8. Children's classics are still being widely read.

9. The media have a strong influence on children's reading choices.

10. Very few children read only non-fiction, but 78% of those that do are boys.

11. Adventure stories are the most popular genre at all ages and for both sexes, followed by romance/relationships and growing up, then horror and science fiction/fantasy, then comedy, and then animal-related fiction.

12. Re-reading is an important element in children's reading choices. Just over one third of the children questioned in the survey had re-read one or more of the books they mentioned.

13. Magazines, comics and newspapers are widely read by children of all ages. Twenty-four per cent of the sample regularly read five or more periodicals.

14. Most children view reading positively and have positive views of themselves as readers. There is a tendency for younger children to judge reading more positively than older ones. Girls responded more positively than boys. The majority of views expressed about reading are positive in all socio-economic groups.

15. Over 70% of children say they borrow books from the public library. As children get older, they borrow library books less frequently. Girls say they borrow more library books than boys do. Girls also say they borrow books more frequently than boys do.

16. Children who read the most, watch least television. Keen readers are more likely than others to claim to have watched little or no television the previous evening. Those children who had read no books in the previous four weeks claim to watch the most television.

17. There is no significant relationship between the amount of time children claim to spend using computers and the amount of time they claim to spend reading. (The Children's Reading Choices Project, 1994/95, pp. 2-14)

These findings of the University of Nottingham project have some similarity with those of the researcher in that female children read

more than male children; the majority of children prefer to read fiction books rather than non-fiction, with a significant difference in favour of female children; most children have positive views about reading where girls' responses are more positive than boys'; girls borrow library books more frequently than boys do; adventure stories are mostly preferred by boys while romance stories are mostly preferred by girls. This should give teachers, librarians and parents guidelines as to what to provide for children for reading and at what age, and to consider developing the range of children's readings by helping them appreciate the qualities of books out of their interests.

Children's reading interests are affected by certain factors, such as: the existence of a range of published books; the availability of children's books in the home, the school, the library and the bookshop; the selection made by adults (teachers, librarians, booksellers, parents) on behalf of children; time and opportunity to read; and children's own personal needs and abilities (Marshall, 1988, p. 213). It is therefore necessary to take account of these factors in addition to those of children's age, sex and social status when conducting survey studies on children's reading interests.

Huus (1964) reviewed the literature on children's reading interests and found consistent results in some eight studies reported over a period of twenty years. Seven conclusions were listed that points up age and sex differences in children's preferences:

- Interests of children vary according to age level
- Few differences between the interests of boys and girls are apparent before the age of nine

- Notable differences in the interests of boys and girls appear between age 10 and 13
- Girls read more than boys, but boys have a wider interest range and read a greater variety
- Girls show an earlier interest in adult fiction of a romantic type than do boys
- Boys like chiefly adventure and girls like fiction, but mystery stories appeal to both
- Boys seldom show preference for a girl's book, but girls will read boys' books to a greater degree. (Huus, 1964, p. 125).

Although this study of Huus is thirty five year old, the researcher found it worth mentioning for the valuable findings it revealed, which, in fact correspond to the findings of many recent studies, including the research study conducted by the researcher on children in primary education in Bahrain. Another reason for presenting such a study and the following investigations into children's reading interests and factors affecting them, is the lack of recent studies in Bahrain and the lack of recent British or American studies or sources concerning children's literature.

An extensive review of the research into reading interests at all age levels by Purves and Beach (1972) substantiates the conclusions of Huus, with the exception that in their study sex differences appear at a slightly earlier age (pp. 205-206). Robinson and Weintroub (1973) also note that sex differences appear in early primary grades and become increasingly predominant through elementary school. These reviewers maintain that individual differences are so marked that

group studies of reading interests are of little value in helping teachers meet the needs of a particular class (pp. 28-29).

Besides sex and age, reading interests have also been linked to mental ability. Russell, (1961), came to three major conclusions after comparing the studies of reading interests and intelligence; he reported:

- Bright children like books that dull children two to three years older like.
- Bright children read three or four times as many books as do average children and do not taper off in reading at 13 as most children do.
- There is little variation in the reading interests of bright, average and dull children, except bright children have a wider range of interests. (pp. 394-395)

Environmental factors such as availability and accessibility of reading materials in the home, classroom, public and school libraries determine and affect the development of reading interests. The more we surround children with a wide range of books, the more we develop their love for and interest in reading (Hanoora, 1987, p.14). However, the researcher believes that surrounding children with a wide range of books is not enough to develop their interests in reading. We, as adults, must be there with them; reading to them and encouraging them to read; helping them to appreciate the qualities in these books; developing their interests in the different types of literature; and motivating them to explore and discover the texts in this range of books.

The geographical location factor may have its effect on children's reading interests. However, Johns (1970) reported that children's reading interests do not seem to vary greatly according to their geographical location. When he studied the reading preferences of inner-city American children in grades four, five and six to see if they preferred stories that dealt with inner-city life, he found that their preferences were for stories that depicted middle-class settings and characters with positive self-concepts (pp. 114-123). This may refer to these children's ambitions to move into a middle class world with middle class values or to their expectations of the lives of heroes. The researcher finds Johns' conclusion to some extent convincing, for we should not expect children from a particular geographical location to be interested only in literature related to their area. Many Bahraini children for example are interested in reading western literature and that imported from other Arab countries.

Cultural expectations are influential factors in determining individual interests. According to Huck (1979) the child acquires interests that bring approval through conformity to social expectations. She wrote:

> "A fourth-grade girl may not be interested in horses or horse stories, but if most of the girls in her group express these interests, she will also ask for stories related to this theme. Boys in the group may reject horse stories because those are just for girls."(p. 29)

Huck also suggests that the child cannot be interested in something that does not exist for him. Through a background of meaningful experience, as she states, he can build interests (ibid., p. 29).

Therefore, the school, the home and the community must provide opportunities for children to have many multisensory experiences. As Smith (1939) pointed out:

> "The reading interests with which pupils come to school are the teacher's opportunity - the reading interests with which children leave school are the teacher's responsibility."
>
> (p. 300)

Adults who are responsible for developing children's abilities need to be knowledgeable about children's interests. They also need to recognise characteristics and needs of children at different ages and stages of development. At the same time, it is important to remember that each child has his or her unique pattern of growth.

Chapter 4

Previous Research Studies

Previous Research Studies

4.1- Introduction

This chapter reviews the relevant research studies conducted in the field of children's literature and books. The review covers areas such as the values of children's literature, children's reading interests and other significant aspects of children's literature. The review of the previous research covers both international and regional studies . The term 'international' refers to studies and sources of information obtained from countries outside the Arab world and the term 'regional' refers to studies and sources of information within the Arab world including Bahrain. Comments on the review of these research studies will be presented at the end of the chapter.

4.2-Previous Research Studies Conducted in Bahrain

The present study is the first study to be conducted which deals comprehensively with the subject of children's literature, children's books and reading interests at Ph.D. level. All that has been written in Bahrain in respect of children's literature and books consists of simple articles presented in the local journals and magazines. There have been only two research studies conducted in the same field at M.Ed., level. One was conducted by Al-Nokhada (1987) and the other was conducted by Ghuloom in (1991).

4.2.1- Al-Nokhada, (1987) "The Significance of Children's Literature in Contributing to Early Primary Education with Particular Reference to the Situation in Bahrain".

The study reviewed the educational provision in the primary schools of Bahrain with particular reference to the provision of children's literature and major problems holding back its development. To study the provision of children's literature in the early stages of primary education and children's reading inclinations, Al-Nokhada conducted a small survey study to collect information from a sample of 112 male/female teachers of the first three years of primary education (6-9 year olds), from 11 schools where the class-teaching system was applied. The collection of information for this survey was mainly by questionnaires circulated to every classroom teacher in the selected schools, and semi-structured interviews with 25% of the teachers sampled for the study. The reason which led the researcher to conduct such a survey study was the lack of sources of information about the provision of children's literature in the primary schools of Bahrain and the non-existence of any previous research studies in this field. The major findings of the study which support the findings of the current study are as follows:

- The majority of teachers pointed out children's love of picture books, containing either cartoon or ordinary pictures.
- Higher percentages of teachers also stated children's inclinations towards amusing stories, imaginative stories, stories of animals, stories of adventure and heroism.
- Most teachers indicated children's great love of drama especially puppet theatre, drawing and music.

- The majority of teachers indicated that there was a lack of teaching aids such as audio-visual equipment and practical materials in their schools.

- The majority of teachers indicated that most children love reading/ listening to fiction stories despite the inadequate provision of them in these schools. The teachers believed that what was being provided for children did not reflect the environment of the Bahraini society and that there was a lack of specialist authors of children's literature in Bahrain.

- Most teachers indicated that they did not practice drama with children as a means to access literature due to the lack of play stages in their schools or the lack of adequate space in their classrooms to allow such an activity to take place.

- A high percentage of teachers revealed that there was a lack of suitable libraries for children in terms of organisation, book provision and space in their schools.

- The majority of teachers indicated that they faced certain problems which hampered them from producing and utilising teaching aids. These problems, as teachers indicate, were the overload of teaching duties; the lack of raw materials, and classrooms that were crowded with children.

This study suggests that there were serious shortcomings which held back the development of children's literature in Bahrain in general and in the primary schools in particular. The recommendations raised by this study considered the development of children's literature in the primary school and in Bahrain as a whole in terms of its presentation and access to it; teachers training courses; parent's involvement in their child's education, and educational centres and clubs.

Clearly, this study relates to the current study in that they both focused on the provision of children's literature for primary school children in Bahrain and on the reading interests of these children.

The difference between the two studies is that the survey for the current study was conducted on a larger-scale covering the six stages of primary education and including five samples (teachers, librarians, parents, authors and children) while on the other hand, the previous study was conducted on a smaller-scale covering the first three stages of primary education and including one sample only which is the teachers of the class-teaching system. Despite the fact that the current study was conducted ten years after the previous one, it produced similar conclusions with regard to the provision of children's literature in primary schools of Bahrain. Both studies show that there is a lack of provision of children's literature in Bahrain in general and in primary schools in particular. Thus, the researcher feels that this situation requires for positive action by the authorities in Bahrain towards the development of children's literature.

4.2.2- Ghuloom, I. A. (1991) "Educational Values in Children's Stories in the Primary School in Bahrain".

With an intention to highlight the significance of the story in children's education and the values it may impart to children, the researcher chose to present this study which aimed at identifying the educational values that should be emphasised in children's stories, either through the curriculum or through books children choose for themselves, and then to ascertain the extent to which these values are present in stories in primary school textbooks. To examine this, the author of this study (Isha Ghuloom) adopted an analytical descriptive methodology by using content analysis of all stories included in primary school textbooks. In the light of reviewing the content analysis, the author prepared a classification list of 40 values. The most significant results of the analysis were as follows:

- The stories contained educational values within the classification.
- Self-values came first while national values came last.
- Common values in the stories included work, care, attention, co-operation, organised thinking, respect, knowledge, recreation, courage, mercy, faith, family loving, initiative and obedience.
- There was an inconsistency in the educational values presented both implicitly and explicitly to students of primary education.
- There was a significant difference between classes in the number of stories assigned. The stories were weighed heavily in favour of the third and fourth years of primary education, and also varied in values they contained.
- Most of the stories lack proper fictional structure as well as convincing characterisation.

In the light of the above results, the author recommended that the story should be given more attention in primary school textbooks in terms of more provision and better quality; implicit methods should be emphasised in presenting educational values and direct methods which eliminate the artistic value of the story should be reduced; the list of educational values included in the study should be utilised; and the Bahraini writers of children's literature should be given a chance to participate in writing school textbooks.

This study provides some support for the current study in that it showed that children's literature provided to primary school children in Bahrain through their textbooks is inadequate in terms of quantity and quality. The recommendations raised by this study are consistent with those raised by the researcher and seek a better provision of children's literature with emphasis on good values to be presented both implicitly and explicitly to primary school children.

Furthermore, the involvement of Bahraini authors of children's literature in writing school textbooks was found by both studies to be important. They should help to enhance the artistic values in stories included in these textbooks.

4.3 - Previous Regional Research Studies Conducted in the Arab World

4.3.1- Ramadan. K. (1978) "An Evaluation of Stories Presented to Children in Kuwait".

Ramadan conducted this study in order to discuss the suitability of stories presented to children in Kuwait and to suggest answers to the following questions:

- What type of stories are available to children in Kuwait?
- What type of stories do Kuwaiti Children prefer to read?
- What criteria can be used in evaluating the content of these stories?
- To what extent can we depend on such evaluations?

The study covered stories provided to primary school children in the school libraries for their own readings and it excluded stories included in textbooks or those presented to children in public libraries and bookshops. The study concentrated on two major aspects:

- Kuwaiti children's reading interests in respect of stories provided to them, in terms of both quantity and quality.
- Developing a set of criteria to evaluate children's stories and applying it to a sample of stories.

The findings related to the first part of the study were as follows:

- On average, Kuwaiti children aged 8-12 spend 1.2% of their time reading each week.
- Certain factors were found to affect the amount of children's reading such as the place of residence, age, gender and school stage.
- There were certain environmental circumstances which discouraged the Kuwaiti child from reading.
- Children were found to have preferences for fiction, detective and historical stories in that order.

The major findings related to the second part of the study were as follows:

- A number of the stories sampled for the study contained negative values.
- Kuwaiti children in general were not very much interested in reading due to certain factors, the most prominent of which was the borrowing system in libraries.
- The educational system applied in Kuwaiti primary schools does allow adequate opportunities for children to read books of their choice.

The researcher believes that the findings and recommendations raised in this study could be applicable to Bahrain since it shares with Kuwait common social, economic, geographical and political environments. In fact, the environments and factors which were identified by Ramadan as affecting the amount of reading and the interests of Kuwaiti children are similar to those experienced by Bahraini children. Thus, children's reading interests in Kuwait can be related to some extent to the interests of Bahraini children.

4.3.2- Al-Badri Ahmed, A. (1985) "An Evaluation of Children's Literature in Arabic Textbooks of the Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Years in Primary Education".

The researcher's aim in presenting this study is to indicate the situation of the literary content presented to Egyptian children through their textbooks. This situation regarding Egyptian children the researcher believes, has its effect on children in Bahrain because Egypt is one of the major regional exporters of children's literature books to Bahrain and many of the primary school textbooks in Bahrain are written by Egyptian authors.

This study was conducted in an attempt to achieve the following objectives:

- To cast light on the situation of the literary content in Arabic language textbooks of the fourth, fifth and sixth years in primary education in Egypt.
- To establish suitable criteria to be used in the evaluation of the literary content presented to children.
- To study the suitability of the literary content presented to children through their Arabic language Textbooks in the light of the suggested criteria.

The problem of the study as stated by the author is that the literary content presented to children in the fourth, fifth and sixth years of primary education through their Arabic language textbooks needs to be reviewed and re-evaluated in the light of scientific criteria applicable to children's needs during these stages.

From his theoretical and practical framework the author identified certain criteria with which to evaluate children's literature. The validity and reliability of such criteria were ascertained and approved

by a number of committees concerned. The major conclusions of the study were:

- A lack of literary content in school Arabic language textbooks of the aforementioned stages of primary education and the inadequacy of the literary content already presented in these books.

- Poetry and prose are the most predominant types of literature in these books.

- Children's plays, puzzles, humorous literature and adventure stories were not adequately considered in these books in terms of quantity and quality.

- Some of the stories presented in these books included negative values which are socially unacceptable and which are beyond children's level of understanding.

- The content of the literary subjects presented in these books contributes adequately to children's language, and their knowledge of their country and society. However, it doesn't realise the artistic, literary and emotional objectives.

These conclusions regarding the quality of the literary subject provided to Egyptian primary school children through their textbooks, as outlined by the Al-Badri study, relate to the researcher's earlier review of the situation of children's literature in the Arab world which indicated deficiency in its provision both quantitatively and qualitatively. The situation reflected by the Al-Badri study represents the provision in one of the leading Arab countries where children's literature was recognised many years ago and where many of the most notable children's literature authors and critics work. This gives a hint as to the situation in a small country like Bahrain where children's literature was only recognised in the 1970s and where very few specialist authors of children's literature live. The findings of the previously demonstrated study of Ghuloom (1991) through which an

approach of content analysis of all stories included in primary school textbooks in Bahrain was adopted, provided similar conclusions to the Al-Badri study. Both studies showed that there is a lack in the provision of the literary subjects to children of primary education through their Arabic textbooks.

4.3.3-Hassanian, A.T., Hanoora, A. H., and Abu Hilal, M.M. (1989) "The Typical Roles Men and Women in Children's Literature and Textbooks in the United Arab Emirates - Content Analysis".

This study is part of a chain of studies funded by UNESCO. It consists of three related sections and aims at identifying the typical roles of men and women through an analysis of Arabic and science textbooks in primary education and an analysis of children's literature available in the United Arab Emirates. This study was presented in three separate sections which relate to each other in terms of objectives, criteria and analysis procedures:

- The first section was entitled "Content Analysis of the Arabic Textbooks of the First Three Years of Primary Education".
- The second section was entitled "Content Analysis of the Arabic and Science Textbooks of the Following Three Years of Primary Education".
- The third section was entitled "Content Analysis of a Sample from *Majid* Magazine and Stories Available in School libraries".

This study put forward a hypotheses that the roles of males and females in children's literature and textbooks are mostly presented in a traditional way giving the man the characteristics of responsibility and greatness while the woman has very limited roles which usually do not extend beyond those of cook and housekeeper.

Through the three sections of the study, accuracy of this hypothesis was examined. The major overall findings were as follows:

- Male names were more frequently mentioned than female names.
- Males were mostly found in the national, scientific and social roles whereas females were mostly found in the housekeeping roles.
- Males were mostly found to do commercial, agricultural, military, educational, medical and engineering jobs, whereas females were mostly found to do sales, teaching housing, social, tailoring and housework jobs.
- The percentage of pictures illustrating males rather than females was 73%.
- The subjects written by/for males are far more than those written by/for females.
- All poems presented in these books were written by male poets. Poems written by female poets were not included at all.
- The structure of the language used in terms of past and present tenses concentrated on the male form considering that the female form is included successively.
- All textbooks were written by male authors while none of the female authors contributed to the writing of these books.

From these findings, it is concluded that there was a bias towards the male gender in terms of values, subject matter, language, authorship and intended readership.

Although this study analysed the content of children's literature and textbooks from a specific angle, that is the typical roles of men and women in these books, it also relates to some extent to the current research study because it gives an idea of the type and quality of

literature presented to children both in Bahrain and in the United Arab Emirates since they both share common educational provision.

4.3.4- The study of Shahata, H. (1989) "The Educational Values in Children's Mystery Stories".

With an aim to identify implicit and explicit values in children's stories and journalism, the researcher presents this study and the following one in (4.3.5).

As an educationalist, Shahata realised that detective and mystery stories are widely read and greatly admired by children, a situation that encouraged him to study the reasons why children are attracted to such stories. Therefore, in 1986, Shahata requested 200 children from the higher classes of the primary and intermediate stages to write their answers to the question: "Why do you read mystery stories?"

In response to this question, the author received a variety of answers highlighting the content of this type of story and its effect on the reader.

In the light of the above study, the author carried out a further study in 1989 to review the educational values in mystery stories and their impact on children's behaviour. The author used the content analysis method to a sample of 20 mystery stories selected randomly but representing different authors and different time periods. To carry out his study, the author prepared a list including different educational values extracted from previous research studies in the same field such as 'knowledge', 'responsibility', 'honesty' 'self expression' and 'intelligence'. The following conclusions were drawn from the study:

- The frequency of including positive educational values in these mystery stories was high.

- The highest frequency rate (22.5%) was gained by the 'knowledge' value whereas the lowest frequency rate was gained by the 'honesty' value. This means that the 'knowledge' was the most implicit value in mystery stories.

- The 'responsibility' value did not gain any rate in the study sample stories.

In the light of these results, Shahta recommended that children's mystery and adventure stories could assist in children's education.

The Shahata study identifies implicit and explicit values in stories presented to children in the Arab world. Although the study represents children of one part of the Arab world and one type of the literature provided to them, it can give an indication of one aspect of the provision of children's literature. However, the 20 mystery stories sampled for Shahata's study are not representative of a country like Egypt where hundreds of this type of stories are written and presented to children annually. Consequently, the conclusions drawn from this study which state that the frequency of the educational values in mystery stories are high may not be reliable or representative to all mystery stories produced and published in Egypt.

4.3.5- The study of Al-Faisal, S. (1988) "The Values in Children's Journalism in Syria".

This study has been carried out by Al-Faisal to identify the values in children's journalism in Syria assuming that the values presented through journalism are those predominant in the society. Samples for

the study were selected by the author from children's journals in Syria, one of which was the children's magazine "*osama*" published two times a month and the "Children's Page" published in the weekly journal "*al-ba'ath*". With regard to "*osama*", the author selected 18 editions from 1977, 1978 and 1979 in order to identify variations in values during these years. In respect of the "Children's Page", 12 pages were selected where each one was the last page of an edition from a particular month. Through this selection he hoped to avoid the prevalence of particular values at specific times.

From the above sample, 223 texts/compositions were analysed and the values in them were identified. In analysing these texts, the author followed specific guidelines, as follows:

- Poetic texts and poetic drama were excluded from the analysis because (according to the researcher) they are difficult to analyse.
- Picture-stories with no texts and also materials concerned with puzzles were excluded.
- Serial stories which were incomplete in the selected samples were excluded.
- Short topics were selected by the author for the study analysis using their titles as criteria for their selection.

The author used the "Theme" either implicit or explicit as a unit for the analysis. The results of this analysis indicated that the largest number of values (97 values) centralised in the group of educational values, whereas the two value groups, i.e. the behavioural and the body values, came in the seventh rank, which is the last rank in the analysis. This led to the conclusion that children's journalism in Syria gives more consideration to the educational values rather than to the

social, recreational, vocational, behavioural and body values respectively. Therefore, the author suggested that consideration should be given to the implicit values presented by authors of children's journalism in Syria.

This study is to shed light on the quality of children's literature presented in another part of the Arab World. Syria is considered one of the major exporters of children's literature to Bahrain and consequently the quality of the literature they deliver to our children should be considered. The study of Al-Faisal proved that there are certain positive values included in children's journalism in Syria although more consideration is given to educational values. Nevertheless, we cannot generalise from these results to all types of children's literature presented in Syria. Moreover, an analysis of two magazines out of many others published in Syria is not representative of all. There are also reservations concerning the methodology of selecting samples for the study. Selecting one particular page (last page) from each edition sampled may represent one subject and one author, but, these cannot be representative to all subjects included in these magazines. Thus the results of this study are still debatable.

4.4- Previous International Research Studies Conducted Outside The Arab World

4.4.1-Kapka, D.K.(1992) "First-Grade Children's Responses to Beginning Reading at the Onset of Formal Reading Instruction Coupled with a Parent-Child Read-Aloud Project".

This qualitative study investigated first grade students' attitudes towards reading at the onset of formal reading instruction and throughout the first fifteen weeks of first grade. Coupled with the participants' observations of formal instruction was the parental 'read-aloud' project. This study employed participant observations of students during regular reading conferences and parental, teacher and student interviews. It attempted to obtain a complete picture of first grade students as they participated in a reading programme and also as they interacted with a parental 'read-aloud' literature component. The study included 21 first grade students who each week exchanged book bags containing four children's books for the parental 'read-aloud'. Also included were books appropriate for first grade students to read to their parents. Eighteen of the parents participated in the follow-up evaluation.

The descriptive analysis of the data obtained from pre and post student interviews, parent interviews, reading conferences during book bag exchanges, collectively supported the positive attitude of the students toward reading. The findings of the study further supported the importance of parental involvement in the literacy process.

The study indicates the significance of literature in contributing to children's reading development and emphasises the importance of parental involvement in the reading experience of their children. Using the literature component, together with parental 'read-aloud' involvement, this study showed children's positive attitudes towards reading. In Bahrain, the present study indicates negligence and a lack of recognition by the parents of their role. Therefore, in addition to the provision of adequate children's literature in primary schools of Bahrain, the authorities should seriously consider setting programmes that involve parents in the reading sessions of their children. Through this approach, children's reading interests will be developed and parents will realise the significance of their roles in their children's education in addition to the significance of literature in their children's lives.

4.4.2- Powell-Smith, K.A. (1993) "Literature-Based and Curriculum-Based Parent Tutoring".

This study investigated the effects of two parent tutoring-reading programmes on their children's reading achievement. One programme was literature-based (LB) and used children's literature books. The other programme was curriculum-based (CB) and used the basal reader from each child's classroom. Subjects were 36 student/parent pairs assigned randomly to one of three groups, LB CB, and Control. The 15-week study comprised 5 weeks of baselines, 5 weeks of treatment, and 5 weeks of follow-up. Tutoring occurred for 20 minutes four times each week during the treatment phase.

Effects were evaluated using Curriculum-Based Measurement procedures. Two types of dependent measures were employed in

reading passages drawn from the student's basal readers and curriculum-independent passages. Data analyses included within-and between-group comparisons, and within-individual examination of changes in level and curve of reading achievement in both dependent measures. Parent and child opinions regarding the tutoring and its effectiveness were also examined.

Treatment integrity data showed that parents implemented the tutoring programmes as designed. However, neither tutoring programme had a significant effect on student reading achievement after tutoring or at follow-up. Additionally, no achievement effects were found due to the interaction between type of tutoring and type-dependent measures. Some individual students in LB and CB groups, however, did experience gains in reading achievement. Participants' questionnaires and anecdotal data indicated that they enjoyed both tutoring programmes and that the children's interest in reading and reading skills increased because of tutoring. Implications for future endeavours in parent tutoring in reading were discussed.

The study of Powell-Smith further emphasises the significance of parental involvement in children's reading and literacy development. This study indicated the positive effect of parental tutoring to children regardless of the type of tutoring programme (whether it be a literature-based programme or a curriculum-based programme). It showed that children's reading skills and interests were developed because of their parental tutoring. In fact, parental involvement can be recommended as one potential solution to a number of children's achievement problems.

4.4.3- Baghban, M. (1995) "A Reading Teacher's View of Children's Literature".

This paper was presented by Dr. Marcia Baghban, an Associate Professor of Elementary Education at Queen's College of the City University of New York, who was invited to be a panel member of "Kaleidoscope: Looking at the Literature of Childhood Through Three Lenses", at the annual Children's Literature Association Conference, the University of New Hampshire, Durham, in June 1995. This paper is an outcome of the author's experience with students entering Queen's College to become elementary classroom teachers.

The dichotomy the author experienced as a child between reading library books and 'store-bought' books at home and reading the textbooks in school turned out to fuel major debates in the teaching of reading. She always believed that she had learned to read with 'real' books and claimed she simply endured the school readers to get through school. The true test of her beliefs came when she became a mother. She instilled in her daughter and son a love of reading from infancy. The Reading and Children's Literature course she teaches at Queen's College in the Elementary and Early Childhood Education Department focuses on literature rather than reading methods. The course begins with a debate over the definition of children's literature. Students develop a log in which they review two children's books per week. The teacher and students read aloud. By the end of the course, each student must teach a short lesson using a children's book. The course ends with the preparation of learning centres in which each student designs an activity related to children's books.

By the end of the course, students remember why they love to read, a love they will pass on to children.

Baghban's paper shows the significance of focusing on the literature rather than placing the emphasis on reading methods to help children learn to read and to develop their reading interests.

4.4.4-The Study of the Children's Literature Research Centre at Roehampton Institute, (1994) Contemporary Juvenile Reading Habits".

In relation to children's reading interests, the researcher presents this survey study which is concerned with finding out what children read; how they come into contact with a range of reading matter including comics, magazines, special-interest periodicals, and information publications available to them; who influences their choice; how they select what to read; differences in public and private reading practices; perceptions of stereotyping (particularly regarding race, class, gender, age, nationality and religion); actual differences attributable to age, sex, parental occupation, and ethnic background; reading in relation to other leisure activities, etc..

The sample selected for this study consisted of children aged 4-16 corresponding to the four National Curriculum Key Stages (4-7; 7-11; 11-14; 14-16). The schools which made up the sample were selected according to criteria established in order to give as representative a cross-section of the population as possible (London and the South East). The selected children were given questionnaires to complete. Two percent of the sample were also interviewed after they had completed the written questionnaire. The information gathered has been used to create a database which provides a wide

range of information about contemporary trends in juvenile reading habits. The major findings from this study were as follows:

- Cover design - picture, title and cover information - is the most important factor influencing the choice of reading matter.
- Free gifts dominate the choice of magazines and comics for young readers.
- Television has the greatest influence on reading choices at key stage 2 (7-11).
- Fiction Series dominate the reading habits of both sexes in key stages 1 and 2 (4-11).
- Adventure stories comprise the most popular genre.
- Romance is the least popular genre overall.
- Fantasy is particularly popular with adolescent boys.
- Horror and mystery are among the most popular genres for teenage girls.

The findings of this study indicate major factors influencing children's choice of reading matter. The researcher's findings in relation to children's reading interests indicated some similarities and differences compared to the findings of the Children's literature Research Centre. Both studies showed that the cover-design and illustration is an important factor affecting children's choice of books and that fiction series dominate the reading habits of both sex aged 4-12. However, the present study of the researcher indicated that adventure stories are mostly read by male children while romance stories are most popular among female children. Other factors such as free gifts and television were not addressed by the researcher as these are not used in Bahrain to encourage children to read.

4.4.5- Sorensen, M. K. (1994) "A Qualitative Study of How Eight Teachers Moved Toward Whole Language (Process Approach, Literature-Based)".

The purpose of this study was to gain insight into and knowledge about the perceptions and practices of teachers who have moved toward a whole-language, literature-based, process approach to the teaching of reading. The data for the study came from interviews with eight teachers: four were teaching in elementary schools, two were language arts resources people, one was serving as a curriculum co-ordinator and one was a university professor. The data are presented in the form of profiles of the eight educators who describe their changed way of teaching in their own words. All interviewees reflect on how they feel they have changed the way they teach based on their new understanding of teaching and learning.

The information on which this study is based was gathered in several ways: notes from participant observation during attendance at classes, seminars, conferences and professional meetings; conversations with knowledgeable colleagues; review of the literature; and, primarily, the tape-recorded interviews with selected teachers. The presentation of the interview data is interspersed with information gathered in the above-mentioned ways. The results of this study demonstrate that there is much collegiality and networking among teachers who believe in this approach to the teaching of reading.

Sorensen's study stresses the need to support, encourage and train teachers if we want them to undergo a philosophical change toward a literature-based approach. A teacher is an important element in any educational programme, therefore, his or her role must be considered

when any move towards a new teaching approach is planned. The present study of the researcher indicated, through the review of the educational system of primary education in Bahrain, that teachers for a literature-based system are prepared by the University of Bahrain for the first three years of primary education. They are taught children's literature subject in addition to other subjects such as Arabic, English and Islam. However, the researcher as a lecturer of children's literature, believes that this course provides an introduction to children's literature which outlines only the basics of this subject. The content of the course is inadequate, in that it will not achieve the objectives set by the Ministry of Education to prepare teachers for such an approach. The children's literature course should be enhanced and developed, and the training of primary education teachers in this field should be fostered through special courses, workshops, and professional conferences, and by reading professional literature and becoming knowledgeable about children's literature.

4.4.6- The study of Hines, M.C. (1995)"Focus on the Influence of Adults on Student Book Selection".

This study was designed to describe criteria adults use to select children's literature and how they influence children's selections. A detailed description of the school setting, literature selection processes and reading activities was used to communicate information that is comprehensive, holistic and lifelike. To corroborate observational findings Hines used several qualitative tools to gather information: questionnaires, interviews, and students' reading logs.

Findings indicated that adults wield a great deal of power over children's selections of literature. Student interviews and observations showed that children were engaged in reading activities, and those activities did foster further reading; however, a scheduled voluntary reading time was not included. One emerging problem - time, or the lack of it - became apparent at both school and home. Reading materials, a conducive reading environment (excellent classroom library and central library), and energetic adults were all available but the lack of time prevented children from taking advantage of the environment.

The school's efforts to do well on standardised tests that measure reading skills outweighed the building of voluntary reading skills. Student interviews and classroom observations revealed an attitude towards reading which was, "read when done with other work". The study revealed that children liked their parents to read to them, and they liked to discuss literature with their parents.

The study of Hines relates to some extent with the present study in that they both used similar approaches for data collection and demonstrated some areas of similarities with regard to the provision made by schools to foster the habit of reading in children. Both studies concluded that the lack of a scheduled voluntary reading programme and the time to integrate such a programme into the curriculum created a disadvantage for both the teacher and the children. Schools' efforts are directed towards measuring children's reading skills through standardised tests instead of developing programmes that improve these skills.

4.4.7- The Study of Smith, J.A. (1993) "Content Learning: A Third Reason For Using Literature in Teaching Reading".

The purpose of this year-long study was to compare the amount of historical information learned by students in classrooms using historical novels in place of basal readers with the amount of historical information learned by students in traditional classrooms. Students' knowledge of U.S. history was assessed at the beginning and at the end of the school year using an oral free-recall measure. Students' oral responses to open-ended questions were tape-recorded, transcribed and categorised as 'details', 'main ideas', 'extended thinking', and then totalled. Students whose teachers used historical fiction novels in place of basal readers recalled significantly more details, main ideas, and a greater total amount of historical information. Students' written responses to the debriefing survey indicate that they greatly prefer the use of novels for reading instruction.

The conclusion of this study indicated that historical novels and social studies texts can serve as effective complements to each other. Historical novels can provide students with a personalised and emotional perspective of historical persons and events. Social studies texts can provide additional facts which 'come to life' as they are tied into the novels. By combining the two disciplines, students can more effectively learn to appreciate their historical and literary heritages.

Smith's study further emphasises the value of literature in enhancing the curriculum and the reading instruction programmes to increase children's learning of content information. Literature can complement not only social studies but also other subjects such as

science, religion and language; especially for children of primary education age range (6-12). The children interviewed by the researcher expressed their preference for the involvement of literature in their curriculum as they found it easier to learn given information through stories, poetry and plays. The significance of literature in contributing to children's learning of the curriculum subjects is further explored in section 3.3.

4.4.8 Tajiran, Z. T. (1980) "A Content Analysis of Iranian Children's Story Books for the Presence of Social and Moral Values".

The objective of the above study was to determine the social and moral values of middle-class Iranians in children's storybooks. Through this study, Tajiran raised the following questions:

- To what extent were social and moral values in the selected literature attributed to middle-class people?
- To what degree were social and moral values presented in the selected literature?
- What are the additional values identified through the study, but not initially determined on the study list?
- How possible is it to compare values presented in the literature books sampled for the study with those previously presented by other research studies of the primary education stage in Iran?

For the study analysis, the author selected a sample of 19 books from the most famous books written for children of ages 7-11 in Iran. The author used a list consisting of 16 social and moral values selected by 6 social scientists in Iran. These values are marriage, religion, homeland, family, authority, education, cleanliness,

sympathy, work, justice, honesty, friendship, decency, the baby boy as a desirable sex, moderate expenditure and generous hospitality to visitors.

The conclusion of the study was that there was no balance in the presentation of the values in the books sampled for the study, that is, the three values of justice, honesty and work ranked first among the values (42%), whereas the two values of cleanliness and the baby boy as a desirable sex ranked last (2%). This means that the latter two values were not considered in these books. The study analysis also showed that there were some additional values which were not included in the list such as discernment, circumspection, proficiency, courage and dignity.

In the light of the above results, the study suggested that:

- Authors of children's literature should consider the aforementioned values when writing for children in order to develop children's ethical concepts.
- Children's books embracing such values are to be selected in preference to others.
- An in-depth scientific study should be carried out to identify the extent to which children are affected by these values.
- Children's books which were translated from other languages to Persian should be studied and analysed.

This study to identifies the social and moral values presented to children in some international children's storybooks. The study of Tajiran concluded the presence of certain positive values in the literature provided to children in Iran. However, although Iran is not a major exporter of children's literature to Bahrain, there are concerns about the translation of the minority of storybooks being imported. It is important that these translations do not lose the values

listed by Tajiran, but to reflect them in a way that suits our cultural, social and moral values. On the other hand, Tajiran is right to suggest we consider these values when writing for children. We should identify the extent to which children are affected by these values and study and analyse children's books translated from other languages before being presented to children in Bahrain.

4.5- A Review of the Previously Presented Studies

From the previously presented studies in the field of children's literature and books the researcher concluded that:

- Most of the previously presented Arabic and international studies aimed at identifying the significance of children's literature in contributing to children's educational and reading development. The researcher's previous study of 1987 was conducted for the same purpose in addition to the reviewing of children's reading inclinations and the provision of children's literature in primary schools, public libraries and bookshops in Bahrain. The results of this study were found by the researcher to support the current study's findings despite the long time interval between the two studies.

- Some of the presented Arabic and international studies aimed at identifying the implicit and explicit values predominant in children's stories and journalism. The researcher's aim in presenting such studies is to measure the quality of stories and journalism being produced by publishing houses and presented to children in public libraries, school libraries and bookshops.

- Some of the Arabic studies examined the quality of children's literature presented to children in some Arab countries which share with Bahrain common social, geographical, economic and political environments. The purpose of presenting such studies is that the findings and recommendations they put forward could be applicable to the situation in Bahrain.

- Most of the international studies stressed the significance of children's literature in the development of children's education and also emphasised adults' involvement in the reading activities and selection process of literature for their children.

- Some of the previously presented studies dealt with children's reading interests at different age levels. The researcher's aim in presenting these studies is to gain some knowledge about what children read; what their preferences are; how they select what to read and who influences their choices.

- Most of the previously presented studies used quantitative and qualitative survey methods in collecting data from respondents. Where the quality of literature is concerned, the content analysis approach to stories or school textbooks sampled for those studies was used.

- Some of the previously presented studies aimed at identifying predominant values both implicit and explicit in children's stories and journalism which are published and presented to children in public libraries, school libraries and bookshops.

Chapter 5

The Empirical Framework of the Research Study

The Empirical Framework of the Research Study

5.1-Introduction

The main objective of this research project is to examine fiction and non-fiction literature which is presented to children in Bahrain, to identify the problems holding back the development of such literature, and to suggest changes and improvements in this provision. To achieve these objectives, the researcher collected quantitative and qualitative information from people responsible for the provision of children's literature and those who are best acquainted with children's reading interests. This study has therefore adopted a survey style research approach and includes questionnaires and semi-structured interviews as principal instruments for collecting large scale data. Patterns, stratification and generalisations can be derived and inferred from this data. This approach reveals and addresses factors found within and across situations, and enables the researcher to evaluate their relative importance and to draw significant conclusions. Gay (1976) defined the survey research as:

> "collecting data in order to test hypotheses or answer questions concerning the current status of the subject of the study and determine and report the way things are " (p.10).

Ary and Razavieh, (1990), declared that survey research studies are designed to:

> "obtain information concerning the current status of phenomena. They are directed toward determining the nature of a situation as it existed at the time of the study" (p.381).

Furthermore, the survey approach can serve many purposes in educational research (Morrison, 1993):

- Using large scale data gathered from a wide population to assist the researcher to generalise from some factors or variables.
- Presenting material that is uncluttered by specific contextual factors.
- Representing a wide range of the target population.
- Supporting or refuting hypotheses about the target population.
- Helping the researcher to acquire numerical data.
- Assisting the researcher in manipulating key factors and variables to determine frequencies.
- Computing correlations to see if there is any relationship between certain variables.
- Computing data from multiple choice and closed questions.
- Helping the researcher to generate precise instrumentation through a pilot study.
- Making generalisations and determining patterns of response.
- Gathering data that can be processed statistically. (pp. 38-39)

The lack of previous research studies in the field of children's literature and books in Bahrain is one of the main reasons why the researcher adopted the survey style research approach. The approach enabled the researcher to collect sufficient data concerning the nature of literature and books currently presented to children in Bahrain, the problems restricting the development of children's reading interests and the problems faced by Bahraini authors of children's literature. To gather such information, the researcher designed four questionnaires to be distributed as follows:

- The first questionnaire to primary stage children of ages 9-12
- The second questionnaire to primary school teachers
- The third questionnaire to librarians of primary school libraries
- The fourth questionnaire to parents of primary stage children.

In addition to the above four questionnaires, the researcher carried out interviews with a group of primary stage children and with authors of children's literature in Bahrain.

These quantitative and qualitative approaches complemented each other in the study, enabling the researcher to gather large amounts of information and to gain a full picture of the phenomena under investigation.

5.2-Methodology

Methodology as defined by Cohen and Manion (1989) refers to the approaches or style used in educational research to collect data which can be used as a foundation for inference and interpretation, for explanation, prediction, and to help us to understand, in the broadest possible terms, not only the products of scientific inquiry but the process itself. Educational research methodology is the systematic application of a method to the study of educational problems. There are diverse research methodologies, each being especially useful for particular research tasks. The researcher's aim is to select the most appropriate model for this research project through which the following demands can be realised:

- Issues under scrutiny can be resolved.
- Large samples can be used in order to collect as much data as possible by using closed and open-ended questions.
- Generalisations can be made in order to generate frequencies and distributions, to calculate correlations, to examine statistical significance and to test hypotheses.

The research methodologies can be organised into quantitative and qualitative approaches. By quantitative methods (e.g. historical research, descriptive research and correlational research), researchers such as Richard and Cook (1979) mean the techniques of randomised experiments, quasi-experiments, paper and pencil (objective) tests, multivariate statistical analysis and surveys (p.7). Qualitative research, as defined by Bogdan and Biklen (1982), is an umbrella word used to refer to a particular research approach that possesses certain characteristics whose roots lie in more than one discipline, e.g. phenomenology and anthropology. Qualitative methods include ethnography, case studies, in-depth interviews and participant observation (p.3).

Morrison (1993), argued that a quantitative style is more formal and pre-planned to a high level of detail, whilst the qualitative style is less formal and the detail only emerges once the evaluator is in situ. Quantitative approaches are 'front-loaded', that is they desire all the groups, multiple choice questions, tests and criteria of the research to be worked out in advance. Qualitative approaches are 'end-loaded'; that is, it is much faster to 'get going' in this style because the significant categories only appear once initial data have been gathered and filtered.

The two approaches are different, as Morrison (1993) concluded, because they derive from different backgrounds. The quantitative approach derives from the natural positivistic sciences, whilst the qualitative style has a clear affinity with the anthropological sciences in which studies of social groups are performed to determine the uniqueness of specific situations, and also with the social scientists of the interactionist school whose practitioners start from the premise

that people behave towards each other on the principle of their own judgements or explanations about each other or about situations. The intentions of quantitative research are to observe as an outsider, while the intentions of qualitative research are to present the situations as they are seen through the eyes of the participants (pp. 35-36).

There are several styles of research which utilise quantitative and qualitative approaches such as historical research, action research, correlational research, case studies and ethnographic research. However, the researcher selected the correlational research to examine degrees of association between identified variables and to make generalisations about different age groups and different stages within the primary education. It felt would be difficult to address these using the other approaches. The correlational research, as Gay (1981) states:

> "attempts to determine whether and to what degree a relationship exists between two or more quantifiable variables. The purpose of correlational study may be to establish relationships or to use relationships in making predictions " (p.13).

This approach has several advantages:

> "The investigator can explore a wide variety of different relationships in the same study.
>
> Correlational research is particularly useful in tackling the problems of education and social sciences because it allows for the measurement of a number of variables and their relationships simultaneously.
>
> It is especially useful for lower-level ground work where it serves as a powerful exploratory tool and it does not require large samples"
> (Cohen and Manion,1989, p. 165).

However, correlational research has significant limitations:

> "Correlational research only identifies what goes with what - it only implies concomitance and therefore does not necessarily establish a cause-and-effect relationship.
>
> It is less rigorous than the experimental approach because it exercises less control over the independent variables.
>
> It is prone to identify spurious relation patterns
>
> It adopts an atomistic approach" (ibid, p. 165).

Researchers in the phenomenological-qualitative mode seek to understand the meaning of events and interactions of factors to ordinary people in specific situations. What phenomenologists stress is the subjective aspect of people's behaviour (Day,1987, p. 14).

According to Bogdan and Biklen (1992), they attempt to achieve entry into the conceptual world of their subjects in order to realise how and what meaning they build around events in their daily lives. Phenomenologists believe that various ways of adapting experiences are accessible to each of us through interacting with others, and that it is the meaning of our experiences that constitute reality. Reality is socially constructed (pp. 33-34). This, as Wiersma (1986) believes, has the disadvantage of neglecting a broader social context of behaviour (p. 235). Iann and Orr (1979) argued that participant observation is an important research style in anthropology (as it is for a number of other social sciences), but within that style it is necessary to develop skills in the use of the technique (p. 91). Such investigations necessarily use observation as their method of data collection (Selltiz, 1974, p. 202).

According to Selltiz (1974), the most difficult element for the anthropologist, is that he comes as a stranger to the group he studies; he is not an expert but a naive, unsophisticated outsider. Like a child he must first learn the language and the social graces that will enable him to maintain communications with the individuals he is observing. That creates a lot of difficulty if the researcher is to build a relationship with the group that he studies (ibid, p. 34) The researcher did not use anthropological research methods because the time available to him was insufficient for this approach, nor would it permit generalisations to be made.

From the different styles of research, the researcher selected the survey style as the principal means of data collection, using some correlational research. The reasons for adopting this method were:

- The researcher wished to collect data from large samples by using closed and open-ended questions.
- The other styles of research methods are not suitable for samples as large as those used by the researcher.
- The researcher wished to make generalisations; to generate frequencies, distributions and correlations; to examine statistical significance and to test hypotheses.

The value of the researcher using a survey method was endorsed by Borg (1981), when he said that the survey method in education can be used to explore a very wide range of topics (p. 259). Gay (I992) explained the purpose of using survey research:

> "A survey is an attempt to collect data from members of a population in order to determine the current status of that population with respect to one or more variables" (p. 219).

Morrison (1993) stated that through survey research the researcher can gather a large amount of data which will help to make generalisations (p. 55). This was a key purpose of this research. The researcher also used historical research in the review of the literature where a number of previous research studies in the field of children's literature and books were presented and discussed. These studies, representing different developed and developing countries, should give the reader some historical background about the status of children's literature. They have also been used to inform the present research and the design of the research questions.

In addition to the quantitative research method, the researcher employed the qualitative research method for collecting and analysing data through semi-structured interviews carried out with children in primary education and authors of children's literature. Cohen and Manion (1994) define the research interview as:

> "A two-person conversation initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining research-relevant information, and focused by him or her on content specified by research objectives of systematic description, prediction, or explanation. It is an unusual method in that it involves the gathering of data through direct verbal interaction between individuals" (pp. 271-273).

Cohen and Manion (1994) also firmly link this research methodology to 'grounded theory' by stating that the interview can be a distinctive qualitative strategy for generating theory from data by providing insights into the respondents' views:

> "It may be used as the principal means of gathering information having direct bearing on the research objectives...By providing access to what is 'inside a person's head'" (ibid, p. 272)

The respondents themselves define the concepts and meanings related to their social context and their social processes. Thus, they become a significant source of data.

Writing on qualitative interviewing, Jolly (1991) highlighted the notion that this method of obtaining qualitative data enables the researchers:

> " to be insiders in the research relationship, interacting rather than merely establishing a rapport with the people to whom they are speaking and observing " (p. 66).

Macmillan and Schumach (1989) presented some advantages of employing the interview method of collecting data:

> "-The interview is normally flexible and adaptable.
>
> - It can be used with many different problems and types of persons, such as those who are illiterate or too young to read or write.
>
> - The responses in interviews can be probed, followed up, clarified, and elaborated to achieve specific accurate responses.
>
> - In face-to-face interaction, verbal as well as non-verbal behaviour can be noted which provides the interviewer with the opportunity to motivate the respondent.
>
> - Lastly, interviews result in a much higher rate of response than questionnaires, especially for topics that concern personal qualities or feelings " (p.265).

Oppenheim (1966) gives a similar account of the advantages of interviews, he says:

> "The greatest advantage of the interview in the hands of a skilled interviewer is its

> flexibility. The interviewer can make sure that the respondent has understood the question and the purpose of the research. Above all, they can build up and maintain rapport, that elusive motivating force that will keep the respondent interested and responsive to the end of the interview...the richness and spontaneity of information collected by interviews is higher than that which a mailed questionnaire can hope to obtain" (p.31).

However, some precautions are recommended by Goetz and Lecompte (1984), who call for care and attention to be paid in preparing the questions, so that they are directly related to the objectives of the study and follow the same sequence in each interview. The problem of subjectivity and bias from the interviewer's side may also result in low reliability of the interview. The interviewer should also pay attention to the problem of the time needed for interviews, which is considered a major disadvantage of this method (p.74).

In this study, an account is given of some interviews with two authors of children's literature in Bahrain and a sample of primary school male and female children of ages 6-9. The researcher paid full care and attention in the preparation of the questions for these interviews, taking into consideration the type of information to be gathered and the type of people to be interviewed.

Consideration of the ethical issues in section 5.10 on page 172 shows how the researcher addressed these concerns in the study. The aim was to shed light on each interviewee's viewpoint and attitudes towards the whole issue of the current study. This qualitative method of investigation is considered by the researcher as a means of searching out and clarifying factors which are significant.

The qualitative data collected by this instrument will be complementary and explanatory to the quantitative data obtained through the questionnaires. It is the researcher's belief that investigating the issue with authorities and children in further depth, in face to face interaction, would result in more data being obtained than would be obtained from a questionnaire. Such detailed data would lend support, explanation and validation to the data obtained by other research instruments.

5.3 - Population and Sample Selected

Borg and Gall (1983) defined the sample and population as follows:

> "Sampling means selecting a given number of subjects from a defined population as representative of that population. One type of population distinguished by education researchers is called the target population, also called the universe, by which we mean all the members of a real or hypothetical set of people, events or objects to which we wish to generalise the results of our research" (p.240).

Sampling, then, involves choosing a part of a population which is representative of that population. For this study, the researcher could select the samples needed according to the density of population, as Bahrain is a small country with a population not exceeding half a million. The samples included males and females, and children and adults. The reason for selecting such a variety of respondents (teachers, parents, librarians and children) was to involve all people concerned with children's literature and reading interests and accordingly to obtain specific and clear information in terms of the situation concerning children's literature and books in Bahrain. The various types of sampling techniques will now be considered.

5.3.1 - Probability and Non-Probability Sampling

A basic differentiation can be made between probability and non-probability sampling. The main feature of probability sampling is that each group has the same probability of being involved in the sample. In non-probability sampling there is no guarantee that every unit has the same chance of being included. If a set of units has no chance of being included in the sample, a restriction on the definition of the population is implied; that is, if the characteristics of this set of units are unknown then the precise definition of the population also remains unknown. A probability sample design makes it possible for the researcher to predict the range within which the findings based on one sample are likely to differ from what he or she would have found by studying the whole population. For this study, the probability sample was very useful for making generalisations about the whole population.

A. Types of Probability Sample

There are four major types of probability samples:

1. Simple Random Sample

In simple random sampling, as explained by Borg (1983) all the subjects in the defined population have an equal opportunity of being selected as a member of the sample (p.73). Anderson (1990) states that whilst, in a large target population, every person has an equal chance of being selected for participation, a simple random sample may be difficult to draw using random numbers simply because one would have to be assigned a number (p.199). The researcher used this approach when he reached the stage of selecting names for his samples.

2. Systematic Sample

As with simple random sampling the technique of systematic sampling is used to obtain a sample from a definite population. This kind of technique can be applied if all members in the designated population have already been placed on a list in random order (Cohen and Manion, 1989, p.102). disadvantage with this strategy is establishing that the sample interval is unaffected by some confounding fluctuation or variation in the population (Goetz,1984, p.74). This disadvantage of the systematic sample discouraged the researcher from using such an approach.

3. Stratified Sampling

According to Nachmias and Nachmias (1981), stratified sampling is used primarily to ensure that different groups in a population are adequately represented in the sample so that the level of accuracy in estimating parameters is increased. Furthermore, all other things being equal, stratified sampling reduces the cost of the process considerably.

The underlying idea in stratified sampling is that already existing knowledge of the population is used to divide it into groups (p.434). An example of stratified sampling was given by Cohen and Manion (1989), as follows:

> "group A, might contain males and group B, females. In order to obtain a sample representative of the whole population in terms of sex, a random selection of subjects from group A and B must be taken. If needed the exact preparation of males to females in the whole population can be reflected in the sample"
>
> (p.102).

Whilst stratified sampling ensures that each group is represented and enables group comparisons to be made, it usually requires more effort than random sampling because the population to be sampled is not homogeneous but in essence consists of several subpopulations (Wiersma, 1986, p. 269). It generally needs a larger sample size to show statistically meaningful results because there should be at least thirty persons in each stratum group or school to make comparisons meaningful (Anderson, 1990, p. 199).

The researcher found this method of sampling to be the most suitable approach since it ensures that all the different groups of the target populations (primary school grades) will be represented equally in the samples.

4. Cluster Sampling

This is used when it is more appropriate or convenient to select groups of individuals than it is to choose individuals from a defined population (Borg, 1983, p.73). For example:

> "It is used when the population to be studied can be combined naturally or analytically into groups that are similar. After all the aggregated groups are designated, a sample of them is drawn then all or some sample of individuals from within the selected clusters are studied"
> (Goetz,1984, p.74).

Cluster sampling can be used where the population is very large or distributed over a wide geographic area (Gay,1981, p.93).Whilst cluster sampling is profitable in situations where the population members are naturally grouped in units that can be conveniently used as clusters (Anderson, 1990, p.199), the correct sample size may not be known until after the sample is selected. This is because clusters

usually are not the same size and the final sample size depends upon those clusters being randomly chosen (Weirsma, 1986, p. 273).

The researcher considered this sampling method as unsuitable for the study, because it does not ensure equal representativeness of the groups in the samples.

B. Types of Non-Probability Sample

There are three major types of non-probability samples which have been used by social scientists:

1. Convenience Samples

A convenience sample is chosen when the researcher chooses whatever sampling groups are suitable or happen to be available. It is difficult to calculate the representativeness of convenience samples, and one cannot attach estimates of standard errors to the sample results (Nachmias and Nachmias, 1981, p. 430). Because the researcher can choose for the sample whoever happens to be available (Gay,1992, p.138), he or she can have no assurance that the results are generalisable (ibid, p. 138). For this study, this sampling method was not convenient as the researcher aimed at making generalisations and determining patterns of response.

2. Purposive Samples

With purposive samples, the sampling groups are chosen subjectively by the researcher who tries to achieve a sample that represents a given population. The opportunity for a specific sampling unit to be chosen for the sample derives from the subjective judgement of the researcher, i.e. the researcher might deliberately select a non-representative sample (Nachmias and Nachmias, 1981, p.

430). This method too, was rejected by the researcher because of the unreliable data it would give as a result of the deliberate selection of non-representative samples.

3. Quota Samples

According to Nachmias and Nachmias (1981) the aim of quota sampling is to choose a sample that is as representative as possible of the frequency with which members of given sub-groups occur in the population. For example, if it is known that the population has equal numbers of Catholics and Protestants, the researcher selects an equal number of Protestants and Catholics in the sample (p. 430). Whilst this approach achieves representativeness (Selltiz, 1974, p. 520), the major shortcomings of quota samples (the impossibility of estimating sampling errors) are exacerbated by two other limitations:

A - within the quota groups, interviewers may be unable to acquire a representative sample of interviewees.

B - securing administrative approval to involve students in a study is not generally easy (Gay, 1992, p. 139).

5.3.2-The Sample Selected

As a main sample for this study, the researcher selected 20 primary schools (10 boys' and 10 girls' schools) to be the target population. These schools represent 21% of the 95 primary schools in Bahrain. From these 20 primary schools, five samples representing five different categories (teachers, librarians, children and parents of children in these schools) were selected in order to collect as much information as possible regarding the quantity and quality of literature and books presented to children in Bahrain.

To ensure that all the groups' populations were equally represented in the samples, the researcher used a random stratified sample in selecting these samples except for the librarians' sample where each of the 20 primary schools has one librarian and all of these were selected. When he reached the stage of selecting individual names from the groups of the samples the researcher used the simple random sampling approach. These samples were taken as representative of all target populations in the 20 primary schools. Gay (1973) stated that if the sample is 10% of the total population, it is considered satisfactory for representativeness (p.140). Cohen and Manion (1980) stated that no exact number can be generally prescribed to be adopted in all studies as far as the number of respondents is concerned; nevertheless,

> "a sample size of 30 is held by many to be the minimum number of cases if the researcher plans to use same form of statistical analysis on his data" (p. 101).

The target populations for the random sampling were teachers. parents, children of ages 9-12 and children of ages 6-9 from the 20 primary schools of the study sample during the academic year of 1995-1996.

A sixth sample in addition to that of the 20 primary schools in the study sample was also added by the researcher to obtain more information with regard to children's literature and books in Bahrain. This sample included two authors of children's literature in Bahrain.

The selection of the six samples was carried out by the researcher as follows:

1-The Sample of Children aged 9-12

The total sample for the first questionnaire consisted of 400 children of ages 9-12 (200 male and 200 female children) representing a percentage of 15.2% of the total children of the same ages in the 20 primary schools, that is, a target population of 2,625 children. The researcher selected the 400 participants by randomly sampling 200 male children from a total population of 1,354 children and 200 female children from a total population of 1,271 children. The researcher obtained a list of names of children of ages 9-12 from each of the 20 primary schools making a total of 20 lists (10 lists of male children and 10 lists of female children). Each of these lists was divided into three primary grades: fourth grade which usually includes children between the ages of 9-10, fifth grade which includes children between the ages of 10 -11 and sixth grade which includes children between the ages of 11-12. The names on these lists had been listed in a random order without considering any particular characteristics so that these lists would fairly represent the whole population. From each list, 20 children were randomly selected consisting of 6 children from the fourth grade, 7 children from the fifth grade and another 7 children from the sixth grade. This was done by drawing numbers out of a basket until the required number for the sample was reached. The researcher deliberately selected larger numbers of children from the upper grades on the assumption that more reliable information would be obtained from older children.

Table 5.1 on page 175 shows the percentages of the children sampled for the study (Children's Questionnaire) in relation to the target population number of children aged 9-12 in each of the primary school.

2-The Sample of Teachers

The sample for the second questionnaire consisted of 60 primary school teachers (30 male and 30 female teachers) representing a percentage of 17.4% of a target population of 344 teachers, i.e. the total number of teachers in the 20 primary schools. The researcher selected these 60 participants by randomly sampling 30 male teachers from a total population of 173 teachers, and 30 female teachers from a total population of 171 teachers. The researcher obtained a list of names of teachers from each of the 20 primary schools in the study sample making a total of 20 lists (10 lists of male teachers and 10 lists of female teachers). From each of these lists, 3 names were selected to whom questionnaires could be distributed by drawing out of a basket numbers representing names of the teachers selected for the sample .

Table 5.2 on page 176 shows the percentages of teachers sampled for the study in relation to the total number of teachers, the target population in each primary school.

3-The Sample of Librarians

The sample for the third questionnaire consisted of 20 primary school librarians (10 male and 10 female librarians) representing 100% of the target population of 20, i.e. the total number of librarians in the 20 primary schools sampled for the study where one librarian only was assigned at each primary school. The researcher thought it beneficial to include the total population of librarians in the sample since the number was so small. This also meant that each school in the sample was represented.

4-The Sample of Parents

The sample for the fourth questionnaire consisted of 40 parents of 40 children between the ages of 6-12 randomly selected from the 20 primary schools sampled in the study. The 40 children selected (20 male and 20 female children) represent 0.6% of the target population which is a total number of 6,569 children. The researcher selected the 40 samples by randomly sampling 20 male children from a total population of 3,213 and 20 female children from a total population of 3,356. The researcher obtained a list of names of children of ages 6-12 from each of the 20 primary schools making a total of 20 lists (10 lists of male children and 10 lists of female children). Each of these lists is divided into six primary grades: first grade which usually includes children between the ages of 6-7, second grade which includes children between the ages of 7-8, third grade which includes children between the ages of 8-9, fourth grade which includes children between the ages of 9-10, fifth grade which includes children between the ages of 10-11 and sixth grade which includes children between the ages of 11-12. From each list, the researcher randomly selected 2 children from one particular grade only (by drawing numbers from the basket), taking into consideration that these two names had not been previously selected for questionnaire no.1. A total number of 40 questionnaires designed for parents were distributed to parents of the 40 children selected in order to obtain their views and suggestions with regard to their children's reading interests.

5-The Sample of Children aged 6-9

The sample for the first semi-structured interview consisted of 60 children of ages 6-9 (30 male and 30 female children) representing 1.5% of the total number of children of the same ages in the 20 primary schools in the study sample, i.e. a target population of 3,944 children. The researcher selected these 60 participants by randomly sampling 30 male children from a total population of 1,859 and 30 female children from a total population of 2,085. The researcher obtained a list of names of children aged 6-9 from each of the 20 primary schools making a total of 20 primary lists (10 lists of male children and 10 lists of female children). Each of these lists was divided into three primary grades: first grade which includes children between the ages of 6-7, second grade which includes children between the ages of 7-8 and third grade which includes children between the ages of 8-9. From each list, the researcher randomly selected three children consisting of one child from the first grade, one child from the second grade and one child from the third grade (by drawing number from the basket) taking into consideration that these three names had not been previously selected for questionnaire no.1.

6-The Sample of Authors

The sample for the second semi-structured interview consisted of 2 authors of children's literature and books in Bahrain. These two authors represented a percentage of 33.3% of a target population of 6 which is the total number of authors of children's literature in Bahrain (all are male authors). The researcher selected these two authors for the main survey study taking into consideration their long

experience in writing for children and their knowledge about the situation regarding children's literature and books in Bahrain. These two authors are different from the two authors selected for the pilot study and the other two authors selected to address the reliability of the study.

5.3.3-Summary

The researcher selected the sample populations for the main survey study for their direct relation to children's education especially in terms of their literary interests. Such people as parents, teachers, librarians and authors are selecting, presenting and writing for children. They are the people most likely to be acquainted with the present situation regarding children's literature and books in Bahrain and children's reading interests. According to the researcher, they are the most relevant people to answer the questions of the main study. (please refer to questions of the study on page 8 of chapter one). Primary school children were also involved in this study to give their views and suggestions with regard to literature and books presented to them as well as information in respect of their reading interests.

The selection of the samples of the study was limited to 20 government primary schools (10 boys school and 10 girls' schools) from different cities and villages covering all regions of Bahrain with consideration being given to population density factors in each of these regions.

Tables 5.3, 5.4 and 5.5 on pages 177 , 178 and 179 indicate the names of the schools selected, the number of questionnaires distributed and the number of responses received from each school.

5.4- Parametric and Non-Parametric Data

The first step in deriving an appropriate survey instrument is to decide whether parametric or non-parametric data are required. Parametric data, as explained by Borg and Gall (1983), make assumptions about populations. One of the assumptions might be that the characteristics in the population are normally distributed about the mean. The other assumption is that the variance of the population when we compare groups in the study is almost equal. Non-parametric data should be used when there are great deviations from these assumptions or where the truth of the assumptions is not known. The non-parametric data statistics is the most suitable method for this survey as it allows for the collection of factual information without indicating any ratios or measurement between the variables and also without making any assumptions about the population distribution.

There are four types of scaling or levels of measurement in parametric and non-parametric data.

Nominal scale level (non-parametric)
Ordinal scale level (non-parametric)
Interval scale level (parametric)
Ratio scale level (parametric).

The Nominal Scale is defined by Cohen and Manion (1989) as follows:

> "The nominal scale is the most elementary scale of measurement. It does no more than identify the categories into which individuals, objects or events may be classified"(p.157).

Gay (1981) states that whatever the basis for classification, a person can only be in one category, and members of a given category have a common set of characteristics (p. 279).

Morrison (1993) states that the nominal scale gives categories a name or a label. These categories are mutually exclusive, for example, male or female, categories of personality (e.g. introvert or extrovert), insurance policy numbers, membership of a political party. This scale of data is often found in those questionnaires where factual information is requested, (e.g. gender, class in school, which subjects students are following) (p. 130).

The Ordinal Scale is used to indicate rank order, that is to say it arranges individuals or objects in a series ranking from the highest to the lowest according to particular characteristics being measured. According to Morrison (1993), an ordinal scale can be used when we are able to put items in a rank order or where we can say that one person or some people display a characteristic greater than or lesser than another person or persons, for example, degrees of leadership, degrees of fair-mindedness (ibid, p.130).

In an Interval Scale, Morrison (1993) states that the distance between intervals is both even and known (as in a temperature scale) and the intervals are measured in standard units. So, for example, in this scale we would know whether the difference between person A and person B on a specified characteristic was the same as the difference between person C and person D on the same given characteristic (p.130). Educational research which uses this kind of data or measurement can be exemplified by achievement tests, aptitude tests and intelligence tests. Interval data can use all the statistics from a nominal and an ordinal scale, but, in addition, are based upon predetermined equal intervals.

The Ratio Scale is defined by Morrison (1993) as the most powerful of the three previous scales, for it permits us, for example, to say that a particular score is twice as high as another score or three times less than another, or that one object weighs twice as much as another object (ibid, p. 131). According to Gay (1981), the ratio scale can use all the statistics from the other kinds of scale, and additionally it assumes a meaningful, true zero point. Height, weight and time are examples of ratio scales (p. 279).

The researcher gathered largely nominal and ordinal data and to some extent used the interval data. Due to the nature of variables upon which data were to be sought, the level of measurements of most of them were largely nominal and ordinal. Although some of the ordinal variables could have been better collected in the form of interval data, experience showed (Cohen and Manion, 1989) that the response rate for such attempts is usually lower. Nevertheless, some variables such as age of children and number of children in classrooms have been gathered at the interval level.

5.5- Instrument Development and Research Questions

Chapter one outlined the research questions which are:

- What is literature?
- What is special about children's literature?
- What provision is made in Bahrain for children to have ready access to good literature and story books?
- What part might children's literature play in children's education?
- How do male and female children engage with children's books and literature in Bahrain?
- Are there any differences in the reading habits of male and female children in Bahrain?
- What are the implications of the research for the development of children's access to literature and books in Bahrain?

It is necessary to identify and understand the variables associated with the research questions. There are a number of variables which could be associated with these questions (e.g. primary school teachers, librarians and children; parents of primary school children; authors of children's literature; male and female; and children's books). Data on these variables could generate knowledge useful in answering the research questions. Before establishing the tools of the study, the following preliminary investigations were carried out:

- An examination of annual reports, documents and statistical records which were available in the Ministry of Education and other ministries to check if there were any previous studies in the area of children's literature and books in Bahrain.

- A review of available literature to guide the questionnaires and the semi-structured interviews with relevant information.

- Visits to public libraries, bookshops and primary schools in Bahrain and in order to discuss the major problems with the librarians, primary school headmasters/headmistresses and primary school teachers.

As a result of these investigations, it was possible to define the instruments that would be suitable for the study and which would demonstrate strong construct validity. The main instruments adopted were questionnaires and semi-structured interviews designed to gather a large amount of data from a large sample of people. The main issues raised by the research questions for investigation especially these related to the situation in Bahrain, were addressed in

the contents of the questionnaires. Table 5.6 on page 180 indicates how each question in the questionnaires and the semi-structured interviews was designed to provide information which contributed to the overall research questions. Other general issues raised by the research questions were addressed in the literature review and the previous research studies.

5.6-Introduction to the Questionnaires

This survey study based on data from the four questionnaires and the two semi-structured interviews was of significant value to the researcher since no previous comprehensive studies had been conducted in the area of children's literature and books. This fact has been ascertained through reviewing the Educational Resources Information Centre (ERIC), the British Education Index (BEI) and the Bath Information and Data Services (BIDS) systems. The questionnaires and the semi-structured interviews were designed to collect data for the main objectives of the research:

- To determine the effectiveness of children's literature and books in developing their educational level.
- To study the availability and use of children's literature and books in Bahrain.
- To ascertain the difficulties facing the teachers and librarians of primary education and Bahraini authors of children's literature in providing suitable literature and books for children.
- To identify the difficulties facing children in Bahrain in getting access to literature and books.
- To study the subjects preferred by male and female children in Bahrain.

When designing the questionnaires, the researcher considered the following key issues:

1-Making sure the questionnaires were not difficult to complete in respect of format and type of questions.

2-Ensuring that the questionnaires contained questions which were relevant to the research activity by relating them to the main study questions and hypotheses.

3-Ensuring that the questions were designed to collect data that was measurable and easy to compute.

Each of the questionnaires was accompanied by a covering page indicating the serial number of the questionnaire, the category of people to whom it was directed and the title of the main research study. It was accompanied by a letter in which the researcher requested each category sampled for the study to provide their opinions regarding the provision of literature and books to children in Bahrain, the access made to engage children in literature and books; and the reading habits of male/female children in Bahrain. It was confirmed that their answers in each category would be used for nothing else but the research purposes.

5.6.1 - The Questionnaire for the Children

This questionnaire was specifically designed to collect data from primary school children (males/females) of ages 9-12. At the bottom of the letter following the covering page, the researcher requested some basic information to be completed by the respondents, e.g. name, age, sex, name of the school, class, which the researcher believed would help the study. The questionnaire for the children included 12 closed questions. Each question provided for multiple choice answers varying in number from 4-8 choices, where children were requested to tick (✓) one response most appropriate to express their point of view. The 12 questions covered:

- Time spent by children reading each week
- Average number of stories bought/borrowed by children in a month
- Number of visits to the public library made by the children during a week
- The extent to which children wrote to children's magazines
- The preferred subjects for reading
- The factors considered by children when selecting a story to read (e.g. subject, author, characters, etc.)
- The people who most affected the children's reading development
- The most preferred access to stories (e.g. books, magazines, television, theatres, etc.)
- The type of stories children preferred to read
- The places where children preferred to read.

(Appendix C on page 448 shows the questionnaire for the children)

5.6.2 - The Questionnaire for the Teachers

This questionnaire was specifically designed to collect data from teachers (males/females) of primary education. Through a separate page, following the letter, the researcher requested the teachers to give general information about the children taught, such as gender, primary grade average age and the average total number of children. The questions designed to obtain such information were closed questions providing for multiple choice answers varying in number from 2-6 choices where teachers were requested to tick (✓) the most appropriate response. The main questions were divided into two parts, as follows.

Part One

This part consisted of 25 closed questions where teachers were requested to select the response most appropriate to express their points of view from five categories of answers to each question. The researcher attempted to relate those 25 questions to the main study questions and hypothesis by covering the following:

- The provision of children's literature and books (locally written / translated) in the classroom library and the main school library
- The practised/preferred methods of presenting literature to children in the school
- The significance of literature (locally written/translated) in the development of children's reading skills
- The consideration of children's literature in the syllabus of primary education
- Children's reading interests
- Information about authors of children's literature in Bahrain
- The quantity and quality of children's literature written/produced by Bahraini authors
- The quantity and quality of imported children's literature
- The provision of children's public libraries in Bahrain.

Part Two

This part of the questionnaire for teachers consisted of four open-ended questions where teachers were requested to present their personal views and suggestions in respect of the provision of literature and books in their schools' libraries.

(Appendix D on page 454 presents the questionnaire for the teachers)

5.6.3 - The Questionnaire for the Librarians

This questionnaire was specifically designed to collect data from primary school librarians (males/females). Through a separate page, following the letter, the researcher asked for information about the librarians in respect of their qualifications and experience. The questions designed to obtain such information were two closed questions of multiple choice answers where librarians were requested to tick (✓) the most appropriate response out of five answers to each question. The researcher attempted to relate the questions included in the questionnaire for librarians to the main research questions and hypotheses. by covering the following:

- The provision of children's literature and books (fiction, non-fiction, locally written, translated from other languages) in the school library.
- Children's reading interests.
- The practised/preferred methods of presenting literature in the school library.
- The provision of public libraries in the cities and villages of Bahrain.

These questions were divided into three parts as follows:

Part One

This part consisted of seven questions against which the librarians were requested to give their very brief comments/information about the books available in their school libraries, the procedures they followed in the classification of books and the system of lending/borrowing of books.

Part Two

This part was designed to obtain information about reading interests of primary school children. It consisted of 12 closed questions where the librarians were requested to select the response most appropriate to express their points of view from five categories of answers to each question. These questions covered the following:

- The type of literature children prefer to read/listen to (e.g. fiction / non-fiction, translated/locally written, etc.)
- The factors attracting children to read particular literature books (e.g. content, author, illustrations, artistic production of the books etc.)

Part Three

This part of the questionnaire for librarians consisted of four open-ended questions where librarians were requested to present their

personal views and suggestions in respect of the provision of literature and books in their school libraries, the provision of locally written literature and books inside/outside the school libraries, the provision of children's public libraries in the cities and villages of Bahrain, the design system of children's school libraries and the classification procedure of books and other educational aids in school libraries.

(Appendix E on page 465presents the questionnaire for the librarians)

5.6.4 - The Questionnaire for the Parents

This questionnaire was specifically designed to collect data from parents of primary school children. The questionnaire for parents was divided into two parts.

Part One

This part consisted of 10 closed questions where the parents were requested to select the response most appropriate to express their points of view from five categories of answers to each question. Each of the 10 questions was presented on a separate page and was divided into two sections (A and B). Section A presented the question in respect of male children while section B presented the same question in respect of female children. Children's age groups were also presented in both section A and B in all the 10 questions to allow parents to select the answer they thought most appropriate to their children's ages. The questions included in part one covered the following:

- The type of literature children prefer to read/listen to (e.g. fiction/ non-fiction, translated/locally written literature, etc.)
- The extent of children's interest in reading at home
- The amount of time spent by children reading at home
- The frequency of children's visits to public libraries

- The role of parents in encouraging their children to read
- The extent to which reading literature affects the development of children's educational level.

Part Two

This part of the questionnaire for the parents included two open-ended questions where parents were requested to freely present their personal comments and suggestions with regard to the kind of books they preferred their children to read at home and the importance to the children of reading at home.

(Appendix F on page 476 presents the questionnaire for the parents)

5.6.5 -The Semi-Structured Interview for the Children

This semi-structured interview included 23 open-ended questions specifically prepared to collect data from primary school children of ages 6-9. The objective of this interview was to involve younger children who were not able to answer the questionnaires. It was the researcher's belief that through the interview younger children would have the opportunity to express their views freely and honestly. The 23 questions covered the following:

- General information about the children interviewed (e.g. name, age, school grade and hobbies)
- The children's reading interests in respect of type of books, type of literature and authors
- The time spent by children reading either at home, at the school library or at the public library
- The people who encouraged the children to read and assisted them in selecting the suitable literature books
- The children's opinions/suggestions with regard to literature, books and educational aids provided at their schools.

(Appendix G on page 491 presents the semi-structured interview for children)

5.6.6 -The Semi-Structured Interview for the Authors

This semi-structured interview included 12 open-ended questions specifically prepared to collect data from authors of children's literature in Bahrain. Through these questions, the researcher attempted to cover the following:

- The present reading level of children in Bahrain
- The reading preferences of Bahraini children aged 6-12 (males/females)
- The role played by the Bahraini family in encouraging their children to read
- The effect of introducing literature into the primary education syllabus on the development of children's reading interests and on expanding their imaginations
- The extent to which authors of children's literature in Bahrain participate in preparing literature books for the primary education syllabus in Bahrain
- The number and quality of children's public libraries in Bahrain.
- The number of locally published children's literature books in Bahrain
- The quality of subject matter in the locally published children's literature books which are available to children in public libraries and bookshops in Bahrain
- The extent of co-operation between authors of children's literature in Bahrain and the responsible authorities/institutions in the field of children's literature
- The difficulties faced by authors of children's literature in Bahrain when writing for children
- The difficulties faced by children in Bahrain in gaining access to literature.

(Appendix H on page 494 presents the semi-structured interview for authors)

5.7-The Validity of the Questionnaires

It is important to check the validity of the instrument, defined generally as the level to which the instrument measures what it claims to measure (Borg and Gall, 1983, p. 275). The instrument or test could be valid for one reason or purpose or one place or position and specific age or subject, but invalid for another (Dalen,1979, p.135). Invalid tests, according to Borg and Gall (1983), can lead to inaccurate research conclusions, which in turn might influence educational decisions (p.275) With regard to the validity of qualitative and quantitative data, Morrison (1993) claims that it takes many forms. He says:

> "...in qualitative data, validity might be addressed through the honesty, depth, richness and scope of the data achieved, the participants approached, the extent of triangulation and the disinterestedness or objectivity of the evaluator. In quantitative data, validity might be approached through careful sampling, appropriate instrumentation and appropriate statistical treatments of the data" (p.165).

Slavin (1984) and Gay (1992) identify four types of validity: (a) Content Validity, (b) Predictive Validity, (c) Concurrent Validity, (d) Construct Validity.

Content Validity is defined by Borg (1987) as "the degree to which items in a test represent the content that the test is designed to measure. It is important primarily in achievement testing and various tests of skills and proficiency, such as occupational skill tests" (p.94); i.e. content validity is addressed if the depth and breadth of an issue is covered exhaustively. The most important question here is how successfully the instruments used were measuring what they were

intended to measure. Table 5.6 on page 180 indicates how each question in the questionnaires and the semi-structured interviews is designed to provide information which contributes to the overall research questions. Nachmias and Nachmias (1987) argue that there is no one best way by which validity can be established or evaluated. However, Gay (1992) suggests that content validity can be determined by expert judgement. 'Usually', he writes:

> "experts in the area covered by the test are asked to assess its content validity. These experts carefully review the process used in developing the test as well as the test itself and make a judgement concerning how well items represent the intended content area."
>
> (Gay, p. 157)

The content validity of the quantitative and qualitative research instruments prepared by the researcher was assessed by expert judgement. The copies of the four questionnaires and the two interviews were submitted to two specialist members of the academic staff of the School of Education at the University of Durham. The main purpose of using expert judgement was to elicit additional information, comments and amendments. Each of the two members was asked to review the questionnaires and comment on the following aspects after a clear explanation of the objectives of the study and the population involved had been given:

- Presentation, wording, sentence structure, relevance of the questions to each other and clarity of the questionnaire.
- Content: to check appropriateness of the items to see if they covered what they were supposed to cover.
- Construction: format, to avoid double-barrelled questions, to avoid long or complicated items, and to check whether the items covered the survey's objectives, and if they were relevant to the particular fields.
- Comprehensibility for the target sample.

The feedback received from these expert judges was used to make the necessary additions and amendments.

After amendments had been made according to the experts' comments and suggestions, the questionnaires were translated by the researcher into Arabic so as to be understood by the teachers, librarians, parents and children in the study sample. The English and the Arabic versions were then submitted to two members from the English language centre at the University of Bahrain to ensure that the translations accurately reflected the questions formed in English. The translated questionnaires and interviews were then submitted to three Arabic language teachers from the University of Bahrain to review and anticipate any problems with regard to the level of language used, i.e. to ensure that the appropriate language had been used for each category of people selected for the study and in order to avoid any ambiguity or grammatical errors. This was done in order to achieve the objectives of the questionnaires and to be appropriate to the respondents. After checking with the Arabic language teachers, the researcher had to make minor modifications in the wording and format of some questions.

For greater precision in determining validity, the researcher submitted copies of the questionnaires to three experts who had much experience in the field of children's education and who were well experienced in using questionnaires. The experts were asked to review them and comment on the content, comprehensibility, the validity of the questions and the general impressions of the questionnaires. As a result of the responses from these three experts, minor improvements in the wording and grammar were made to the instruments. The experts agreed that the questionnaires, with very

minor modifications to wording, addressed content validity and met the requirements.

After modifications had been made according to the experts' comments, the researcher submitted the questionnaires together with the semi-structured interviews to the Director of Primary Education to be reviewed in respect of content, clarity and comprehensibility. After obtaining approval from the Director of Primary Education as to the validity of the questionnaires (appendix I on page 497), the researcher was able to distribute them to the relevant people.

Predictive Validity is defined by Borg (1987) as the level to which the predictions made by measurements or tests are confirmed by later behaviour of the subjects (p. 95). According to Morrison (1993) predictive validity is achieved if the data acquired at the first round of evaluation correlate highly with data acquired at a future date. An example of predictive validity, demonstrated by Morrison (1993) is as follows:

> "If the results of examinations taken by sixteen year-olds correlate highly with the examination results gained by the same students when aged eighteen then we might wish to say that the first examination demonstrated strong predictive validity" (p.166).

This type of validity was addressed in the questionnaires and the research instruments used by the researcher through the pilot study (explained in section 5.9) and the data obtained by the researcher through the previous research study which he conducted in 1986/87 to assess the provision of children's literature at primary education stage in Bahrain and its significance in contributing to their educational development. The results of the pilot study and the

previous research study correlate highly with the data acquired by the present study. Concurrent Validity is defined by Borg and Gall (1983):

> "The concurrent validity of a test is determined by relating the test score of a group of subjects to a criterion measure administered at the same time or within a short interval of time"
>
> (p. 279).

To demonstrate this form of validity, as explained by Morrison (1993), the data gathered from using one instrument must be correlated highly with data gathered from using another instrument. (p. 166). Morrison (1993), added that:

> "Concurrent validity is very similar to its partner - predictive validity - in its core concept (i.e. agreement with a second measure), What differentiates concurrent and predictive validity is the absence of a time element in the former, concurrence can be demonstrated simultaneously with another instrument"
>
> (ibid, p. 166).

Therefore, by having four questionnaires and two semi-structured interviews targeted at different categories of people, that is, children, parents, librarians, teachers and authors of children's literature, a high degree of concurrent validity was demonstrable in that all instruments focused on the same issue. Questionnaires and interviews were distributed/carried out simultaneously and the data gathered by using these instruments correlate highly with each other. Construct Validity is defined by Gay (1976):

> "Construct validity is the degree to which a test measures an intended hypothetical construct. A construct is a non-observable trait, such as intelligence, which explains behaviour. You can't see the construct, you can only observe its effect". (p. 89)

The researcher demonstrated construct validity derived from the pilot study section 5.9 page 167, through which he aimed at:

- Identifying weaknesses and strengths in the content of the main study questionnaires
- Testing suitability of the questions to respondents
- Recognising and assessing difficulties or any ambiguities
- Measuring the time needed to complete the questionnaires
- Ensuring that the questions provided the data required.

Construct validity of the questionnaires is high in that they were agreed by expert in the field, generated from document analysis and visits to those working in the field and also from personal knowledge and experience.

5.8- The Reliability of the Questionnaires and the Semi-Structured Interviews

Reliability is defined by Gay (1976) as the degree to which an instrument consistently measures whatever it purports to measure. The more reliable an instrument, the greater the confidence in the score obtained from the administration of the instrument. In a reliable instrument the same scores should be obtained if the instrument were to be re-administered (p. 92). According to Kline (1986) an instrument is reliable when it gives stable results under similar conditions (p. 32). Reliability coefficients can be achieved by various techniques such as those outlined by Gay (1992):

> "test-retest, equivalent forms and split-half reliability. These are determined through correlation and rationale equivalence. A major problem with this type of reliability is the difficulty of knowing how much time should elapse between the two testing sessions"
> (p.118).

Morrison (1993) explained that the evaluator has to decide what an appropriate length of time is: too short a time and respondents may remember what they said or did in the first test situation, too long a time and there may be extraneous effects operating to distort the data (for example, maturation in students, outside influences on the students) (p. 162). An evaluator is therefore to choose an appropriate time span between the test and re-test if seeking to demonstrate reliability.

In addition to stability over time, Morrison (1993) adds that reliability as stability (i.e. test-retest) can also be achieved over a similar sample, (ibid, p. 163), for example:

> "we would assume that if we were to administer a test or a questionnaire simultaneously to two groups of students who were very closely matched on significant characteristics (e.g. age, gender, ability etc....whatever characteristics are deemed to have a significant bearing on the responses), then similar results (on a test) or responses (to a questionnaire) would be obtained
>
> (ibid, p. 163).

The researcher selected the test-retest reliability to give the test greater stability by testing a group of people with the same questionnaires more than once. Gay (1976) explained the procedure for determining test-retest reliability:

> "- Administer the test to the sample.
> - After some time, about one week, administer the same test again to the same individuals.
> - Correlate the two sets of scores.
> - If the resulting coefficient (referred to as the coefficient of stability) is high the test has a good test-retest reliability" (p. 93).

In order to be certain that the questionnaires' result was stable, the researcher followed the same procedure as that outlined by Gay (1976), administering the questionnaires twice to the same groups of people with a period of one week between the two tests. The groups for the test-retest reliability were selected from the 20 primary schools sampled for the study as follows:

1 - Fifty (50) children of age 9-12
2 - Ten (10) primary school teachers
3 - Five (5) primary school librarians
4 - Ten (10) parents of primary school children.

The University of Bahrain Computer Centre correlated the two data sets of each of the four groups using the Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient Formulae and the T-Test of Significance Formula which are explained by Morrison (1993, pp. 199-200). The resulting coefficients and significance levels were:

- 0.80 for the questionnaire for the children with a significance level of p 0.01.
- 0.87 for the questionnaire for the teachers with a significance level of p 0.01.
- 0.84 for the questionnaire for the librarians with a significance level of p 0.01.
- 0.78 for the questionnaire for the parents with a significance level of p 0.01.

The coefficients were considered to be high correlation, enabling the researcher to have confidence and trust in the reliability of the questionnaires.

Reliability was also addressed by the researcher for the qualitative research which was carried out through the semi-structured interviews with primary school children of age 6-9 and two authors of children's literature in Bahrain. One approach to reliability in

qualitative research, as Jolly (1991) suggests, is to attempt cumulative research using the same qualitative methods:

> "its use and applicability in similar settings, in different situations and problems over time" (p. 66).

In her view, reliability may be achieved:

> "from the investigator's best analyses and this includes his/her skills, resources, creativity and analytical ability. No two investigators are identical. It would be more appropriate to say that if one were to apply a particular 'ground theory' to a similar situation, will it work? i.e. permit the researcher to understand and interpret phenomena" (ibid, p. 66).

The researcher tested the reliability of the findings of the qualitative research by the cumulative research approach as follows:

- Interviewing 10 primary school students of age 6-9 other than those interviewed for the main study and the pilot study.
- Interviewing 2 Bahraini authors of children's literature other than authors interviewed for the main study and the pilot study.

The results obtained through the cumulative research correlated to those of the main study's qualitative research. This gave the researcher confidence and trust in the reliability of the semi-structured interviews.

5.9 -The Pilot Study

Before accepting the final version of the questionnaires and the semi- structured interviews, the researcher conducted a pilot study. The four questionnaires (for children aged 9-12, teachers, librarians and parents of primary school children) were piloted, as well as the

two semi-structured interviews (for children aged 6-9 and Bahraini authors of children's literature). The main objective of the piloting was to check the following:

- To check whether the questionnaires' items were suitable in terms of appropriateness, clarity, understanding, type (e.g. rating scales) and to see whether the instructions for the questionnaires were clear
- To recognise and assess difficulties or ambiguities
- To make sure that the questions provided the kind of data required
- To check the time taken to complete the questionnaires and the semi-structured interviews
- To make any comments about the structure and form of the questionnaires for consideration at a later stage.

According to Wilson and McClean (1994) pilot testing is a process whereby a newly designed questionnaire is tested for its ability to do the job which it is designed to perform. The pilot test can highlight questions which may be ambiguous or difficult for the respondents to reply to (pp. 47-48). Ary and Razavich (1990) explained the benefits of a pilot study,

> "Before the research plan is prepared it may be helpful to try out the proposed procedures on a few subjects. This trial run or pilot study will first of all help the researcher to decide whether the study is feasible and whether it is worthwhile to continue. It provides an opportunity to assess the appropriateness and practicality of the data collection instruments. The pilot study will also demonstrate the adequacy of the research procedures and the measures that have been selected for variables. Unanticipated problems that appear may be solved at this stage, thereby saving time and effort later" (p. 109).

In a pilot study the entire study is conducted exactly as for the final study on a small, but representative, group of persons typical of those who will receive the definitive questionnaire, and the resulting data are analysed according to the research plan. The pilot study of this survey was implemented in two primary schools (one for boys and one for girls) selected from schools other than the 20 primary schools sampled for the study. Before distributing copies of the questionnaires, the researcher arranged meetings with teachers and librarians of the two schools through the headmaster/headmistress. In these meetings the researcher explained the objectives of the study, the questions included in the questionnaires and also requested the teachers' contribution in clarifying to children and parents selected for the study any difficult/ambiguous areas arising. The questionnaires for the pilot study were then distributed as follows:

5.9.1-The Questionnaire for the Children

Copies of this questionnaire were distributed by the researcher in co-operation with the teachers to 60 primary school children aged 9-12 who were randomly selected from the two schools of the pilot study (30 male and 30 female children). The researcher followed the stratified random sampling method (explained in detail in section 5.3 on page 137) in the selection of these children. The response rate from the children was 54 questionnaires out of the 60 distributed.

5.9.2-The Questionnaire for the Teachers

Copies of this questionnaire were distributed by the researcher to primary school teachers (3 male 3 female) from the two schools of the pilot study. The researcher followed the stratified random

sampling method (explained in detail in section 5.3 on page137) in the selection of these teachers. In response, all 6 questionnaires were returned fully answered.

5.9.3-The Questionnaire for the Librarians

Copies of this questionnaire were distributed to four primary school librarians from the two schools of the pilot study (each of these schools has a librarian and an assistant librarian). In response, the four questionnaires were returned fully answered.

5.9.4-The Questionnaire for the Parents

Copies of this questionnaire were distributed to 10 parents of primary school children. The researcher randomly selected 10 primary school children (5 male and 5 female children) from the two schools of the pilot study. The questionnaires were then distributed to parents of the 10 selected children through the schools' managers. The researcher followed the stratified random sampling method (explained in detail in section 5.3 on page 137) in the selection of these children. In response, 9 questionnaires were returned.

Table 5.7 on page 181 indicates the number of the informants from the two selected schools to whom questionnaires of the pilot study were distributed and the number of responses received.

The pilot study also included:

5.9.5-The Semi-Structured Interview for the Children

Interviews carried out with 10 primary school children of ages 6-9 (5 male and 5 female children), who were randomly selected by the researcher according to the stratified random sampling method

(explained in section 5.3 on page 137) from the two schools of the pilot study. These interviews took place at the schools in co-operation with teachers of these children who were most helpful while the interviews were being conducted. Responses were tape-recorded in addition to notes taken on the question sheet.

5.9.6-The Semi-Structured Interview for the Authors

Interviews carried out with two Bahraini authors out of a total of 6 authors of children's literature in Bahrain. The interviews were arranged by the researcher via telephone calls made to selected authors. The authors were told of the objectives of the study and the significance of contributing with their views and suggestions. The interviews were carried out at a time and a place initially agreed by the authors. Responses were tape-recorded and some notes were taken by the researcher.

As a result of the pilot study, some modifications were made in the wording of some items. The piloting showed that little change was needed. After the researcher had received the full information concerning the respondents involved in this study (e.g. number of participants, the convenient time to start the study, the locations, etc.), an official letter was submitted by the researcher to the Director of Primary Education in Bahrain requesting his approval for the application of the main study, and including a list of the names of the schools selected for the study. A letter of approval was received by the researcher from the Director to go ahead with the study at the named schools (see appendix I on page 497 which shows copies of the two letters).

5.10 -The Ethical Considerations

There are ethical considerations in every piece of research. The researcher should make every attempt to reduce potential hazards to subjects, e.g. invasion of privacy or misuse of personal details. Morrison (1993) suggests that subjects should be completely informed about the study, for example, as to what sort of information is going to be gathered from personal files or from particular classrooms or from the interview, and the respondents given the option to refuse to take part in the study (p. 187). Rieken (1969), too, suggested that the researcher must inform the participant about:

- The sort of activities that this role involves
- The sort of information that falls within the legitimate purview of this study
- The uses to which this information will be put
- The manner in which he would like the subjects to aid him in his pursuit, e. g. to relate specific facts to him rather than vague generalisations and impressions, to guide him to pertinent sources, and to correct him when his assumptions and conclusions seem to be in error (p.43).

The subject's right to privacy is also important. According to Gay (1981), subjects should be aware that researchers are collecting information from them or observing them. Collecting information without their knowledge or without appropriate permission can be unethical because the researchers should treat people as human beings rather than solely as a source of data. Data collected either from or about a subject should be totally confidential and reported anonymously (often in aggregated form so that respondents cannot be traced), especially if it is at all personal, because the subject has the right to privacy (p. 63).

Nachmias and Nachmias (1981), also stressed that participants in social science research need to be informed that the information gathered from them will be treated confidentially. Even if researchers are able to identify a particular participant's information, they should not announce the details publicly (p. 493).

The researcher addressed the ethics of the research in his study as follows:

- He obtained permission from the Ministry of Education in Bahrain to apply his questionnaires and interviews. (see appendix I on page 497)

- The researcher arranged appointments with the concerned school principals to discuss the research, its purpose and timing.

- In co-ordination with the school principals, the researcher arranged meetings with the teachers and librarians to give them a brief introduction to the research and to explain to them the kind of information needed.

- Before conducting his interviews with the authors of children's literature, the researcher discussed with them over the telephone the objectives of his research and the significance of their contribution to the study. The interviews were carried out at locations and times initially agreed by the authors.

- Throughout the questionnaires and the interviews, the researcher did not ask the subjects sensitive questions.

- The researcher assured the subjects that the information to be gathered was to be treated confidentially and used only for the purpose of the study. Respondents were not obliged to put their names on the questionnaires and the data were aggregated, i.e. individuals would not be able to be traced.

- Before conducting his interviews with children, the researcher held familiarisation sessions with them, with the assistance of their teachers. Through these sessions the researcher talked informally to the children, presented some stories, and offered simple prizes

for children who were competent in answering his quizzes. The environment of these sessions created children's confidence in the researcher and helped them to talk freely with him regarding their interests.

- The researcher's intention was to video-tape-record some of his interviews with children to support his study. But since he felt that this might not be acceptable to the families of these children (especially in case of females), the researcher decided not to do so.

- When conducting his interviews with children, the researcher allowed the children to select the place for the interviews and most of children declared their preference for the school library. The researcher felt that these children chose this venue because they felt distanced there from the formalities of the classrooms.

- The researcher requested the assistance of some primary school teachers in conducting the interviews with children especially those children who felt more comfortable talking to their teachers than to the researcher. Reluctant children were given the choice not to take part.

- Other respondents such as teachers, librarians and parents were given the opportunity not to be involved in the research.

- After the research was completed, the researcher distributed acknowledgement letters to all principals of the schools involved in the study thanking them for their co-operation during the study.

  (See appendix J on page 504, which shows a copy of acknowledgement letter in both Arabic and English languages.)

Table 5.1:

Table no 5.1 shows the percentages of the children sampled for the study (Children's Questionnaire) in relation to the target population, number of children age 9 -12 in each of the primary school.

	Name of the School	Total no. of children	No. of children age 6-9	No. of children age 9-12	No. of study samples	Percentage (%)
1	Hautteen Primary Boys' School	320	171	149	20	13.4
2	Umm Al-Hasam Primary Boys' School	300	162	138	20	14.4
3	Al-Mutanabi Primary Boys' School	290	160	130	20	15.4
4	Al-Rasheed Primary Boys' School	350	229	121	20	16.5
5	Hamad Town Primary Boys' School	285	160	125	20	16.0
6	Aali Primary Boys' School	314	162	152	20	13.2
7	Badr Al-Kubrah Primary Boys' School	456	328	128	20	15.6
8	Al-Mamoon Primary Boys' School	295	139	156	20	12.8
9	Al-Tabary Primary Boys' School	320	195	125	20	16.0
10	Imam Malek Primary Boys' School	383	153	130	20	15.4
11	Al-Quds Primary Girls' School	292	160	132	20	15.2
12	Mariam B. Omran Primary Girls' School	407	278	129	20	15.5
13	Sumayya Primary Girls' School	274	156	118	20	16.9
14	Um Ayman Primary Girls' School	269	119	150	20	13.3
15	Al Salmaniya Primary Girls' School	420	306	114	20	17.5
16	Isa Town Primary Girls' School	415	286	129	20	15.5
17	Zubeidah Primary Girls' School	310	205	105	20	19.0
18	Ain-Jaloot Primary Girls' School	250	103	147	20	13.6
19	Bilad Al-Qadeem Primary Girls' School	310	195	115	20	17.4
20	Al-Sanabis Primary Girls' School	409	277	132	20	15.2
	Total	**6569**	**3944**	**2625**	**400**	**15.2**

Table 5.2:

Table no 5.2 shows the percentages of teachers sampled for the study in relation to total number of teachers, target population in each primary school.

	Name of the Schools	Total No of Teachers		Study Samples	
		NO	%	NO	%
1	Hautteen Primary Boys' School	18	100	3	16.7
2	Umm Al-Hasam Primary Boys' School	17	100	3	17.6
3	Al-Mutanabi Primary Boys' School	16	100	3	18.8
4	Al-Rasheed Primary Boys' School	19	100	3	15.8
5	Hamad Town Primary Boys' School	16	100	3	18.8
6	Aali Primary Boys' School	17	100	3	17.6
7	Badr Al-Kubrah Primary Boys' School	20	100	3	15.0
8	Al-Mamoon Primary Boys' School	16	100	3	18.8
9	Al-Tabary Primary Boys' School	18	100	3	16.7
10	Imam Malek Primary Boys' School	16	100	3	18.8
11	Al-Quds Primary Girls' School	16	100	3	18.8
12	Mariam B. Omran Primary Girls' School	20	100	3	15.0
13	Sumayya Primary Girls' School	15	100	3	20.0
14	Um Ayman Primary Girls' School	15	100	3	20.0
15	Al Salmaniya Primary Girls' School	20	100	3	15.0
16	Isa Town Primary Girls' School	19	100	3	15.8
17	Zubeidah Primary Girls' School	16	100	3	18.8
18	Ain-Jaloot Primary Girls' School	15	100	3	20.0
19	Bilad Al-Qadeem Primary Girls' School	16	100	3	18.8
20	Al-Sanabis Primary Girls' School	19	100	3	15.8
	TOTAL	**344**	**100**	**60**	**17.4**

Table 5.3:

Table 5.3 shows the 10 primary boys' schools sampled for the study with an indication of the total number of each questionnaire distributed and received at each school.

	Name of the School	Questionnaire for the Children age 9 -12		Questionnaire for the Teachers		Questionnaire for the Librarians		Questionnaire for the Parents	
		D	R	D	R	D	R	D	R
1	Hautteen Primary Boys' School	20	19	3	3	1	1	2	2
2	Umm Al-Hasam Primary Boys' School	20	20	3	2	1	1	2	2
3	Al-Mutanabi Primary Boys' School	20	16	3	3	1	1	2	2
4	Al-Rasheed Primary Boys' School	20	17	3	3	1	1	2	1
5	Hamad Town Primary Boys' School	20	18	3	3	1	1	2	2
6	Aali Primary Boys' School	20	17	3	2	1	1	2	2
7	Badr Al-Kubrah Primary Boys' School	20	19	3	3	1	1	2	2
8	Al-Mamoon Primary Boys' School	20	18	3	2	1	--	2	2
9	Al-Tabary Primary Boys' School	20	17	3	3	1	1	2	2
10	Imam Malek Primary Boys' School.	20	18	3	3	1	--	2	1
	TOTAL	200	179	30	27	10	8	20	18

D - Distributed **R** - Received

Table 5.4:

Table 5.4 shows the 10 primary girls' schools sampled for the study with an indication of the total number of each questionnaire distributed and received at each school.

	Name of the School	Questionnaire for the Children age 9-12		Questionnaire for the Teachers		Questionnaire for the Librarians		Questionnaire for the Parents	
		D	R	D	R	D	R	D	R
1	Al-Quds Primary Girls' School	20	19	3	3	1	1	2	2
2	Mariam Bint Omran Primary Girls' School	20	16	3	3	1	1	2	1
3	Sumayya Primary Girls' School	20	19	3	3	1	1	2	2
4	Um Ayman Primary Girls' School	20	17	3	3	1	1	2	2
5	Al Salmaniya Primary Girls' School	20	17	3	3	1	1	2	1
6	Isa Town Primary Girls' School	20	20	3	2	1	1	2	2
7	Zubeidah Primary Girls' School	20	18	3	3	1	1	2	2
8	Ain-Jaloot Primary Girls' School	20	16	3	3	1	1	2	1
9	Bilad Al-Qadeem Primary Girls' School	20	19	3	3	1	1	2	2
10	Al-Sanabis Primary Girls' School.	20	20	3	3	1	1	2	2
	TOTAL	200	181	30	29	10	10	20	17

D - Distributed **R** - Received

Table 5.5:

Table 5.5 shows the total number of questionnaires distributed and the total number of responses received from the 20 primary boys' and girls' schools sampled for the study.

The Schools		Questionnaire for the Children age 9-12		Questionnaire for the Teachers		Questionnaire for the Librarians		Questionnaire for the Parents	
		Total no distributed	Total no received	Total no distributed	Total no received	Total no distributed	Total no received	Total no distributed	Total no received
10	Primary Boys' Schools	200	179	30	27	10	8	20	18
10	Primary Girls' Schools	200	181	30	29	10	10	20	17
20	Total	400	360	60	56	20	18	40	35

Table 5.6:

Table 5.6 shows the research main questions derived from chapter one and the questionnaires' items and interviews, which covered those questions. The other research questions were addressed in the literature review through chapter three and four.

The Research Questions	Questionnaire for the Children age 9 -12	Questionnaire for the Teachers	Questionnaire for the Librarians	Questionnaire for the Parents	Children's Interviews	Authors' Interviews
What provision is made in Bahrain for children to have ready access to good literature and story books?		Q6,Q8,Q9,Q10 Q14,Q15,Q16, Q17,Q20,Q21, Q22,Q23,Q24, Q25,Q1P2,	Q1,Q2,Q3,Q4 Q5,Q1P3, Q2P3,Q3P3, Q4P3		Q22,	Q1,Q4,Q5, Q6,Q7,Q8, Q9,Q10, Q11,Q12,
What part might children's literature play in children's education?		Q7,Q13,		Q8,Q1P2, Q2P2	Q21,Q23	
How do male and female children engage with children's books and literature in Bahrain?	Q4,Q7,Q9,Q10	Q5,Q18,Q19, Q3P2,Q4P2	Q2P2,Q8P2,	Q7	Q10,Q12, Q14,Q15, Q19,	Q3,
Are there any differences in the reading habits of male and female children in Bahrain?	Q1,Q2,Q3,Q5, Q6,Q8,Q11, Q12	Q11,Q12,Q2P2	Q1P2,Q3P2, Q4P2,Q5P2, Q6P2,Q7P2, Q9P2,Q10P2, Q11P2,Q12P2,	Q1,Q2,Q3,Q4 Q5,Q6,Q9, Q10	Q5,Q6,Q7 Q8,Q9,Q11 Q13,Q16, Q17,Q18, Q20,	Q2,

Table 5.7:

Table 5.7 shows the two primary schools of the pilot study with an indication of the total number of each questionnaire distributed and received at each school.

The two schools involved in the pilot study	Questionnaire for the Children age 9 -12		Questionnaire for the Teachers		Questionnaire for the Librarians		Questionnaire for the Parents	
	Total no distributed	Total no deceived	Total no distributed	Total no received	Total no distributed	Total no received	Total no distributed	Total no received
Isa Town Primary Boys' School	30	26	3	3	2	2	5	4
Muharraq Primary Girls' School	30	28	3	3	2	2	5	5
Total	60	54	6	6	4	4	10	9

Chapter 6

Data Presentation and Analysis

Data Presentation and Analysis

6.1-Introduction

The main objective of this section of the study is to present and analyse the data concerning issues of children's literature and books in Bahrain, and the reading interests of primary school children aged 6-12 with particular focus on the gender factor. The data gathered from the questionnaires given to the children, teachers, librarians and parents will be analysed. Furthermore, the results of the semi-structured interviews carried out with children aged 6-9 and authors of children's literature in Bahrain will be analysed. The implications of the results will be discussed in chapter seven.

The researcher selected the samples for this study from 20 primary schools in Bahrain (10 boys' and 10 girls' schools). For the authors' semi-structured interview he selected two authors from a total of six authors of children's literature in Bahrain. The total number of each sample was as follows:

- 400 primary school children of ages 9-12 including 200 male and 200 female children.
- 60 primary school teachers including 30 male and 30 female.
- 20 primary school librarians including 10 male and 10 female.
- 40 parents of 40 primary school children aged 6-12 (20 male and 20 female children).
- 60 primary school children of ages 6-9 including 30 male and 30 female children.
- 2 authors of children's literature in Bahrain.

6.2-Statistical Procedures

6.2.1-Quantitative Data

The researcher used the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) to process the quantitative data obtained through the questionnaires. He chose statistical tests which were appropriate for non-parametric data, i.e. data which derived from nominal and ordinal variables. Siegel (1956) argues:

> "If data are inherently in ranks, or even if they can only be categorised as plus or minus, they can be treated by non-parametric methods, whereas they cannot be treated by parametric methods unless precarious and perhaps unrealistic assumptions are made about the underlying distributions" (p. 33).

The researcher used frequencies and percentages in analysing cross-tabulated data. The Mann-Whitney U Test of Significance was used throughout the four questionnaire to measure statistical significance of the distribution of data for two variables 'male/female' (Borg and Gall, 1983, p. 561). Furthermore, the Kruskal-Wallis Test was used to ascertain any significant relationship between three or more variables. As Siegel (1956) pointed out "it is the most powerful of the non-parametric tests and it is a most useful alternative to the parametric t test when the researcher wishes to avoid the t test's assumptions" (p. 117). The significance level of $P \leq 0.05$ will be reported where appropriate, as will $P<0.05$, $P<0.01$, $P<0.001$, $P<0.0001$ for statistical significance, and $P>0.05$ for no statistical significance. In the current study, the significance level in $P \leq 0.05$ is taken as a level suitable for rejection of the null hypothesis. The researcher also used the reliability coefficient to identify the degree of association between the closed questions of each questionnaire.

6.2.2-Qualitative Data

The qualitative data obtained in response to the open-ended questions and the semi-structured interviews were manually analysed by the researcher by coding answers and compiling percentages. These figures are indicated in the presentation of responses to the open-ended questions and interviews in section 6.3. This data is supported by transcripts extracted from responses to the open-ended questions of the questionnaires for teachers, librarians and parents, which are shown together with their translations in Appendix K on page 507.

6.3-Reports and outcomes

6.3.1-The Questionnaire for the Children

6.3.1.1-The Main Objectives

This questionnaire was specifically designed to gather data from primary school children (males/female) of ages 9-12 in order to provide the following information:

- The amount of reading done by children
- The average number of stories bought/borrowed by children
- The frequency of visits made by children to public libraries
- The extent to which children write to children's magazines
- The preferred subjects for reading
- The factors considered by children when selecting a story to read (e.g., subject, author, characters, appearance of books, etc.)
- The people who most affect the children's reading development
- The most preferred access to stories (e.g., books, magazines, television, theatre, etc.)
- The type of stories preferred by children
- The places where children prefer to read.

Table 6.1 : The distribution of children (sample of children aged 9-12) according to their gender.

Variables	No of Children	Percentage	No of Responses Received	Percentage
Male	200	50%	170	42.5%
Female	200	50%	190	47.5%
Total	400	100%	360	90 %

Table 6.1 shows the total of 360 out of 400 children of ages 9-2 who responded to the children's questionnaire. One can observe from the table that there is no large difference in the number of responses between male and female children.

6.3.1.2-Analysis of the Closed Questions

Question 1: How many hours a week do you generally spend in reading? (one response only).

1 - None (from zero to less than 1 hour)
2 - From one to three hours
3 - From four to six hours
4 - From seven to nine hours
5 - From ten hours and above.

Table 6.2: Cross-tabulation, frequencies and percentage counts by gender.

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	Row Total
Male	5	100	50	15	0	170
% of total	2.9	58.8	29.4	8.8	.0 %	47.2
Female	0	25	42	107	16	190
% of total	.0 %	13.2	22.1	56.3	8.4	52.8
Column	5	125	92	122	16	360
Total	1.4	34.7	25.6	33.9	4.4	100.0%

Table 6.2 shows that 1.4% of the total population spend no time reading. Those who spend 1-3 hours a week reading were 34.7%

which represents the highest percentage of the total population. The next percentage is 33.9% which represents those who spend 7-9 hours a week reading whereas 25.6% spend 4-6 hours a weeks and only 4.4% spend 10 hours and hours a week. When we combine the percentages of those who spend time reading, they form the majority of 98.6% compared to those who read "none" of the time.

Another point shown by the table is that 100% of female children in the study sample do spend at least one hour reading compared to male children where 2.9% declared that they do not read at all. It is also indicated that female children spend longer hours reading compared to male children (56.3% of female children spend 7-9 hours compared to 8.8% of male children who spend the same time reading, and 8.4% of female children spend 10 hours and above compared to 0% male children in the same category). These results indicate that female children spend more time reading than male children.

Table 6.3 : Mann-Whitney U Test.

Variables	U Value	Significance
Male Female	5357.5	0.0000

The Mann-Whitney U Test in table 6.3 reveals that there is a statistically high significant difference between responses of male and female children ($p<0.01$). This difference can be clearly recognised in table 6.2 in categories 2 and 4.

Question 2: How many stories on average do you obtain a month? (one response only).

1 - None
2 - One story only
3 - From two to four stories
4 - From five to seven stories
5 - From eight and above.

Table 6.4: Cross-tabulation, frequencies and percentage counts by gender.

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	Row Total
Male	40	90	20	20	0	170
% of total	23.5	52.9	11.8	11.8	.0 %	47.2
Female	15	35	102	28	10	109
% of total	7.9	18.4	52.7	14.7	5.3	52.8
Column	55	125	122	48	10	360
Total	15.3	34.7	33.9	13.3	2.8	100.0 %

Table 6.4 shows that 15.3% of the total population of children do not obtain stories at all. The highest percentage (34.7%) represent those children who obtain one story a month. Those who obtain 2-4 stories a month represent 33.9% of the total population. Children who obtain a larger number of stories a month (5 and above) represent a percentage of 16.1% which is a small percentage if compared to those in other categories. Another point shown by the table is that female children obtain more stories in a month than male children which is likely to mean that female children read more than male children as indicated in table 6.2. If we compare percentages in table 6.4 category 3, we will find that 52.9% of male children obtain one story a month compared to 18.4% of female children who obtain the same number. On the other hand, female children who obtain 2 or more stories a month represent 73.7% compared to 23.6% of male children who obtain the same number of stories a month.

Table 6.5 : Mann-Whitney U Test.

Variables	U Value	Significance
Male Female	8565.0	0.0000

The Mann-Whitney U Test in table 6.5 reveals that there is a statistically high significant difference between responses of male and female children ($p < 0.01$). Categories 2 and 3 in table 6.4 clearly demonstrate the difference in responses.

Question 3: How many times a week do you visit the public library ? (one response only).

1 - None
2 - Once a week
3 - From two to four times
4 - From five to seven times
5 - From eight times and above.

Table 6.6: Cross-tabulation, frequencies and percentage counts by gender.

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	Row Total
Male % of total	125 73.5	30 17.6	10 5.9	5 2.9	0 .0 %	170 47.2
Female % of total	25 13.2	105 55.3	45 23.7	15 7.9	0 .0 %	190 52.8
Column Total	150 41.7	135 37.5	55 15.2	20 5.6	0 .0 %	360 100.0 %

Table 6.6 shows that 41.7% of the total population of children never visit public libraries, 37.5% of children visit the public library once a week only, 15.2% of children visit the public library from two to four times a week and 5.6% of children visit the public library from five to seven times a week. Although the number of children who visit the public library more than once a week represents the highest percentage (58.3%) of the total population, the researcher still

considers the percentage of those who never visit public libraries (41.7%) as critical. Table 6.6 also shows that female children represent the highest percentages of the total population of those who visit the public library for reading. Male children scored lower percentages when compared to female percentages. For example, 55.3% of female children visit the library once a week against only 17.6% of male children who visit the public library the same number of times and 23.7% of female children visit the public library 5-7 times a week against 5.9% of male children making the same number of visits.

Table 6.7 : Mann-Whitney U Test.

Variables	U Value	Significance
Male Female	6325.0	0.0000

The Mann-Whitney U Test in table 6.7 shows that there is a statistically high significant difference between responses of male and female children ($p < 0.01$). The difference is clearly illustrated in table 6.6 in categories 1 and 2.

Question 4: To what extent do you participate in writing to children's magazines? (one response only).

1 - Not at all
2 - Very little
3 - A little
4 - A lot
5 - A very great deal.

Table 6.8: Cross-tabulation, frequencies and percentage counts by gender.

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	Row Total
Male	30	120	15	5	0	170
% of total	17.6	70.6	8.8	2.9	.0 %	47.2
Female	5	21	96	38	30	190
% of total	2.6	11.1	50.5	20.0	15.8	52.8
Column	35	141	111	43	30	360
Total	9.7	39.2	30.8	11.9	8.4	100.0 %

Table 6.8 shows that 9.7% of the total population of children do not participate at all in writing to children's magazines. This is a small percentage if compared to the percentage of those who do participate which is 90.3. Nevertheless, those who participate "a lot" or "a very great deal" represent a small percentage (20.3%) if compared to the percentage of those who participate "a little" or "very little" (70%). More can be revealed from the same table. For example, female children who participate in writing to children's magazines represent higher percentages than those of male children, that is, 50.5% of female children against 8.8% of male children who participate "a little", 20% of female children against 2.9% of male children who participate "a lot" and 15.8% of female children against 0% of male children who participate "a very great deal". Generally, female children are more interested than male children in writing to their magazines.

Table 6.9: Mann-Whitney U Test.

Variables	U Value	Significance
Male Female	3750.0	0.0000

The Mann-Whitney U Test in table 6.9 shows that there is a statistically high significant difference between responses of male and female children ($p < 0.01$). The difference is clearly indicated in all categories of table 6.8 especially 2 and 3.

Question 5: Which type of subjects do you prefer to read most? (one response only).

1 - Fiction
2 - Science (non-fiction)
3 - History (non-fiction)
4 - Geography
5 - Languages
6 - Arts
7 - Religion.

Table 6.10: Cross-tabulation, frequencies and percentage counts by gender.

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Row Total
Male	70	40	5	5	0	30	20	170
% of total	41.2	23.5	2.9	2.9	.0 %	17.6	11.8	47.2
Female	100	33	5	7	12	13	20	190
% of total	52.6	17.4	2.6	3.7	6.3	6.8	10.5	52.8
Column Total	170	73	10	12	12	43	40	360
	47.3	20.3	2.8	3.3	3.3	11.9	11.1	100.0%

Table 6.10 shows that the highest percentage which is 47.3% represents children who mostly prefer to read "Fiction". Those who prefer to read "Science" represent 20.3% of the total population of children, whereas those who prefer to read other types of subjects such as "History", "Geography", "Languages", "Arts" and "Religion" represent very low percentages i.e. 2.8%, 3.3%, 3.3%, 11.9% and

11.1% respectively. Table 6.10 also indicates that there are only minor differences in percentages between male and female children.

Table 6.11 : Mann-Whitney U Test.

Variables	U Value	Significance
Male Female	14385.0	0.0570

The Mann-Whitney U Test in Table 6.11 shows that the difference in interest between the male and female children is statistically non-significant ($p>0.05$), i.e. there are commonly shared interests in the subjects preferred by male and female children for reading. This is clearly indicated in all categories of table 6.10 particularly 3, 4,and 7.

Question 6: On what basis do you choose a story to read on your own? (one response only).

1 - Subject of story
2 - The artistic production of the story
3 - The characters of the story
4 - The author of the story.

Table 6.12: Cross-tabulation, frequencies and percentage counts by gender.

Variables	1	2	3	4	Row Total
Male % of total	115 67.6	15 8.8	40 23.5	0 .0 %	170 47.2
Female % of total	120 63.2	25 13.2	45 23.7	0 .0 %	190 52.8
Column Total	235 65.3	40 11.1	85 23.6	0 .0 %	360 100.0 %

Table 6.12 suggest that 65.3% of the total population of children select the stories to read on the basis of the subject. Those who are attracted by the artistic production while selecting a story to read represent a percentage of 11.1% and those who select stories to read

on the basis of the characters of the story represent a percentage of 23.6%. On the other hand, table 6.12 shows that none of the children (0.0%) select the stories to read on the basis of the author since authors of children's literature are not very well-known to children in Bahrain. Table 6.12 also shows slight differences between percentages of male and female children. This reveals that there is a commonly shared interest between male and female children in the selection of stories to read.

Table 6.13: Mann-Whitney U Test.

Variables	U Value	Significance
Male Female	15587.5	0.4975

The Mann-Whitney U Test in table 6.13 reveals that the difference in interest between the male and female children is statistically non-significant ($p>0.05$), i.e. both genders of children share common interest in the type of stories they select to read. This is clearly shown in all categories of table 6.12 particularly 3 and 4.

Question 7: Who mostly encourages you to read? (one response only).

1 - Your father
2 - Your mother
3 - Your brothers/sisters
4 - Your teachers
5 - Your librarians
6 - Others.

Table 6.14: Cross-tabulation, frequencies and percentage counts by gender.

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	Row Total
Male	20	90	20	35	5	0	170
% of total	11.2	52.9	11.8	20.6	2.9	.0 %	47.2
Female	25	103	12	40	5	5	190
% of total	13.2	54.2	6.3	21.1	2.6	2.6	52.8
Column	45	193	32	75	10	5	360
Total	12.5	53.6	8.9	20.8	2.8	1.4	100.0 %

Table 6.14 shows that the highest percentage which is 53.6% of the total population of children are encouraged in their reading by their mothers. Children encouraged by their fathers represent 12.5% which is a very low percentage if compared to the previous percentage of those who are encouraged by their "mother". Those who are encouraged to read by "brothers/sisters", "teachers", "librarians" and "others" such as grandparents or friends represent percentages of 8.9%, 20.8%, 2.8% and 1.4% respectively. Table 6.14 also indicates slight differences in percentages between male and female children's responses. Category 1 shows a slight difference of 1.4% in favour of female children; category 2 shows a slight difference of 1.3% in favour of female children; category 3 shows a difference of 5.5% in favour of male children; category 4 shows a slight difference of 0.5% in favour of female children; category 5 shows a slight difference of

0.3% in favour of male children and category 6 shows a difference of 2.6% in favour of female children.

Table 6.15: Mann-Whitney U Test.

Variables	U Value	Significance
Male Female	15972.5	0.8437

The Mann-Whitney U Test in table 6.15 indicates that the difference in responses between the male and female children is statistically non-significant ($p>0.05$). This is clearly shown in all categories of table 6.14 particularly in 1, 2, 4 and 5.

Question 8: What is your most preferred access to a story ? (one response only).

1 - Reading it
2 - Listening to it
3 - Watching it on television
4 - Watching it played in the theatre
5 - Listening to it on radio.

Table 6.16: Cross-tabulation, frequencies and percentage counts by gender.

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	Row Total
Male	15	18	95	40	2	170
% of total	8.8	10.6	55.9	23.5	1.5	47.2
Female	101	49	15	20	5	190
% of total	53.2	25.8	7.9	10.5	2.6	52.8
Column	116	67	110	60	7	360
Total	32.2	18.6	30.6	16.7	1.9	100.0 %

Table 6.16 shows that the highest percentages (i.e. 32.2% and 30.6%) represent those children who considered the most preferable access to a story is reading it or watching it on television. The percentages of those who considered listening to a story or watching

it played in the theatre as the most preferable access represent 18.6% and 16.7% of children respectively. Those who selected listening to a story on radio as the most preferable access represent only 1.9% of the total children. This table also indicates large differences between male and female children's preferences. The highest percentage of female children (53.2%) selected reading a story as the most preferable access, while only 8.8% of male children selected this. On the other hand, the highest percentage of male children (55.9%) selected watching a story on television as the most preferable access while only 7.9% of female children selected this. Moreover, those who selected listening to a story as the most preferable access were 25.8% of female children against 10.6% of male children, and those who selected watching a story played in the theatre were mostly male children, i.e., 23.5% against 10.5% of female children.

Table 6.17: Mann-Whitney U Test.

Variables	U Value	Significance
Male Female	6946.0	0.0000

The Mann-Whitney U Test in table 6.17 reveals that there is a statistically high significant difference between responses of male and female children ($p<0.01$). This difference can be clearly recognised in categories 1, 2, 3 and 4 of table 6.16.

Question 9: Whom do you depend on when choosing stories to read? (one response only).

1 - Yourself
2 - Your parents
3 - Your teacher
4 - Brothers/sisters
5 - The librarians
6 - Other.

Table 6.18: Cross-tabulation, frequencies and percentage counts by gender.

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	Row Total
Male	120	20	15	10	5	0	170
% of total	70.6	11.8	8.8	5.9	2.9	.0 %	47.2
Female	96	43	28	19	4	0	190
% of total	50.5	22.6	14.7	10.0	2.1	.0 %	52.8
Column	216	63	43	29	9	0	360
Total	60.0	17.5	11.9	8.1	2.5	.0 %	100.0 %

Table 6.18 indicates that the majority of children (60%) preferred to choose the stories to read by themselves. Those who depend on their parents to select stories for them to read represent 17.5% of children; those who depend on their teachers represent 11.9%, those who depend on their brothers/sisters represent 8.1% and those who depend on the librarians represent 2.5%. The table also indicates large differences between male and female responses. Although the majority of male children (70.6%) and the majority of female children (50.5%) indicated their preference for selecting stories by themselves, a significant difference between both genders in the same category can be recognised. There are also large differences in categories 2 and 3 in favour of female children, i.e. 22.6% of female children revealed that they depend on their parents when selecting stories to read while 11.8% of male children selected the same category, and 14.7% of female children revealed that they depend on

their teachers while 8.8% of male children selected the same category. In categories 4 and 5 the differences in responses between male and female children were not significant. The "other" Category was not selected at all by either gender.

Table 6.19: Mann-Whitney U Test.

Variables	U Value	Significance
Male Female	13110.0	0.0005

The Mann-Whitney U Test in table 6.19 reveals that there is a statistically significant difference between responses of male and female children ($p < 0.01$). This difference can be clearly recognised in table 6.18 in categories 1, 2 and 3.

Question 10: Who is the most interesting person to read to you or tell you a story? (one response only).

1 - Your father
2 - Your mother
3 - Your grandparents
4 - Your brothers and sisters
5 - Your teachers
6 - Others.

Table 6.20: Cross-tabulation, frequencies and percentage counts by gender.

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	Row Total
Male	16	18	93	18	24	1	170
% of total	9.4	10.6	54.7	10.6	14.1	0.6	47.2
Female	15	48	102	5	20	0	190
% of total	7.9	25.3	53.7	2.6	10.5	.0 %	52.8
Column	31	66	195	23	44	1	360
Total	8.6	18.3	54.2	6.4	12.2	0.3	100.0 %

Table 6.20 shows that the majority of children, i.e. 54.2% of the target population revealed that their "grandparents" are the most interesting people to read or tell stories to them. Those who revealed that the "mother" is the most interesting person to read to them or tell a story represent 18.3%, while 12.2% preferred their "teachers", 8.6% preferred their "fathers" and 6.4% preferred their "brothers and sisters". Table 6.20 also shows that there are large differences between male and female children's responses in categories 2, 4 and 5 of the table, i.e. 25.3% of female children stated that their mothers are the most interesting people against 10.6% of male children who stated the same; 10.6% male children selected brothers and sisters, while only 2.6% of female children selected the same; and 14.1% of male children selected their teachers against 10.5% of female children who selected the same. On the other hand, table 6.20 shows slight differences between male and female children's responses in categories 1,3 and 6 of the table, i.e. 9.4% of male children selected their fathers and 7.9% of female children selected the same; 54.7% of male children selected their grandparents against 53.7% of female children who selected the same; and 0.6% of male children selected "others" against 0.0% of female children.

Table 6.21: Mann-Whitney U Test.

Variables	U Value	Significance
Male Female	13351.0	0.0019

The Mann-Whitney U Test in table 6.21 reveals that there is a statistically significant difference between responses of male and

female children ($p<0.01$). This difference can be clearly recognised in categories 2,4, and 5 of table 6.20.

Question 11: What type of story do you prefer to read? (one response only).

1 - Adventure story
2 - Animal story
3 - Humorous story of everyday life
4 - Social story
5 - Scientific story
6 - Historical story
7 - Religious story
8 - Other.

Table 6.22: Cross-tabulation, frequencies and percentage counts by gender.

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Row Total
Male	91	28	15	8	10	3	10	5	170
% of total	53.5	16.5	8.8	4.7	5.9	1.8	5.9	2.9	47.2
Female	15	20	28	95	4	3	20	5	190
% of total	7.9	10.5	14.7	50.0	2.1	1.6	10.5	2.6	52.8
Column	106	48	43	103	14	6	30	10	360
Total	29.4	13.3	11.9	28.6	3.9	1.7	8.3	2.8	100.0%

Table 6.22 shows that 29.4% of the children prefer to read adventure stories, 28.6% prefer to read social stories, 13.3% prefer to read animal stories, 11.9% prefer to read humorous stories, 8.3% prefer to read religious stories, 3.9% prefer to read scientific stories, 2.8% prefer to read other types of stories and 1.7% prefer to read historical stories. The majority of children then preferred adventure and social stories whereas the historical and other stories were preferred by very low percentages of children. Table 6.22 also indicates large differences in preferences between male and female children in most categories of the table. With regard to adventure stories, they were preferred by 53.5% of male children against 7.9%

of female children who preferred the same. Animal stories were preferred by 16.5% of male children against 10.5% of female children who selected the same. Humorous stories were mostly preferred by female children, that is, 14.7% against 8.8% of male children. Social stories were preferred by the majority of female children, i.e. 50% against 4.7% of male children. Scientific stories were preferred by 5.9% of male children while only 2.1% of female children preferred them. Religious stories were preferred by 10.5% of female children against 5.9% of male children. Percentages of preferences for historical and other stories were nearly the same for male and female children.

Table 6.23: Mann-Whitney U Test.

Variables	U Value	Significance
Male Female	7779.5	0.0000

The Mann-Whitney U Test in table 6.23 reveals that there is a statistically high significant difference between responses of male and female children ($p<0.01$). This difference can be clearly recognised in categories 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 7 of table 6.22.

Question 12: Where do you mostly prefer to read books? (one response only).

1 - At home
2 - In the school classroom
3 - In the school library
4 - In the public library
5 - In the other places.

Table 6.24: Cross-tabulation, frequencies and percentage counts by gender.

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	Row Total
Male	30	29	76	30	5	170
% of total	17.6	17.1	44.7	17.6	2.9	47.2
Female	92	20	34	33	11	190
% of total	48.4	10.5	17.9	17.4	5.8	52.8
Column	122	49	110	63	16	360
Total	33.9	13.6	30.6	17.5	4.4	100.0 %

Table 6.24 shows that 33.9% of children prefer reading books at home, 30.6% prefer reading books in the school library, 17.5% prefer reading books in public libraries, 13.6% prefer to read books in the school classroom and only 4.4% who prefer to read books in other places. The table also indicates large differences between male and female children's responses particularly in the first three categories, i.e. 48.4% of female children prefer reading books at home while only 17.6% of male children prefer the same; 17.1% of male children prefer reading books at school while only 10.5% of female children prefer the same; and 44.7% of male children prefer reading books in school libraries whereas only 17.9% of female children prefer the same. It is also indicated that there are slight differences between male and female responses in categories 4 and 5, i.e. 17.6% of male children prefer reading books in public libraries and 17.4% of female children prefer the same; also, 2.9% of male children prefer reading books in other places and 5.8% of female children prefer the same.

Table 6.25: Mann-Whitney U Test.

Variables	U Value	Significance
Male Female	12360.5	0.0001

The Mann-Whitney U Test in table 6.25 reveals that there is a statistically high significant difference between responses of male and female children ($p<0.01$).The difference can be clearly recognised in categories 1, 2 and 3 of table 6. 24.

6.3.1.3 - Reliability Coefficients

Table 6. 26:

Reliability Analysis-Scale (Alpha) of the questionnaire for the children with reference to children's attitude toward reading.

Variables	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Alpha if Item Deleted
Question 1	0.37	0.45
Question 2	0.28	0.48
Question 3	0.24	0.50
Question 4	0.45	0.41
Question 9	0.14	0.54
Question 11	0.30	0.52

Alpha = 0.53 Standardised item alpha = 0.57.

Table 6.26 shows the reliability analysis of the questionnaire for the children. It clearly indicates moderate reliability coefficients between questions which relate to children's attitude towards reading.

Table 6. 27:

Reliability Analysis-Scale (Alpha) of the questionnaire for the children with reference to the preferred subjects and reading interests.

Variables	Corrected Item - Total Correlation	Alpha if Item Deleted
Question 5	0.06	0.21
Question 8	0.17	0.02
Question 10	0.06	0.13
Question 12	0.04	0.14

Alpha = 0.15 Standardised item alpha = 0.18.

Table 6. 27 shows the reliability analysis of the questionnaire for the children. It clearly indicates low reliability coefficients.

From table 6.26 and table 6.27 it is clear that Q 6 and Q 7 are not included because each question measures different attitudes in relation to children's literature, their books and reading interests, although both of the questions are strongly related to the research questions. Question 6, "On what basis do you choose a story to read on your own?" is mainly concerned with the most attractive factors in their books which encourage them to read. These factors may be the artistic production of the books, the characters of the story, the subject of the story or the author of the story. On the other hand, question 7 "Who mostly encourages you to read?" is mainly concerned with the people in children's lives who most encourage them to read. These may be the father, the mother, brothers and sisters, the teachers or the librarians.

These two questions differ from the other questions of the questionnaire for children in that they have no strong relation to children's reading interests and attitudes towards reading, although they are strongly related to the research questions.

6.3.1.4-Summary of the Findings

The major findings of the questionnaire for the children are as follows:

- The majority of children in the survey group (94.2%) spend time varying from one to nine hours a week reading. There was a significant difference between male and female children in the time spent reading. The data indicates that female children spend more time reading than male children.

- The majority of children of the survey group (68.6%) obtain from one to four stories a month. There was a significant difference between male and female children, whereby female children obtain more stories than male children.

- The majority of children (79.2 %) do not make frequent visits to the public libraries. There was a significant difference between male and female children in the number of visits made to the public libraries. Female children made more frequent visits than male children.

- The majority of children (70%) participate "a little" in writing to children's magazines whereas a minority of them (20.3%) participate "a great deal". There was a significant difference between male and female children where female children indicated more interest than male children in writing to their magazines.

- From the findings it is concluded that 47.3% of the total children in the study sample prefer to read fictional stories. There was a non-significant difference in interest between male and female children.

- The majority of children (65.3%) select stories to read on basis of subject. There was a non-significant difference in interest between male and female children.

- The majority of children (53.6%) are encouraged in their reading by their mothers. There was a non-significant difference in responses between male and female children.

- It is clear that 32.2% of children in the study sample consider reading a story as the most preferable access to it. In addition, 30.6% of children consider watching a story on television as the most preferable access to it. There was a significant difference between male and female children. Female children were more in favour of reading a story than watching it on television whereas it was the opposite in the case of male children.

- The majority of children (60%) indicated that they prefer to choose the stories to read by themselves. There was a significant difference between male and female children. Larger numbers of male children preferred to choose the stories by themselves whereas significant numbers of female children tended to depend on their parents and teachers.

- The majority of children (58%) prefer to read adventure stories and social stories. There is a significant difference between male and female children. Larger numbers of male children prefer to read adventure stories, while on the other hand, larger numbers of female children prefer to read social stories.

- The majority of children (64.5%) prefer to read books either at home or in the school library with a significant difference between male and female children. The majority of the female children tended to prefer reading at home while, on the other hand, the majority of male children prefer to read books in the school library.

6.3.2 -The Questionnaire for the Teachers

6.3.2.1-The Main Objectives

This questionnaire was specifically designed to collect data from teachers (males/females) of primary education. In response, the researcher received 56 questionnaires out of the 60 distributed. This questionnaire was specifically designed with an objective to cover the following:

- The provision of children's literature books (locally written/ translated) in the classroom library and the main school library
- The practised/preferred methods of presenting literature to children in the school
- The significance of literature (locally written/translated) in the development of children's reading skills
- The extent of consideration of children's literature in the syllabus of primary education
- Children's reading interests
- Information about authors of children's literature in Bahrain
- The quantity and quality of children's literature written/produced by Bahraini authors
- The quantity and quality of imported children's literature
- The provision of children's public libraries in Bahrain
- Teachers' personal views and suggestions in respect of the provision of literature books in their school's libraries and methods/aids to develop children's imaginations and language skills.

Table 6. 28 indicate the distribution of the teachers in the study Sample by gender. From this table, one can observe the very slight difference in number between male and female teachers.

Variables	No of Teachers	Percentage	No of Responses Received	Percentage
Male	30	50%	27	45%
Female	30	50%	29	48%
Total	60	100%	56	93%

Table 6.28 : Distribution of teachers with regard to gender.

6.3.2.2 - Analysis of the Closed Questions

Question 2: What primary stage are you mainly teaching?

1- First primary stage
2- Second primary stage
3- Third primary stage
4- Fourth primary stage
5- Fifth primary stage
6- Sixth primary stage.

Table 6.29: Cross-tabulation, frequencies and percentage counts by gender.

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	Row Total
Male	3	5	2	4	7	6	27
% of total	11.1	18.5	7.4	14.8	25.9	22.2	48.2
Female	4	3	3	6	8	5	29
% of total	13.8	10.3	10.3	20.7	27.6	17.2	51.8
Column	7	8	5	10	15	11	56
Total	12.5	14.3	8.9	17.9	26.8	19.6	100%

Table 6.29 shows that the highest percentages (26.8% and 19.6%) of teachers, in the study sample, represent those who teach the fifth and the sixth primary stage respectively. Those who teach the third and the fourth primary stage represent 8.9% and 17.9%, whereas teachers who teach the first and the second stage represent 12.5% and 14.3% of the total respondents. Generally, then, the data received from teachers represent children they teach in the different primary education stages with non-significant differences in the distribution of these children in each stage and in their genders. If we compare the percentages of male and female teachers, there are not large differences between the two genders.

Table 6.30: Mann-Whitney U Test.

Variables	U Value	Significance
Male Female	341.5	0.3863

The Mann-Whitney U Test in table 6.30 reveals that the difference in responses between male and female teachers is statistically non-significant (P>0.05). This is clearly indicated in all categories of table 6.29 particularly in category 5.

Question 3: What is the average age of the children you are teaching?

1- From 6 to 7 years old
2- Above 7 to 8 years old
3- Above 8 to 9 years old
4- Above 9 to 10 years old
5- Above 10 to 11 years old
6- Above 11 to 12 years old.

Table 6.31: Cross-tabulation, frequencies and percentage counts by gender.

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	Row Total
Male	3	5	2	4	7	6	27
% of total	11.1	18.5	7.4	14.8	25.9	22.2	48.2
Female	4	3	3	6	8	5	29
% of total	13.8	10.3	10.3	20.7	27.6	17.2	51.8
Column	7	8	5	10	15	11	56
Total	12.5	14.3	8.9	17.9	26.8	19.6	100.0%

Table 6.31 shows that the majority of the average age of children taught by teachers in the study sample is between 10-12. This is clearly indicated through the percentages in categories 5 and 6 of the above table (26.8% and 19.6%), i.e. a total of 46.4% of the teachers who teach this age group. Those who teach children of ages 8-9 represent 8.9%, those who teach children of ages 9-10 represent 17.9%, those who teach children of ages 7-8 represent 14.3% and those who teach children of ages 6-7 represent 12.5% of the total respondents. The table also shows that there are not large differences in responses between male and female teachers.

Table 6.32: Mann-Whitney U Test.

Variables	U Value	Significance
Male Female	341.5	0.3863

The Mann-Whitney U Test in table 6.32 indicates that the difference in responses between male and female teachers is statistically non-significant (P>0.05). This is clearly indicated in all categories of table 6.31, particularly in category 5.

Question 4 : What is the total number of children in your classroom?

1- From 20 to 29 children
2- From 30 to 39 children
3- From 40 to 49 children
4- From 50 to 59 children.

Table 6.33: Cross-tabulation, frequencies and percentage counts by gender.

Variables	1	2	3	4	Row Total
Male % of total	6 22.2	16 59.3	5 18.5	0 .0%	27 48.2
Female % of total	12 41.4	14 48.3	3 10.3	0 .0%	29 51.8
Column Total	18 32.1	30 53.6	8 14.3	0 .0%	56 100.0%

Table 6. 33 shows that the highest percentage of the teachers, i.e. 53.6% have 30-39 children in their classrooms; 32.1% have 20-29 children in their classrooms; and 14.3% have 40-49 children in their classrooms. This means that a very high percentage (67.9%) of teachers have large numbers of students (30-49) in their classrooms. The table also reveals slight differences between responses of male and female teachers, i.e. 22.2% of male teachers against 41.4% of female teachers who have 20-29 children in their classrooms. Those who

have 30-39 children in their classrooms represent 59.3% of male teachers and 48.3% of female teachers. Those who have 40-49 children in their classrooms represent 18.5% of male teachers and 10.3% of female teachers. This also indicated that male schools are most likely to have more classrooms with large numbers of children than female schools, a situation that has a negative effect on the provision of literature in the classroom.

Table 6.34: Mann-Whitney U Test.

Variables	U Value	Significance
Male Female	305.5	0.1172

The Mann-Whitney U Test in table 6.34 reveals that the difference in responses between male and female teachers is statistically non-significant (P>0.05). This is indicated in all categories of table 6.33.

Question 5: To what extent do you practise story telling as a method of presenting literature to children?

Table 6.35: Cross-tabulation, frequencies and percentage counts by gender.

Variables	1 Not at all	2 Very little	3 A little	4 A lot	5 Very great deal	Row Total
Male % of total	1 3.7	2 7.4	9 33.3	10 37.0	5 18.5	27 48.2
Female % of total	1 3.4	2 6.9	9 31.0	12 41.4	5 17.2	29 51.8
Column Total	2 3.6	4 7.1	18 32.1	22 39.3	10 17.9	56 100.0%

Table 6.35 shows that 39.3% of the total teachers practise story telling "a lot" as a method of presenting literature to children. 17.9% of teachers practise this method "a very great deal". This makes a total of

57.2%, which is a good percentage of teachers who practise story telling frequently. Nevertheless, those who practise story-telling "a little" or "not at all" represent 32.1%, 7.1% and 3.6% respectively making a total of 42.8% of teachers. The table also shows that there are not large differences between responses of male and female teachers.

Table 6.36: Mann-Whitney U Test.

Variables	U Value	Significance
Male Female	384.5	0.9037

The Mann-Whitney U Test in table 6.36 shows that the difference in responses between male and female teachers in statistically non-significant (P>0.05). This is indicated in all categories of table 6.35.

Question 6: To what extent do the children's literature books sold in Bahrain bookshops attract children to reading?

Table 6.37: Cross-tabulation, frequencies and percentage counts by gender.

Variables	1 Not at all	2 Very little	3 A little	4 A lot	5 Very great deal	Row Total
Male % of total	2 7.4	3 11.1	13 48.1	4 14.8	5 18.5	27 48.2
Female % of total	1 3.4	3 10.3	13 44.8	7 24.1	5 17.2	29 51.8
Column Total	3 5.4	6 10.7	26 46.4	11 19.6	10 17.9	56 100.0%

Table 6.37 shows that the majority of teachers (46.4%) stated that literature books sold in bookshops in Bahrain attract children "a little" to reading. 10.7% of teachers agreed that children are attracted "very little" by books sold in bookshops. Nevertheless, a significant percentage of 37.5% (a total of 19.5% + 17.9%) of teachers stated that

children are attracted "a lot" and "a very great deal" respectively by literature books sold at bookshops in Bahrain. Those who stated that children are not attracted at all represent 5.4% of the total teachers which is a very low percentage if compared to other categories of the table. Table 6.37 also shows that the differences between male and female teachers' responses are very slight, i.e. 7.4% of male teachers against 3.4% of female teachers who agreed that children are "not at all" attracted; 11.1% of male teachers against 10.3% of female teachers who agreed that children are attracted "very little"; 48.1% of male teachers against 44.8% of female teachers who agreed that children are attracted "a little"; 14.8% of male teachers against 24.1% of female teachers who agreed that children are attracted "a lot"; and 18.5% of male teachers against 17.2% of female teachers who agreed that children are attracted "a very great deal". These results indicate that teachers have different views about the books available in bookshops.

Table 6.38: Mann-Whitney U Test.

Variables	U Value	Significance
Male Female	359.5	0.5771

The Mann-Whitney U Test in table 6.38 shows that the difference in responses between male and female teachers is statistically non-significant (P>0.05). This is clearly indicated in all categories of table 6.37.

Question 7: To what extent does the existence of the classroom library assist in the development of children's reading skills and interests?

Table 6.39: Cross-tabulation, frequencies and percentage counts by gender.

Variables	1 Not at all	2 Very little	3 A little	4 A lot	5 Very great deal	Row Total
Male % of total	0 0.0	0 0.0	2 7.4	10 37.0	15 55.6	27 48.2
Female % of total	1 3.4	3 10.3	5 17.2	10 34.5	10 34.5	29 51.8
Column Total	1 1.8	3 5.4	7 12.5	20 35.7	25 44.6	56 100.0%

Table 6.39 shows that the highest percentages represent teachers who agreed that the existence of the classroom library assists in the development of children's reading skills and interests, i.e. 35.7% of the total teachers agreed that the classroom library assists "a lot" and 44.6% of them agreed that it assists "a very great deal". Those who think that the classroom library only assists "a little" or "very little" represent 12.5% and 5.4% respectively. Those who think that the classroom library assists "not at all" in the development of children's reading skills and interest represent a very low percentage, which is 1.8% of female teachers only. The table also shows significant differences between male and female teachers' responses. A total percentage of 30.9 of female teachers did not really support the idea of the classroom library as an aid to the development of children's reading skills. This is a high percentage if compared to 7.4% of male teachers who thought the same. Another large difference of 21.1% between male and female responses is also clearly recognised in category 5 of the table where 55.6% of male teachers agreed that the classroom

library assists "a very great deal", whereas only 34.5% of female teachers thought the same.

Table 6.40: Mann-Whitney U Test.

Variables	U Value	Significance
Male Female	270.0	0.0320

The Mann-Whitney U Test in table 6.40 reveals that there is a statistically high significant difference between responses of male and female teachers ($P < 0.05$). This difference can be clearly recognised in categories 2, 3, and 5 of table 6.39.

Question 8: To what extent is children's literature considered in the syllabus of primary education now?

Table 6.41: Cross-tabulation, frequencies and percentage counts by gender.

Variables	1 Not at all	2 Very little	3 A little	4 A lot	5 Very great deal	Row Total
Male % of total	7 25.9	10 37.0	5 18.5	4 14.8	1 3.7	27 48.2
Female % of total	8 27.6	10 34.5	5 17.2	4 13.8	2 6.9	29 51.8
Column Total	15 26.8	20 35.7	10 17.9	8 14.3	3 5.4	56 100.0%

Table 6.41 shows that the highest percentage of teachers (35.7%) revealed that children's literature is considered "very little" in the syllabus of primary education, in addition to a percentage of 17.9 of the total teachers who revealed that it is considered "a little". Those who indicated that children's literature is considered "not at all" in the syllabus of primary education represent 26.8% of the total teachers. On the other hand, percentages of those who revealed that children's

literature is considered "a lot" and "a very great deal" are 14.3% and 5.4% respectively. These are very low percentages if compared to percentages of other categories in the table. Another point shown by the table is that the differences between responses of male and female teachers are very slight. These differences are 1.7%, 2.5%, 1.3%, 1.0% and 3.2% in categories 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 of table 6.41 respectively.

Table 6.42: Mann-Whitney U Test.

Variables	U Value	Significance
Male Female	388.5	0.9592

The Mann-Whitney U Test in table 6.42 revealed that the difference in responses between male and female teachers is statistically non-significant (P>0.05). This is indicated in all categories of table 6.41.

Question 9: To what extent does locally written literature exist in the classroom?

Table 6.43: Cross-tabulation, frequencies and percentage counts by gender.

Variables	1 Not at all	2 Very little	3 A little	4 A lot	5 Very great deal	Row Total
Male % of total	15 55.6	3 11.1	3 11.1	4 14.8	2 7.4	27 48.2
Female % of total	13 44.8	7 24.1	3 10.3	4 13.8	2 6.9	29 51.8
Column Total	28 50.0	10 17.9	6 10.7	8 14.3	4 7.1	56 100.0%

Table 6.43 shows that the highest percentage of teachers (50.0%) revealed that the locally written literature exists "not at all" in their classrooms. Another 28.6% (17.9% and 10.7%) of teachers declared that literature written by Bahraini authors exists "very little" and

"a little" in classrooms of primary schools. On the other hand, those who indicated that the locally written literature exists "a lot" and "a very great deal" represent 14.3% and 7.1% of teachers respectively, comprising a total of 21.4%. This percentage is considered very low if compared to percentages scored by other categories of the table. The table also shows slight differences between male and female responses especially in categories 3, 4, and 5, whereas categories 1 and 2 show differences of 10%-13% between both genders.

Table 6.44: Mann-Whitney U Test.

Variables	U Value	Significance
Male Female	367.5	0.6722

The Mann-Whitney U Test in table 6.44 shows that the difference in responses between male and female teachers is statistically non-significant (P>0.05). This is clearly indicated in categories 3, 4 and 5 of table 6.43.

Question 10: To what extent does foreign literature exist in the classroom?

Table 6.45: Cross-tabulation, frequencies and percentage counts by gender.

Variables	1 Not at all	2 Very little	3 A little	4 A lot	5 Very great deal	Row Total
Male % of total	9 33.3	6 22.2	5 18.5	3 11.1	4 14.8	27 48.2
Female % of total	13 44.8	9 31.0	2 6.9	3 10.3	2 6.9	29 51.8
Column Total	22 39.3	15 26.8	7 12.5	6 10.7	6 10.7	56 100.0%

Table 6.45 shows that 39.3% of the total teachers revealed that foreign literature does "not at all" exist in their classrooms. Those who

indicated that it exists "very little" represent 26.8% and those who stated that it exists "a little" represent 12.5% of teachers. Those who agreed that it exists "a lot" or "a very great deal" represent a total of 21.4% which is very low if compared to percentages of other categories. This generally means that foreign literature does not significantly exist in the classrooms of primary schools in Bahrain. Another point indicated by table 6.45 is that, although the differences between male and female responses are recognisable, they are not significant. This is clearly indicated in table 6.46.

Table 6.46: Mann-Whitney U Test.

Variables	U Value	Significance
Male Female	316.0	0.1958

The Mann-Whitney U Test in table 6.46 shows that the difference in responses between male and female teachers is statistically non-significant (P>0.05). This is clearly indicated in all categories of table 6.45.

Question 11: Most children tend to prefer listening to stories rather than reading them.

Table 6.47: Cross-tabulation, frequencies and percentage counts by gender.

Variables	1 Strongly Agree	2 Agree	3 Undecided	4 Disagree	5 Strongly disagree	Row Total
Male % of total	9 33.3	10 37.0	3 11.1	3 11.1	2 7.4	27 48.2
Female % of total	16 55.2	7 24.1	1 3.4	2 6.9	3 10.3	29 51.8
Column Total	25 44.6	17 30.4	4 7.1	5 8.9	5 8.9	56 100.0%

Table 6.47 shows that the highest percentage of teachers (44.6%) "strongly agree" that most children tend to prefer listening to stories rather than reading them, in addition to 30.4% representing those who "agree" with the same statement. On the other hand, the other categories of the table such as "undecided", "disagree" and "strongly disagree" respectively represent 7.1%, 8.9% and 8.9% of the total teachers. If we compare the percentages of those who agreed with those who do not agree that most children prefer stories being read to them rather than reading them by themselves, we will find that teachers who agree represent the majority, i.e. 75% against 17.8% of those who do not agree. The table also reveals that although the differences between male and female responses are recognisable, they are not significant. This is clearly indicated in table 6.48.

Table 6.48: Mann-Whitney U Test.

Variables	U Value	Significance
Male Female	315.5	0.1844

The Mann-Whitney U Test in table 6.48 shows that the difference in responses between male and female teachers is statistically non-significant (P>0.05). This reveals that there are commonly shared points of view between male and female teachers as regards to children's interests.

Question 12: Most children tend to prefer reading fiction stories rather than non-fiction stories.

Table 6.49: Cross-tabulation, frequencies and percentage counts by gender.

Variables	1 Strongly Agree	2 Agree	3 Undecided	4 Disagree	5 Strongly disagree	Row Total
Male % of total	13 48.1	13 48.1	1 3.7	0 .0 %	0 .0 %	27 48.2
Female % of total	7 24.9	11 37.9	5 17.2	4 13.8	2 6.9	29 51.8
Column Total	20 35.7	24 42.9	6 10.7	4 7.1	2 3.6	56 100.0%

Table 6.49 shows that the majority of teachers (78.6%) revealed that children tend to prefer reading fiction stories rather than non-fiction stories. This percentage includes 35.7% of those who "strongly agree" and 42.9% of those who "agree". Teachers who "disagree" or "strongly disagree" represent 7.1% and 3.6% respectively, i.e. a total of only 10.7% which is a very low percentage if compared to those who agree. Those who were "undecided" represent 10.7% of the total teachers. The table also shows that there are large differences between responses of male and female teachers, i.e. 48.1% of male teachers against 24.9% of female teachers who "strongly agree"; 48.1 of male teachers against 37.9% of female teachers who "agree"; 3.7% of male teachers against 17.2% of female teachers who were "undecided"; 0% of male teachers

against 13.8% of female teachers who "disagree"; and 0% of male teachers against 6.9% of female teachers who "strongly disagree".

Table 6.50: Mann-Whitney U Test.

Variables	U Value	Significance
Male Female	228.5	0.0043

The Mann-Whitney U Test in table 6.50 reveals that there is a statistically high significant difference between responses of male and female teachers ($P<0.01$). This difference can be clearly recognised in all categories of table 6.49.

Question 13: School textbooks presented to children in primary schools develop children's language.

Table 6.51: Cross-tabulation, frequencies and percentage counts by gender.

Variables	1 Strongly Agree	2 Agree	3 Undecided	4 Disagree	5 Strongly disagree	Row Total
Male % of total	3 11.1	13 48.1	4 14.8	3 11.1	4 14.8	27 48.2
Female % of total	0 .0 %	21 72.4	4 13.8	2 6.9	2 6.9	29 51.8
Column Total	3 5.4	34 60.7	8 14.3	5 8.9	6 10.7	56 100.0

Table 6.51 shows that the highest percentage of teachers (66.1%) declared that school textbooks presented to children in primary schools develop children's language. This percentage includes 5.4% of teachers who "strongly agree" and 60.7% who "agree". Those who "disagree" or "strongly disagree" represent 8.9% and 10.7% respectively, i.e. a total of 19.6% which is very low if compared to the total percentage of those who agree. The rest of the teachers (14.3%)

selected the "undecided" category on table 6.51. If we compare responses of male and female teachers, we will find that there are large differences between both genders' percentages only in categories 1 and 2 where 11.1% of male teachers against 0% of female teachers "strongly agree" and 48.1% of male teachers against 72.4% of female teachers "agree". The other categories of the table show slight differences between male and female teachers. These results indicate that although primary school textbooks may not be seen to contain literature values, they still have the quality of developing children's language skills, especially Arabic language textbooks.

Table 6.52: Mann-Whitney U Test.

Variables	U Value	Significance
Male Female	364.5	0.6142

The Mann-Whitney U Test in table 6.52 indicates that the difference in responses between male and female teachers is statistically non-significant (P>0.05). This is particularly indicated in categories 3 and 4 of table 6.51.

Question 14: There are few specialist children's authors in Bahrain.

Table 6.53: Cross-tabulation, frequencies and percentage counts by gender.

Variables	1 Strongly Agree	2 Agree	3 Undecided	4 Disagree	5 Strongly disagree	Row Total
Male % of total	25 92.6	2 7.4	0 .0 %	0 .0 %	0 .0 %	27 48.2
Female % of total	21 72.4	3 10.3	1 3.4	2 6.9	2 6.9	29 51.8
Column Total	46 82.1	5 8.9	1 1.8	2 3.6	2 3.6	56 100.0%

Table 6.53 shows that the majority of teachers (82.1%) "strongly agree" that there are only a few specialist authors of children's literature in Bahrain. Another 8.9% of teachers "agree" with the same statement leaving 1.8% who were "undecided" and a total of 7.2% who "disagree" and "strongly disagree". The table also indicates that there are large differences between male and female teachers' responses. The most significant difference clearly appears in the "strongly agree" category where a difference of 20.2% in favour of male teachers can be recognised. In other categories a difference of 3%-7% in favour of female teachers can be recognised.

Table 6.54: Mann-Whitney U Test.

Variables	U Value	Significance
Male Female	307.5	0.0390

The Mann-Whitney U Test in table 6.54 indicates that there is a statistically significant difference between responses of male and female teachers ($P<0.05$). This difference can be clearly identified in all categories of table 6.53 particularly category 1.

Question 15: The total number of specialist children's authors in Bahrain is satisfactory in comparison to the total number of children in Bahrain.

Table 6.55: Cross-tabulation, frequencies and percentage counts by gender.

Variables	1 Strongly Agree	2 Agree	3 Undecided	4 Disagree	5 Strongly disagree	Row Total
Male % of total	0 .0 %	0 .0 %	1 3.7	11 40.7	15 55.6	27 48.2
Female % of total	1 3.4	2 6.9	2 6.9	2 6.9	22 75.9	29 51.8
Column Total	1 1.8	2 3.6	3 5.4	13 23.2	37 66.1	56 100.0%

Table 6.55 shows that the majority of teachers (66.1%) "strongly disagree" that the total number of specialist authors of children's literature in Bahrain is satisfactory in comparison to the total number of children in Bahrain. 23.2% of teachers "disagree" with the same statement. This makes a total of 89.3% of teachers who believe that the number of Bahraini authors of children's literature is not adequate for the number of children in Bahrain. Those who "agree" or "strongly agree" with the statement represent a total of only 5.4% which is a very low percentage if compared to the percentage of those who disagree. Those who were "undecided" represent 5.4%, which is, also, a low percentage if compared to the percentage of teachers who disagree.

Table 6.56: Mann-Whitney U Test.

Variables	U Value	Significance
Male Female	3450.0	0.3125

The Mann-Whitney U Test in table 6.56 reveals that the difference in responses between male and female teachers is statistically non-

significant (P>0.05). This indicates that there are commonly shared points of view between male and female teachers with regard to number of Bahraini authors of children's literature.

Question 16: The locally produced literature books are adequate with regard to quantity.

Table 6.57: Cross-tabulation, frequencies and percentage counts by gender.

Variables	1 Strongly Agree	2 Agree	3 Undecided	4 Disagree	5 Strongly disagree	Row Total
Male % of total	0 .0 %	0 .0 %	3 11.1	4 14.8	20 74.1	27 48.2
Female % of total	2 6.9	2 6.9	3 10.3	10 34.5	12 41.4	29 51.8
Column Total	2 3.6	2 3.6	6 10.7	14 25.0	32 57.1	56 100.0%

Table 6.57 shows that the highest percentage of teachers (57.1%) "strongly disagree" that the locally produced literature books are adequate in quantity. Another 25.0% "disagree" with the same statement.

Those who were "undecided" represent a percentage of 10.7% of the total teachers. On the other hand, those who agree with the statement represent a total percentage of 7.2, which is a very low percentage if compared to those who disagree. The table also indicates large differences between male and female teachers' responses. The most significant differences clearly appear in the "disagree" categories where a difference of 19.7% in favour of female teachers can be recognised in the former and a difference of 32.7% in favour of male teachers can be recognised in the latter. In the "strongly agree" and the

"agree" categories a difference of 6.9% in favour of female teachers can be recognised.

Table 6.58: Mann-Whitney U Test.

Variables	U Value	Significance
Male Female	258.5	0.0146

The Mann-Whitney U Test in table 6.58 indicates that there is a statistically significant difference between male and female teachers' responses ($P<0.05$). This difference can be clearly recognised in all categories of table 6.57 particularly in the "disagree" and "strongly disagree" categories.

Question 17: The locally produced literature books are adequate with regard to quality.

Table 6.59: Cross-tabulation, frequencies and percentage counts by gender.

Variables	1 Strongly Agree	2 Agree	3 Undecided	4 Disagree	5 Strongly disagree	Row Total
Male % of total	0 .0%	0 .0%	2 7.4	19 70.4	6 22.2	27 48.2
Female % of total	2 6.9	2 6.9	3 10.3	16 55.2	6 20.7	29 51.8
Column Total	2 3.6	2 3.6	5 8.9	35 62.5	12 21.4	56 100.0%

Table 6.59 shows that the majority of teachers (62.5%) "disagree" that the locally produced literature books are adequate with regard to quality. Another 21.4% of teachers "strongly disagree" with the same statement leaving those who were "undecided" to represent 8.9% of the total number of teachers. On the other hand, those who "agree" or "strongly agree" with the statement represent a total of 7.2%, which is

a very low percentage if, compared to those who disagree. The table also indicates that there are not large differences between responses of male and female teachers in any categories except in the "disagree" category where a significant difference of 15.2% in favour of male teachers is clearly recognised.

Table 6.60: Mann-Whitney U Test.

Variables	U Value	Significance
Male Female	331.0	0.2506

The Mann-Whitney U Test in table 6.60 shows that the difference in responses between male and female teachers is statistically non-significant (P>0.05). This indicates that there are commonly shared points of view between male and female teachers with regard to the quality of literature books produced in Bahrain.

Question 18: Children's reading inclinations are to be considered when writing literature for them.

Table 6.61: Cross-tabulation, frequencies and percentage counts by gender.

Variables	1 Strongly Agree	2 Agree	3 Undecided	4 Disagree	5 Strongly disagree	Row Total
Male % of total	18 66.7	8 29.6	1 3.7	0 .0 %	0 .0 %	27 48.2
Female % of total	18 62.1	6 20.7	1 3.4	2 6.9	2 6.9	29 51.8
Column Total	36 64.3	14 25.0	2 3.6	2 3.6	2 3.6	56 100.0%

Table 6.61 shows that the majority of teachers (89.3%), that is, 64.3% and 25.0%, "strongly agree" and "agree" respectively that children's reading inclinations are to be considered when writing literature for

them. Those who were "undecided" represent 3.6% of the total teachers. On the other hand, those who "disagree" or "strongly disagree" represent 7.2%, which is a very low percentage if compared to the percentage of those who agree. The table also indicates that there are not large differences in responses of male and female teachers in all categories of the table.

Table 6.62: Mann-Whitney U Test.

Variables	U Value	Significance
Male Female	354.5	0.4742

The Mann-Whitney U Test in table 6.62 shows that the difference in responses between male and female teachers is statistically non-significant (P>0.05). This indicates that there are commonly shared points of view between male and female teachers with regard to necessity of considering children's reading inclinations when writing their literature.

Question 19: Children's individual differences are considered in the literature books in Bahrain.

Table 6.63: Cross-tabulation, frequencies and percentage counts by gender.

Variables	1 Strongly Agree	2 Agree	3 Undecided	4 Disagree	5 Strongly disagree	Row Total
Male % of total	0 .0 %	0 .0 %	0 .0 %	12 44.4	15 55.6	27 48.2
Female % of total	2 6.9	2 6.9	3 10.3	8 27.6	14 48.3	29 51.8
Column Total	2 3.6	2 3.6	3 5.4	20 35.7	29 51.8	56 100.0%

Table 6.63 shows that the majority of teachers (51.8%), "strongly disagree" that children's individual differences are considered in the literature books in Bahrain. 35.7% of teachers "disagree" with the same statement. Those who were "undecided" represent a percentage of 5.4 of the total teachers. On the other hand, those who supported the statement represent a total percentage of 7.2 where 3.6% of them "strongly agree" and another 3.6% "agree". The table also indicates that there are slight differences between male and female teachers' responses in all categories except in category 4 where a significant difference of 16.8% in favour of male teachers can be recognised. Another point shown by table 6.63 is that all male teachers disagree with the statement whereas 7.2% of female teachers agree on the same statement, in addition to 10.3% who are "undecided". It is therefore concluded that children's individual differences are not considered enough when writing literature for them.

Table 6.64: Mann-Whitney U Test.

Variables	U Value	Significance
Male Female	321.0	0.2005

The Mann-Whitney U Test in table 6.64 reveals that the difference in responses between male and female teachers is statistically non-significant (P>0.05). This indicates that male and female teachers in Bahrain share common points of view with regard to literature presented to children in Bahrain.

Question 20: There is an adequate number of children's public libraries in Bahrain.

Table 6.65: Cross-tabulation, frequencies and percentage counts by gender.

Variables	1 Strongly Agree	2 Agree	3 Undecided	4 Disagree	5 Strongly Disagree	Row Total
Male % of total	0 .0 %	0 .0 %	2 7.4	3 11.1	22 81.5	27 48.2
Female % of total	2 6.9	2 6.9	2 6.9	7 24.1	16 55.2	29 51.8
Column Total	2 3.6	2 3.6	4 7.1	10 17.9	38 67.9	56 100.0%

Table 6.65 shows that the majority of teachers, representing 85.8%, disagree with the statement. This total percentage is composed of 17.9% those who "disagree" and 67.9% of those who "strongly disagree". A percentage of 7.1 of both male and female teachers were "undecided". On the other hand, the total percentage of teachers who agree with the statement is 7.2 where 3.6% represent those who "strongly agree" and another 3.6% represent those who agree. This is considered a very low percentage if compared to those who disagree. The table also shows that there are significant differences between male and female teachers' responses particularly in the "strongly disagree" category where a difference of 26.3% in favour of male teachers can be recognised.

Table 6.66: Mann-Whitney U Test.

Variables	U Value	Significance
Male Female	282.5	0.0304

The Mann-Whitney U Test in table 6.66 reveals that there is a statistically significant difference between male and female teachers'

responses (P<0.05). This difference can be clearly recognised in all categories of table 6.65 particularly in the "strongly disagree" and the "disagree" categories.

Question 21: There are excellent library services provided for primary school children in Bahrain.

Table 6.67: Cross-tabulation, frequencies and percentage counts by gender.

Variables	1 Strongly agree	2 Agree	3 Undecided	4 Disagree	5 Strongly Disagree	Row Total
Male % of total	0 .0 %	1 3.7	1 3.7	2 7.4	23 85.2	27 48.2
Female % of total	2 6.9	1 3.4	1 3.4	8 27.6	17 58.6	29 51.8
Column Total	2 3.6	2 3.6	2 3.6	10 17.9	40 71.4	56 100.0%

Table 6.67 shows that the majority of teachers, representing a total percentage of 89.3 disagree with the statement that there are excellent library services provided to primary school children in Bahrain. This total percentage is made up of 17.9% who "disagree" and 71.4% who "strongly disagree". A percentage of 3.6 of both male and female teachers were "undecided". On the other hand, the total percentage of teachers who agree with the statement is 7.2 where 3.6% represent those who "strongly agree" and another 3.6% represent those who "agree". This is considered a very low percentage if compared to the total percentage of those who disagree. The table also indicates that there are large differences between male and female teachers. These differences are mostly recognised in the "disagree" and the "strongly disagree" categories. The "disagree" category shows a difference of 26.6% in favour of male teachers.

Table 6.68: Mann-Whitney U Test.

Variables	U Value	Significance
Male Female	289.5	0.0351

The Mann-Whitney U Test in table 6.68 shows that there is a statistically significant difference between male and female teachers' responses ($P<0.05$). This difference can be clearly recognised in the "disagree" and the "strongly disagree" categories of table 6.67.

Question 22: The books presented in children's libraries are interrelated in subject with the primary school curriculum.

Table 6.69: Cross-tabulation, frequencies and percentage counts by gender.

Variables	1 Strongly agree	2 Agree	3 Undecided	4 Disagree	5 Strongly disagree	Row Total
Male % of total	1 3.7	1 3.7	6 22.2	18 66.7	1 3.7	27 48.2
Female % of total	1 3.4	3 10.3	9 31.0	12 41.4	4 13.8	29 51.8
Column Total	2 3.6	4 7.1	15 26.8	30 53.6	5 8.9	56 100.0%

Table 6.69 shows that a high percentage of teachers (62.5%) disagree with the statement that the books presented in children's libraries are interrelated in subject with the primary school curriculum. This percentage is made up of 53.6% who "disagree" and 8.9% who "strongly disagree". Those who were "undecided" represent a total percentage of 26.8 of both male and female teachers. On the other hand, the total percentage of teachers who agree with the statement is 10.7 where 3.6% represent those who "strongly agree" and the other

7.1% represent those who "agree". This is considered a very low percentage if compared to the total percentage of those who disagree. The table also indicates that there are not major differences between male and female teachers' responses except in the "disagree" category where a significant difference of 25.3% in favour of male teachers is clearly identified.

Table 6.70: Mann-Whitney U Test.

Variables	U Value	Significance
Male Female	360.0	0.5699

The Mann-Whitney U Test in table 6.70 shows that the difference in responses between male and female teachers is statistically insignificant (P>0.05). This indicates that male and female teachers share common points of view with regard to literature presented to children in school and public libraries in Bahrain.

Question 23: Children are not allowed adequate time to read in the classroom.

Table 6.71: Cross-tabulation, frequencies and percentage counts by gender.

Variables	1 Strongly Agree	2 Agree	3 Undecided	4 Disagree	5 Strongly disagree	Row Total
Male % of total	7 25.9	16 59.3	1 3.7	2 7.4	1 3.7	27 48.2
Female % of total	4 13.8	20 69.0	1 3.4	2 6.9	2 6.9	29 51.8
Column Total	11 19.6	36 64.3	2 3.6	4 7.1	3 5.4	56 100.0%

Table 6.71 shows that the majority of teachers, representing a total percentage of 83.9 agree with the statement that children are not allowed adequate time to read in the classroom. This total percentage is

made up of 19.6% who "strongly agree" and 64.3% who "agree". Those who were "undecided" represent a percentage of only 3.6 of both male and female teachers. On the other hand, those who believe that children in their schools are allowed adequate time to read in the classroom represent a total percentage of 12.5 where 7.1% represent those who "disagree" and the other 5.4% represent those who "strongly disagree" with the statement. However, this is a very low percentage if compared to those who agree. The table also indicates that there are not large differences in responses between male and female teachers. This indicates that there is a general view among teachers of primary education about the provision of time for reading. In their responses to the open-ended question, most of the teachers consider the timetable very congested with the routine work which does not allow children the opportunity to read.

Table 6.72: Mann-Whitney U Test.

Variables	U Value	Significance
Male Female	342.5	0.3458

The Mann-Whitney U Test in table 6.72 reveals that the difference in responses between male and female teachers is statistically non-significant (P>0.05). This indicates that male and female teachers share common points of view with regard to provision of time for primary school children to read in their classrooms.

Question 24: All imported children's literature books have unsuitable values for children in Bahrain.

Table 6.73: Cross-tabulation, frequencies and percentage counts by gender.

Variables	1 Strongly agree	2 Agree	3 Undecided	4 Disagree	5 Strongly disagree	Row Total
Male % of total	1 3.7	1 3.7	4 14.8	17 63.0	4 14.8	27 48.2
Female % of total	1 3.4	1 3.4	6 20.7	17 58.6	4 13.8	29 51.8
Column Total	2 3.6	2 3.6	10 17.9	34 60.7	8 14.3	56 100.0%

Table 6.73 shows that the majority of teachers, representing a total percentage of 75.0 disagree with the statement that all imported children's literature books have unsuitable values for children in Bahrain. This total percentage is made up of 60.7% who "disagree" and 14.3% who "strongly disagree". Those who were "undecided" represent a percentage of 17.9 of both male and female teachers. On the other hand, those who believe that all imported children's literature books have unsuitable values for children in Bahrain represent a total percentage of 7.2 divided equally between those who "agree" and those who "strongly agree". This percentage is considered very low if compared to those who disagree. The table also indicates that there are not large differences between male and female teachers' responses.

Table 6.74: Mann-Whitney U Test.

Variables	U Value	Significance
Male Female	372.5	0.7222

The Mann-Whitney U Test in table 6.74 shows that the difference in responses between male and female teachers is statistically non-

significant (P>0.05). This indicates that both genders share a common opinion that not all imported children's literature books have unsuitable values for children in Bahrain.

Question 25: Some of the imported children's literature books have values that are not useful to children in Bahrain.

Table 6.75: Cross-tabulation, frequencies and percentage counts by gender.

Variables	1 Strongly agree	2 Agree	3 Undecided	4 Disagree	5 Strongly disagree	Row Total
Male % of total	6 22.2	12 44.4	6 22.2	2 7.4	1 3.7	27 48.2
Female % of total	2 6.9	18 62.1	6 20.7	2 6.9	1 3.4	29 51.8
Column Total	8 14.3	30 53.6	12 21.4	4 7.1	2 3.6	56 100.0%

Table 6.75 shows that the majority of teachers, representing a total percentage of 67.9 agree with the statement that some of the imported children's literature books have values, which are not useful to children in Bahrain. This total percentage is made up of 14.3% who "strongly agree" and 53.6% who "agree". Those who were "undecided" represent a percentage of 21.4 of both male and female teachers.

On the other hand, those who disagree that some of the imported literature books have values that are not useful to children in Bahrain represent a total percentage of 10.7 of which 7.1% represents those who "disagree" and the other 3.6% represents those who "strongly disagree". This percentage is considered very low if compared to those who agree. The table also indicates that there are slight differences between male and female teachers' responses, except in

the "strongly agree" and the "agree" categories where recognisable differences are found, i.e. a difference of 15.3% in favour of male teachers and a difference of 17.7% in favour of female teachers can be clearly recognised in these two categories respectively.

Table 6.76: Mann-Whitney U Test.

Variables	U Value	Significance
Male Female	358.5	0.5533

The Mann-Whitney U Test in table 6.76 reveals that the difference between male and female teachers' responses is statistically non-significant (P>0.05). This indicates that both genders share common points of view with regard to imported children's literature books.

6.3.2.3 - *Reliability Coefficients*

With regard to the reliability analysis of the questionnaire for the teachers, the researcher divided the questions into two groups according to their attitudes, in order to obtain more accurate reliability coefficients between the questions. The first group's attitude related to children's literature and children's reading interests, and the second group's attitude related to children's literature and the presentation of children's books.

Table 6.77:

Reliability Analysis-Scale (Alpha) of the Questionnaire for the teachers with respect to children's literature and their reading interests.

Variables	Corrected Item - Total Correlation	Alpha if Item Deleted
Question 5	0.12	0.54
Question 7	0.14	0.53
Question 9	0.09	0.55
Question 10	0.07	0.56
Question 11	0.04	0.56
Question 15	0.38	0.49
Question 16	0.37	0.48
Question 17	0.41	0.48
Question 19	0.20	0.52
Question 20	0.47	0.46
Question 21	0.28	0.50
Question 22	0.25	0.51
Question 24	0.18	0.52
Question 25	0.01	0.56

Alpha = 0.54 Standardised item alpha = 0.58.

Table 6.77 shows the reliability analysis for the scale (Alpha) in relation to the questionnaire for the teachers. It clearly indicates moderate reliability coefficients between questions that relate to

children's reading interests at their schools and the effect of reading on their language development.

Table 6.78:

Reliability Analysis-Scale (Alpha) of the questionnaire for the teachers with respect to children's literature and the presentation of children's books.

Variables	Corrected Item - Total Correlation	Alpha if Item Deleted
Question 6	0.12	0.25
Question 8	0.05	0.32
Question 14	0.19	0.19
Question 18	0.13	0.24
Question 23	0.18	0.19

Alpha = 0.28 Standardised item alpha = 0.30.

Table 6.78 shows the reliability analysis for five questions from the questionnaire for the teachers. It is clear that the questionnaire for the teachers has a moderate reliability coefficient between the questions in respect of children's literature and the presentation of children's books.

The first four questions measure a different attitude related to general information such as the gender of the children taught, the level of the class, and the average age of children taught in addition to the number of children in each classroom. These four questions were not included in the reliability coefficients tables because the attitude they measure does not strongly relate to the other questions, although it has a relation to the research main questions.

6.3.2.4 - Analysis of Responses to the Open-ended Questions

Copies of the questionnaire for the teachers were distributed to 60 classroom teachers of primary education (30 male teachers and 30 female teachers) where 56 questionnaires were received in response. All of the respondents fully completed the open-ended questions. The class-teaching system (already explained in section 2.4 of chapter two) is followed in most primary schools in Bahrain where the average number of children in each class is 30. The children are all in single sex schools and there is no co-educational schooling at this stage. The age for primary education in Bahrain is 6-12.

At the end of this questionnaire, teachers were asked four open-ended questions to express their opinions, to suggest and comment on the following.

1 - The provision of children's literature and books in their schools

The teachers' responses with regard to this indicated that the majority of them (51.91%) reported that children's literature and books (fiction/non-fiction) were not adequately provided in school libraries. The provision was inadequate in terms of quantity and quality. According to the teachers, most of the books presented in these libraries are suitable only for the early ages of primary education, while children of age 10 and above face difficulty in finding books.

Many teachers (48.85%) also agreed that the majority of books available to children in school libraries are imported books, which have been translated from different languages into Arabic. These

books, as reported by teachers, reflect different cultures, beliefs and values that are not compatible with those of the Bahraini society.

2 - Children's reading preferences in respect of literature

The majority of teachers (47.83%) reported that the children they teach are mostly interested in reading fiction stories and poetry either from literature books or magazines. However, teachers added that such books are not abundantly provided for children at school. In addition, the intensive daily curriculum applied in these schools do not allow children the opportunity to read books of interest to them.

3 - Efficient methods/aids for developing children's imaginations

Many of the teachers in the sample (45.80%) recommended the story-telling method as an aid to develop children's imaginations. They suggested that during story-telling times children would be told part of the story and then allowed the opportunity to imagine the succeeding events and subsequently write or tell them. Some of the teachers (31.55%) suggested that children could be encouraged to play the roles of characters in the story in order to expand their imaginations by developing events not included in the story. This would also help them to develop their language skills. Some teachers (26.46%) suggested that children could be encouraged to use their imaginations to draw the events in the story. It was also stressed by some respondents that primary stage children of ages 9-12 should be encouraged to write their own stories, starting with short stories and gradually moving to longer ones, because they believed this to be the most efficient method of expanding children's imaginations.

(See appendix L on page 541, which is a short story written by a girl aged 10 from one of the primary schools in the study sample.)

4 -Efficient methods/aids for developing children's language

In respect of developing children's language skills, teachers suggested ideas such as matching the written and spoken words with drawings or shapes, or encouraging children to write sentences or short stories from separated words. Another way of developing children's language, as suggested by the teachers, would be to arrange for children to listen frequently to stories told either through a tape-recorder or by the teacher and then to allow free discussions between the children and their teacher about the subject of the story. It was also suggested by most of the teachers (78%) that children should be encouraged to write literature and have their work displayed on the class or school information board and they would be rewarded for the best written story. Most of the teachers also stressed the necessity of establishing/developing a library in classrooms of all primary schools in Bahrain and to provide adequate time for children to read or be read to.

6.3.2.5-Summary of the Findings

1 - The major findings from the closed questions of the questionnaire for the teachers are as follows

1.1 - In terms of practising story-telling as a method of presenting literature to children in the classroom, the findings shows that 39.3% of the total teachers in the study sample practised story-telling "a lot" as a method of presenting literature to children. However, a significant percentage of teachers (32.1%) practised this method only "a little". The difference between male and female teachers' responses is statistically non-significant.

1.2 - The majority of teachers (57.1%) declared that literature books sold at bookshops in Bahrain attract children only "a little" to reading. The difference between male and female teachers' responses is statistically non-significant.

1.3 -The vast majority of teachers (80.3%) agreed that the existence of the classroom library assists in the development of children's reading skills and interests. The difference between male and female teachers' responses is significant, that is, male teachers support the idea that the existence of the classroom library assists in the development of children's reading skills and interests more than female teacher.

1.4 - The majority of teachers (62.5%) stated that children's literature is not adequately considered in the syllabus of primary education. There is a non-significant difference in responses between male and female teachers.

1.5 - The majority of teachers (78.6%) declared that there is not sufficient locally written literature in their classrooms. There is a non-significant difference in responses between male and female teachers.

1.6 - The majority of teachers (78.6%) stated that foreign literature exists "very little" in their classrooms with non-significant differences in responses between male and female teachers.

1.7 - The majority of teachers (75%) agreed that most children tend to prefer listening to stories rather than reading them. The difference in responses between male and female teachers is statistically non-significant.

1.8 - The majority of teachers (78.6%) agreed that most children tend to prefer reading fiction stories rather than non-fiction. The difference in responses between male and female teachers is significant, that is, male teachers were more likely to agree with this.

1.9 - The majority of teachers (66.1%) agreed that textbooks presented to children in primary schools develop children's language. There was a non-significant difference in responses between male and female teachers.

1.10 - The vast majority of teachers (91%) agreed that there are few specialist children's authors in Bahrain. The difference in responses between male and female teachers is significant, that is, male teachers were more likely to agree with the statement.

1.11 - The majority of teachers (82.1%) disagreed that the locally produced literature and books for the children are adequate with regard to quantity. The difference in responses between male and female teachers is significant. Male teachers strongly disagreed with this fact more than female teachers.

1.12 - The majority of teachers (83.9%) disagreed that the locally produced literature books are adequate with regard to quality. The difference in responses between male and female teachers is statistically non-significant. There are commonly shared points of view between male and female teachers with regard to the quality of literature and books produced for children in Bahrain.

1.13 - The majority of teachers (89.3%) agreed that children's reading inclinations are to be considered when writing literature for them. The difference in responses between male and female teachers is non-significant. This indicates that there are commonly shared opinions between male and female teachers with regard to the necessity of considering children's reading inclinations when writing their literature.

1.14 - The majority of teachers (87.5%) disagreed that children's individual differences are considered in the literature books in Bahrain. The difference in responses between male and female teachers is non-significant. Both genders share common points of view in this regard.

1.15 - The majority of teachers (85.8%) disagreed that there are an adequate number of children's public libraries in Bahrain. The difference in responses between male and female teachers is significant. Male teachers were more likely than female teachers to agree with this fact.

1.16 - A large majority of teachers (89.3%) did not feel that the library provision for children could be described as excellent. The difference in responses between male and female teachers is significant. Male teachers were more likely to disagree with this fact than female teachers.

1.17 - Many of the teachers (62.5%) stated that the books available in children's libraries did not relate closely to the primary school syllabus. The difference in responses between male and female teachers is significant. Male teachers were more likely to disagree with this fact than female teachers were.

1.18 - A large majority of teachers (83.9%) declared that children were not given adequate time to read in the classroom. The difference in responses between male and female teachers is non-significant. Both male and female teachers share common points of view with regard to provision of time for primary school children to read in their classrooms.

1.19 - The majority of teachers (75%) disagreed that all imported children's literature books such as stories have unsuitable values for children in Bahrain. The difference in responses between male and female teachers is non-significant. Both male and female teachers share a common opinion in this regard.

1.20 - The majority of teachers (67.9%) agreed that some of the imported children's literature books have values that are not useful to children in Bahrain. The difference in responses between male and female teachers is non-significant.

2 - The major findings from the open-ended questions of the questionnaire for the teachers are as follows

2.1 - The vast majority of teachers (91%) reported that children's literature and books are not adequately provided (in terms of quantity and quality) in school libraries.

2.2 - The majority of teachers (83%) reported that the children they teach are mostly interested in reading fiction stories. However, because of the daily intensive curriculum, children are not allowed the adequate opportunity to read these books.

2.3 - The majority of teachers (80%) recommended the storytelling method as an effective aid to develop children's imaginations. They suggested different methods of involving children during the story-telling time, for example, by allowing them to play roles of characters in the story or to use their imaginations to draw the events in the story.

2.4 - Some teachers (46%) suggested that children of ages 9-12 should be encouraged to write their own stories to expand their imaginations.

2.5 - Different ideas have been suggested by teachers in respect of developing children's language skills, for example, matching written or spoken words with drawings or shapes, allowing children to listen frequently to stories followed by free discussions, rewarding children for their own writings, and establishing a library in the classrooms of all primary schools in Bahrain.

6.3.3 -The Questionnaire for the Librarians

6.3.3.1-The Main Objectives

This questionnaire was distributed to 20 specialist children's librarians who have had between 5-10 years' experience of working at children's libraries. In response, the researcher received 18 questionnaires out of the 20 distributed. This questionnaire was specifically designed to collect information from school librarians (males/females) with regard to:

- The provision of literature books in primary school libraries.
- The reading interests of primary school children.
- The factors leading children to read particular literature books.

Table 6.79: The distribution of primary school librarians (males and females) according to their academic qualifications.

Variables	No	Percentage
Secondary School Certificate	2	11.1 %
Diploma in Librarianship	10	55.5 %
B.Ed Degree	6	33.4 %
Master's Degree	0	0.0 %
Experience only	0	0.0 %
Total	18	100 %

Table 6.79 indicates that the majority of the librarians sampled for the study (55.5%) hold the Diploma in Librarianship. Those who hold a B.Ed Degree represent 33.4% of the total librarians, while those who only hold the Secondary School Certificate as their highest qualification represent 11.1%. Table 6.79 also shows that none of the librarians (0.0%) holds a Master's Degree or has experience but no qualifications.

Table 6.80: The distribution of primary school librarians (males and females) according to their number of years of experience as librarians.

Variables	No	Percentage
Less than 5 years	0	0.0 %
From 5 - 10 years	8	44.4 %
From 11 - 15 years	6	33.4 %
From 16 - 20 years	4	22.2 %
20 years and above	0	0.0 %
Total	18	100 %

Table 6.80 shows that the majority of librarians sampled for the study (44.4%) have a number of years of experience falling within the range of 5-10 years. Another significant percentage of librarians (33.4%) have a number of years of experience falling within the range of 11-15 years. Those who have from 16-20 years' experience represent 22.2% of the total librarians. The table also shows that none of the librarians (0.0%) have experience of less than 5 years or above 20 years.

6.3.3.2 - Analysis of the Closed Questions

Question 1: How often do children of primary stage use the library by themselves?

Table 6.81: Cross-tabulation, frequencies and percentage counts by gender.

Variables	1 Not at all	2 Very rarely	3 Rarely	4 Often	5 Very often	Row Total
Male	4	3	1	0	0	8
% of total	50.0	37.5	12.5	.0 %	.0 %	44.4
Female	0	0	5	4	1	10
% of total	.0 %	.0 %	50.0	40.0	10.0	55.6
Column	4	3	6	4	1	18
Total	22.2	16.7	33.3	22.2	5.6	100.0%

Table 6.81 shows that the majority of the librarians (72.2%) stated that children do not often use the library by themselves. This can be

clearly recognised through the percentages shown in the table where 16.7% of librarians claimed that children "very rarely" use the library and 33.3% of them claimed that children "rarely" use the library. In addition, 22.2% claimed that children do not use the library at all. Those who stated that children do use the library by themselves represent a total of 27.8% where 22.2% represent those who claimed that children "often" use the library and the other 5.6% represent those who claimed that children "very often" use the library. The table also indicates large differences between male and female librarians' responses.

Table 6.82: Mann-Whitney U Test.

Variables	U Value	Significance
Male Female	2.5	0.0006

The Mann-Whitney U Test in table 6.82 reveals that there is a statistically high significance between responses of male and female librarians ($P<0.01$). The difference in responses is clearly demonstrated in all categories of table 6.81.

Question 2: How often do children of primary stage use the library with the encouragement and direction of their teachers?

Table 6.83: Cross-tabulation, frequencies and percentage counts by gender.

Variables	1 Not at all	2 Very rarely	3 Rarely	4 Often	5 Very often	Row Total
Male	0	1	5	2	0	8
% of total	.0 %	12.5	62.5	25.0	.0 %	44.4
Female	0	0	3	6	1	10
% of total	.0 %	.0 %	30.0	60.0	10.0	55.6
Column	0	1	8	8	1	18
Total	.0 %	5.6	44.4	44.4	5.6	100.0%

Table 6.83 shows that 50% of the librarians claim that children do not often use the library with the encouragement and direction of their teachers. This percentage includes 5.6% of the librarians who claim that children "very rarely" use the library and 44.4% who claim that children "rarely" use the library. The other 50% of the librarians includes 44.4% who claim that children "often" use the library with the encouragement of their teachers and 5.6% of those who claim that children "very often" use the library with the same encouragement. The table also indicates large differences between male and female librarians' responses, for example, in the "rarely" category a difference of 32.5% in favour of male librarians can be recognised and a difference of 35% in favour of female librarians can be recognised in the "often" category.

Table 6.84: Mann-Whitney U Test.

Variables	U Value	Significance
Male Female	19.5	0.0451

The Mann-Whitney U Test in table 6.84 reveals that there is a statistically high significant difference between responses of male and female librarians ($P<0.01$). This difference is clearly demonstrated in the "rarely" and "often" categories of table 6.83.

Question 3: How often do children of primary stage borrow books to read at home?

Table 6.85: Cross-tabulation, frequencies and percentage counts by gender.

Variables	1 Not at all	2 Very rarely	3 Rarely	4 Often	5 Very often	Row Total
Male	0	4	2	2	0	8
% of total	.0 %	50.0	25.0	25.0	.0 %	44.4
Female	0	1	1	3	5	10
% of total	.0 %	10.0	10.0	30.0	50.0	55.6
Column	0	5	3	5	5	18
Total	.0 %	27.8	16.7	27.8	27.8	100.0%

Table 6.85 shows that similar percentages of the librarians selected the different categories of the table. Those who claim that children "very rarely" borrow books to read at home represent 27.8% of librarians. Those who selected the "rarely" category represent 16.7% of librarians. Those who selected the "often" category represent 27.8% in addition to a similar percentage of those who selected the "very often" category. The table also shows that there are large differences between male and female responses particularly in the "very rarely" category where a difference of 40% in favour of male librarians can be recognised and the "very often" category where a difference of 50% in favour of female librarians can be recognised. Since male librarians' data represent male children and female librarians' data represent female children, their responses indicate that female children borrow books more often than male children.

Table 6.86: Mann-Whitney U Test.

Variables	U Value	Significance
Male Female	120	0.0100

The Mann-Whitney U Test in table 6.86 reveals that there is a statistically significant difference between responses of male and female librarians ($P<0.05$). Categories 2 and 5 on table 6.85 demonstrate the difference in responses.

Question 4: To what extent are children of primary stage interested in reading fiction books?

Table 6.87: Cross-tabulation, frequencies and percentage counts by gender.

Variables	1 Not at all	2 Very little	3 A little	4 A lot	5 Very great deal	Row Total
Male	0	0	6	1	1	8
% of total	.0 %	.0 %	75.0	12.5	12.5	44.4
Female	0	0	3	4	3	10
% of total	.0 %	.0 %	30.0	40.0	30.0	55.6
Column	0	0	9	5	4	18
Total	.0 %	.0 %	50.0	27.8	22.2	100.0%

Table 6.87 shows that 50% of the librarians stated that children are interested "a little" in reading fiction books. On the other hand, the other 50% of the librarians includes 27.8% who stated that children of primary stage are interested "a lot" in reading fiction books and 22.2% who stated that children are interested a "very great deal" in reading the same books. The table also indicates large differences between male and female librarians' responses particularly in the "a little" category where a difference of 45% in favour of male librarians can be clearly recognised. In the "a lot" category a difference of 27.5% in favour of female librarians is demonstrated and in the "very great deal" category a difference of 17.5% in favour of female librarians is demonstrated. Thus, since the female librarians' responses refer to female children, the results of this table indicate that female children are more interested in reading fiction books than male children read.

Table 6.88: Mann-Whitney U Test.

Variables	U Value	Significance
Male Female	22.5	0.0908

The Mann-Whitney U Test in table 6.88 shows that the difference between male and female librarian's responses is statistically significant (P>0.05).

Question 5: To what extent are children of primary stage interested in reading non-fiction books?

Table 6.89: Cross-tabulation, frequencies and percentage counts by gender.

Variables	1 Not at all	2 Very little	3 A little	4 A lot	5 Very great deal	Row Total
Male	2	5	1	0	0	8
% of total	25.0	62.5	12.5	.0 %	.0 %	44.4
Female	0	4	2	1	3	10
% of total	.0 %	40.0	20.0	10.0	30.0	55.6
Column	2	9	3	1	3	18
Total	11.1	50.0	16.7	5.6	16.7	100.0%

Table 6.89 shows that 50% of the librarians claim that children of primary stage are interested "very little" in reading non-fiction books in addition to 16.7% who claim that children are interested "a little" in the same books. Another 11.1% of the librarians claim that children are "not at all" interested in reading non-fiction books. On the other hand, those who claim that children are interested in reading non-fiction books represent a total percentage of 22.3. This includes 5.6% of librarians who claim that children are interested "a lot" and 16.7% who claim that children are interested a "very great deal" in reading non-fiction books. The table also shows that there are large differences in responses of male and female librarians. There are large differences

in favour of male librarians in the "not at all" and the "very little" categories, whereas the differences are in favour of female librarians in the "a lot" and "very great deal" categories.

Table 6.90: Mann-Whitney U Test.

Variables	U Value	Significance
Male Female	15.0	0.0170

The Mann-Whitney U Test in table 6.90 shows that there is a statistically significant difference between responses of male and female librarians ($P<0.05$). This difference is clearly demonstrated in the "not at all", "very little", "a lot" and "very great deal" categories of table 6.89.

Question 6: To what extent are children of primary stage interested in reading foreign literature translated into Arabic?

Table 6.91: Cross-tabulation, frequencies and percentage counts by gender.

Variables	1 Not at all	2 Very little	3 A little	4 A lot	5 Very great deal	Row Total
Male	5	2	1	0	0	8
% of total	62.5	25.0	12.5	.0 %	.0 %	44.4
Female	0	2	4	3	1	10
% of total	.0 %	20.0	40.0	30.0	10.0	55.6
Column	5	4	5	3	1	18
Total	27.8	22.2	27.8	16.7	5.6	100.0%

Table 6.91 shows that 50% of the librarians claim that children are not interested in reading foreign literature translated into Arabic language. This total percentage includes 22.2% of the librarians who claim that children are interested "very little" and 27.8% who claim that children are interested "a little" in reading foreign literature. 27.8%

of the librarians claim that children are "not at all" interested in reading translated foreign literature.

On the other hand, those who claim that children are interested in reading translated foreign literature represent a total percentage of 22.3 which is a very low percentage if compared to the total percentage of those who agree "a little". This total percentage includes 16.7% of librarians who claim that children are interested "a lot" and 5.6% who claim that children are interested a "very great deal" in reading translated foreign literature. The table also shows that there are large differences between male and female responses particularly in the "not at all" category where a difference of 62.5% in favour of male librarians is clearly demonstrated. In the other categories of table 6.91 such as the "a little", "a lot" and "very great deal", the differences are in favour of female librarians. This indicates that female children are more interested than male children in reading translated foreign literature.

Table 6.92: Mann-Whitney U Test.

Variables	U Value	Significance
Male Female	6.0	0.0019

The Mann-Whitney U Test in table 6.92 shows that there is a statistically significant difference between responses of male and female librarians ($P<0.01$). This difference can be clearly recognised in all categories of table 6.91.

Question 7: To what extent are children of primary stage interested in reading magazines?

Table 6.93: Cross-tabulation, frequencies and percentage counts by gender.

Variables	1 Not at all	2 Very little	3 A little	4 A lot	5 Very great deal	Row Total
Male	0	0	1	3	4	8
% of total	.0 %	.0 %	12.5	37.5	50.0	44.4
Female	0	0	1	3	6	10
% of total	.0 %	.0 %	10.0	30.0	60.0	55.6
Column	0	0	2	6	10	18
Total	.0 %	.0 %	11.1	33.3	55.6	100.0%

Table 6.93 shows that the majority of the librarians (55.6%) claim that children of primary stage are interested a "very great deal" in reading magazines. 33.3% of the librarians claim that children are interested "a lot" in reading magazines. On the other hand, those who claim that children are "a little" interested in reading magazines represent a total percentage of 11.1 of the librarians which is a very low percentage if compared to those who claim the opposite (88.9%). This indicates that (according to the librarians) most children are interested in reading magazines. The table indicates that there are not large differences between responses of male and female librarians.

Table 6.94: Mann-Whitney U Test.

Variables	U Value	Significance
Male Female	36.0	0.6897

The Mann-Whitney U Test in table 6.94 shows that the difference between male and female librarians' responses is statistically non-significant (P>0.05). This indicates that there are commonly shared

points of view between male and female librarians with regard to children's interest in reading their magazines.

Question 8 : To what extent do children of primary stage participate in writing literature such as stories, poetry, etc.?

Table 6.95: Cross-tabulation, frequencies and percentage counts by gender.

Variables	1 Not at all	2 Very little	3 A little	4 A lot	5 Very great deal	Row Total
Male	1	5	2	0	0	8
% of total	12.5	62.5	25.0	.0 %	.0 %	44.4
Female	0	0	0	3	7	10
% of total	.0 %	.0 %	.0 %	30.0	70.0	55.6
Column	1	5	2	3	7	18
Total	5.6	27.8	11.1	16.7	38.9	100.0%

Table 6.95 shows that the highest percentage of the librarians (55.6%) state that children participate a great deal in writing literature such as stories, poetry, etc. This percentage includes 16.7% of the librarians who claim that children participate "a lot" and 28.9% who claim that children participate a "very great deal". On the other hand, those librarians who state that children do not participate a lot in writing literature represent a total percentage of 38.9. This includes 28.7% of librarians who claim that children participate "very little" and 11.1% who claim that children participate "a little". 5.6% of librarians state that children participate "not at all" in writing literature. The table also indicates very large differences between male and female librarians' responses. In the "not at all", "very little" and "a little" categories, the difference is in favour of male librarians, whereas, in the "a lot" and the "very great deal" categories, the difference is in favour of female librarians. This indicates that female children participate more than male children in writing literature.

Table 6.96: Mann-Whitney U Test.

Variables	U Value	Significance
Male Female	0. 0	0. 0002

The Mann-Whitney U Test in table 6.96 reveals that there is a statistically high significant difference between male and female librarians' responses ($P<0.01$). This difference can be clearly recognised in all categories of table 6.95.

Question 9 : To what extent does the content of literature books attract children of primary stage to reading?

Table 6.97: Cross-tabulation, frequencies and percentage counts by gender.

Variables	1 Not at all	2 Very little	3 A little	4 A lot	5 Very great deal	Row Total
Male	2	1	3	2	0	8
% of total	25.0	12.5	37.5	25.0	.0 %	44.4
Female	0	1	1	3	5	10
% of total	.0 %	10.0	10.0	30.0	50.0	55.6
Column	2	2	4	5	5	18
Total	11.1	11.1	22.2	27.8	27.8	100.0%

Table 6.97 shows that the majority of the librarians representing a total percentage of 55.6% state that children are very much attracted by the content of literature books. This percentage includes 27.8% of the librarians who claim that the content of literature books attracts children "a lot" and another 27.8% who claim that it attracts children a "very great deal". On the other hand, those who state that the content of literature books attract children "very little" and "a little" to reading, represent 11.1% and 22.2% respectively . 11.1% of the librarians claim that the content of literature books attracts children "not at all" to reading. The table also indicates very large differences between male

and female librarians' responses particularly in the "not at all" category where a difference of 25.0% in favour of male librarians is demonstrated, and the "very great deal" category where a difference of 50.0% in favour of female librarians is demonstrated. This indicates that female children are attracted to reading by the content of literature books more than male children read.

Table 6.98: Mann-Whitney U Test.

Variables	U Value	Significance
Male Female	12.0	0.0105

The Mann-Whitney U Test in table 6.98 reveals that there is a statistically significant difference between male and female librarians' responses ($P<0.05$). This difference can be clearly recognised in the "not at all" and "very great deal" categories of table 6.97.

Question 10 : To what extent does the illustration of literature books attract children of primary stage to reading?

Table 6.99: Cross-tabulation, frequencies and percentage counts by gender.

Variables	1 Not at all	2 Very little	3 A little	4 A lot	5 Very great deal	Row Total
Male	0	0	0	0	8	8
% of total	.0 %	.0 %	.0 %	.0 %	100.0	44.4
Female	0	0	1	5	4	10
% of total	.0 %	.0 %	10.0	50.0	40.0	55.6
Column	0	0	1	5	12	18
Total	.0 %	.0 %	5.6	27.8	66.7	100.0%

Table 6.99 shows that the majority of the librarians representing a total percentage of 94.5% state that the artistic illustration of literature books attracts children to a high extent. This total percentage includes

27.8% of the librarians who claim that the artistic illustration of literature books attracts children "a lot" to reading and 66.7% who claim that it attracts children a "very great deal". On the other hand, those librarians who claim that the artistic illustration attracts children only "a little" represent a percentage of 5.6 which is considered very low if compared to that representing librarians who claim that the artistic illustration attracts children a great deal. The table also indicates very large differences between male and female librarians' responses, particularly in the "a lot" category where a difference of 50.0% in favour of female librarians is demonstrated and the "very great deal" category where a difference of 60.0% in favour of female librarians is demonstrated.

Table 6.100: Mann-Whitney U Test.

Variables	U Value	Significance
Male Female	16.0	0.0099

The Mann-Whitney U Test in table 6.100 reveals that there is a statistically significant difference between male and female librarians' responses ($P<0.01$). This difference can be clearly demonstrated in the "a lot" and the "very great deal" categories of table 6.99.

Question 11: To what extent does the name of the author attract children of primary stage to reading?

Table 6.101: Cross-tabulation, frequencies and percentage counts by gender.

Variables	1 Not at all	2 Very little	3 A little	4 A lot	5 Very great deal	Row Total
Male	7	1	0	0	0	8
% of total	87.5	12.5	.0 %	.0 %	.0 %	44.4
Female	8	1	1	0	0	10
% of total	80.0	10.0	10.0	.0 %	.0 %	55.6
Column	15	2	1	0	0	18
Total	83.3	11.1	5.6	.0 %	.0 %	100.0%

Table 6.101 shows that the majority of the librarians (83.3%) state that the name of the author does "not at all" attract children of primary stage to reading. 11.1% of the librarians state that the name of the author attracts children "very little" to reading, in addition to a percentage of 5.6 of the librarians who state that it attracts children "a little". This indicates that children of primary stage are not familiar with names of authors of children's literature, and consequently they do not consider them as important factors when selecting stories to read. The table also shows that there are not large differences between male and female librarians' responses.

Table 6.102: Mann-Whitney U Test.

Variables	U Value	Significance
Male Female	36.5	0.6318

The Mann-Whitney U Test in table 6.102 reveals that difference between male and female librarians' responses is statistically non-significant (P>0.05). This indicates that there are commonly shared

points of view between male and female librarians with regard to familiarity of names of authors of children's literature in Bahrain.

Question 12: To what extent are children of primary stage interested in listening to the stories inside the library?

Table 6.103: Cross-tabulation, frequencies and percentage counts by gender.

Variables	1 Not at all	2 Very little	3 A little	4 A lot	5 Very great deal	Row Total
Male	0	0	0	0	8	8
% of total	.0 %	.0 %	.0 %	.0 %	100.0	44.4
Female	0	0	0	1	9	10
% of total	.0 %	.0 %	.0 %	10.0	90.0	55.6
Column	0	0	0	1	17	18
Total	.0 %	.0 %	.0 %	5.6	94.4	100.0%

Table 6.103 shows that all librarians in the study sample, i.e. 100%, state that children of primary stage are interested in listening to stories inside the library. This percentage includes 5.6% of the librarians who state that children are interested "a lot" in listening to stories and 94.4% who state that children are interested "a very great deal". The table also indicates that there are not large differences in responses of male and female librarians. This indicates that both male and female children share a common interest in listening to the stories being told to them inside the library.

Table 6.104: Mann-Whitney U Test.

Variables	U Value	Significance
Male Female	36.0	0.3711

The Mann-Whitney U Test in table 6.104 reveals that the difference between male and female librarians' responses is statistically non-

significant (P>0.05). This indicates that there are commonly shared points of view between male and female librarians with regard to children's interest in listening to stories inside the library.

6.3.3.3 - Reliability Coefficients

Table 6.105:

Reliability Analysis-Scale (Alpha) of the questionnaire for the librarians with reference to children's literature and books and their reading interests.

Variables	Corrected Item - Total Correlation	Alpha if Item Deleted
Question 1	0.75	0.85
Question 2	0.61	0.87
Question 3	0.70	0.86
Question 4	0.69	0.86
Question 5	0.59	0.87
Question 6	0.70	0.86
Question 7	0.28	0.88
Question 8	0.78	0.85
Question 9	0.72	0.86
Question 11	0.17	0.89

Alpha = 0.88 Standardised item alpha = 0.87.

Table 6.105 shows the reliability coefficients of the questionnaire for the librarians. Thus, it is clear that the librarians' questionnaire has high reliability between ten questions except for two questions, 10 and 12, which are not included in the table because each one has to measure a different attitude to children's literature, their books and reading interests, although both are relevant to the objective of the research questions and the hypotheses of the study.

Question 10, "To what extent does the artistic illustration of children's literature books attract children of primary stage to read?", is mainly concerned with the artistic production of the literature books and its role in attracting children to read. The artistic production such as the drawings, pictures, colours, font and type of paper has no direct relation to children's reading interests and their attitudes toward reading despite its logical relation to the research's main questions. On the other hand, question 12, "To what extent are children of primary stage interested in listening to stories inside the library?", is mainly concerned with children's interest in listening to stories told/read to them inside the library. Although it has no direct relation to children's attitudes towards reading, it has a strong relation to the research's main questions.

6.3.3.4 - Analysis of Responses to the Open-ended Questions

The librarians were asked a number of open-ended questions parts one and three of this questionnaire. The responses to these open-ended questions were reviewed and analysed as follows.

Part one

In this part, librarians were asked through questions numbered 1,2,3,4 and 5 to give general information about the books available in their libraries. Such information included the number of books available in each library, percentages of children's literature books in comparison to other books, percentages of foreign literature books translated into Arabic language in comparison to other literature books, percentages of locally written literature books and numbers of each type of story book available in each library, for example, adventure stories, animal stories, etc. The librarians could easily

extract this information from the records, which they maintain, about numbers and percentages of the categories of books in their libraries. After analysing the information received, it was concluded that:

- The total number of books available in all the 18 libraries is 72,000, most of which are textbooks such as history, geography, religion and science textbooks.
- The total number of the locally written literature books in all the 18 libraries is 625 representing 1% of the total books (72,000) which is a very low rate that does not satisfy children's needs.
- The total number of literature books from other Arab countries including stories and poetry books in all the 18 libraries is 11,250 (16% of the total books) which is a low rate in comparison to the total number of books (72,000).
- The total number of foreign literature books translated into Arabic language (e.g. Snow White, Cinderella, Sleeping Beauty, etc.) is 6,300 representing 9 % of the total (72,000).
- The total number of literature books including those imported from other Arab countries, foreign literature books translated into Arabic and those locally written by Bahraini children's authors, is 18,175 which represents 25% of the total books (72,000) available in the 18 libraries.

These results are indicated in tables 6.106, 6.107 and 6.108 on pages 274, 275, 276,

Part Three

Part three of the questionnaire for the librarians also included four open-ended questions where the librarians were requested to put their recommendations and suggestions in respect of problems affecting the quality of literature available to children and library services offered to them. In response to these open-ended questions (questions 1,2,3 and 4 of part three), the librarians presented their opinions as to the current situation and accordingly they submitted their recommendations and suggestions as follows:

1 - The provision of literature books in the library for children of ages 6-12

Most of the librarians (15, 83%) stated that there was a lack in the provision of literature books (either Arabic or foreign literature books) in school libraries. The available books, as all librarians agreed, are not adequate in terms of quantity and quality. They stated that most of the books available in their libraries are of poor quality in terms of format, artistic production, presentation of events of stories, etc. As a solution to such a situation, the librarians suggested that budgets of all school libraries be increased to enable them to buy an adequate number of literature books and that the quality of the content of these books be considered.

2 - The provision of locally written literature books which reflect the social life in Bahrain

All librarians (18,100%) pointed out that due to the lack of Bahraini authors of children's literature, there is a deficiency in the provision of locally written literature books. Therefore, the librarians suggested that the relevant authorities in Bahrain should direct more attention to

this matter by encouraging those who are beginning to write for children, for example through competitions, assigning prizes for the best story written. Existing authors would be rewarded regularly for the production of high quality children's literature.

3 - The provision of public libraries in cities and villages of Bahrain

Most of the librarians (16, 88%) asserted that there is not enough children's public libraries in some rural areas of Bahrain. Even in the cities, most of these libraries lacked suitable books for children in terms of content and format related to children's literature. These libraries, they suggested, needed to be organised in an attractive way with the use of comfortable furniture where children would find it encouraging to spend as long a time as possible.

4 - The design of children's school libraries and the classification of books or other educational media

With regard to the classification of books or other educational aids, librarians stated that the Dewey Decimal System was applied in most of the school libraries in addition to the use of colours to differentiate each class of books according to subject, in order to make it easier for children to select the subject for reading.

6.3.3.5 - Summary of the Findings

1 - The major findings from the closed questions of the questionnaire for the librarians are as follows:

1.1 - The majority of the librarians (72%) stated that children do not often use the library by themselves. The difference in responses

between male and female librarians is significant - male librarians were more likely to agree with this statement than female librarians.

1.2 - A significant difference was indicated in responses between male and female librarians in respect of children's use of the library when encouraged by their teachers. More male librarians (75% against 30%) reported that children "rarely" use the library, while on the other hand, more female librarians (70% against 25%) claimed that children "often" use the library.

1.3 - A significant difference was indicated in responses between male and female librarians in respect of the frequency of books borrowed by primary school children to read at home. More male librarians (75% against 20%) stated that children "rarely" borrow books, while on the other hand, more female librarians (80% against 25%) indicated that children "often" borrow books.

1.4 - Half of the responses of the librarians (50%) reported that children are interested "a little" in reading fiction books. The other 50% of responses revealed that they are interested "a great deal" in reading fiction books. A significant difference was indicated in responses between male and female librarians. A larger number of male librarians claimed that children are interested "a little" in fiction books, while on the other hand a larger number of female librarians indicated that children are interested "a great deal".

1.5 - The majority of the librarians (77.8%) stated that children in primary school are interested "very little" in reading non-fiction books. The difference in responses between male and female librarians is

significant. A large majority of male librarians indicated that children are interested "very little", while on the other hand, a larger number of female librarians indicated that children are interested "a great deal".

1.6 - The majority of the librarians (77.8%) reported that children in primary school are not so interested in reading foreign literature translated into Arabic. The difference in responses between male and female librarians is significant. A larger number of male librarians indicated that children are not so interested in reading such literature, while on the other hand, a larger number of female librarians indicated that children are interested to some extent in reading foreign literature that is translated into Arabic language.

1.7 - The majority of the librarians (88.9%) claimed that children in primary school are interested "a great deal" in reading magazines. The difference in responses between male and female librarians is statistically non-significant.

1.8 - More than half of the librarians (55.6%) reported that children in primary school participate "a great deal" in the production and presentation of literature such as stories, poetry, etc. The difference in responses between male and female librarians is significant. A larger number of male librarians indicated that children participate "very little", while on the other hand, a larger number of female librarians indicated that children participate "a great deal".

1.9 - More than half of the librarians (55.6%) stated that the content of literature books attract children "a great deal" to reading. The difference in responses between male and female librarians is

significant A larger number of male librarians indicated that children are attracted "very little" by the content of literature books, whereas, a larger number of female librarians indicated that children are attracted "a great deal".

1.10 - The majority of librarians (94.5%) reported that the artistic illustration of literature books attracts children "a great deal" to reading. The difference in responses between male and female librarians is significant. A larger number of male librarians indicated that children are attracted "a very great deal" by the artistic illustration of literature books, whereas, a larger number of female librarians indicated that children are attracted "a lot" to reading by the same factor.

1.11 - The majority of the librarians (83.3%) reported that the name of the author does "not at all" attract children of primary school to reading. The difference in responses between male and female librarians is statistically non-significant in this regard.

1.12 - The majority of the librarians (94.4%) claimed that children are interested "a very great deal" in listening to the stories inside the library. The difference in responses between male and female librarians is statistically non-significant in this regard.

2 - The major findings from the responses to the open-ended questions of the questionnaire for the librarians are as follows:

2.1 - Most of the books available in the 18 school libraries sampled for the study are textbooks such as history, geography, religion and science textbooks.

2.2 - The approximate total number of literature books including books imported from other Arab countries, foreign literature translated into Arabic and the locally written literature books, is very low (26%) in comparison to the total number of books available in these libraries.

2.3 - Most of the librarians (83%) stated that there was a deficiency in the provision of literature books in their libraries.

2.4 - All librarians (100%) pointed out that due to the lack of Bahraini children's authors, there is a deficiency in the provision of the locally written literature books.

2.5 - Most of the librarians (88%) asserted that there is not enough suitable children's public libraries existed in the rural areas of Bahrain.

2.6 - Most of the librarians (88%) claimed that most of the public libraries lacked the required quantity and quality of books suitable for children.

Table 6.106:

The following table indicates the total numbers and total percentages of books held by each library of the 10 primary boys' schools sampled for the study. The total number is divided into locally published literature books, literature books from other Arab countries, translated literature books and others.

	Name of the School	Locally published literature books		Literature books from other Arab countries		Translated literature books		Others		Total no of books	
		No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
1	Hutteen Primary Boys' School	40	0.9	825	18.4	330	7.3	3305	73.4	4500	100
2	Umm Al-Hasam Primary Boys' School	20	0.5	500	12.5	300	7.5	3180	79.5	4000	100
3	Al-Mutanabi Primary Boys' School	35	0.8	800	17.8	450	10.0	3215	71.4	4500	100
4	Al-Rasheed Primary Boys' School	40	1.0	835	17.5	400	9.5	3025	72.0	4200	100
5	Hamad Town Primary Boys' School	25	0.6	750	17.5	380	8.9	3145	73.0	4300	100
6	Aali Primary Boys' School	30	0.9	530	16.6	350	10.9	2290	71.6	3200	100
7	Badr Al-Kubrah Primary Boys' School	50	1.2	800	18.6	550	12.8	2900	67.4	4300	100
8	Al-Mamoon Primary Boys' School *	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
9	Al-Tabary Primary Boys' School	37	1.5	470	18.8	255	10.0	1738	69.5	2500	100
10	Imam Malek Primary Boys' School *	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
	Total	277	0.9	5410	17.2	3015	9.5	22798	72.4	31500	100

* No response was received from these schools.

Table 6.107:

The following table indicates the total numbers and total percentages of books held by each library of the 10 primary girls' schools sampled for the study. The total number is divided into locally published literature books, literature books from other Arab countries, translated literature books and others.

	Name of the School	Locally published literature books		Literature books from other Arab countries		Translated literature books		Others		Total no of books	
		No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
1	Al-Quds Primary Girls' School	31	1.0	450	15.0	260	8.7	2259	75.3	3000	100
2	Mariam Omran Primary Girls' School	24	0.7	400	12.1	200	6.1	2676	81.1	3300	100
3	Sumayya Primary Girls' School	27	0.8	420	12.0	375	10.7	2678	76.5	3500	100
4	Um Ayman Primary Girls' School	34	0.8	750	17.9	430	10.2	2986	71.1	4200	100
5	Al Salmaniya Primary Girls' School	30	0.7	550	12.2	350	7.8	3570	79.3	4500	100
6	Isa Town Primary Girls' School	50	0.8	920	15.3	400	6.7	4630	77.2	6000	100
7	Zubeidah Primary Girls' School	40	1.0	640	16.0	300	7.5	3020	75.5	4000	100
8	Ain-Jaloot Primary Girls' School	32	0.9	400	11.4	220	6.3	2848	81.4	3500	100
9	Bilad Alqadeem Primary Girls' School	38	0.8	880	17.6	400	8.0	3682	73.6	5000	100
10	Al-Sanabis Primary Girls' School.	42	1.2	430	12.3	350	10.0	2678	76.5	3500	100
	Total	348	0.9	5840	14.4	3285	8.1	31027	76.6	40500	100

Table 6.108:

The following table indicates the total numbers and total percentages of books by types (indicated below) held by libraries of primary boys schools and primary girls schools (sample of the study)

The schools	Locally published literature books		Literature books from other Arab countries		Translated literature books		Others		Total no of books	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Primary Boys' Schools	277	0.9	5410	17.2	3015	9.5	22798	72.4	31500	100
Primary Girls' Schools	348	0.9	5840	14.4	3285	8.1	31027	76.6	40500	100
Total	625	0.9	11250	15.6	6300	8.8	53825	74.7	72000	100

6.3.4 -The Questionnaire for the Parents

6.3.4.1-The Main Objectives

The researcher believes that parents are the people most acquainted with their children's reading inclinations since they spend most of their time together. Therefore, the researcher designed this questionnaire to collect data from parents of primary school children for the significance of their views and suggestions in respect of the following points for the study:

- The type of stories children prefers to read/listen to (e.g., fiction/non-fiction, translated/locally written literature, etc.)
- The extent of children's interest in reading at home
- The amount of time spent by children reading at home
- The frequency of children's visits to public libraries
- The role of parents in encouraging their children to read
- The extent to which reading literature affects the development of children's educational level.

The responses received from parents in the study sample refer to 80 of their children (38 male and 42 female children). Thus, the data presented in the following tables concern these 80 children and consequently the discussion of the frequencies and percentage counts relates to these children by gender and by age where statistical significance is indicated.

Table 6.109:

The distribution of children whose reading interests were studied through their parents (via questionnaires for the parents) by age and gender.

Age	Male		Female		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
From 6 - 7 years	4	10.5	4	9.5	8	10.0
From 7 - 8 years	5	13.2	5	11.9	10	12.5
From 8 - 9 years	6	15.7	6	14.3	12	15.0
From 9 - 10 years	8	21.1	9	21.4	17	21.3
From 10 - 11 years	7	18.4	8	19.1	15	18.7
From 11 - 12 years	8	21.1	10	23.8	18	22.5
Total	38	100.0	42	100.0	80	100.0

Table 6.109 shows the distribution of children as given by their parents. One can observe the high representation of female children and the high representation of children aged 11-12 years old.

6.3.4.2 - Analysis of the Closed Questions

Question 1: To what extent are your male/female children aged between 6-12 interested in reading at home?

Table 6.110: Cross-tabulation, frequencies and percentage counts by gender.

Variables	1 Not at all	2 Very little	3 A little	4 A lot	5 Very great deal	Row Total
Male % of total	1 2.6	6 15.8	20 52.6	9 23.7	2 5.3	38 47.5
Female % of total	0 .0 %	3 7.1	5 11	16 38.1	18 42.9	42 52.5
Column Total	1 1.3	9 11.3	25 31.3	25 31.3	20 25.0	80 100.0%

Table 6.110 shows parents' responses with regard to the extent of their male/female children's (aged 6-12) interest in reading at home.

The parents in the study sample reported that the majority of their children (56%) are interested in reading at home. This percentage includes 31.3% of children who are interested "a lot" and 25% who are interested "a very great deal". Those who are "very little" interested represent a percentage of 11.3 and those who are "a little" interested represent a percentage of 31.3. On the other hand, those who are "not at all" interested in reading at home represent 1.3% of the 80 children which is a very low percentage if compared to the percentage of those who are interested. The table also shows large differences between male and female children's interest particularly in the "a little" and the "very great deal" categories, where a difference of 41.6% in favour of male children is demonstrated in the former and a difference of 37.6% in favour of female children is demonstrated in the latter.

Table 6.111: Mann-Whitney U Test.

Variables	U Value	Significance
Male Female	329.0	0.0000

The Mann-Whitney U Test in table 6.111 reveals that there is a statistically high significant difference in interest between male and female children ($P<0.01$) as declared by parents in the study sample. This difference can be clearly recognised in all categories of table 6.110 particularly the "a little" and the "very great deal" categories.

Question 2: To what extent are your male/female children aged between 6-12 interested in reading fiction books?

Table 6.112: Cross-tabulation, frequencies and percentage counts by gender.

Variables	1 Not at all	2 Very little	3 A little	4 A lot	5 Very great deal	Row Total
Male % of total	7 18.4	8 21.1	18 47.4	4 10.5	1 2.8	38 47.5
Female % of total	0 .0 %	0 .0 %	8 19.0	16 38.1	18 42.9	42 52.5
Column Total	7 8.8	8 10.0	26 32.5	20 25.0	19 23.8	80 100.0%

Table 6.112 shows parents' responses with regard to the extent of their male/female children's (aged 6-12) interest in reading fiction books. The parents in the study sample revealed that 48.8% of their children are interested in reading fiction books. This percentage includes 25% of children who are interested "a lot" and 23.8% who are interested "a very great deal". Those who are "very little" interested represent a percentage of 10.0 and those who are "a little" interested represent a percentage of 32.5. On the other hand, those who are "not at all" interested in reading fiction books represent 8.8% of the 80 children which is a very low percentage if compared to the percentage of those who are interested to a certain extent. The table also shows significant differences between male and female children's interest in all categories. Another point shown by table 6.112 is that female children are more interested in reading fiction books than male children.

Table 6.113: Mann-Whitney U Test.

Variables	U Value	Significance
Male Female	169.0	0.0000

The Mann-Whitney U Test in table 6.113 reveals that there is a statistically high significant difference in interest between male and female children ($P<0.01$) as declared by their parents in the study sample. This difference can be clearly recognised in all categories of table 6.112.

Question 3: To what extent are your male/female children aged between 6-12 interested in reading non-fiction books?

Table 6.114: Cross-tabulation, frequencies and percentage counts by gender.

Variables	1 Not at all	2 Very little	3 A little	4 A lot	5 Very great deal	Row Total
Male % of total	2 5.34	4 10.5	14 36.8	13 34.2	5 13.2	38 47.5
Female % of total	2 4.8	8 19.0	9 21.4	12 28.6	11 26.2	42 52.5
Column Total	4 5.0	12 15.0	23 28.8	25 31.3	16 20.0	80 100.0%

Table 6.114 shows parents' responses with regard to the extent of their male/female children's (aged 6-12) interest in reading non-fiction books. The parents in the study sample reported that 51.3% of their children are interested in reading non-fiction books. This percentage includes 31.3% of children who are interested "a lot" and 20.0% who are interested "a very great deal". Those who are "very little" interested represent a percentage of 15.0 and those who are "a little" interested represent a percentage of 28.8. On the other hand, those who are "not at all" interested in reading non-fiction books represent 5.0% of the 80 children which is a very low percentage if compared to the percentage of those who are interested to a certain extent. The table also shows

that there are not large differences between male and female children's interest in any categories.

Table 6.115: Mann-Whitney U Test.

Variables	U Value	Significance
Male Female	736.5	0.5399

The Mann-Whitney U Test in table 6.115 shows that the difference in interest between male and female children is statistically non-significant (P>0.05). This indicates that there is commonly shared interest in reading non-fiction books between male and female children.

Question 3: To what extent are your male/female children aged between 6-12 interested in reading non-fiction books?

Table 6.116: Cross-tabulation, frequencies and percentage counts by children's age.

Variables Age in years	1 Not at all	2 Very little	3 A little	4 A lot	5 Very great deal	Row total
From 6 - 7	2	4	2	0	0	8
% of total	25.0	50.0	25.0	.0 %	.0 %	10.0
From 7 - 8	1	3	3	3	0	10
% of total	10.0	30.0	30.0	30.0	.0 %	12.5
From 8 - 9	0	2	2	4	4	12
% of total	.0 %	16.7	16.7	33.3	33.3	15.0
From 9 - 10	1	2	6	4	4	17
% of total	5.9	11.8	35.3	23.5	23.5	21.3
From 10 - 11	0	0	5	5	5	15
% of total	.0 %	.0 %	33.3	33.3	33.3	18.8
From 11 - 12	0	1	5	9	3	18
% of total	.0 %	5.6	27.8	50.0	16.7	22.5
Column total	4	12	23	25	16	80
% of total	5.0	15.0	28.8	31.3	20.0	100.0

Table 6.116 indicates that the majority of children who are greatly interested in reading non-fiction books are between ages 8 and 12.

Those who are a little interested are a majority of children aged between 6 and 8.

Table 6.117: Kruskal-Wallis Test to determine the significance of rating scale responses by children's age, with regard to question 3 of the questionnaire for the parents.

Variables Age in years	Chi-square Corrected for ties	Significance
From 6 - 7		
From 7 - 8		
From 8 - 9	21.2446	0.0007
From 9 - 10		
From 10 - 11		
From 11 - 12		

The Kruskal Wallis Test in table 6.117 shows that the difference in interest with regard to reading non-fiction books is statistically significant ($p<0.01$) between children of ages 6-8 and those of ages 8-12. This clearly indicates that children aged 8-12 are more interested in reading non-fiction than those aged 6-8.

Question 4: To what extent are your male/female children aged between 6-12 interested in reading children's magazines?

Table 6.118: Cross-tabulation, frequencies and percentage counts by gender.

Variables	1 Not at all	2 Very little	3 A little	4 A lot	5 Very great deal	Row Total
Male % of total	0 .0 %	0 .0 %	2 5.3	15 39.5	21 55.3	38 47.5
Female % of total	0 .0 %	0 .0 %	1 2.44	13 31.0	28 66.7	42 52.5
Column Total	0 .0 %	0 .0 %	3 3.8	28 35.0	49 61.3	80 100.0%

Table 6.118 shows parents' responses with regard to the extent of their male/female children's (aged 6-12) interest in reading children's magazines. The parents in the study sample stated that the majority of their children (96.3%) like to read children's magazines. This percentage includes 35% of children who are interested "a lot" and 61.3% who are interested "a very great deal". The percentage of students who are interested "a little" is 3.8 which is very low if compared to that of those interested "a lot" or a "very great deal". On the other hand, parents indicated that none of their children (0%) are "not at all" or "very little" interested in reading children's magazines. The table also indicates that there are not large differences between male and female children's interest in any categories.

Table 6.119: Mann-Whitney U Test.

Variables	U Value	Significance
Male Female	701.5	0.2757

The Mann-Whitney U Test in table 6.119 reveals that the difference in interests between male and female children is statistically non-significant (P>0.05). This indicates that there is a commonly shared interest in reading children's magazines between male and female children.

Question 5: To what extent are your male/female children aged between 6-12 interested in reading literature written by Bahraini authors?

Table 6.120: Cross-tabulation, frequencies and percentage counts by gender.

Variables	1 Not at all	2 Very little	3 A little	4 A lot	5 Very great deal	Row Total
Male % of total	3 7.9	10 26.3	17 44.7	8 21.1	0 .0%	38 47.5
Female % of total	2 4.8	6 14.3	18 42.9	13 31.0	3 7.1	42 52.5
Column Total	5 6.3	16 20.0	35 43.8	21 26.3	3 3.8	80 100.0%

Table 6.120 shows parents' responses with regard to the extent of their male/female children's (aged 6-12) interest in reading literature written by Bahraini authors. The parents in the study sample revealed that 3.8% of their children are interested "a very great deal" in addition to 26.3% who are interested "a lot". Those who are "a little" interested represent the highest percentage of 43.8 whereas those who are interested "very little" represent a percentage of 20.0. On the other hand, those who are "not at all" interested in reading literature written by Bahraini authors represent 6.3% of the 80 children. The table also shows that there are some differences between male and female children's interest in some categories of the table. Another point shown by table 6.120 is that female children are more interested in reading literature written by Bahraini authors than male children.

Table 6.121: Mann-Whitney U Test.

Variables	U Value	Significance
Male Female	602.0	0.0453

The Mann-Whitney U Test in table 6.121 reveals that there is a statistically significant difference between male and female children's interest ($P<0.05$) as declared by their parents in the study sample.

Question 6: To what extent are your male/female children aged between 6-12 interested in listening to fiction stories?

Table 6.122: Cross- tabulation, frequencies and percentage counts by gender.

Variables	1 Not at all	2 Very little	3 A little	4 A lot	5 Very great deal	Row Total
Male % of total	0 .0 %	0 .0 %	1 2.6	11 28.9	26 68.4	38 47.5
Female % of total	0 .0 %	0 .0 %	0 .0 %	7 16.7	35 83.3	42 52.5
Column Total	0 .0 %	0 .0 %	1 1.3	18 22.5	61 76.3	80 100.0%

Table 6.122 shows parents' responses with regard to the extent of their male/female children's (aged 6-12) interest in listening to fiction stories. The parents in the study sample claimed that that the majority of their children love listening to fiction stories. Their responses showed that 76.3% of their children are interested "a very great deal" in listening to fiction stories in addition to 22.5% who are interested "a lot". Those who are "a little" interested represent a percentage of 1.3. On the other hand, parents indicated that none of their children (0%) are "not at all" or "very little" interested in listening to fiction stories. The table also indicates that the differences in the extent of interest between male and female children are very slight. In the "a lot" category, a difference of 12.2% in favour of male children is demonstrated and in the "very great deal" category a difference of 14.9% in favour of female children is demonstrated.

Table 6.123: Mann-Whitney U Test.

Variables	U Value	Significance
Male Female	675.5	0.1100

The Mann-Whitney U Test in table 6.123 reveals that the difference in the extent of interest between male and female children is statistically non-significant (P>0.05). This indicates that there is a commonly shared interest between male and female children with regard to listening to fiction stories.

Question 7: To what extent do your male/female children aged between 6-12 need your assistance while reading?

Table 6.124: Cross-tabulation, frequencies and percentage counts by gender.

Variables	1 Not at all	2 Very little	3 A little	4 A lot	5 Very great deal	Row Total
Male % of total	1 2.6	4 10.5	6 15.8	12 31.6	15 39.5	38 47.5
Female % of total	3 7.1	4 9.5	15 35.7	6 14.3	14 33.3	42 52.5
Column Total	4 5.0	8 10.0	21 26.3	18 22.5	29 36.3	80 100.0%

Table 6.124 shows parents' responses with regard to the extent of the need of their male/female children (aged 6-12) for their assistance while reading. The parents in the study sample reported that their children do need their assistance to a certain extent while reading. They demonstrated that 36.3% of their children need their assistance "a very great deal"; 22.5% need their assistance "a lot"; 26.3 need their assistance "a little" and 10.0% need their assistance "very little". On the other hand, parents stated that only 5.0% of their children need their assistance "not at all" while reading. The table also shows slight

differences in the extent of need between male and female children, except in the "a little" and the "a lot" categories where significant differences are demonstrated. In the "a little" category, a difference of 19.9% in favour of female children is demonstrated and in the "a lot" category a difference of 17.3% in favour of male children is demonstrated.

Table 6.125: Mann-Whitney U Test.

Variables	U Value	Significance
Male Female	662.5	0.1739

The Mann-Whitney U Test in table 6.125 reveals that the difference in the extent of need for parents' assistance while reading between male and female children is statistically non-significant (P>0.05).

Question 7: To what extent do your male/female children aged between 6-12 need your assistance while reading?

Table 6.126: Cross-tabulation, frequencies and percentage counts by children's age.

Variables Age in years	1 Not at all	2 Very little	3 A little	4 A lot	5 Very great deal	Row total
From 6 - 7	0	0	0	1	7	8
% of total	.0 %	.0 %	.0 %	12.5	87.5	10.0
From 7 - 8	0	0	1	3	6	10
% of total	.0 %	.0 %	10.0	30.0	60.0	12.5
From 8 - 9	0	0	2	4	6	12
% of total	.0 %	.0 %	16.7	33.3	50.0	15.0
From 9-10	0	0	4	5	8	17
% of total	.0 %	.0 %	23.5	29.4	47.1	21.3
From 10-11	0	2	7	4	2	15
% of total	.0 %	13.3	46.7	26.7	13.3	18.8
From 11-12	4	6	7	1	0	18
% of total	22.2	33.3	28.9	5.6	.0 %	22.5
Column total	4	8	21	18	29	80
% of total	5.0	10.0	26.3	22.5	36.3	100.0

Table 6.126 indicates that the majority of children of ages 6-10 greatly need their parents' assistance while reading. On the other hand the table shows that the majority of children of ages 10-12 need their parents' assistance only "a little" while reading.

Table 6.127: Kruskal-Wallis Test to determine the significance of rating scale responses by children's age, with regard to question 7 of the questionnaire for the parents.

Variables Age in years	Chi-square Corrected for ties	Significance
From 6 - 7		
From 7 - 8		
From 8 - 9	43.5651	0.0000
From 9 - 10		
From 10 - 11		
From 11 - 12		

The Kruskal-Wallis Test in table 6.127 reveals a statistically high significance ($p<0.01$) in the differences between children of ages 6-10 and those of ages 10-12 with regard to the extent of their need for their parents' assistance while reading. This clearly indicates that children aged 6 -10 need their parents' assistance while reading more than those aged 10-12.

Question 8: To what extent does reading literature affect the educational level of your male/female children between 6-12 years old?

Table 6.128: Cross-tabulation, frequencies and percentage counts by gender.

Variables	1 Not at all	2 Very little	3 A little	4 A lot	5 Very great deal	Row Total
Male % of total	0 .0 %	1 2.6	7 18.4	18 47.4	12 31.6	38 47.5
Female % of total	0 .0 %	0 .0 %	1 2.4	16 38.1	25 59.5	42 52.5
Column Total	0 .0 %	1 1.3	8 10.0	34 42.5	37 46.3	80 100.0%

Table 6.128 shows parents' responses with regard to the extent of the effect that reading literature has on the educational level of male/female children (aged 6-12). The parents in the study sample claimed that reading literature has a great effect on their children's educational level. They demonstrated that 46.3% of their children are educationally affected "a very great deal" reading literature. Another percentage of 42.5 are affected "a lot". Those who are affected "a little" represent a percentage of 10.0 and those who are affected "very little" represent a percentage of 1.3. The table also indicates that there are significant differences between male and female children (aged 6-12) with regard to the effect on their educational level of reading literature.

Table 6.129: Mann-Whitney U Test.

Variables	U Value	Significance
Male Female	519.5	0.0031

The Mann-Whitney U Test in table 6.129 reveals that there is a statistically significant difference between male and female children

(aged 6-12) with regard to the effect of reading literature on their educational level ($P<0.01$). The difference indicates that parents think female children are affected more than male children by reading literature.

Question 9: How often do your male/female children aged between 6-12 read each week at home?

Table 6.130: Cross-tabulation, frequencies and percentage counts by gender.

Variables	1 Not at all	2 1-2 hours	3 3-4 hours	4 5-6 hours	5 7 hours and above	Row Total
Male % of total	1 2.6	15 39.5	16 42.1	6 15.8	0 .0 %	38 47.5
Female % of total	0 .0 %	2 4.8	9 21.4	12 28.6	19 45.2	42 52.5
Column Total	1 1.3	17 21.3	25 31.3	18 22.5	19 23.8	80 100.0%

Table 6.130 shows parents' responses with regard to their male/female children's (aged 6-12) amount of weekly reading. The parents in the study sample indicated that 23.8% of their children read for "7 hours and above"; 22.5% read for "5-6 hours"; 31.3% read for "3-4 hours"; and 21.3% read for "1-2 hours". Those who read "not at all" at home represent a percentage of 1.3, which is very low if compared to the percentages of those, who do read. The table also shows large differences between male and female children with regard to the amount of their weekly reading at home. These differences indicate that female children read at home more than male children, particularly in the "7 hours and above" category where a difference of 45.2% in favour of female children is demonstrated.

Table 6.131: Mann-Whitney U Test.

Variables	U Value	Significance
Male Female	221.0	0.0000

The Mann-Whitney U Test in table 6.131 reveals that there is a statistically high significant difference between male and female children (aged 6-12) with regard to the amount of their weekly readings at home (P>0.01). These differences can be clearly recognised in all categories in table 6.130.

Question 9: How often do your male/female children aged between 6-12 read each week at home?

Table 6.132: Cross-tabulation, frequencies and percentage counts by children's age.

Variables Age in years	1 Not at all	2 1 - 2 hrs	3 3 - 4 hrs	4 5 - 6 hrs	5 7 hrs and above	Row total
From 6 - 7	1	4	3	0	0	8
% of total	12.5	50.0	37.5	.0 %	.0 %	10.0
From 7 - 8	0	3	7	0	0	10
% of total	.0 %	30.0	70.0	.0 %	.0 %	12.5
From 8 - 9	0	4	4	4	0	12
% of total	.0 %	33.3	33.3	33.3	.0 %	15.0
From 9 - 10	0	5	2	5	5	17
% of total	.0 %	29.4	11.8	29.4	29.4	21.3
From 10 - 11	0	0	5	4	6	15
% of total	.0 %	.0 %	33.3	26.7	40.0	18.8
From 11 - 12	0	1	4	5	8	18
% of total	.0 %	5.6	22.2	27.8	44.4	22.5
Column total	1	17	25	18	19	80
% of total	1.3	21.3	31.3	22.5	23.8	100.0

Table 6.132 indicates that the majority of children of ages 9-12 spend an average time of 5-7 hours per week reading at home. On the

other hand, the table shows that the majority of children of ages 6-9 spend an average time of 1-4 hours per week reading at home.

Table 6.133: Kruskal-Wallis Test to determine the significance of rating scale responses by children's age, with regard to question 9 of the questionnaire for the parents.

Variables Age in years	Chi-square Corrected for ties	Significance
From 6 - 7		
From 7 - 8		
From 8 - 9	26.6895	0.0001
From 9 - 10		
From 10 - 11		
From 11 - 12		

The Kruskal-Wallis Test in table 6.133 reveals a statistically high significance ($P<0.01$) in the differences between children of ages 6-9 and those of ages 9-12 with regard to the time they spend reading. This clearly indicates that children aged 9-12 read more than those aged 6-9.

Question 10 : How often do your male/female children aged between 6-12 visit the public library each week?

Table 6.134: Cross-tabulation, frequencies and percentage count by gender.

Variables	1 Not at all	2 Once	3 Twice	4 Three times	5 Four times and above	Row Total
Male % of total	24 63.2	8 21.1	4 10.5	2 5.38	0 .0%	38 47.5
Female % of total	6 14.3	5 11.9	14 33.3	12 28.6	5 11.9	42 52.5
Column Total	30 37.5	13 16.3	18 22.5	14 17.5	5 6.3	80 100.0%

Table 6.134 shows parents' responses with regard to the frequency of weekly visits to the public library by their male/female children

(aged 6-12). The parents in the study sample stated that the majority of their children do not visit the public library frequently. The parents declared that 37.5% of their children visit the public library "not at all", "once" represents a percentage of 16.3 and those who visit the public library "twice" represent a percentage of 22.5. On the other hand, children who visit the public library "three times" represent a percentage of 17.5 and those who visit the public library "four times and above" represent a percentage of 6.3. This indicates that children rarely visit the public library. The table also shows that there is a large difference between male and female children (aged 6-12) with regard to the number of their weekly visits to the public library. This difference indicates that female children visit the public library more frequently than male children.

Table 6.135: Mann-Whitney U Test.

Variables	U Value	Significance
Male Female	274.0	0.0000

The Mann-Whitney U Test in table 6.135 reveals that there is a statistically high significant difference between male and female children (aged 6-12) in respect of the frequency of their weekly visits to the public library ($P<0.01$). The difference can be clearly recognised in all categories in table 6.134.

Question 10: How often do your male/female children aged between 6-12 visit the public library weekly?

Table 6.136: Cross-tabulation, frequencies and percentage counts by children's age.

Variables Age in years	1 Not at all	2 Once	3 Twice	4 Three times	5 Four times-above	Row total
From 6 - 7	7	1	0	0	0	8
% of total	87.5	12.5	.0 %	.0 %	.0 %	10.0
From 7 - 8	6	2	1	1	0	10
% of total	60.0	20.0	10.0	10.0	.0 %	12.5
From 8 - 9	6	2	3	1	0	12
% of total	50.0	16.7	25.0	8.3	.0 %	15.0
From 9 - 10	6	4	4	3	0	17
% of total	35.3	23.5	23.5	17.6	.0 %	21.3
From 10 - 11	4	2	2	4	3	15
% of total	26.7	13.3	13.3	26.7	20.0	18.8
From 11 - 12	1	2	8	5	2	18
% of total	5.6	11.1	44.4	27.8	11.1	22.5
Column total	30	13	18	14	5	80
% of total	37.5	16.3	22.5	17.5	6.3	100.0

Table 6.136 indicates that the majority of children of ages 10-12 visit the public library between 2-4 times a week. The majority of children of ages 9-10 visit the public library between 1-3 times a week. One the other hand, the table shows that the majority of children of ages 6-9 "not at all" visit the public library. This indicates that older children visit the public library more than younger ones.

Table 6.137: Kruskal-Wallis Test to determine the significance of rating scale responses by children's age, with regard to question 10 of the questionnaire for the parents.

Variables Age in years	Chi-square Corrected for ties	Significance
From 6 - 7		
From 7 - 8		
From 8 - 9	23.5789	0.0003
From 9 - 10		
From 10 - 11		
From 11 - 12		

The Kruskal-Wallis Test in table 6.137 indicates a statistically high significance ($P<0.01$) in the differences between children of ages 6-9 and those of ages 9-12 in respect of the number of times they visit the public library. The clearly indicates that children of ages 10-12 visit the public library more frequently than those of ages 6-10.

6.3.4.3 - Reliability Coefficients

Table 6.138:

Reliability Analysis-Scale (Alpha) of the questionnaire for the parents, with respect to children's literature, their books and reading interests.

Variables	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Alpha if Item Deleted
Question 1	0.38	0.65
Question 2	0.44	0.63
Question 3	0.23	0.68
Question 4	0.22	0.67
Question 5	0.25	0.67
Question 6	0.27	0.67
Question 8	0.15	0.68
Question 9	0.70	0.56
Question 10	0.53	0.61

Alpha = 0.68 Standardised item alpha = 0.66.

Table 6.138 shows the reliability analysis of the questionnaire for the parents. It is clear that the questionnaire for parents has a moderate

reliability between all questions, except question 7 (To what extent do your male and female children of ages 6-12, need your assistance while reading?), which was designed to collect data regarding the extent of children's need for their parents' assistance while reading, taking into consideration the age and gender of these children. This question does not relate directly to the rest of the questions of the questionnaire for parents, in that it does not measure attitudes towards children's literature, their books and reading interests. However, it has a strong relation to the main questions in the study which it seek to measure the role of parents in Bahrain in the development of their children's reading interests.

6.3.4.4 - Analysis of Responses to the Open-Ended Questions

The questionnaire for the parents included two open-ended questions to allow parents to present their personal comments and suggestions with regard to the children's literature and books. In response, 35 out of 40 questionnaires were received and all of these respondents presented their views and suggestions in respect of the open-ended questions as follows:

1 - The kind of books they prefer their children to read at home

- Most of the informants in the study (32, 91%) declared that they prefer their children to read literature, which contains scientific fiction. They believe that, in addition to expanding children's imaginations, this type of literature keeps children up to date with modern technology and scientific discoveries.

- Some of the informants (27, 77%) showed their preference for religious stories from which, they believe, their children would gain positive values and good manners, in addition to their

contribution to the development of children's linguistic skills and religious faith.

- Some informants (23, 65%) indicated their preference for stories about social subjects in addition to scientific and religious stories. They believed that through the social type of stories children learn how to understand the problems they face in their day to-day life and accordingly are helped to find the right solutions to them.

2 - The importance to their children of reading at home

- Most of the parents (31, 88%), irrespective of their educational levels, believed that reading at home played a significant role in developing their children's linguistic skills and literary inclinations. Reading at home, according to the informants, enables children to write their own stories and to express their feelings.

- All the parents of the study (35, 100%) stressed the significance of encouraging children to read at home and the need to provide them with various literature books that suited their ages and mental abilities.

6.3.4.5 - Summary of the Findings

1 - The major findings from the closed questions of the questionnaire for parents, which refer to 80 children, aged 6-12 of the parents sampled for the study are as follows:

1.1 - The parents stated that the majority of their children (56%) are interested "a lot" in reading at home. The difference in interest between male and female children, as declared by their parents, is significant. Female children were said to be more interested than male children. However, the difference in interest between the different age variables was not found to be significant.

1.2 - The parents stated that almost half of their children (48.8%) are interested in reading fiction books varying from " a lot " to a " very great deal". A significant difference in interest between male and female children was declared by their parents. Female children were stated to be more interested than male children. However, the difference in children's interest in fiction books was not found to be significant between their different age variables.

1.3 - With regard to the extent of interest in reading non-fiction books, the parents claimed that (51.3%) of their children are interested to a very great extent in reading such books. The difference in interest between male and female children was non-significant, whereas the difference in interest between the different age variables was highly significant. Children of ages 8-12 were shown to be more interested in reading non-fiction books than those aged 6-8.

1.4 - In respect of the extent of interest in reading children's magazines, the parents declared that the majority of their children (96.3%) are interested a "very great deal" in reading such magazines The difference in interest between male and female children and also between the age variables is statistically non-significant.

1.5 - The parents reported that most of their children (63.8%) are interested "a little" in reading literature written by Bahraini authors.
A significant difference in interest between male and female children was indicated. Female children were indicated to be more interested than male children. However, the difference in interest in literature written by Bahraini authors was not found to be significant between children's age variables.

1.6 - The parents stated that the vast majority of their children (98%) are interested "a great deal" in listening to fiction stories. The difference in the extent of interest between male and female children and between their different age variables is statistically non-significant.

1.7 - In respect of the extent of children's need for their parent's assistance while reading, non-significant statistical difference was found between male and female children. However, a high significant difference was found between the different age variables. Children aged 6-10 was found to be more in need of their parent's assistance while reading than those aged 10-12.

1.8 - With regard to the effect of reading literature on children's educational level, the parents claimed that the majority of their children (88.8%) are positively affected to a great extent by reading literature. The difference between male and female children in this regard is statistically significant. Female children are indicated to be affected more than male children. However, the difference in the extent of the effect of reading literature between the different age variables of children was found to be non-significant.

1.9 - In respect of the weekly amount of children's reading at home, the parents indicated that the majority of their male children (81.6%) read between 1-4 hours per week, whereas the majority of their female children (73.8%) read between 5-7 hours per week. The difference between male and female children is therefore statistically significant. Furthermore, the difference between the different age variables was highly significant. The amount of reading by children aged above 9-12 was found to be more than the amount of reading by children aged 6-9.

1.10 - The parents declared that the majority of their male children (63.2%) visit the public library "not at all", while on the other hand, the majority of their female children (61.9%) visit the public library from 2-3 times per week. This clearly indicates that the difference between male and female children is statistically significant. The difference between the different age variables was also found to be highly significant. Children of ages 10-12 visited the public library more frequently then those of ages 6-10.

2 - The major findings from responses to the open-ended questions of the questionnaire for parents are as follows:

2.1 - The vast majority of parents (91%) sampled for the study, indicated their preference for scientific fiction to be read by their children to keep them up-to-date with modern technology and scientific discoveries.

2.2 - 77% of parents indicated their preference for religious stories to be read by their children to gain positive values and good manners.

2.3 - 65% of parents suggested that social subjects should be read by their children in addition to scientific and religious literature.

2.4 - The majority of parents (88%) mentioned that reading at home played a significant role in developing their children's linguistic skills and literary inclinations.

2.5 - All the parents of the study (100%) stressed the importance of encouraging children to read at home by providing various literature books suitable for their age and mental abilities.

6.3.5-The Semi-Structured Interview for children

6.3.5.1-Introduction

The semi-structured interview for children was conducted by the researcher with 60 male/female children of ages 6-9. These children were selected randomly from primary schools sampled for the study and were individually interviewed by the researcher with the help and full agreement of their teachers. The following figures, 6.1 and 6.2 on pages, 302, 303, show the researcher conducting his interviews with two of the selected children.

Figure 6.1:

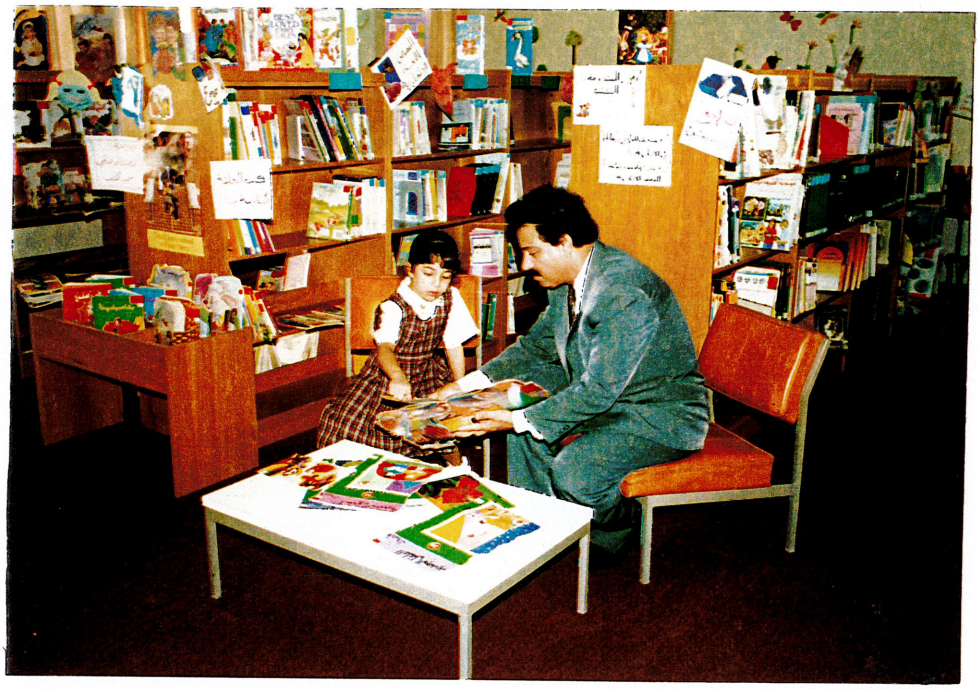


Figure 6.1: The researcher conducting an interview with one of the selected female children.

Figure 6.2:



Figure 6.2: The researcher conducting an interview with one of the selected male children.

6.3.5.2 -The Interview Questions

1 - What is your name?
2 - How old are you?
3 - What is your school level?
4 - What are your hobbies?
5 - Do you enjoy reading books?
6 - What type of books do you prefer to read?
    * - Fiction
    * - Non-fiction
    * - History
    * - Geography
    * - Languages
    * - Arts
    * - Religion.
7 - Do you have favourite authors? If not, why not?
8 - To what extent are you interested in reading fiction stories in your free time?
9 - How many hours a week do you generally spend reading?
10 - How do you select books that you consider to be good?

11 - What type of fiction stories do you prefer to read?
12 - Do you remember the title of the last fiction or non-fiction story you have read or listened to during the previous month?
13 - What are the subjects of stories that you consider most attractive to read?
14 - Who assists you in selecting books for reading?
15 -Whom do you consider the best person to assist you while reading?
* - Your parents
* - Your teacher
* - Your librarian
* - Your friends.
16 - Do you consider the number of times you visit the public library to be enough?
17 - Do you prefer to read at home, at school or at the public library, and why?
18 - What is your favourite children's magazine, and why?
19 - To what extent do you participate in writing to your favourite magazine?
20 - Which do you like reading best, books or magazines?
21 - How much do you gain educationally from listening to stories at school?
22 - What are the aids you need at school in order to assist in the development of your reading interests?
23 - Do you feel that literature books provided by school assist in developing your literary level?

6.3.5.3 -Analysis of Children's Responses to Questions of the Semi-Structured Interview

The interview started with the children being questioned about their names, ages, class levels, hobbies and then moved gradually to their reading interests (see appendix G on page 491 which shows the questions the children were asked during the interview). The analysis of the children's responses to the questions is as follows:

From the children's responses to questions 2 and 3, which were about their ages and class levels, it was obvious that the age range of

the interviewed children was 6-9. This age range represents the first three ages of the main study age range, which is 6-12. The researcher selected the semi-structured interview as children of this age range would find it easier to talk freely during the interview than to answer questionnaires.

With regard to question 4, which was about children's hobbies, most of the male children (70%) expressed their preference for sport and the other 30% expressed their preference for reading. On the other hand, 67% of the female children expressed their preference for reading and the other 33% expressed their preference for artistic activities such as painting, drawing, sewing, etc. However, through the children's responses to question 5, "Do you enjoy reading?", it was apparent that reading is generally enjoyed by most children regardless of their age and educational level.

In response to question 6 about the type of books preferred by children, 60 % of indicated their preference for fictional stories while 40% indicated their preference for the non-fiction books including those on the arts, history, science etc.

From the children's responses to question 7 about their favourite authors, it was clear that authors of children's literature in Bahrain are not very well known to children. All male and female children interviewed (100%) stated that they were not introduced to the author whenever they read a story, the reason which kept them unfamiliar with authors of children's literature in Bahrain.

With regard to question 8 which was about the extent of children's interest in reading fiction stories in their free time, most of the

children, males and females, (94%) revealed that they enjoyed reading fiction stories of their own choice in their free time.

In their responses to question 9 about the number of hours they spend reading each week, the children indicated a range of 1-7 hours a week that they spend in reading varying in accordance with their age and gender. However, the average time spent reading by children of ages 6-9 is four hours a week.

With regard to question 10 about how children select books that they consider to be good, most of the children (79%) stated that they were attracted by the title of the book whenever they selected a book /story to read. The author and the artistic production of the book were not major criteria considered by the children when selecting books for reading.

In response to question 11 about the type of fiction stories children prefer to read, most of the female children (91%) selected social stories as the most preferable type. They mentioned different names of stories that they love to read or listen to, such as "Aladdin", "Snow White", "Cinderella", "Beauty and the Beast", "The Sleeping Beauty", etc. Male children, on the other hand, selected adventure stories as the most preferable type of literature. They mentioned different names of adventure stories that they love to read or listen to such as "Sinbad", "The Black Samba", "Superman", etc.

In response to question 12 which was about the title of the last fiction /non-fiction story they read or listened to during the previous month, most of the children (83%), male and female, mentioned titles

of fiction stories whereas (17%) of them mentioned titles of non-fiction stories.

With regard to subjects of stories that children consider attractive to read, most of the female children (91%) stated that they prefer social subjects with some romance, while most of the male children (83%) indicated their preference for adventure, detective and horror stories, etc. However there was a percentage of female children (19%) who indicated their preference for the subjects preferred by male children and there were some male children (17%) who selected subjects preferred by female children.

With reference to question 14 "who assists you in selecting books for reading?", 50% of the children claimed that they select what they like to read by themselves. Some of them (36%) indicated that they depend on their parents for the selection of books/stories while a few of them (14%) declared their dependency on their teachers when selecting books to read.

In response to question 15 which was about who provides the best assistance to children while reading, most of the children (78%) claimed that their parents provide them with the best assistance especially the mother who is considered by the majority of children (62%) as the most supportive person while reading stories. Some of the children (22%) claimed that their teachers provided them with the best assistance during their reading.

In response to question 16 about the number of visit to the public or school library which the children consider to be enough, most of the children (89%) considered 1-3 times a week to be enough.

With regard to the place where the children preferred to read, 70 % of the children reported their preference for the library as a quiet place to read in. They recognised that it had been prepared for such a purpose in terms of the furniture, lighting, air-conditioning and also the availability of different types of books and magazines, audio-visual aids and computers. The other 30% of the children preferred reading at home because, as they explained, they found it a more comfortable and encouraging place to read in with more opportunity to concentrate and to get their parents' assistance whenever they needed it.

With regard to their favourite magazine, 90% of the children indicated that they love to read "MAJID" magazine which is a children's magazine published weekly in the United Arab Emirates and distributed all over the Arab world. This magazine embraces a variety of topics and useful information which supports their school subjects (see figure 6.3).

Figure 6.3:

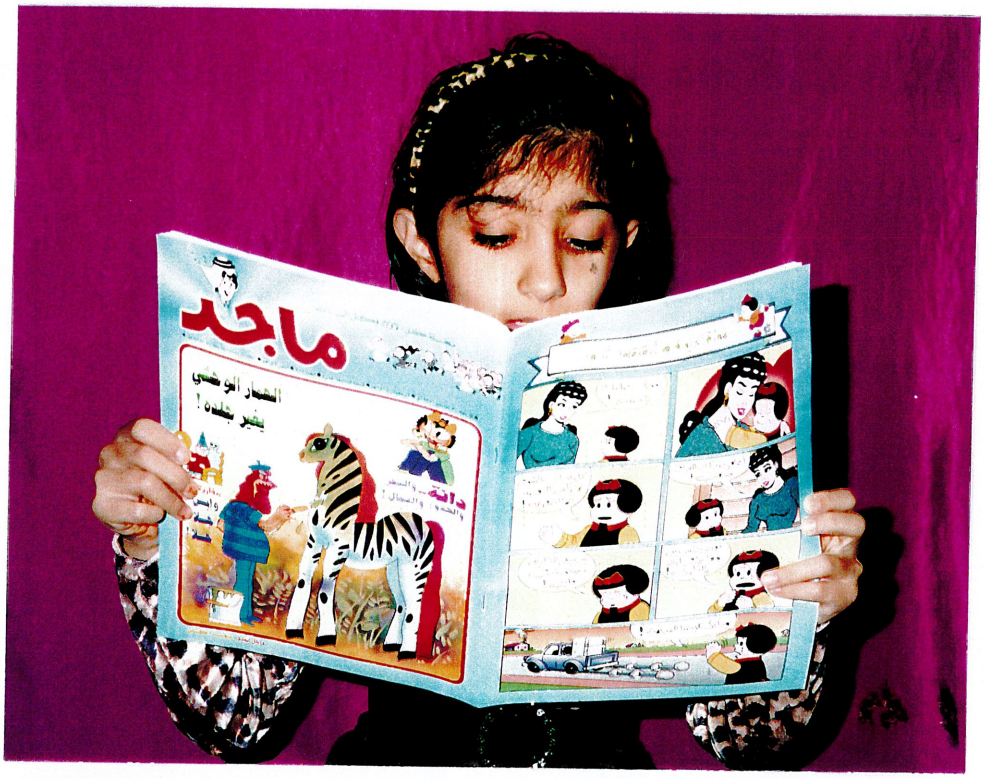


Figure 6.3: A nine-year-old girl reading MAJID magazine.

With regard to the extent of children's participation in writing to their favourite magazine, most of the children (78%) stated that they submit short stories, quizzes and poetry to their favourite magazine.

In response to question 20 about the kind of literature children prefer to read, that is, books or magazines, most of the children (87%) stressed that they would consider the subject they wanted to read rather than the format of the text. In other words, they would select a book or a magazine for its contents and not for its physical qualities.

In respect of question 21 about how much they gain educationally from listening to stories at school, most of the children (84%) stated

that they gained a great deal especially when they were read stories with contents related to their curriculum subjects such as history, geography, religion, etc.

With regard to the aids needed to be provided in schools in order to develop children's reading interests, 65% of the children suggested the puppet theatre which, according to them, would be an attractive way of presenting stories for it would allow them the opportunity to participate and interact with the story characters. Older children suggested that a theatre equipped with all the necessary materials should be provided at their schools to allow them the opportunity to play in groups the roles of the characters of stories they read for themselves. It has also been suggested that stories recorded on videotapes should be displayed in libraries on large screens, which would be more attractive and interesting than reading books.

With regard to literature books provided in school libraries, 40% of children declared that these books were useful and of great value to the development of their interest in reading. On the other hand, 60% of the children declared that most of the books available in their libraries were not of good literary value that would assist in the development of their reading interests. They claimed that most of these books are of general educational subjects and that literature books are not adequately provided.

6.3.5.4 - Summary of the Findings

Through his interviews with the 60 primary level children (30 males and 30 females), the researcher concluded that:

- Female children are more likely to prefer reading as a hobby than male children

- Most children are interested in reading literature books

- Most children prefer fictional stories to non-fictional stories

- Children are unfamiliar with the names of children's authors in Bahrain because children are not introduced to authors whenever they are read a story and in addition there is a shortage of production by these authors

- Most children do not spend enough time reading at their homes

- Female children are mostly interested in reading social fiction, whereas male children are mostly interested in reading adventure fiction

- Most children prefer to select what they like to read by themselves instead of depending on their parents or teachers

- Most children consider their mothers as the most supportive person while reading stories

- Most children consider their school library as the most suitable place for reading

- No weekly magazines are produced/published for children in Bahrain. However, magazines from other Arab countries are provided for children through bookshops and libraries of Bahrain. The most famous Arabic magazine loved by most children in Bahrain is "MAJID" which is published weekly in the United Arab Emirates and distributed all over the Arab world

- Most children consider the subject as the most important aspect rather than the format of the text (i.e. book or a magazine)

- Children are not allowed enough time to read literature at school

- School libraries are not provided with adequate literature books in terms of quantity and quality.

6.3.6-The Semi-Structured Interview For Authors

6.3.6.1- Introduction

One of the methodologies used by the researcher in conducting this survey study was a semi-structured interview with two Bahraini authors of children's literature who have had long experience of writing for children. The researcher's objectives for carrying out such an interview were mainly to identify the authors' opinions and also their suggestions with regard to:

- the locally published children's literature and books in terms of quantity and quality;
- the reading inclinations of the male and female children in Bahrain;
- the role of the Bahraini family in encouraging their children to read;
- the quantity and quality of children's public libraries;
- the difficulties faced by authors of children's literature in Bahrain;
- the difficulties faced by children in Bahrain in accessing their literature.

The semi-structured interview for authors included twelve questions, which were directed to the two, selected authors: Khalaf Ahmed Khalaf and Ebrahim Sanad. The researcher individually interviewed them. Before going further into the analysis of the authors' responses to these questions, the researcher wishes to introduce each of these authors with the following brief information:

Figure 6.4:



Mr. KHALAF AHMED KHALAF.

He is a member of the Literary Authors Family and the Bahraini Socialists Society. His published compilations are:

- *The Dream and Other Faces*, a group of stories, 1975, Beirut / Bahrain.
- *The Bahraini Children's Needs and Inclinations*, a survey study conducted in Bahrain in 1981.
- *The Game*, a play published in 1982 in Baghdad.
- *The Devil* and *The Bird's Home*, two plays for children published in 1983 in Damascus.
- *Feeznar*, a group of stories published in 1985 in Beirut / Bahrain.
- Different children's stories published in Qatar and Bahrain.

Some of his published plays such as *The Devil* and *The Bird's Home* were presented on theatre in Kuwait, United Arab Emirates and Bahrain.

Figure 6.5:



Mr. EBRAHIM SANAD.

He has published stories suitable for children at the primary education level. All these, which include the following, were published in the 1980s.

- *The Green Island*
- *What makes Sami Run*
- *What Did the Ant Wish To Be?*
- *The Home of the Palm Tree*
- *The Thieves of Home Countries*
- *The Boy Who Said Who Am I*
- *The Duck With the Soft Feathers.*

6.3.6.2-The Interview Questions

1. From your long experience as an author for children in Bahrain, how do you evaluate Bahraini children's reading level in respect of literature?

2. In your personal view, what are the literary subjects preferred by Bahraini children of age 6-12?
   A - Male children
   B - Female children

3. To what extent, in your opinion, does the Bahraini family currently play a role in developing/expanding their children's reading interests?

4. To what extent do the books of the primary education curriculum play a role in supporting children's literature?

5. Have you contributed to the writing of literature books related to the primary education curriculum?

6. How do you find children's public libraries in Bahrain in terms of the quantity and quality of books?

7. Do you consider the number of locally published children's literature books each year is adequate in comparison to the number of Bahraini children and their needs?

8. Do you think the quality of the locally produced literature books, which are presented to children in public libraries and bookshops in Bahrain, satisfies children's literary needs?

9. How do you find the extent of co-operation between you as an author of children's literature, and the governmental or private institutions in presenting quality literature to children in Bahrain?

10. Currently, what is the role of traditional heritage in children's literature in Bahrain?

11. Do you face any difficulties as an author of children's literature in Bahrain?

12. Do children in Bahrain face any difficulties in accessing their literature?

6.3.6.3 - Analysis of the Authors' Responses to Questions of the Semi-Structured Interview

The authors' responses to the researcher's questions were explicit, as follows:

In response to the first question put by the researcher which was about the authors' evaluation of the literary level of Bahraini children, both authors agreed that children's literary levels are being gradually reduced by the continuous invasion of modern technological media starting with television and then the recent introduction of computers and children's computer games. According to both authors, children nowadays are spending most of their time with the television programmes, video films and computer games that attract them more than reading books.

Another problem affecting the development of children's literary levels in Bahrain is the negative role of parents in failing to encourage their children to read literature. Khalaf Ahmed Khalaf, for example, explained:

> "The complicated nature of life today, in addition to the effects of the introduction of modern technology have driven the interest of parents themselves away from reading. This situation is consequently reflected on their children and has caused their retrogression from reading".

On the other hand, both authors agreed that there is a minority of children who are interested in literature reading that is mostly in the form of magazines and translated foreign literature.

The second question directed by the researcher concerned children's reading preferences. One of the authors, Khalaf Ahmed Khalaf, said that the differences in reading interests between male and female children of ages such as 6-12 were not marked, except in cases where gender role stereotypes imposed specific limitations, for example, where girls are interested in female related subjects while boys are interested in adventure stories.

The second author, Ebrahim Sanad, classified childhood into three stages where children's interests differ from one stage to another. He asserted that:

> The first stage is the early childhood stage (age 3-5) where children, males and females, prefer to listen to short stories especially humorous and comic once. Moreover, children in the early childhood stage love to listen to songs and plays and are inclined to imitate the roles of story characters.
>
> The second stage is the middle childhood stage (age 5-8) where children prefer to read or listen to fiction stories specially those about devils and witches.
>
> The third stage is the late childhood stage (8-12). At this stage differences of interests between male and female children tend to arise, that is, male children prefer to read adventure stories and those including famous heroes. Female children prefer to read stories, which include female characters such as 'Snow White' and 'Cinderella'.

In respect of the contribution of the Bahraini family and the extent to which it plays a role in the development of the children's reading interests, both authors agreed that many of the Bahraini families do

not play an effective role and most depend on schools for their children's education. In this regard, Khalaf Ahmed Khalaf stated that:

> The role of the Bahraini families is restricted to quickly reading magazines and daily newspapers to their children. The parents themselves lack interest in reading and therefore do not play an effective role in developing their children's reading interests.

Also, Ebrahim Sanad stated that:

> Despite its important role in the development of the child's education, the family in Bahrain depends entirely on the school to play such roles. In order to develop children's interest in reading there is a need for a fertile soil that unfortunately does not exist in most Bahraini homes.

Through the interview, both authors indicated different reasons for the negative involvement of Bahraini parents in their children's education. The most important of these can be summarised as follows:

> Parents these days spend longer at work and consequently find very little time to spend with their children to develop their reading interests.

> The existence of a high level of illiterate parents in Bahrain is a major problem causing a lack of appreciation for the significance of children's literature reading.

> The movement towards modern technology and media encourages the parents to concentrate on the provision of such media as computers, computer games and video films for their children in their belief that these contribute more to children's education than reading.

> The number of children in most of the Bahraini families ranges from 4-8. This large number within each family does not allow parents the opportunity to play a positive role in encouraging their children to read literature, especially in the case of poor and illiterate families.

With regard to the contribution of school textbooks in developing children's literary inclinations and in expanding their imaginations, both authors agreed that they do not have any literary content. According to Khalaf Ahmed Khalaf:

> The primary education textbooks do not assist in developing children's literary inclinations and in expanding their imaginations. This basically refers to the nature of the curriculum and the subjects selected to be taught to children which themselves lack imaginary features.

According to Ebrahim Sanad:

> The primary education textbooks do not have any literary content except for a few scattered excerpts written by educationalists who are not specialised in children's literature. These excerpts are rigid and more concerned with rote learning than the exercise of imagination.

With regard to the role of Bahraini authors of children's literature in compiling literature books for primary education, both authors admitted that there has been no contribution made by authors of children's literature in Bahrain to the curriculum of primary education. They both indicated their great interest in playing such a role when they are allowed the opportunity by the Ministry of Education to present valuable literature to children in primary education through their text books.

Another aspect of concern to the researcher in this study is the situation concerning children's public libraries in Bahrain with regard to the quantity and quality of the books they provide. Both authors indicated that the public libraries in Bahrain are mainly designed and equipped for adults. They only have a small corner for children with a few shelves holding a few of the most well-known books in the market such as translated literature books and those written by traditional authors, who are unacquainted with children's current interests and attitudes. In the research study carried out by Khalaf Ahmed Khalaf into children's reading interests and needs (Khalaf, 1979) he concluded that children's books in public libraries represent 3.3% of the total books at a time when the number of children visiting these libraries represent 48.9% of the total visitors.

Both authors suggested that children in Bahrain should be provided with separate children's public libraries equipped with the most attractive features needed for modern children's interests and needs. These would include comfortable and attractive furniture, audio-visual aids and expert children's librarians who would specialise in children's reading interests. The authors also stressed the necessity to improve school libraries as these are more accessible to children and it is through these that the educational process can be assisted.

Through his interviews with the authors, the researcher considered the quantity of locally published children's literature books. Both authors agreed that literature books written and published by Bahraini authors are very few compared to the number of children in Bahrain. Ebrahim Sanad explained the situation in the following statement:

> The total number of readers - children in Bahrain aged 6-13- equals 14% of the total population that is 516,444 persons. This percentage represents a number of 70,000 children. The total number of children's literature authors in Bahrain does not exceed five, and the number of literature books published annually by these authors is 2-3 books. I think these figures do not need further comments. This is in fact a major problem.

Both authors also stated that one of the major reasons for such low productivity in respect of books for children, is the very high cost of producing and publishing. According to Khalaf Ahmed Khalaf, "publishing for children is a process that has its own costly aesthetic characteristics which is usually avoided by publishing corporations, publishers and other concerned authorities unless they have the financial resources for marketing and distribution". Another problem which could account for the limited production in writing and publishing literature books for children is the lack of co-ordination between publishers, authors and government authorities in encouraging and supporting the process of publishing for children.

The situation described above means that children have to read whatever is available to them in bookshops and libraries. Mostly this is imported literature, either from other Arab countries or European countries, which does not reflect the children environments. Therefore, it has been suggested by these authors that a publishing corporation should be established specifically for children to support the publication of children's literature.

The researcher was also concerned about the quality of literature written by Bahraini authors. Both authors said that most of the children's literature presented by Bahraini authors does not satisfy Bahraini children's literary needs and reading interests. One of the interviewed authors, Ebrahim Sanad, ascribed such a situation to insufficient publication of children's literature books in addition to the fact that Bahraini authors in general do not seriously consider the significance of childhood education. According to the second interviewed author, Khalaf A. Khalaf:

> Most of the literary productions presented to children by Bahraini authors, including myself, depend on independent opinions and judgements, that is, the author writes what he or she believes suitable for children and not according to research studies carried out in the field of children's literary needs and reading interests.

Moreover, Khalaf A. Khalaf believes that authors' judgements with regard to suitable children's literature should be based on several factors, most important of which are the author's acquaintance with a scientific background in the field of child psychology and children's literary inclinations, his own talent for writing children's literature and his ability to experiment. Therefore, he suggests that authors of children's literature should try out their books on Bahraini children and then, through indirect questioning, measure their responses.

Another aspect of concern to the researcher is the extent of co-ordination and co-operation between children's literature authors in Bahrain and the governmental and public authorities responsible for selecting and presenting suitable literature to children in Bahrain.

According to both authors, such co-ordination and co-operation does not exist except in very few cases where special conditions related to the children can be found. Ebrahim Sanad explained the situation in the following statement:

> The relationship between authors of children's literature in Bahrain and specialist institutions in children's education is not as strong as it needs to be. Each institution works separately without co-operating or co-ordination with other concerned parties, which causes duplication of activities, for example, a competition in story or poetry writing may be held by different institutions simultaneously. The objective of each of these institutions is to manifest its activities through the different media of information and not to serve children's literary needs.

Khalaf A. Khalaf added that:

> The co-operation and co-ordination between authors of children's literature and institutions concerned with children's education occurs only on special occasions, for example, the International Year of the Child, where each institution extends its efforts to manifest its activities. Therefore with such aims, institutions cannot create permanent relationships with authors or other concerned parties.

In this context, Khalaf A. Khalaf suggests that:

> Co-operation and co-ordination between all authorities concerned with children's education must be accomplished in an institutional framework, and through a body permanently assigned to the purpose of developing the Bahraini child's education. A worthy achievement in this regard could be, for

> example, through the publishing of a weekly children's magazine where the most suitable and enriching children's literature could be presented.

With regard to the role of the Bahraini traditional heritage in children's literature, the researcher asked the authors to identify the extent of its existence in the literature published for children by Bahraini authors.

Both authors declared that despite the insufficient production of children's literature books in Bahrain, the Bahraini traditional heritage is greatly considered in these publications. Ebrahim Sanad stated that most Bahraini literary publications have a very strong relation to the traditional heritage and there is a distinctive presence of folk stories in the modern literature. He believes that we cannot produce successful children's literature if we do not refer to our traditional heritage and extract from it the most useful experiences, attitudes and events.

According to Khalaf A. Khalaf, the traditional heritage has been drawn on to a large extent by all authors of children's literature in Bahrain. This heritage is written into the stories by the authors and read into the stories by children brought up within this tradition. Some of the authors, however, have recently revised the traditional stories and published them for children. This, as Khalaf A. Khalaf believes, is only a reiteration of the traditional stories, etc. and not a reworking of them and their values in the form of modern literature.

Considering the difficulties facing authors of children's literature in Bahrain, the researcher directed a question in this regard to the

authors who both declared that they face many problems when writing books for children. These problems, include, for example:

- –lack of support and motivation from the relevant government and public institutions;
- –high costs of producing attractive children's books to read;
- –ignorance of most of the authors of children's literary needs;
- –lack of recognition by Bahraini society as a whole of the significance of children's literature;
- –non-existence of specialist publishing houses or corporations for children in Bahrain.

Ebrahim Sanad explained the difficulties they face in the following statement:

> Without doubt, there are certain difficulties facing authors of children's literature. The first of these is the high cost of producing children's books especially when colourful pictures and attractive drawings are to be included. Most of the Bahraini authors cannot afford such high expenses of publishing, especially when they know that there is no potential market for these books. Moreover, there are no institutions in Bahrain which are responsible for publishing and distributing Bahraini children's books to other Arab countries.

Khalaf A. Khalaf declared that the major problems they face when writing or publishing for children that:

> Non-existence of a children's linguistic encyclopaedia or dictionary which shows the right language to be used for each age group of children. High costs of producing children's books at a time when these books are to be sold to children or their parents for low prices. Lack of recognition by the Bahraini society, including educationalists, librarians and parents, of the significance of children's literature in contributing to their education.

With regard to the problems facing children in accessing their literature, both authors agreed on the following points:

- the high costs of children's literature books leave most of the mid and lower class families in Bahrain unable to buy books needed by their children;
- there is a lack of recognition by most of the Bahraini families of the significance of literature in their children's education;
- the literature presented to children in Bahrain does not satisfy their needs and interests.

6.3.6.4 - Summary of the Findings

From the previously presented opinions of the interviewed authors, the researcher draws the following findings:

-The literary levels of Bahraini children are being gradually reduced by the invasion of modern technological media and the negative role of parents in failing to encourage their children to read literature.

-Children's reading preferences vary according to their ages until they reach the age of eight where they start to differ in preferences according to gender.

-Many of the Bahraini families do not play an effective role in the development of their children's reading interests but mostly depend on the school for their children's education.

-The school textbooks do not have any literary content and accordingly do not assist in developing children's literary inclinations and in expanding their imaginations.

-Bahraini authors of children's literature make no contribution to the curriculum of primary education.

- There are no special children's public libraries in Bahrain. All the public libraries available were originally equipped for adults with a small corner for children.

- Children's literature books written and published by Bahraini authors are very few in comparison to the number of readers - i.e. children in Bahrain.

- Children's literature written by Bahraini authors does not satisfy children's needs and reading interests.

- There is a lack of co-ordination and co-operation between children's literature authors in Bahrain and the responsible governmental and public authorities in the process of selecting or presenting suitable literature to children in Bahrain.

- The Bahraini traditional heritage is greatly considered in children's literature.

- Bahraini authors of children's literature are facing various problems when writing books for children.

- Children are facing problems in accessing their literature such as high costs of books, the negative role of parents and the poor quality of the presented literature.

Chapter 7

Discussion of the Findings

Discussion of the Findings

7.1-Introduction

The major findings, which emerge from the analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data, are discussed in this chapter and they are related to the questions and hypotheses of the study. The researcher will attempt to present features of the current situation in respect of children's literature in Bahrain, provision of the books and reading inclinations of the children. This should enable the researcher to identify the problem areas and then suggest some suitable solutions in chapter eight. The discussion is divided into three sections:

- The provision of children's literature and related books in Bahrain
- The provision of ready access to children's literature in Bahrain
- The reading habits of male and female children in Bahrain.

7.2-The Provision of Children's Literature And Books in Bahrain

The findings from the analysis of responses to the questionnaire for teachers, the questionnaire for librarians and the interviews conducted with the authors of children's literature, indicate that there is a deficiency in the provision of children's literature and related books in school libraries, public libraries and bookshops in Bahrain. The majority of teachers in the study claimed that:

- Children's literature is not adequately considered in the curriculum of primary education. Both male and female teachers have agreed this point of view with non-significant differences in their responses.

- The provision of locally written literature and foreign literature in school libraries is inadequate in respect of quantity and quality. Both male and female teachers sampled for the study agreed about this with non-significant statistical differences between their responses.

- The locally produced literature books are inadequate in terms of quantity and quality. There was a statistically significant difference in responses of male/female teachers. The reason for this might be that the same female respondents who agreed that the number of specialist authors of children's literature is adequate still believe that what these authors produce is satisfactory in terms of quantity and quality.

- Some of the imported children's literature and books have values, which are irrelevant to children in Bahrain. Non-significant difference in male/female teachers' responses was clear.

- There are very few children's authors writing in Bahrain. However, the male/female teachers' responses in this regard indicated a statistically significant difference in favour of the female teachers. This difference in responses was a surprise to the researcher since the lack of specialist children's authors is a matter of fact in Bahrain. It might be that some of the female teachers are not fully aware of the real situation of children's literature and

books in Bahrain, or perhaps they think that this number of authors is sufficient as well as not being a problem or an obstacle to an adequate provision of children's literature in Bahrain.

- Most of the literature books sold in bookshops in Bahrain lack the appropriate content and format likely to attract children to reading. Non-significant statistical difference between male/female teachers' responses was shown. This indicates common point of views in this regard.

The majority of school librarians, too, supported the view that there is a deficiency in the provision of children's literature in school/public libraries. According to them, the provision of literature books in their school libraries is inadequate if compared to the provision of textbooks dealing with, for example, geography, history or science. The analysis of their responses to the general information questions about the books available in their school libraries indicated that the number of literature books, including books imported from other Arab countries, foreign literature translated into Arabic and the locally written literature books, is very low (26%) in comparison to the total number of books available in these libraries (see table 6.108 on page 276). The librarians also indicated that there is poor provision of locally written literature and there are very few Bahraini children's authors. With regard to the provision of literature books for children in the public libraries, the majority of librarians claimed that these libraries lacked the required quantity and quality of books suitable for children.

The researcher consider that such inadequacy is due to the prevalence of informational subjects in primary school textbooks as

compared with literary subjects which are restricted in Arabic textbooks and are inadequate in terms of quantity and quality. This situation is seen by the researcher as very critical and needs to be considered by the responsible authorities in Bahrain because of the significance of literature and literature-based subjects and programmes in contributing to the development of children's education and reading interests. The Ministry of Education in Bahrain is currently depending on primary school teachers to select literary subjects for children from resources other than their textbooks and to present them in the form of story telling and drama. However, this is not always reliable because of the individual differences of the teachers in respect of their experiences in selecting suitable books for children and their skills in presenting these literary subjects. In some primary schools in Bahrain, teachers tend to make children spend the time allocated to them for free reading in doing their homework, reading their textbooks and watching educational films. This situation discourages the people concerned in these schools from providing the library with recently published, good-quality literature books.

Through the interviews carried out by the researcher with the primary school children aged 6-9, 60% of the children declared that most of the books available in their school libraries do not encompass literary themes to assist in the development of their literary levels. They claimed that most of these books are about general educational subjects and that literature books are not adequately provided. However 40% of the children thought that these books were useful and of great value to the development of their reading interests. The researcher found it surprising that children of such age could evaluate

the content of books presented to them in their school libraries. This might be because they find a great similarity in the subjects presented to them through their textbooks and those presented to them through books available in the school library, therefore, they could easily distinguish between informational subjects and literary themes they have read in story books. Teachers and librarians see this situation as unhelpful to the development of children's reading interests. Children would not care to read subjects similar to their curriculum and would consequently tend to find alternatives to spend their reading time such as watching video films or doing art works.

It is clear that teachers and librarians think there is a direct connection between the abundant provision of children's literature and the development of children's reading interests. Following from this belief, they stress that it is very important to enrich the school library with books of interesting literary subjects such as stories, poetry and plays, in order to attract and encourage children to read and to allow them the opportunity to expand their imaginations. Although some other teachers and librarians may argue that children may become expert readers without any story books, this opinion cannot be generalised in respect of all children. The researcher believes that children are individuals and have different reading inclinations. Some children prefer to read non-fiction, others prefer to read fiction and others like or dislike reading both types of subjects. We cannot produce expert readers from children who prefer fiction books by exposing them to non-fiction books and vice versa. Consequently, we need to ensure adequate provision of both fiction and non-fiction in school libraries to satisfy the different interests of children. Moreover, children in schools are not expected to develop

an interest in reading by being presented with the same type of subjects during the whole time of their school days. They need to find some change and pleasure in the books available in their school libraries. However, the quality of the contents of these books needs to be considered in terms of suitability and positive values.

The two Bahraini children's authors interviewed by the researcher also claimed that there is a lack of provision of children's literature and related books in Bahrain in terms of quality and quantity. They both agreed that:

- The school textbooks do not present literary features and themes and accordingly do not assist in developing children's literary inclinations and in expanding their imaginations. When the researcher perused some of the textbooks taught to children in primary education, he found that only Arabic textbooks contained literary forms such as short stories and some poetry or songs which were mainly presented with the aim to develop children's language. This situation refers back to the failure of concerned authorities in Bahrain to recognise the significance of literature for primary education and the fact that authors of children's literature are not in the process of writing primary school textbooks.

- Bahraini authors of children's literature are not given the opportunity to write literature books for use in primary schools. If they were, it might help to ensure that suitable and valuable literature is presented to children through their syllabus. The researcher believes that authors of children's literature in Bahrain are the people most acquainted with children's literature. Hence,

he stresses the necessity of involving them in writing textbooks for the primary school curriculum to strengthen children's literature base in these schools and to introduce children to the indigenous literature as well as to authors.

- Children's literature books written and published by Bahraini authors are very few in comparison to the number of children in Bahrain. This, of course, is a result of the lack of authors of children's literature in Bahrain and the lack of the production of these authors.

- There is a lack of co-ordination and co-operation between the authors of children's literature in Bahrain and the responsible governmental and public authorities involved in selecting suitable literature and books for children in Bahrain. This means that these authors' experience in the field of children's literature is not utilised in selecting appropriate books for children. The responsible governmental and public authorities in Bahrain are represented in the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labour, The General Organisation for Youth and Sports, Ministry of Information and the Bahraini societies for child development. However, it has been indicated in the research that there is a lack of co-ordination and co-operation between these authorities in the development of childhood literary education.

These responses seem to indicate that there is a significant lack of provision of suitable children's literature and books in terms of quantity and quality. This lack of provision includes the locally written/produced literature and that imported from other countries.

With regard to the locally written/produced literature, the researcher concluded the following reasons for the lack of their provision:

- The lack of specialist authors of children's literature in Bahrain. The number of Bahraini authors currently writing for children does not exceed 6 which is very low when compared to the number of children or young readers in Bahrain. The researcher believes that the lack of children's specialist authors is due to the lack of encouragement received from the responsible authorities and the lack of recognition by Bahraini society as a whole given to the significance of children's literature and books in contributing to their children's education in terms of the development of their imagination, language skills and personalities. In the United Kingdom, financial incentives are granted to authors of children's books in addition to the encouragement rewards which are provided through competitions of the best stories written (Berliner, 1996). This process should begin in Bahrain with the responsible authorities paying financial incentives to Bahraini authors of children's literature for the locally produced books. Moreover, in order to encourage the production of valuable literature for children in Bahrain, competitions through which rewards are granted for the best story are to be held regularly. Nevertheless, the researcher's point of view is that we, as adults (including authors), hold the responsibility for providing children with the most valuable/suitable literature and books without expecting any rewards for this.

- These authors are not adequately acquainted with children's reading inclinations and consequently they depend on their

independent opinions and judgements to write what they think is suitable for children.

- The Bahraini authors of children's literature, as they claimed, face problems such as the high costs of book production, lack of support and motivation from the relevant government and public institutions, the lack of specialist publishing corporations for children in Bahrain and the failure by Bahraini society as a whole to recognise the importance of children's literature. The relevant authorities in Bahrain therefore must begin the process of buying good locally written/produced books as well as those produced abroad; to encourage children to read these books and to encourage local authors to start writing for children.

- Authors of children's literature in Bahrain are not fully committed to writing for children, as they do not do it full time. They give their main jobs first priority, and consider writing for children as a part-time hobby. Consequently, this has negative effects on the volume of children's literature and books 'written' by these authors, and increases the tendency towards importing children's literature books either from other Arab countries or European/American countries. This situation needs to be greatly considered by the responsible authorities and by children's authors in an attempt to produce children's literature and books in Bahrain which are adequate in terms of both quantity and quality.

With regard to children's literature imported from other countries, which includes literature imported from the European countries and translated into Arabic language and that imported from other Arab

countries, the researcher believes that the reasons behind the lack of provision might be that:

- The costs of importing books, as claimed by the librarians, are too high. This high cost will have its impact on the selling prices of these books in the bookshops and accordingly on the demand from children and the relevant authorities. This will certainly have its effect on the provision of literature books in the public libraries and school libraries.

- Children's literature is not yet recognised by society and by authorities responsible for children's education in Bahrain as being a significant aid to the development of children's educational and literary levels.

- There is a lack of specialist authorities or institutions responsible for selecting suitable literature to be imported for children. According to the parents and librarians sampled for the study, "when perusing the piles of books translated for children, it is noticeable that they are a jumble of stories most of which do not suit the Bahraini children at all".

- Moreover, it has been agreed by the respondents sampled for the study that some of the imported children's literature and books have values, which are irrelevant to children in Bahrain. Some of the adventure stories include values such as violence and cruelty that may encourage children to imitate such behaviours believing that these are acceptable by the society. Furthermore, some of the imported books include values that contradict the Islamic culture

and customs. Consequently, adults providing children with literature and books should make careful selection. It is of great importance that special institutions are founded in Bahrain with qualified staff who are responsible for checking the literature and books being imported from other countries and selecting those relevant to the culture and customs of the Bahraini society. But, presumably, making sure that these books help to make Bahraini children more aware of other cultures as well.

With regard to the existence of literature in the syllabus of primary education, the researcher concluded that the school textbooks do not have a literary content except for a few scattered excerpts which are more concerned with rote - learning than exercising the imagination. These excerpts are written by educationalists who are not specialised in children's literature. The Bahraini authors of children's literature are not given the opportunity to make literary contributions to the textbooks in primary education.

It has also been agreed by most of the respondents sampled for the study that most of the children's literature sold in bookshops in Bahrain lacks the appropriate content and format likely to attract children to reading. As they previously explained, most of the books available in bookshops are imported from other Arab countries and are poorly illustrated as their production is affected by financial constraints. They added that since book production costs are too high in these countries, as in Bahrain, authors tend to use the most cost-effective materials needed for the production of books in terms of paper, colours, pictures, etc. However, although the researcher supports these opinions, he still believes that bookshops in Bahrain

do present to some extent attractively formatted children's books, especially those imported from the developed countries where high technology is applied and great consideration is given to resources for children's education.

In addition to the reasons given for the lack of quality literature books in Bahrain bookshops in terms of content and format, the researcher believes that children's reading interests are not considered by authors when writing for children and also by bookshop owners when selecting books for children. Moreover, the prevalence of the attractively produced children's magazines in the bookshops of Bahrain has encouraged children to read these more than books which are less attractively produced.

7.3- The Provision of Ready Access to Children's Literature and Books in Bahrain

The children's library provides the most important access for children to their literature and books. A school without an appropriate school library is not properly equipped, quite regardless of what other facilities may exist. The library could surely be a place where real education is provided if it contains good books which are well chosen and well presented.

The findings from the analysis of the responses from the quantitative and qualitative surveys indicated that there is a lack of provision of children's libraries in Bahrain especially children's public libraries. The two authors interviewed by the researcher stated that there are no

separate public libraries for children. ` All the public libraries in Bahrain, they claim, are mainly designed for adults. They only contain a section for children with a few shelves holding the most popular books in the market.

The vast majority of teachers in the study supported this view. They stated that there are few children's public libraries in Bahrain and that the services provided for children in these libraries such as specialist librarians, audio-visual aids, and comfortable attractive furniture are not to the appropriate standard. Furthermore, literature and books are not adequately provided in terms of quantity and quality in the existing libraries.

Most of the librarians also declared that there are no children's public libraries in some areas of Bahrain. They added that there are some public libraries mainly designed for adults scattered throughout the main cities of Bahrain. They think these are not equipped to professional standards and lack the required quantity and quality of children's literature books.

The researcher believes that this situation concerning the public libraries has discouraged children from visiting them frequently. The analysis of responses to the questionnaire for children shows that the majority of children (79.2%) do not make frequent visits to the public libraries. Moreover, 64.5% of these children indicated their preference for their homes or school libraries as the best places for reading. The parents' opinions supported this. They too, indicated that the majority of their children (56%) are very interested in reading

at home with a significant difference in interest in favour of the female children.

The reasons for such a difference in preference between male and female children were inferred by the researcher from his interviews with children of age 6-9. The male children reported that they found their school library to be a quiet place to read without so many distractions, and that it was designed for such a purpose in terms of its furniture, lighting and air-conditioning as well as its provision of different types of books and magazines, audio visual aids and computers. The female children indicated that they found their home a more comfortable and encouraging place to read with more opportunity to concentrate and to get their parents' assistance whenever they need it.

The researcher's view with regard to the difference in preference between male and female children is that the Bahraini customs and religious constraints restrict females' freedom to make frequent journeys outside their homes, and this consequently has its effect on their visit to the public libraries unless they are accompanied by an adult. Male children on the other hand have more freedom, which is reflected in the more frequent visits made by male children to the public libraries. The existing public libraries are scattered throughout some cities and villages in Bahrain. This situation makes it difficult for some children to reach these public libraries especially for those who live some distance away.

Some children do not visit public libraries because the school libraries can adequately meet their needs and are more accessible than public libraries. Furthermore, because children's public libraries

are only a small part of adults' public libraries, some children expressed through their interviews with the researcher that they find it discouraging to read in a place where they must be with adults and where they feel restricted in their freedom to talk about the books or subjects they read. Another reason for children not visiting public libraries, as they stated, which the researcher considers as critical is the excessive amount of homework being given to children by their teachers. This overload of homework consumes most of children's time at home and also most of their effort. It is a situation, which discourages them from visiting public libraries and only allows them a little time at home either to read at home or watch television.

With regard to the provision of school libraries, it has been agreed by most of the respondents sampled for the study that they exist in most primary schools in Bahrain although the provision of suitable literature and books in those libraries is not adequate. The majority of teachers (89.3%) indicated that the services and facilities provided by school libraries were not to the appropriate standard. However, when the researcher visited some of the primary school libraries whilst conducting his current research study, he found that there was inconsistency in the provision of library services including qualified librarians, suitable literature and books and appropriate standard of facilities. This inconsistency is due to the differences in the schools' financial abilities. In Bahrain, the Ministry of Education holds the responsibility for constructing buildings in all schools to be used as libraries by the students, however, the funding of these libraries is the responsibility of the management in each school which they usually collect from charity activities and donations from the students themselves. This has caused variances in the amount of funds made by

each school for the library in addition to the fact that each school management has different views about prioritising the school library among other needs such as sport materials and teaching aids. This suggests that great consideration should be given by the authorities responsible in the Ministry of Education in Bahrain to the development of school libraries, especially in those schools which are in need of financial assistance, in order to ensure that a consistent and appropriate standard of service is provided by all primary school libraries.

In respect of the classroom library, the vast majority of teachers (80.3%) considered its existence in the classroom to be an aid to the development of children's reading skills and interests. However, there was a significant difference in responses between male and female teachers. A total percentage of 30.9 of female teachers did not really support the idea of the classroom library being an assistance to the development of children's reading interests compared to 7.4% of male teachers who thought the same. The reason behind the difference in responses between male and female teachers might be that the female teachers wanted to show that the current situation of their classroom libraries, where inadequate provision of literature and books in terms of quantity and quality exists, did not assist in achieving such an objective. On the other hand, when the majority of male/female teachers expressed their opinions, they considered the importance of the existence of the classroom library in general without taking into consideration the current situation of their classroom libraries. Nevertheless, despite the great importance of the classroom library indicated by the majority of male/female teachers, it does not exist in most classrooms of primary schools in Bahrain.

The classroom library exists only in classrooms where the class-teaching system is applied, and since the class-teaching system, has not yet been applied to all primary schools in Bahrain; not all of primary school classrooms in Bahrain contain libraries. The researcher believes that the classroom library is the starting point from which children are encouraged to read literature and books other than their textbooks. These libraries need to be attractively and comfortably designed and also adequately provided with a variety of literature and books that satisfy children's needs and interests. Children should be provided with adequate time during the school day to read and to discuss what they read with their teachers. This will also motivate children to read from sources other than the classroom library, such as the public or the school library especially when teachers suggest interesting books for them to read.

7.4- The Reading Habits of Male and Female Children in Bahrain

One of the survey's major findings in respect of the reading habits of male and female children in Bahrain indicates that female children read more than male children. The results of the comparison between male and female children in the first four questions in the questionnaire for children, indicate that female children spend more time reading than male children; they obtain a larger number of stories than male children; and they are more interested in writing to their magazines than male children. Moreover, more female children considered reading a story as the most preferable access to it, whilst

more male children considered watching the story on television to be preferable.

The results obtained from the analysis of responses of the librarians sampled for the study also indicated that female children read more than male children. A significant difference was indicated in responses between male and female librarians in respect of children's use of the school library and in respect of the frequency with which books are borrowed by these children. The majority of female librarians stated that children "often" use the library and borrow books whereas the majority of male librarians reported that children "rarely" use the library or borrow books. It is important to note here that education in the primary stage in Bahrain is not co-educational, therefore, the responses of the female librarians refer to female children and the responses of the male librarians refer to male children. This means that female children borrow books more frequently than male children. The reason for this, as the teachers indicated in their responses to the open-ended question, is that male children are generally found to spend their leisure time playing sports, computer games or watching television, while female children tend to practice quieter hobbies such as reading and that they are not allowed to make frequent journeys outside the home.

The data gathered from the questionnaire for parents indicated that the majority of children are interested "a lot" in reading at home with a significant statistical difference in interest in favour of the female children (i.e. female children are interested in reading more than male children). This is proved by the parents' responses in respect of the weekly amount of children's reading at home. They indicated that the majority of their male children read between 1-4 hours per week,

whereas the majority of their female children read between 5-7 hours per week. In addition to the gender factor, the parents' responses indicated children's amount of reading according to their age. The analysis of parents' responses demonstrated that the majority of children of ages 9-12 spend an average time of 5-7 hours per week reading at home, whereas the majority of children of ages 6-9 spend an average time of 1-4 hours per week reading at home. This, in the researcher's point of view, may refer to children's age related expectations. Children of ages 9-12 are mostly found to have gained sufficient linguistic skills and abilities, therefore, they are expected to be fluent readers and their range of language, experience and comprehension is expected to be wider. Younger children, on though, have not attained such level of skills and abilities, therefore they tend to prefer listening to stories read or told to them by adults rather than reading them.

The parents also added that most of their male children did not visit the public library at all, while on the other hand, most of their female children visit the public library from 2-3 times per week. This clearly indicates that the difference in the reading habits between male and female children is statistically significant. In the researcher's point of view, this number of hours spent by children, especially boys, reading at home each week is not enough to develop their language and imagination. This situation requires that parents become more involved in encouraging their children to read and assisting them in the selection of appropriate books during their reading times. The parents' responses also indicated significant differences between the different age ranges of children in respect of the frequency of their weekly visits to the public library. The majority of children aged

10-12 was shown to visit the public library more frequently than those of ages 9-10. On the other hand, the majority of children aged 7-9 does not make visit to public libraries at all. The independence of older children might be the main reason for their frequent visits to public libraries.

Furthermore, the responses of the children interviewed by the researcher to the question about their hobbies, indicated that most of the male children preferred sports rather than reading, while on the other hand, most of the female children preferred reading and artistic activities, such as painting, drawing, sewing, etc. However, through the children's responses to question 5 "Do you enjoy reading?", it was concluded that reading is generally enjoyed by most children regardless of their age and educational level.

The researcher believes that one of the reasons for the tendency of female children to read more than male children might be that most male children, regardless of their age, are inclined to practice other hobbies such as sports and artistic activities. Also, the introduction of the computer and computer games has attracted children's interest. The male children declared in their responses to the researcher's questions that they love playing with these computer games more than reading, while the female children indicated that reading is their favourite hobby.

With regard to the type of literature preferred by children, the survey indicated the following:

- The majority of children prefer to read fictional stories. A vast majority of the teachers sampled for the study agreed that most

children tend to prefer reading fiction stories rather than non-fiction with a significant difference in favour of the male children. Most of the children aged 9-12 indicated their preference for fiction stories with non-significant difference between male and female children. Furthermore, most children of ages 6-9 expressed their preference for reading fiction. The parents claimed that almost 50% of their children are interested in reading fiction stories with a significant difference in favour of the female children. The responses of the librarians too, indicate that 50% of them thought that children are very interested in reading fiction books with a significant difference in favour of the female children. However, the researcher found the teacher' responses with regard to children's preference of fictional stories very surprising. The significant difference indicated by male teachers in favour of the male children in reading fictional stories contradicts their earlier responses when the majority of them stated that female children are generally more interested in reading as a hobby than male children. Moreover' this significant difference contradicts the parents' and the librarians' responses in this regard where most of them indicated that female children are more interested in reading fictional stories.

One of the authors asserted that children of the age of 5-8 prefer to read or listen to fiction stories specially those about devils and witches, with a non-significant difference between male and female children. He added that at the age of 8-12, the differences in interests between male and female children tend to arise. This tendency towards reading fictional stories may refer to the fact that both the style of presenting these stories and the subjects

themselves differ considerably from those subjects/stories imposed by their curriculum for educational purposes. This type of literature expands children's imagination and provides them with the optimum pleasure they seek. Stories touch our lives in ways that non-fiction forms are unlikely to do. In Barbara Hardy's words, storying is "a primary act of mind" (Hardy, 1968 in Wells, 1989, p.197). Gordon Wells, 1989, asserts that storying is one of the most fundamental means whereby human beings gain control over the world around them. In its beginnings, storying is not a conscious and deliberate activity, but the way in which the mind itself works. At a later stage, however, there does begin to be a conscious shaping. To narrate a story-to tell it in words necessarily involves a selecting and ordering of the elements to be brought together (Wells, 1989, p.197). For all children, then, stories continue to provide one of the most enriching contexts for the development of language, both spoken and written. Although the study shows a statistical difference in interest between male and female children towards fictional stories, the researcher believes that there should be an abundant provision of these in both male and female primary school libraries.

The provision of fictional stories should also be extended to the home. It is time for all parents in Bahrain to recognise the significance of this type of literature in the development of their children's language skills and in expanding their imagination, and thus, to adequately provide their children with fictional stories at home, appropriate to their ages and interests. The Ministry of Information can also play an important role in presenting appropriate stories through radio and television programmes in the form of story telling or drama.

- The majority of the librarians claimed that children of primary school age have very little interest in reading non-fiction books. The difference in responses between male and female librarians is statistically significant. A larger number of male librarians indicated that children have very little interest, whereas a larger number of female librarians indicated that children have a great deal of interest in non-fiction. This suggests that female children are more interested in non-fiction than male children since female librarians' responses represent female children while male librarians' responses represent male children. Moreover, 40% of children aged 6-9 indicated their preferences for non-fiction books including arts, history, science, etc. However, when the researcher asked them about the title of the last fiction/non-fiction story they read or listened to during the previous month, very few of them (17%) mentioned titles of non-fiction stories.

On the other hand, the parents sampled for the study stated that more than 50% of their children are very interested in reading non-fiction books. The difference in interest between male and female children is statistically non-significant. This view of the parents contradicts the view of the librarians who stated that children are interested very little in reading non-fiction and indicated a significant statistical difference in favour of the female children. However, the parents' responses indicated a high statistical difference between the different ages of their children. The majority of parents reported that their children of ages 8-12 are more interested in reading non-fiction than those of ages 6-8. The reason for such difference may refer to the fact that younger children (ages 6-8) find non-fiction subjects uninteresting and difficult to understand.

Thus the results of the discussion of the findings related to the type of literature preferred by children suggests that:

- Most children are interested in reading fiction rather than non-fiction.
- Female children are more interested in reading fiction and non-fiction than male children.

In the researcher's point of view, this significant difference in interest in favour of the female children supports the previous conclusion that female children are interested in reading more than male children.

In respect of the subjects of literature (fiction/non-fiction) preferred by children, the researcher concluded that children's gender plays a significant role in determining the subjects preferred for reading. Most of the female children interviewed selected social stories as the most preferable type for them. They mentioned different names of stories that they love to read or listen to such as "Snow White", "Cinderella" or "The Sleeping Beauty". The male children on the other hand, selected adventure stories as the most preferable type. They mentioned different names of adventure stories that they love to read or listen to such as "Sinbad", "The Black Samba" and "Superman". Also, in response to the same question in the questionnaire for children, the majority of children aged 9-12 selected adventure and social stories as the most preferable types with a significant difference between male and female children. A larger number of male children preferred adventure stories, while a larger number of female children preferred social stories. The authors supported this finding. They claimed that at the age of 8-12, the differences in reading interests between male and female children

tend to arise, that is, male children prefer to read adventure stories and those including famous heroes. Female children prefer to read stories, which include female characters such as "Snow White" and "Cinderella".

The researcher believes that the child's gender plays a significant role in determining his or her preferences regarding reading matter. For example, female children are generally found to be more quiet and peaceful than male children and they are emotionally connected more with their mothers and with their lives at home, and are therefore, more inclined to read social (fiction/non-fiction) subjects than male children. On the other hand, male children are more inclined to act out roles of power, authority and heroism that may cause them to prefer reading adventure stories more than female children. However, this point of view does not necessary apply to all male and female children, thus, it is not surprising to find some female children interested in adventure, detective or space stories, or to find some male children interested in social stories.

With regard to children's interest in reading their magazines, the parents reported that the vast majority of their children are very interested in reading such magazines. The difference in interest between male and female children is statistically non-significant. The vast majority of the librarians too, indicated that children at primary school are very interested in reading their magazines, with a non-significant statistical difference between male and female children. Most of the interviewed children aged 6-9, indicated that their favourite weekly magazine is "MAJID" which is a children's magazine published weekly in the United Arab Emirates and distributed all over the Arab world. Most of the children added that

they contribute short stories, quizzes and poetry to their favourite magazines. However, despite the great interest shown by children sampled for the study in reading children's magazines, Bahrain has not yet produced its own magazine for children to satisfy their need for subjects related to their lives and to their society's customs and traditions. Most of the magazines presented to children in Bahrain are imported from other Arab countries. Moreover, these magazines are sold at very high prices and many children cannot afford to buy them or at least not regularly. In any case, some of these magazines lack the suitable, high-quality literary subject-matter needed for the development of children's language skills. They only present commercial advertisements and cartoon stories quoted from magazines imported from countries outside the Arab world. It is therefore necessary that the responsible authorities in Bahrain consider seriously the production and publication of a children's magazine to meet their needs and to which children could easily contribute their own literary efforts. This magazine should include literary subjects that reflect the Bahraini culture and customs as well as literary subjects reflecting other cultures and other societies, however, which are carefully selected.

Considering the foreign literature translated into Arabic language, it was reported by the majority of the librarians that children at primary school are not so interested in reading this type of literature. The difference in responses between male and female librarians is significant. This means that female children seem to be slightly more interested in reading such literature than male children. The reason might be that the foreign literature reflects environments, customs and life-styles other than those of the Bahraini child, and therefore

children may find it difficult to understand or follow the events of a particular foreign story as it is presented. Moreover, the librarians declared that the cost of purchasing these books from bookshops is too high for children to buy. This discourages many children to buy and read this type of literature and on the other hand would direct their interests towards cheaper books or may be away from reading itself.

On the other hand, considering literature written by Bahraini authors, the parents sampled for the study revealed that most of their children are interested "a little" in reading such literature. The researcher believes that the main reason for the little interest of children towards the locally written literature is that it does not attract children to reading either in terms of subject matter or in terms of the artistic production of the books. One of the interviewed authors admitted that what is being written for children in Bahrain is what is thought by individual authors as suitable and interesting for children, without identifying children's literary needs and reading interests. Nevertheless, female children were shown to be more interested in reading the locally written literature than male children. This supports the earlier conclusion that female children read more than male children despite their little interest in this type of literature.

The most preferred access to a story as indicated by the majority of female children is reading it whereas the majority of male children considered watching it on television is the most preferable access. This difference between male/female children preference supports the earlier conclusion that female children are interested in reading more than male children. However, the majority of male/female teachers sampled for the study reported that primary school children tend to

prefer listening to stories rather than reading them. This contradiction in the results pertaining to children's most preferable access to a story may refer to the fact that children who have shown preference to reading stories are those of ages 9-12. Children of this age are more independent and have already gained the skills of reading and therefore they find reading a story an easy access to it. The teachers' responses on the other hand represent children of a wider age range (6-12). This might have affected the final results in this regard since younger children are found to be more keen on listening to stories while older children are inclined to read stories by themselves.

The extent to which children are attracted by the name of the author when selecting a story to read was addressed by the researcher through the questionnaire for the librarians and the semi-structured interviews with children. The majority of male/female librarians indicated that the name of the author "did not" attract primary schoolchildren to reading. Children sampled for the semi-structured interviews stated that authors of children's literature in Bahrain are not very well known to them. The reason behind this might be that adults including parents, teachers and librarians do not introduce children to the author whenever they read a story to them. This has kept children unfamiliar with authors of children's literature in Bahrain. Furthermore, the researcher believes that the lack of the production of these authors has contributed to children's ignorance of their names.

Issues concerning relationships between children and figures in authority such as members of the family, teachers and librarians were also addressed by the researcher to identify their roles in children's

attitudes towards reading. Through their responses to the questionnaire, the majority of children aged 9-12 indicated that they are encouraged in their reading by their mothers. This may refer to the fact that the Bahraini society still believes that the mother holds the responsibility of raising the children in all aspects of life. Some cultural reasons may also affect such situation. Fathers spend most of the day out of their homes, either at work or carrying out some duties related to the provision of living necessities. The mothers on the other hand are mostly found at their homes. Even if they work they spend the rest of the day with their children looking after them and assisting them in doing their homework. This situation has led many mothers in Bahrain to compensate for the role of the father at home, especially in this aspect of children's education. However, this 'single-parent' role played in the development of children's education and in encouraging them towards reading may not fully achieve this objective, and it may have its negative effects on children's interests in reading in the future.

The extent to which children depend on adults in the selection of literature and books for them to read was also considered by the researcher through the questionnaire for the children. Through their responses, the majority of male children indicated their preference for choosing the stories by themselves. On the other hand, although the majority of female children also indicated their preference for choosing stories by themselves, significant numbers of them tended to depend on their parents and teachers. The social and cultural factors play a significant role in this context. The pride and independence of male children in Bahrain may have an influence on their preference towards selecting their own reading materials,

whereas the social constraints on female children restrict their independence and oblige them to accept what is being selected for them. Nevertheless, in the researcher's point of view, adults' role in the selection of reading materials for children should only be significant during their early ages where children are too immature to distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate subjects. For older children, freedom and confidence are to be granted, yet still with some guidance from adults to ensure good selection of subjects.

The relationship between children and the adult reader or storyteller in their lives was also highlighted through the questionnaire for the children. The majority of male/female children indicated that their grandparents are the most interesting people when reading or telling them a story. This, as concluded by the researcher, is also a result of social and cultural reasons. In Bahraini society, grandparents are very important figures in children's lives. Children find them ready and welcoming at any time they wish to be read to or told a story. Moreover, children find the way their grandparents present or tell a story as very attractive and interesting although they tend to tell children stories from the traditional inheritance passed through from one generation to the other. However, grandparents are to be guided to select from this traditional inheritance suitable and valuable subject stories that attract children, expand their imagination and encourage their interest to read. On the other hand, a significant percentage of children indicated that they consider their mothers as the most interesting person in reading to them or telling-them a story. Many mothers in the Bahraini society tend to go to work outside their homes to assist in the provision of better standards of life to their children. This has consequently affected their roles in encouraging

their children's reading interests and in allocating adequate time to read or to tell-stories.

The extent to which male/female children aged between 6-12 need the assistance of their parents while reading was indicated by parents sampled for the study. The majority of the responses showed that children need, 'to a certain extent', their parents' assistance. However, the extent of need varies between the different ages of children. According to the parents' responses, the majority of children of ages 6-10 greatly need their parents' assistance, while the majority of those aged 10-12 need their parents' assistance 'only a little' while reading. This difference in the extent of male/female children's need of their parents' assistance in reading may refer to the nature of the age itself. Children of older ages may be more independent than younger children in all aspects of their life.

Chapter 8

Critiques, Conclusions and Recommendations

Critiques, Conclusions and Recommendations

8.1- Introduction

The aim of this study has been to assess the provision of children's literature and books in primary schools, public libraries and bookshops in Bahrain; to determine the effect of children's literature and books on educational development and to identify children's preferences and the problems they might face in getting access to appropriate books. It is hoped then, that the findings of this study will contribute towards improving educational practice in the primary schools of Bahrain with particular attention being given to the provision of children's literature in these schools. Moreover, the findings may be of importance to the appropriate authorities so that more informed decisions might be made concerning the provision of children's literature and books in Bahrain.

Other Arab Gulf States might also benefit from the findings of this study since there are similarities between these states in terms of problems they encounter in the provision of children's literature and books. This chapter presents some conclusions and recommendations and focuses on some of the many questions which remain unanswered but which, as a result of this study, may be seen as deserving further attention.

8.2- Critique of the Research

This section reviews some of the strengths and weaknesses of the present study from the researcher's point of view.

8.2.1- The Strengths of the Study

The strengths of this study are outlined as follows:

- As far as the researcher can be sure, this study is the first to be comprehensively conducted at this level in the field of children's literature and books. The results of this study should be of great importance to authorities concerned to bring on improvements in educational practice in the primary schools of Bahrain and in the provision of appropriate children's literature and books in schools, public libraries and bookshops.

- The survey conducted for this study included samples of the people best acquainted with children's reading interests and the provision of children's literature and books in Bahrain. These samples included parents, primary school teachers and librarians, Bahraini authors of children's literature and books and children aged 6-12. The number of different samples believed to provide reliability.

- The use of both quantitative and qualitative survey approaches strengthened the study and enabled the researcher to collect relevant data.

- The high level of co-operation and help from the head teachers and class teachers of primary schools sampled for the study enabled the researcher to talk with all the children in a relaxed manner.

- The large size of each of the samples strengthened the research. Also the comprehensive response from this sample, despite their different characteristics, yielded data of high reliability and promoted confidence in the findings and in the results of the data analysis.

8.2.2- The Weaknesses of the Study

Some of the weaknesses of the study may be identified as follows:

- Some of the information collected from children (aged 6-9) through the semi-structured interview may not be highly reliable, since children of such age may tend to satisfy the interviewer through their responses and avoid any negative answers.

- Due to the lack of previous research studies and other sources of information in the field of children's literature and children's reading interests, the researcher was not able to discuss the development of children's literature in Bahrain with reference to comparable research.

8.3- Conclusion and Recommendations

The review of the literature in Chapter 3 illustrates the great value of children's literature and books in their lives and shows how it contributes to children's educational, language, cognitive, personality and social development. However, the results obtained from the survey confirmed that there is a serious deficiency in the provision of such books in the primary schools. This deficiency has had a significant negative effect on the development of Bahraini children's literary education and in meeting their reading needs. Thus, the researcher believes that in order to develop the provision of children's literature and books in Bahrain, such deficiency should be resolved, and any plan proposed should be appropriate to the needs of Bahraini society for a well-educated generation. On the basis of the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made. Some of these recommendations are addressed to the Bahraini

context and some of them may be applied generally to the Arab world.

8.3.1- Recommendations related to the Provision of Children's Literature and Books in Bahrain

On the basis of the findings obtained from the data of the questionnaires and the semi-structured interviews, it is concluded that there is a deficiency in the provision of children's literature and books in school libraries, public libraries and bookshops in Bahrain. This deficiency is in respect of locally written literature and foreign literature imported from other countries. The literature review on the provision of children's literature and books in the Arab world and in Bahrain in particular, indicated that what is being presented to children is a 'retarded literature' which refers to old stories and superstitions re-written by some of the present authors of children's literature. This situation is due to the prevalence of the commercial vision over educational values when writing for children and the slow movement of general education in the region and in the Arab world as a whole. With regard to literature imported from other countries, it is concluded that it is a jumble of stories most of which do not suit the Bahraini children. Thus, it is important to ensure adequate provision of children's literature and Books in Bahrain in terms of both quantity and quality.

A children's council consisting of members representing all the ministries of the country should be established to form a recognised body that holds the responsibility of: studying Bahraini children's educational and literary needs; providing ready access to children's literature and books through the provision of an adequate number of

children's libraries all over the country; strengthening the relationship between the home and the school and co-ordinate their objectives towards meeting children's literary needs; ensuring abundant provision of children's literature and books suitable for Bahraini children and at reasonable prices; encouraging scientific and educational research studies to be conducted in the field of children's education and reading interests and to present the findings of these studies to those concerned such as the Ministry of Education in Bahrain as well as the University of Bahrain; holding annual conferences and seminars on the development of children's literature and books in Bahrain and encouraging attendance of teachers, librarians, parents and children's authors at these conferences; encouraging the contribution of the Bahraini authors of children's literature in writing textbooks for the primary school curriculum; paying special attention to the education of primary school children aged 6-12 through the development of relevant plans and policies, assigning necessary budgets for the construction of school libraries and supporting those working in these schools because of the critical importance of this period of education.

The establishment of a council, the researcher believes, would ensure centralisation of decision making towards the development of children's literature and books and would act as a single point of contact for the concerns such as teachers, librarians and authors of children's literature to discuss related problems and suggestions. Moreover, being an authority representing all the ministries in Bahrain is advantageous for the development of children's literature and books. The funding of this council would be enhanced through the contribution of all the government sectors in addition to the

creation of a sense of responsibility by every individual of these sectors towards the development of children's education through their literature and books.

The process of publishing for children as indicated by authors sampled for the study is usually avoided by publishing corporations, publishers and other concerned authorities for its costly and aesthetic characteristics. It is therefore recommended that a specialist book publishing house should be formed in Bahrain to take the responsibility for: producing the most recently written books for children; producing books which relate to the national and international cultural heritage and contain only those values appropriate for children; taking responsibility for translating suitable children's books imported from different foreign countries. The relevant government authorities should ensure adequate provision of financial assistance to children's publishing house in order to facilitate the process of marketing and distribution of children's books which is currently found as a problematic and costly task. There should also be a good co-ordination between publishers, authors and government authorities in encouraging and supporting the process of publishing for children. Thus, the existence of a specialist-publishing house for children supported and funded by all the relevant authorities would encourage authors to increase their writings for children and would also ensure abundant quantity of high quality books being published for children.

To eliminate the problem of irrelevant literature and books being imported for children from other countries either inside or outside the Arab world, it is recommended that a Specialist educational union should be formed to have responsibility for introducing children to

the excellent range and quality of international children's literature by selecting and translating examples appropriate to our children and society. Specialist translators of children's books should also be prepared to translate literature from other languages into clear Arabic in order to facilitate children's reading and understanding of the presented subjects. The experience of the Bahraini children's authors in the field of children's literature can also be utilised by this union in selecting appropriate books in terms of content and format to be imported for children from other Arab and European countries. Bahraini children should also have the opportunity to be presented with international children's literature which introduces them to other cultures as well, but which at the same time presents positive values. However, it has been concluded through the data of the study that the cost of importing these books is too high. This has a great impact on the provision of this type of literature in Bahrain. Thus, it is suggested that the relevant authorities in Bahrain should consider exemption or at least reducing taxes imposed on imported books in order to encourage the concerns to import more quantities to meet children's needs. This will certainly have its effect on the selling prices of these books in the bookshops and accordingly on the demand of children and the concerned parties.

The provision of the locally written/produced children's literature in Bahrain, as concluded earlier, is inadequate in respect of quantity and quality. This short of provision is due to lack of specialist authors of children's literature in Bahrain in addition to the problem of the low production of the existing few authors. It is therefore recommended that the relevant authorities in Bahrain should encourage children's authors through financial incentives and through purchasing of

certain quantities of the good locally written/produced books to be distributed among school libraries especially those lacking the provision of this type of literature. Children's books competitions should be arranged and prizes are to be awarded to the best written / produced books over a particular period of time. The necessary strategies to foster the development of the locally written/produced children's literature and books should be devised so that these books encompass the range of subject- matter needed to form the personality of the Bahraini child.

A children's books centre where attention is given to research studies and plans regarding the development of children's literature is recommended to be established in order to provide children's authors with both the financial and artistic support through incentives and the provision of specialist human and technical resources in the art of producing attractive books for children. This centre should also work on reducing the prices of advertising children's books through the different informational media in co-ordination with the Ministry of Information in Bahrain. This will ensure frequent advertising of the latest and best children's books in addition to attracting children's interests to read these books. The awareness and recognition by Bahraini society of the significance of children's literature in contributing to their children's education can be increased through special programmes being arranged by the centre and broadcasted through the different media.

Another important conclusion is that children's literature is not adequately considered in the curriculum of primary education except for a few excerpts in Arabic textbooks. For this, the researcher

recommends that the Ministry of Education should seriously consider the value of children's literature in developing children in all aspects of education. The primary-school textbooks should have literary content that encourages children's learning and exercises their imaginations. The experience of the talented Bahraini authors or those from other Arab countries can be utilised by involving them in writing primary school textbooks where they can contribute some of their valuable literary subjects. The researcher believes that an early exposure of children to literature, starting at home and later on through their textbooks during their early years of education, will encourage their literary readings and consequently will extend their interests in reading throughout their lives.

8.3.2- Recommendations related to the Provision of Library Services for Children in Bahrain

The findings from the analysis of the responses from the quantitative and qualitative surveys indicated that there is some lack of provision of children's libraries in Bahrain. With regard to public libraries, it is concluded that there are few of them in Bahrain and that the services provided for children in these libraries such as specialist librarians, audio-visual aids, and comfortable attractive furniture are not to the appropriate standard. Furthermore, children's literature and books are not adequately provided in terms of quantity and quality in the existing libraries. Although school libraries existed in most primary schools of Bahrain, the provision of suitable children's literature and books in these libraries is not to the required standard. In respect of the classroom library, it has been concluded that it does not exist in some classrooms of primary schools in Bahrain. They only exist in classrooms where the class-teaching system is applied.

The public, school and classroom libraries are the access to children's literature, and the lack of the provision of these would have its negative effects on the provision of children's literature and books. Not many children afford to buy their own books and read at home, therefore the existence of these libraries would enable these children to read and to borrow books at any time and as frequent as they like without paying for this. Thus, in order to encourage the reading interests of the Bahraini children, it is important to ensure that all these children are provided with ready and accessible accesses to literature and books. However, if high costs will be involved in the provision of these ready accesses, the relevant authorities in Bahrain should consider a short term, medium term or a long-term plan to construct children's public libraries in all areas of Bahrain. Five-year or ten-year plans based on priorities can be made so that direct costs can be minimised. Separate section in adults' public libraries should be reserved for children. These sections should specially be designed and equipped for children to feel free to read and discuss subjects of their interests. However, until all areas of Bahrain are provided with public libraries, it is recommended that mobile libraries should be used to ensure delivery of literature and books to children living in distant villages and cities of Bahrain.

Special consideration should be given to the layout and appearance of the existing children's libraries and also those in future plans through attractive presentation of books, adequate space, attractive and comfortable furniture and fittings, up-to-date audio-visual aids, computers, etc., in order to make these libraries interesting places for children to visit them frequently and to spend most of their free times in them. Parents would also be encouraged to take their children to

these libraries especially when professional librarians are there to supervise, direct and assist children in their readings.

The development of school libraries should also be given special consideration. The Ministry of Education should ensure that these libraries exist in all primary schools of Bahrain and that adequate provision of all the necessary financial and manpower resources in these libraries is made so that they can completely achieve their objectives.

The school libraries should always be open for children to compensate for the lack of children's public libraries. The feasibility of adding additional periods for library use to the weekly timetable of children's basic educational programme should be studied by the Ministry of Education in order to allow children the time they need for reading.

The Ministry of Education in Bahrain should also consider the classroom library. The majority of teachers sampled for the study agreed on the importance of the classroom library in contributing to children's education and in developing their reading interests. The Ministry of Education should therefore work on the expansion of provision of classroom libraries to make books more accessible to children. These libraries need to be attractively and comfortably designed and should satisfy children's needs and interests through provision of good collection of literature and books.

As part of the library services development, the relevant authorities should also consider the development and training of the librarians working in public and school libraries. These librarians should be

well prepared to be in a position to select good books to be presented in the libraries, to attract children to read through the provision of well-designed programmes and to assist/direct them towards valuable reading. To achieve such an objective, specialist training workshops should be held periodically to train children's librarians to organise different activities such as drama, puppet shows, story-telling, competitions, etc., in order to attract children's frequent visits to the library. Special attention should be directed towards children's literature as part of library services courses currently run by the University of Bahrain to ensure the provision of qualified librarians and effective library services in the public and school libraries. Lecturers who train children's librarians should themselves be trained at specialist centres to update them with the most advanced information and technology related to library services. A specialist branch for school librarianship in the teachers' training programs should be introduced by the University of Bahrain to ensure graduation of library teachers who are able to provide excellent library services to primary school children in addition to their normal duties as teachers.

In summary, the provision of adequate library services for children does not only mean construction of several buildings for such purpose, but also adequate provision of valuable well-selected collection of books and qualified /skilled librarians. Nevertheless, the provision of school and classroom libraries in all primary schools of Bahrain, the provision of adequate quantities of the best quality books and the provision of professional librarians in these libraries, may be a costly task to be attained by the relevant authorities at one stage. Hence, the researcher suggests that these authorities should

adopt a plan through which such objectives can be achieved in different phases in order to minimise the direct costs involved.

8.3.3- Recommendations Related to Production, Publication and Development of Children's Books

As presented earlier in this chapter, a major conclusion of this study is that there is a lack of provision of children's literature and related books in Bahrain. This lack of provision includes, of course, the locally written, produced and published literature and books. The reasons for such a short provision of locally written literature are the lack of specialist authors of children's literature and the lack of production of the existing authors. The Bahraini authors of children's literature face problems that discourage them from writing and producing an adequate volume of children's literature and books. These problems include: the high costs of book production; the lack of support and motivation from the relevant government and public institutions; the lack of specialist publishing houses for children in Bahrain and the failure by Bahraini society as a whole to recognise the importance of children's literature. Furthermore, authors of children's literature in Bahrain are not fully devoted to writing for children. They give their main jobs first priority, while they consider writing for children as a side job, which takes part of their time only.

Hence, in order to overcome these presented problems and to ensure adequate production of the locally written literature and books for children, it is necessary to encourage a larger number of specialist and gifted authors in the field of children's literature. This can be achieved through financial incentives and rewards being granted to authors of distinguished books written for children so that those who

are talented in this field are encouraged to write more. The relevant authorities in Bahrain should provide Bahraini children's authors with full support to overcome the problems, which discourage them from writing and producing for children. This support could be indirectly provided through the purchasing of a certain number of each honoured books produced for children in Bahrain, in order to provide full cost coverage for the book, which would encourage its reprinting. The purchased quantity of books should be distributed among schools to: encourage the foundation of libraries in these schools; to increase the provision of children's literature and books in these libraries; and consequently to aid the development of children's reading interests. Public awareness and recognition of the importance of children's literature should be enhanced through holding conferences and seminars related to children's education.

Moreover, to support the production of the Bahraini children's authors, specialist children's publishing houses should be established to facilitate the process of publishing children's books. In order to encourage the publishing of children's books in Bahrain and to facilitate their marketing, the costs of promoting and advertising children's books through the official government media such as radio, television and journals, should be reduced in comparison to the costs of other advertisements.

The artistic production and illustration of children's books should be seriously considered. A child's book without an attractive cover or clear, colourful illustrations may not fully achieve its objective. For children between the ages of 6-9, these elements are very important. Thus, to improve the quality of the books presented to children in

Bahrain in terms of format and illustrations, it is recommended that: courses on the illustration, design and artistic production of children's books, should be introduced in colleges of fine art or universities in Bahrain or other Arab countries; conferences and workshops on the illustration and artistic production of children's books should be encouraged; necessary materials for the illustration and artistic production of children's books are to be provided at reasonable prices; special prizes should be awarded for the best artistically produced and illustrated children's books to encourage good practice in this important aspect in children's books.

8.3.4- Recommendations Related to Encouraging Children's Reading Interests Through the School Environment and Adults' Role.

The finding from the quantitative and the qualitative research study indicate that adults in Bahrain do not play a significant role in encouraging children's reading interests. It is concluded that there is a lack of recognition by the Bahraini society as a whole of the importance of children's literature in contributing to their educational development. This has consequently affected the provision of children's literature in schools, homes, public libraries and bookshops. Most of the teachers and librarians sampled for the study reported that in spite of children's great interest in reading fiction stories and poetry, these are not abundantly provided in their schools. They declared further that the intensive daily curriculum applied in these schools does not allow children the opportunity to read books of interest to them. Most of the parents sampled for the study play a minor role in encouraging their children's reading interests. This situation refers back to the problem of illiteracy among some parents

in Bahrain in addition to the problem of the ignorance of some of the educated parents to the significance of children's literature in developing children's educational levels. Thus, adults in children's lives such as parents, teachers and librarians should play a positive and efficient role in encouraging children's reading interests.

To enhance the role of these categories of adults, the relevant authorities should ensure a provision of healthy and effective environments in all primary schools of Bahrain so that adults in these schools can professionally perform their duties in terms of children's educational and literary development. It is recommended that primary school teachers should be well prepared and their skills in the field of children's literature and education should be continuously developed to meet children's needs. This can be achieved through the provision of specialised in-service training courses particularly to newly-recruited teachers and librarians, to help raise their professional standards in the process of selecting appropriate literary subjects and designing effective programmes for stimulating children's readings, and to introduce them to the most advanced methods/aids of teaching and learning. These courses could be organised at the beginning and at the end of the academic year so that teachers and librarians would have enough time to participate effectively.

In all classrooms, the teacher's role is critical to the successful implementation of any programme. The teacher need to: actively model literate behaviour by such means as reading aloud to children every day; experiment with different types of literature for children; collect a wide variety of reading resources related to children's interests; allow children the opportunity to practice their literary skills

and provide on-going feedback to them; and to encourage children to develop literary skills by building up pleasurable experiences with books, and allowing time for reading and writing. Nevertheless, a teacher bounded by a heavy school timetable will not be able to practice these activities. The Ministry of education should therefore seriously consider allowing adequate time and opportunity to primary school teachers to develop more flexibility in their work with children.

Furthermore, all primary schools in Bahrain should be well prepared and equipped to assist teachers and librarians meet children's literary and educational needs. The provision of the most advanced technological teaching aids such as television; video-tape recorder, audio-tape recorder; computer and projectors should be adequate in all primary schools. The use of such aids will assist teachers and librarians to introduce children to literature and books through different mediums and accordingly to encourage them to read. A main library well organised and attractively decorated, containing a collection of interesting fiction/non-fiction books, should be provided in each primary school in addition to the small classroom library. Specialist librarians should be employed in these libraries to ensure that appropriate, useful books are brought in and that wide reading is encouraged. Children should be allowed adequate time to read in the school library and the opportunity to borrow books to read at home in their free time. Moreover, each primary school should be provided with a stage in order to facilitate the performance of drama and puppet-shows to present some of the plays/stories available in the school library as a means of stimulating children's interests in literature and books.

The parents' role in developing children's literary and educational level should be enhanced by the responsible parties in primary schools. A council should be established in each school so that parent-teacher conferences could be held to discuss methods of teaching children and encouraging their reading interests either at home or at school. Parents should be encouraged to contact the school regularly to become informed about their children's level of attainment and problems facing them, and to monitor their progress in school. Parents should also be encouraged to become involved in school programme, to support homework activities, to buy their children books, to consider construction of the home library or to take them to public libraries, and to encourage reading as a free time activity.

The relevant authorities in Bahrain can also play a major role in supporting an improvement in the development of children's literature and education as a whole. They should protect children from unsuitable imported literature by checking the content for what is appropriate to the demands and principles of our society. Also, attention needs to be given to the Arabic literary heritage and selections made from it should be appropriate to children's current attitudes and interests.

With regard to male/female children's reading interests, it is recommended that:

- Since male/female children were inclined to read fictional stories, there should be an abundant provision of these in all primary schools libraries. This provision should also be extended to the home. Parents should appreciate the

significance of this type of literature in the development of their children's educational level.

- To satisfy children's great interest in reading children's magazines, the relevant authorities in Bahrain should consider producing a special magazine for Bahraini children which presents subjects related to their lives and to their society's customs and traditions and to facilitate their contribution in writing literary subjects to their own magazine. The price of this magazine should be reasonable so that all children can afford to buy it regularly.

- As a significant difference in interest for reading was found in favour of the female children, it is recommended that teachers, librarians and parents should encourage the reading interest of male children and organise their leisure time between reading and practising their other hobbies. Male/ female children should be given the assistance they need in the selection of the right books and during their reading time.

8.3.5-General Recommendations

The following recommendations apply generally to all Arab countries including Bahrain:

- A union should be founded for authors and illustrators of children's books and for those concerned with children's education in the Arab world, so that they can work together and discuss ideas of benefit to children.

- Co-operation between all ministries of information and ministries of education in the Arab world should be developed in order to formulate an educational policy aiming at a better standard of education for children all over the Arab world.

- More attention should be directed to school textbooks in terms of illustration, design, production and literary presentation in order to attract children and encourage them to read and learn.

- Talented authors of children's literature should be allowed the opportunity to contribute to the writing of primary school textbooks.

- Consideration should be given to the significance of the role of the family in contributing to an education relevant to the society and its values and in encouraging children's reading interests. Parents should therefore be advised to establish their own home libraries for their children to have easy access to books.

- Great consideration should be given to adult education programmes to ensure that illiterate parents can reach a good standard of education to enable them to assist/encourage their children to read.

- Authorities concerned with children's television and radio should consider an appropriate time to include children's literature in their programmes.

- Consideration should be given to the historic, religious and national Arabic heritage and also to Arabic folklore that could be presented to children in a new attractive form.

- A child's dictionary should be produced for the entire Arabic World as a valuable resource in children's education and for specialists in children's language. A specialist children's encyclopaedia should also be published in Arabic language to assist and encourage children to read.

8.4- Suggestions for Future Researches

More research surveys should be conducted in order to increase awareness within Bahraini society of children's literature and to improve analysis of specific problems so that solutions may be found regarding the development of children's literature and books. For example:

- Further research studies should be conducted to identify current trends in writing for children and also to identify children's reading interests and language development at different ages. They should be designed to study the ways of familiarising children with the different communication aids and assessing the negative/positive effects of these on their reading interests.

- Further research studies in children's language should be carried out with the aim of specifying a standardised language appropriate for use with children in an educational and literary context. This would facilitate mutual understanding between children in the Arab world and the exchange of children's educational and literary productions between all the Arab countries and not only Gulf states.

- This research investigated the provision of children's literature and books for children at primary education level (ages 6 -12). It is suggested that the same study should be replicated at other stages, such as the pre-school and Intermediate stages, to examine the provision of children's literature and books for these children, to identify their reading interests and to explore any differences in their interests in relation to age.

- A comprehensive research study should be conducted to identify children's writing interests, so that the results of this study can be used by the relevant authorities in Bahrain in parallel with the results related to children's reading interests, identified by the current study, for provision of suitable literature and books for children.

In summary, there is still a need to continue the development and improvement of children's literature and books in order to keep pace with the rapid development outside Bahrain. The researcher hops that these recommendations would contribute to the development of children's literature and related books in Bahrain.

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Illustrator: Mohammed Gharib
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Appendix B

A Review of Some Story Books Presented to children in Bahrain

A Review of Some Stories Written By Bahraini Authors

Title of the Story: **The Duck With The Soft Feathers**
Author: Ebrahim Sanad
Illustrator: Mahmood Gareeb
Publisher: Ministry of Information Press, State of Bahrain 1991
Age Group: 6-8 years.



- **The Summary of the Story**

The story is about a beautiful duck who lived in a lake with her friends. The duck was very conceited because of her extraordinary beauty and bright colours. Therefore, she decided to abandon the lake and live on her own as she thought that the other ducks were inferior to her. However, she failed to find better friends as everybody refused her friendship because of her conceit. One day, a harsh falcon saw

her and tried to eat her, but he failed to do so and just managed to get a few feathers from her. Only then did she realise the value of her peaceful lake and good friends. Therefore she returned home and forgot about her conceit and lived happily ever after.

- **The Evaluation of the Story**

In the light of the previously demonstrated features of the standard of language appropriate in children's literature (section 3.3), the researcher finds the simple-classic Arabic language used in this story suitable for children in the age group it is intended for (6-8 years old). Considering that children of such an age are still developing their vocabularies (Dr Abu Ma'al, 1988, pp. 12-20), the author of this story use short sentences with clear and simple vocabulary for children to read and understand. Children's age range and experience have also been considered when selecting the subject matter and its presentation, which needed to suit the children's abilities to attend to the experiences presented and their span of concentration. At the same time, the author uses vivid description in the story, which assists in the development of children's imagination. This is clear when the author describes the duck as being like "a wet broom" when she scared and ran away from the falcon. The researcher sees the format of this storybook as suitable for the specified age group of children. The illustrations in the story are attractive and are fully planned and integrated with the text to interpret the action of the story. The cover of the story is a colourful illustration of the beautiful duck, which is attractive for children.

Title of the Story: **The Friends**
Author: Ebrahim Bashmi
Illustrator: Yousif Al-Qaseer
Publisher: Al-Ayyam Printing Press 1994.



- **The Summary of the Story**

This story is about a group of friends who gather everyday in the square of their town to play and enjoy themselves. One day, Mohammed - one of the friends - brought a kite to play with. All his friends saw it and liked it very much so they asked him, "Where did you get this beautiful kite from?" and he answered with pride "My father bought it for me from the city". He refused to let them try it. The next day, he brought a children's story and read it on his own without showing his friends any of its pictures. So they realised that Mohammed was a selfish person and became angry with him. They decided to leave him alone and never play with him any more. Only then, when he was so lonely, did he realise how important friends were.

- **The Evaluation of the Story**

The story emphasises certain values such as friendship, co-operation and respect for others. Throughout the story, friendship is shown to be important in both sad and happy times with the implication that nobody can live on his or her own. The values of co-operation and respect for others are clearly indicated through the events of the story, especially when Mohammed refused to allow his friends to play with him as they requested, but regretted this later on when he felt lonely. Although the author does not specify the age group of children for which this story is intended, he uses simple-classic Arabic language with easily understood vocabulary.

However, the age group needs to be defined on the cover of the story in order to assist adults in selecting the right story-book for the right age. This is simply because children's language experience and attention span varies in both extent and kind at different ages (Smith, 1967: pp. 15-20). The title of the story, "The Friends", does not correlate strongly with the content and values presented by the story. With regard to the format of the story, it is supported with colourful cartoon pictures, which make it attractive to children. The size of the font used is suitable for young children. However, the text is written on the coloured pictures which makes it unclear and difficult for children to read.

Title of the Story: **What makes Sami Run!**
Author: Ebrahim Sanad
Illustrator: Mohammed Gharib
Publisher: Ministry of Information Press, State of Bahrain 1992.
Age level of the story: 8-9.



- **The Summary of the Story**

The story is about one of the winter days when a strong cold windy storm blew in a garden and caused the trees to shake, the leaves to fall and the birds to fly away. As the leaves were falling, a nest also fell down and a small sparrow hopped out of it. The small bird could not fly and was trembling with cold. Then the small bird was saved by a hunter who gave it to his son Sami and asked him to take care of it. The boy did so until the bird grew up and had feathers and wings. One day the bird said to Sami, "Please let me go so I can fly

freely in the sky". But Sami never listened to it and did not allow it to come out of his cage. One day the bird pretended it was dead and did not move or make any sound. When Sami removed it from the cage the bird flew away in the air enjoying the freedom. Then it said to Sami "I don't want to run away, but I love to fly freely in the sky as the other birds do".

- **The Evaluation of the Story**

This story contains positive values such as kindness and freedom. Through the events of the story, children are encouraged to treat animals and birds kindly. They are also taught that freedom is an absolute right for every creature and even the birds should not be deprived of it. The language used in presenting the story is the simple-classic Arabic language, which suits the age group it is intended for (8-9 years old). The vocabulary is simple, clear and understandable so that children of this age can read by themselves without needing adult assistance to comprehend the meaning. With regard to the artistic production of this story, the author includes attractive, colourful illustrations that clearly reflect its events and deliver its messages.

A Review Of A Story From The Arabic Language Text Book Of The Sixth Primary Grade

Title of the Story: **The Good Path**
Authors: A group of teachers of the Curriculum Administration for the Ministry of Education
Illustrator: Ashraf A.Latif Salman
Publisher: Ministry of Education/Curriculum Administration
Age level of the story: 11



- **The Summary of the Story**

Once upon a time an old good hearted man called Abu Al-Khair lived happily with his wife and children. He spent most of his time working actively on his farm, planting, harvesting and looking after his sheep. One year there was too little rain and this was bad for the plants and the sheep. Abu Al-Khair therefore decided to find another source of water in the neighbourhood. While he was searching for water, he saw a big rock and went near it to have some rest in its shade. But when he arrived there he saw a small opening underneath it. This hole was originally an opening for a well, but the big rock had somehow shifted towards it and obstructed the opening which caused

the water to stop flowing out of the well. Then Abu Al-Khair thought of asking the others to help him to remove that big rock so the water could flow gain, and everyone could have some. They moved that rock and the opening was enlarged enough so water could flow again and the farmers could have plenty of water for their plants and lands which were affected by aridity. Then everyone felt happy as a result of their co-operation and the help they had given each other.

- **The Evaluation of the Story**

As is obvious, "The Good Path" it is a short story for the purpose of teaching Arabic language and emphasises certain positive values for children of age eleven such as good morals. One of the important morals included in the story is that of co-operation, which was recognised when all the people of the village gathered around the big rock to remove it from the well so they could get water.

Another value present in the story is that of clear thinking, the use of the mind to solve problems that we face. This can be seen when there was little rain and the land was dry but Abu Al-Khair did not feel hopeless. He thought of other ways to find another source of water. Therefore he worked hard to look for other resources by using his mind. Another value that can be gained from the story is patience, which every human being needs to learn. In the story Abu Al-Khair showed great patience when he spent a difficult time searching in different places for water.

The standard of language used in presenting the story is simple-classic Arabic language, which suits the experiences of the age group it is intended for. The plot of the story is well constructed, coherent (Huck, 1979: p.7) and grows logically and naturally from the

beginning of it, then to the conflict or problem and finally to the definitive ending, in such a way that it holds the children's interest. However, despite the fact that the researcher finds this story well constructed in content, he finds its format in terms of size, shape, design of pages and illustrations very poor. The story lacks the clear typography and attractive illustrations which children usually like to see when reading stories.

A Review Of Some Arabic Stories Written By Non-Bahraini Authors

Title of the Story: **Princess Zummurrida**
Author: Ebrahim Azzooz
Illustrator: Tad
Publisher: Al-Nahddah Printing Press 1992.



- **The Summary of the Story**

The main character in the story is a beautiful girl called Zummurida who lived with her mother after her father had gone travelling and left them alone. She was spending most of her time growing flowers and taking care of them. One cold, rainy winter evening, Zummurida heard knocks on the door, so she opened it to find a poor monkey chilled from the cold. Zummurida let the monkey in and helped him to sit near the fire.

Next morning, the monkey thanked Zummurida and left for the forest. However, he returned the following evening to present a bouquet of flowers to Zummurida who was so happy with it. In the morning the monkey asked Zummurida to visit him at his home in the forest.

A few days later, Zummurida entered the forest while she was walking and thinking of her father. There she saw a short frightful man whom she became scared of when he pointed to her, so she screamed and the monkey heard her and hurried to help her. When the monkey saw the short man he fought with him until the man ran away from Zummurida. Then the monkey suddenly became a handsome prince and after that he married Zummurida. Zummurida's father returned home on the wedding night.

- **The Evaluation of the Story**

This story is likely to be enjoyed more by female than male children. It emphasises moral values such as kindness, which was clear when Zummurida protected the monkey from the cold. It also presents the value of returning benevolence to people who have been benevolent to us. This is indicated when the monkey presented a bouquet of flowers to Zummurida, and also when he saved her from the old man in the forest, because she had helped him when he needed it.

With regard to the standard of language used in this story, the author uses a simple vocabulary, although he does not specify the age group it is intended for. The events of the story are presented in a way that the researcher finds appropriate for younger children's limited experiences. They were logically and naturally presented without any complexity. However, the researcher stresses the need to indicate the

age group on the cover of the story to assist adults, especially parents, select books suitable to children's age abilities. This is because not all parents in Bahrain are educated enough to assess which books are suitable for their children, therefore to have the age group specified by authors or publishers would ensure, to some extent, compatibility of book selection with children's experiences and abilities.

In terms of the illustrations of the story, the artist successfully portrays Zummurida, consistently retaining her features in every illustration despite the differences in action. Furthermore, the illustrations enhance the events of the story. The text of the story is clearly printed at the bottom of the pages with an appropriate font. At the top of each page there is an illustration relating to that text.

Title of the Story: **The Beautiful Jungle**
Author: Zacharia Tamer.
Illustrator: Taha Al-Khalid.
Publisher: Dar Al-Adab, Beirut.



- **The Summary of the story**

Once, there was an elephant who lived in a jungle. The elephant loved that jungle for its many, beautiful trees. One day while the elephant was walking between the trees he saw a small sad cat. When the elephant asked her the reason for her sadness, she said, "I like to eat birds, but I can't do that". The elephant replied, "Try to attack the birds' nests when the birds are asleep". The cat answered that she had tried that several times but had failed. After a bit of thinking, the cat said, "I would be very pleased if you would help me". Then the cat asked the elephant to uproot all the trees of the jungle so the birds would not be able to sit or sleep in them; they would be tired from flying and would not have any place to rest. The cat could then catch them easily.

The elephant uprooted all the trees of the jungle as the cat asked, until the jungle became empty of trees. Thus, when the birds saw what had happened to the trees, they flew away and deserted the place. No single bird remained in the jungle. Therefore the cat never got what she dreamed of and both of them were very sad as they had lost the birds and the beautiful jungle.

- **The Evaluation of the Story**

The story contains certain negative features both in its narrative presentation and in its illustrations. The researcher found the title of the story unsuitable, as it does not reflect its events and main concept. When a child reads the title "The Beautiful Jungle", he or she would expect the jungle throughout the story to be permanently beautiful and full of happiness but, unfortunately, it present to children a catastrophe which destroyed the jungle as a result of selfish and reckless thinking. Despite the fact that some authors deliberately use

ironic titles as a way of helping children understand irony, the researcher believes that stories for younger children must have cheerful endings to avoid children being affected psychologically by unhappy ones. Another negative feature of the story is its poor artistic production. The researcher found its illustrations unattractive and not directly related to the events of the story. In addition, the narrative is written on the drawings, which makes it unclear for children to read. The format of a story book which includes its size, shape, page design, illustrations, typography, quality of paper and bindings have been recognised to be important when adults evaluate books for children (Huck 1979). Certain criteria for a good book format have been emphasised by Huck (1979), who makes the following points: an attractive and good quality paper cover is very important in a child's decision to read a story. Illustrations rich in colour and detail and fully planned and integrated with the text are essential to enrich the interpretation of the story. Typography should be large enough for easy reading by the age level for which it is intended, and the space between the lines should be sufficient to make the text clear. Thick enough paper should be used to prevent any penetration of ink. The binding should be durable and practical, one that can withstand the use of many interested, but frequently grimy hands (pp. 13-14).

A good illustrated book has been defined by Whalley in the *International Companion Encyclopaedia of Children's Literature,* edited by Peter Hunt, (1996) as one where the accompanying pictures enhance or add depth to the text. On the other hand, a badly illustrated book, as he defined it, is one where the pictures lack relevance to the text, or are ill placed and poorly drawn or reproduced - these are books with pictures rather than illustrated books (Hunt,

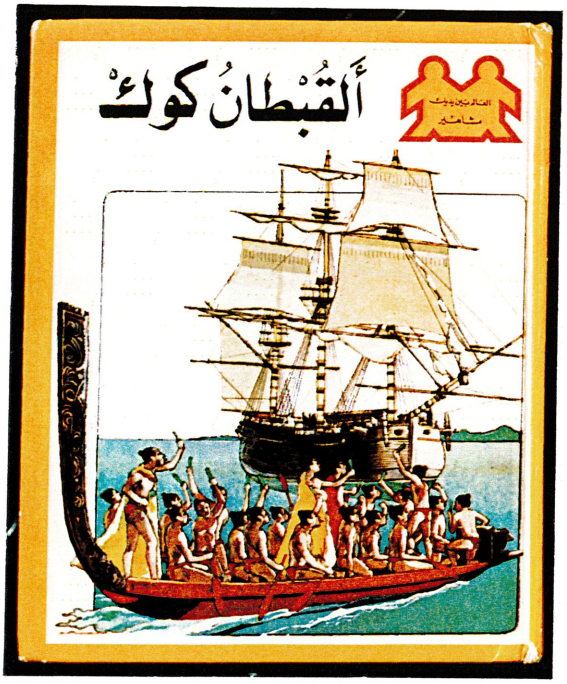
1996, p.220). Another negative feature of the story identified by the researcher is that the author does not specify the age range of children for whom the story is intended so as to assist adults select the right books for the right age. This issue has been fully explained in section 3.3 and in the evaluation of the previous stories.

However, despite the previously explained negative features of the story, it includes some positive values such as co-operation between individuals and the importance of thinking before doing any activity which might have bad results, as happened in the story. Also, it teaches children that the use of power without thinking can be disastrous.

The standard of language used in presenting the events of the story is simple-classic Arabic with clear and understandable vocabulary.

A Review Of Some Foreign Stories, Translated To Arabic Language

Title of the Story: **Captain Cook**
Author: B.Yousborn
Illustrator: S. Swalo
Publisher: Macdonald Education Ltd., Beirut, Lebanon 1989.



- **The Summary of the Story**

"Captain Cook" is an English story translated and reproduced in Arabic Language by some specialists in children's education to be presented to children all over the Arab world. It is sold in local bookshops. This story, describes the life of a famous British sailor who lived in England 200 years ago, whose name was James Cook. When he was young, James Cook loved the sea and, therefore, he joined the navy and trained to be a skilful sailor. Then he was appointed as a captain on a ship called "Endeavour". So he sailed with his fellow sailors and some scientists to discover new lands in the Pacific Ocean. He reached the Tahiti Islands, New Zealand and

Australia after a long wearisome journey. Then he returned to England to start a new journey to discover the South Pole. By that time Captain James Cook was very famous in England which led the King to ask to meet him. Captain James Cook was then encouraged to begin a third journey to discover the Hawaii Islands. There the natives considered him to be a god, and gave valuable presents to him and his crew. They also held parties for them and gave them bouquets of flowers. But one day a conflict arose between the natives and Cook's crew which made the natives take back their presents from the crew and also try to steal one of the boats. Captain Cook rushed to help his crew and was killed in that fight.

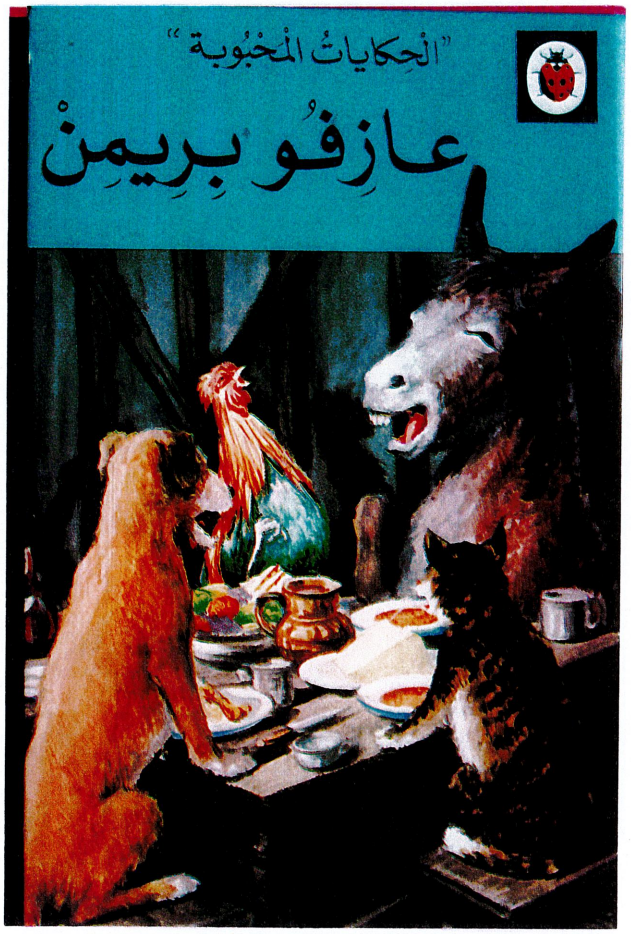
- **The Evaluation of the Story**

This is in fact a true historical story that happened a long time ago. Although it contains scientific and historical values that can assist Bahraini children to develop their scientific education, the story does not represent the culture of the Bahraini child. Its events are strange to children and do not usually occur in their community. When the researcher presented this story to a group of children in primary schools, they did not show great interest in it. When he wrote about the status of children's literature in the Arab world, Abu-Nasr (1986) stated that early providers of children's books in the Arab world relied too much on translations of European works, which tended to describe situations and settings alien to Arab children. This inclination to translate irrelevant foreign works continues despite efforts to encourage native writers (Hunt, 1996, p.789). Dorothy Briley (1990) contends that successful translated books share the characteristics of other successful books; they capture our imaginations, broaden our views, entertain us, and inform us (White,

1992: pp. 261-262). Maureen White (1992) contends that quality translated literature for children allows for the thoughtful reflection of the reality that all people experience the same problems, stresses and crises (ibid, p.262). It is therefore important that publishers of children's literature are concerned with producing successful translated books just as children's literature specialists, teachers and librarians should be concerned with receiving and promoting the best children's books from other cultures.

The researcher found the illustrations of the story to be clear and appropriately represent its narrative.

Title of the Story: **Bremen's Musicians**
Author: Vera Sue Thegit.
Illustrator: Robert Lamli.
The Publisher: Lebanon Library, Beirut-Lebanon, 1989.



- **The Summary of the Story**

"Bremen's Musicians" is a famous European children's story which has been translated into Arabic language. It is available in most bookshops in Bahrain. The characters of the story are animals (a donkey, a dog, a cat and a cock). The author chose the German city of Bremen to be the main setting of the story.

The story started when the owner of the donkey abandoned him because he was no longer useful to him due to his old age. So the donkey decided to start another job and become a musician. He thought of starting a musical group for the city of Bremen as it did

not have one. On his way to the city, he met the other characters of the story, the cat, the dog and the cock, who were all suffering from the same circumstances. On their way to Bremen, it got dark and they were starving. Luckily, they saw a light coming from one of the distant houses. So they headed towards it and there they found a group of thieves sitting round a table covered with delicious dishes. The animals entered the house and the thieves ran in with fear. The four friends decided to spend the rest of their lives in this house. Therefore, they never reached the city of Bremen and never started the musical group they dreamed of.

- **The Evaluation of the Story**

This story presents different values such as co-operation to fulfil our aims to live with liberty, and standing up to difficult circumstances. The vivid imaginative quality of the story gives strength to its dialogues. The standard of the translated language used by the author is simple with clear and understandable vocabulary. The translator has tried his/her best to present the story in an attractive manner in terms of language and the sequence of events, in such a way that it does not lose its original meanings and values. In this context, Peter Hunt (1996) presents the view of an American writer and translator for young people, Edward Fenton (1977), concerning the process of translating. Fenton's view is that the first and foremost aspect of translation is that of meaning. The translator must know both languages well enough to know what is meant in the original language and then to use his judgement and his broad experience of the second language to choose the most effective, most suitable, and most evocative equivalent word or phrase. In addition to this, Fenton asserts, translation is not merely a matter of shifting linguistic gears.

It is a shift from one culture to another, from one way of thought to another, from one way of life to another. What may be strange and exotic must be made to seem, if not familiar, at least rational and acceptable (p. 639). The illustrations of the story are attractive and enhance the meaning. They are nicely printed on pages facing the related narrative and clearly reflect the events of the story.

3.6.6 - Conclusion

Through his review of some story books presented to children in bookshops and school libraries in Bahrain, the researcher concluded the following:

- Not all literature and books presented to children in Bahrain present negative values that are unsuitable for children. There are some books, which although inadequate in quantity (as shown in the results of the Questionnaires for Teachers and Librarians which are discussed in chapter 7), present useful values to children and are attractive in terms of format and illustrations.

- Although some literature and books presented to children in Bahrain include positive values and qualities, at the same time they include some negative features that need to be seriously considered.

- Not all translated foreign literature is unsuitable to children in Bahrain, and some of it includes positive values.

Appendix C

The Questionnaire for the Children

The Questionnaire for the Children Ages 9 -12

The researcher selected 20 schools, 10 boys' schools and 10 girls' schools, from 95 government primary schools (total of schools, which own libraries). Within each school 20 students of age 9-12 group were randomly selected to make a total of 400 students. The reason for selecting this age group of children was their ability to answer the questions more effectively than children from younger age groups.

The questionnaires for the children were distributed among them to collect their views and suggestions regarding fiction and non-fiction books in addition to their reading interests in related to children's literature subjects. This questionnaire was simplified so that it suited their mental and educational abilities and enabled them to answer easily freely and honestly.

School of Education
University of Durham
United Kingdom .

Dear Children,

I would be very grateful if you please provide me with your opinions and views regarding Children's Literature, their books and reading interests. The information you will provide will be for investigation and research purposes only.

Thank you very much
Mohamed Al-Nokhada

1 December 1995

Name .....

Sex .....

Age .....

Class .....

School .....

Please answer by putting one (✓) in the most appropriate response.

Q 1 - How many hours a week do you generally spend in reading?

1 ☐ None (from zero to less than 1 hour)
2 ☐ From one to three hours
3 ☐ From four to six hours
4 ☐ From seven to nine hours
5 ☐ From ten hours and above.

Q 2 - How many stories on average do you obtain a month?

1 ☐ None
2 ☐ One story only
3 ☐ From two to four stories
4 ☐ From five to seven stories
5 ☐ From ten hours and above.

Q 3 - How many times a week do you visit the public library?

1 ☐ None
2 ☐ Once a week
3 ☐ From two to four times
4 ☐ From five to seven times
5 ☐ From eight times and above.

Q 4 - To what extent do you participate in writing to children's magazines?

1 ☐ Not at all
2 ☐ Very little
3 ☐ A little
4 ☐ A lot
5 ☐ A very great deal

Q 5 - Which type of subjects do you prefer to read most?

1 ☐ Fiction
2 ☐ Science (non-fiction)
3 ☐ History (non-fiction)
4 ☐ Geography
5 ☐ Languages
6 ☐ Arts
7 ☐ Religion.

Q 6 - On what basis do you choose a story to read on your own?

1 ☐ Subject of the story
2 ☐ The illustrations in the story
3 ☐ The characters of the story
4 ☐ The author of the story.

Q 7 - Who mostly encourages you to read?

1 ☐ Your father
2 ☐ Your mother
3 ☐ Your brothers/sisters
4 ☐ Your teachers
5 ☐ Your librarians
6 ☐ Others.

Q 8 - What is your most preferred access to a story?

1 ☐ Reading it
2 ☐ Listening to it
3 ☐ Watching it on television
4 ☐ Watching it played in the theatre
5 ☐ Listening to it on radio.

Q 9 - Whom do you depend on when choosing stories to read?

1 ☐ Yourself
2 ☐ Your parents
3 ☐ Your teacher
4 ☐ Brothers/sisters
5 ☐ The librarians
6 ☐ Others.

Q 10 -Who is the most interesting person to read to you or tell you a story?

1 ☐ Your father
2 ☐ Your mother
3 ☐ Your grandparents
4 ☐ Your brothers and sisters
5 ☐ Your teachers
6 ☐ Others.

Q 11 -What type of story do you prefer to read?

1 ☐ Adventure story
2 ☐ Animal story
3 ☐ Humorous story of everyday life
4 ☐ Social story
5 ☐ Scientific story
6 ☐ Historical story
7 ☐ Religious story
8 ☐ Others.

Q 12 -Where do you mostly prefer to read books?

1 ☐ At home
2 ☐ In the school classroom
3 ☐ In the school library
4 ☐ In the public library
5 ☐ In the other places.

Appendix D

The Questionnaire for the Teachers

The Questionnaire for the Teachers

The second group from the sample of the study, consisted of 60 teachers. There were three classroom teachers from each of the 20 sample schools, who were randomly selected. The Questionnaire for the teachers was distributed among them to collect their views regarding type of books and topics preferred by children and also their suggestions regarding selection of the right school literature books, which contribute in expanding and developing children's imaginations.

School of Education
University of Durham
United Kingdom .

Dear Teachers ,

This questionnaire is a part of a field study carried out by the researcher in fulfilment of his Ph.D. programme in the subject of children's literature and their books, fiction/ non-fiction, which are presented to Bahraini children including story books, poetry books, periodical magazines, etc.

Through this study, the researcher intends to examine the standard quality of literature available to children in Bahrain, their reading interests and the extent to which they educationally benefit from their readings.

From your experience as a teachers of primary school level, I would be very grateful if you kindly contribute in providing me with your personal views regarding children's literature, books and reading interests.

The information you will submit through the following questionnaire will be for research purposes only.

Thanking you for co-operation.

Yours faithfully

Mohamed Al-Nokhada
University of Durham
School of Education
1 December 1995

General Information,

Name "Optional" .....
Sex .....

Please answer by putting one (✓) in the most appropriate response.

1 - What type of sex you are teaching?

1 - ☐ Male children
2 - ☐ Female children

2 - What primary stage are you mainly teaching?

1 - ☐ First primary stage
2 - ☐ Second primary stage
3 - ☐ Third primary stage
4 - ☐ Fourth primary stage
5 - ☐ Fifth primary stage
6 - ☐ Sixth primary stage

3 - What is the average age of children you are teaching?

1 - ☐ From 6 to 7 Years old
2 - ☐ Above 7 to 8 Years old
3 - ☐ Above 8 to 9 Years old
4 - ☐ Above 9 to 10 Years old
5 - ☐ Above 10 to 11 Years old
6 - ☐ Above 11 to 12 Years old

4 - What is the total number of children in the classroom?

1 - ☐ From 20 to 29 Children
2 - ☐ From 30 to 39 Children
3 - ☐ From 40 to 49 Children
4 - ☐ From 50 to 59 Children

Part one:

Please put one (✓) where you answer falls within the most suitable and appropriate response.

		Not at all	Very little	A little	A lot	Very great deal
5	To what extent do you practise story-telling as a method of presenting Literature to children ?					
6	To what extent do the children's literature books sold in Bahrain book-shops attract children to read ?					
7	To what extent does the existence of the classroom library assist in the development of children's reading skills and interests ?					
8	To what extent is children's literature considered in the syllabus of primary education now ?					

		Not at all	Very little	A little	A lot	Very great deal
9	To what extent does locally written literature exist in the classroom ?					
10	To what extent does the foreign literature exist in the classroom ?					

Please answer by putting one (✓) in the most appropriate response.

		Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
11	Most children tend to prefer listening to stories rather than reading them.					
12	Most children tend to prefer reading fiction stories rather than non-fiction stories.					
13	School textbooks presented to children in primary schools develop children's language.					
14	There are few specialist children's authors in Bahrain.					
15	The total number of specialist children's authors in Bahrain is satisfactory in comparison to the total number of children in Bahrain.					

		Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
16	The locally produced literature books are adequate with regard to quantity.					
17	The locally produced literature books are adequate with regard to quality.					
18	Children's reading inclinations are to be considered when writing literature for them.					
19	Children's individual differences are considered in the literature books in Bahrain.					
20	There is an adequate number of children's public libraries in Bahrain.					

		Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
21	There are excellent library services provided for primary school children in Bahrain.					
22	The books presented in children's libraries are interrelated in subject with the primary school curriculum.					
23	Children are not allowed adequate time to read in the classroom .					
24	All imported children's literature books have unsuitable values for children in Bahrain.					
25	Some of the imported children's literature books have values that are not useful to children in Bahrain.					

Part two:

Please provide your personal views and suggestions in respect of the followings:

1 - The provision of children's literature and books in their schools.

2 - Children's reading preferences in respect of literature.

3 - Efficient methods/aids for developing children's imaginations.

4 - Efficient methods/aids for developing children's language.

Appendix E

The Questionnaire for the Librarians

The Questionnaire for the Librarians

Twenty specialist children's librarians who have had experience in working at children's libraries were selected according to their qualification and experience. The views and suggestions of these librarians regarding the nature of children's books and reading interests were collected through the questionnaire for the librarians.

School of Education
University of Durham
United Kingdom.

The Librarian of .....School.

Dear Mr / Mrs / Miss,

This questionnaire is a part of a field study carried out by the researcher in fulfilment of his Ph.D. programme in the subject of children's literature books, fiction/non-fiction, which are presented to Bahraini children including story books, poetry books, periodical magazines, etc.

I should be very grateful if you would please provide me with your views and suggestions regarding the points highlighted in the attached questionnaire. Such information will be of great value and should have great benefit to my study.

Thanking you for your co-operation.

Yours faithfully

Mohamed Al-Nokhada
University of Durham
School of Education
1 December 1995

Name "optional" .....

Qualification and Experience.

Please answer by putting one (✓) in the appropriate response.

A - Higher academic qualification:

- ☐ Secondary school
- ☐ Diploma in Librarianship
- ☐ Bachelor Degree
- ☐ Master's Degree
- ☐ Experience only.

B - Years of experience as a librarian:

- ☐ Less than 5 years
- ☐ From 5 - 10 years
- ☐ From 11 - 15 years
- ☐ From 16 - 20 years
- ☐ From 20 - and above.

Part one:

General Information About the Books
Available in the Library

Please give your brief comments about the following points:

1 - The total number of books available in the library at present, including all subjects (fiction/non-fiction).

2 - The percentage of children's literature books including story books, poetry/rhyme books, etc in comparison to other books such as science, history, geography and religion books.

3 - The percentage of foreign literature books translated to Arabic Language in comparison to other children's literature books.

4 - The percentage of locally written literature books.

5 - The number of story books available in the library with regard to the following subjects, and suitable to children ages 6 -12.

1 - Adventure Stories .....
2 - Animal Stories .....
3 - Humorous Stories .....
4 - Social Stories .....
5 - Scientific Stories .....
6 - Historical Stories .....
7 - Religious Stories .....
8 - Detective Stories .....
9 - Others. .....

Part two:

General Information About
Primary Stage Children's
Reading Interests

Please answer by putting one (✓) in the most appropriate response.

		Not at all	Very rarely	Rarely	Often	Very often
1	How often do children of primary stage use the library by themselves ?					
2	How often do children of primary stage use the library with the encouragement and direction of their teachers ?					
3	How often do children of primary stage borrow books to read at home ?					

Please answer by putting one (✓) in the most appropriate response.

		Not at all	Very little	A little	A lot	A very great deal
4	To what extent are children of primary stage interested in reading fiction books ?					
5	To what extent are children of primary stage interested in reading non-fiction books ?					
6	To what extent are children of primary stage interested in reading foreign literature translated to Arabic Language?					
7	To what extent are children of primary stage interested in reading magazines ?					

		Not at all	Very little	A little	A lot	A very great deal
8	To what extent do children of primary stage participate in writing literature such as stories, poetry, etc ?					
9	To what extent does the content of literature books attract children of primary stage to read ?					
10	To what extent does the illustration of children's literature books attract children of primary stage to reading ?					
11	To what extent does the name of the author attract children of primary stage to read ?					
12	To what extent are children of primary stage interested in listening to the stories inside the library ?					

Part three:

Librarians' Recommendations
and Suggestions

Please write down any particular notes about any current problems, and suggested solutions related to the quality of literature available to children in Bahrain and library services offered to them with regard to the following points:

1 - The provision of literature books in the library for children of age 6-12.

2 - The provision of locally written literature books which reflect the social life in Bahrain.

3 - The provision of public libraries in cities and villages of Bahrain.

4 - The designing system of children's school libraries and the classification of books or other educational media.

Appendix F

The Questionnaire for the Parents

The Questionnaire for the Parents

The views of 40 parents were collected, as the parents are the people most acquainted with their children's reading interests since they spend most of their time together. Therefore, the researcher designed this questionnaire to collect data from 40 parents of 40 primary school children for the significance of their views and suggestions in respect of the type of literature children prefer to read or to listen to, the time they spend in reading at home, and the role of parents in encouraging their children to read.

School of Education
University of Durham
United Kingdom.

Dear Guardian,

This questionnaire is a part of a field study carried out by the researcher in fulfilment of his Ph.D. programme in the subject of Children's Literature, their books and reading interest.

Through this study, the researcher intends to examine the standard quality of literature available to children in Bahrain, their reading interests and the extent to which they benefit from their readings.

Therefore, your positive participation in expressing your personal opinions will help the study to achieve its objective.

Thanking you for your co-operation.

Yours Faithfully,

Mohammed Al-Nokhada
University of Durham
School of Education
1 December 1995

The General Information

Name "Optional" .....

Please answer by putting the right number or one (✓) only in the most appropriate square.

A - How many children of aged 6-12 do you have? (according to their sex).

Male	Female	
☐	☐	6 - 7 years old
☐	☐	7 - 8 years old
☐	☐	8 - 9 years old
☐	☐	9 - 10 years old
☐	☐	10 - 11 years old
☐	☐	11 - 12 years old

B - Do you have twin children aged 6-12 years old?

☐ Yes
☐ No

C - Do you have any handicapped children age 6-12?

☐ Yes
☐ No

Part one :

Please answer by putting one (✓) in the most appropriate response.

Question 1	Not at all	Very little	A little	A lot	A very great deal
A - To what extent are your **MALE** children of the following ages interested in reading at home ?					
From 6 - 7 years old					
From 7 - 8 years old					
From 8 - 9 years old					
From 9 - 10 years old					
From 10 - 11 years old					
From 11 - 1 2 years old					
B - To what extent are your **FEMALE** children of the following ages interested in reading at home ?					
From 6 - 7 years old					
From 7 - 8 years old					
From 8 - 9 years old					
From 9 - 10 years old					
From 10 - 11 years old					
From 11 - 1 2 years old					

Question 2	Not at all	Very little	A little	A lot	A very great deal
A - To what extent are your **MALE** children of the following ages interested in reading fiction books ?					
From 6 - 7 years old					
From 7 - 8 years old					
From 8 - 9 years old					
From 9 - 10 years old					
From 10 - 11 years old					
From 11 - 1 2 years old					
B - To what extent are your **FEMALE** children of the following ages interested in reading fiction books ?					
From 6 - 7 years old					
From 7 - 8 years old					
From 8 - 9 years old					
From 9 - 10 years old					
From 10 - 11 years old					
From 11 - 1 2 years old					

Question 3	Not at all	Very little	A little	A lot	A very great deal
A - To what extent are your **MALE** children of the following ages interested in reading non-fiction books?					
From 6 - 7 years old					
From 7 - 8 years old					
From 8 - 9 years old					
From 9 - 10 years old					
From 10 - 11 years old					
From 11 - 12 years old					
B - To what extent are your **FEMALE** children of the following ages interested in reading non-fiction books ?					
From 6 - 7 years old					
From 7 - 8 years old					
From 8 - 9 years old					
From 9 - 10 years old					
From 10 - 11 years old					
From 11 - 12 years old					

Question 4	Not at all	Very little	A little	A lot	A very great deal
A - To what extent are your **MALE** children of the following ages interested in reading children's periodical magazines?					
From 6 - 7 years old					
From 7 - 8 years old					
From 8 - 9 years old					
From 9 - 10 years old					
From 10 - 11 years old					
From 11 - 12 years old					
B - To what extent are your **FEMALE** children of the following ages interested in reading children's periodical magazines?					
From 6 - 7 years old					
From 7 - 8 years old					
From 8 - 9 years old					
From 9 - 10 years old					
From 10 - 11 years old					
From 11 - 12 years old					

Question 5	Not at all	Very little	A little	A lot	A very great deal
A - To what extent are your **MALE** children of the following ages interested in reading literature written by Bahraini authors?					
From 6 - 7 years old					
From 7 - 8 years old					
From 8 - 9 years old					
From 9 - 10 years old					
From 10 - 11 years old					
From 11 - 12 years old					
B - To what extent are your **FEMALE** children of the following ages interested in reading literature written by Bahraini authors?					
From 6 - 7 years old					
From 7 - 8 years old					
From 8 - 9 years old					
From 9 - 10 years old					
From 10 - 11 years old					
From 11 - 12 years old					

Question 6	Not at all	Very little	A little	A lot	A very great deal
A - To what extent are your **MALE** children of the following ages interested in listening to fiction stories?					
From 6 - 7 years old					
From 7 - 8 years old					
From 8 - 9 years old					
From 9 - 10 years old					
From 10 - 11 years old					
From 11 - 12 years old					
B - To what extent are your **FEMALE** children of the following ages interested in listening to fiction stories?					
From 6 - 7 years old					
From 7 - 8 years old					
From 8 - 9 years old					
From 9 - 10 years old					
From 10 - 11 years old					
From 11 - 12 years old					

Question 7	Not at all	Very little	A little	A lot	A very great deal
A - To what extent are your **MALE** children of the following ages need your assistance while reading?					
From 6 - 7 years old					
From 7 - 8 years old					
From 8 - 9 years old					
From 9 - 10 years old					
From 10 - 11 years old					
From 11 - 12 years old					
B - To what extent are your **FEMALE** children of the following ages need your assistance while reading?					
From 6 - 7 years old					
From 7 - 8 years old					
From 8 - 9 years old					
From 9 - 10 years old					
From 10 - 11 years old					
From 11 - 12 years old					

Question 8	Not at all	Very little	A little	A lot	A very great deal
A - To what extent does reading literature affect the educational level of your **MALE** children of the following ages?					
From 6 - 7 years old					
From 7 - 8 years old					
From 8 - 9 years old					
From 9 - 10 years old					
From 10 - 11 years old					
From 11 - 12 years old					
B - To what extent does reading literature affect the educational level of your **FEMALE** children of the following ages?					
From 6 - 7 years old					
From 7 - 8 years old					
From 8 - 9 years old					
From 9 - 10 years old					
From 10 - 11 years old					
From 11 - 12 years old					

Please answer by putting one (✓) in the most appropriate response.

Question 9	Not at all	1-2 hours	3-4 hours	5-6 hours	7 hrs and above
A - How often do your **MALE** children of the following ages read each week at home?					
From 6 - 7 years old					
From 7 - 8 years old					
From 8 - 9 years old					
From 9 - 10 years old					
From 10 - 11 years old					
From 11 - 12 years old					
B - How often do your **FEMALE** children of the following ages read each week at home?					
From 6 - 7 years old					
From 7 - 8 years old					
From 8 - 9 years old					
From 9 - 10 years old					
From 10 - 11 years old					
From 11 - 12 years old					

Please answer by putting one (✓) in the most appropriate response.

Question 10	Not at all	One time	Two times	Three times	Four times and above
A - How often do your **MALE** children of the following ages visit the public library each week?					
From 6 - 7 years old					
From 7 - 8 years old					
From 8 - 9 years old					
From 9 - 10 years old					
From 10 - 11 years old					
From 11 - 12 years old					
B - How often do your **FEMALE** children of the following ages visit the public library each week?					
From 6 - 7 years old					
From 7 - 8 years old					
From 8 - 9 years old					
From 9 - 10 years old					
From 10 - 11 years old					
From 11 - 12 years old					

Part Two:

Please give your brief personal comments and suggestions with regard to the following:

1 - The kind of books you prefer your children to read at home.

2 - The importance of reading at home to your children.

Appendix G

The Semi-structured Interview for Children

The semi-structured interview for children

The semi-structured interview for children was conducted by the researcher with 60 male/female children of age 6-9. These children were selected randomly from primary schools (sampled for the study) and were individually interviewed by the researcher with the full agreement of their teachers.

The Interview Questions

1 - What is your name?

2 - How old are you?

3 - What is your school level?

4 - What are your hobbies?

5 - Do you enjoy reading books?

6 - What type of books do you prefer to read?

* - Fiction
* - Non-fiction
* - History
* - Geography
* - Languages
* - Arts
* - Religion.

7 - Do you have favourite authors? If so, why ?

8 - To what extent are you interested in reading fiction stories in your free time?

9 - How many hours a week do you generally spend reading?

10 - How do you select books that you consider to be good?

11 - What type of fiction stories do you prefer to read?

12 - Do you remember the title of the last fiction or non-fiction story you have read or listened to during the previous month?

13 - What are the subjects of stories that you consider most attractive to read?

14 - Who assists you in selecting books for reading?

15 - Whom do you consider the best person to assist you while reading?

* - Your parents
* - Your teacher
* - Your librarian
* - Your friends.

16 - Do you consider the number of times you visit the public library to be enough?

17 - Do you prefer to read at home, at school or at the public library, and why?

18 - What is your favourite children's magazine, and why?

19 - To what extent do you participate in writing to your favourite magazine?

20 - Which do you like reading best, books or magazines?

21 - How much do you gain educationally from listening to stories at school?

22 - What are the aids you need at school in order to assist in the development of your reading interests?

23 - Do you feel that literature books provided by the school assist in developing your literary level?

Appendix H

The Semi-structured Interview for Authors

The semi-structured interview for Bahraini authors of children's literature

One of the methodologies used by the researcher in conducting this survey study was a semi-structured interview with two Bahraini authors of children's literature who have had long experience of writing for children. The researcher's objectives for carrying out such an interview were mainly to identify the authors' opinions and also their suggestions with regard to:

The Interview Questions

1. From your long experience as an author for children in Bahrain, how do you evaluate Bahraini children's literary reading level ?

2. In your personal view, what are the literary subjects preferred by Bahraini children of age 6-12 ?

   A - Male children
   B - Female children

3. To what extent, in your opinion, does the Bahraini family currently play a role in developing/expanding their children's reading interests?

4. To what extent do the books of the primary education curriculum play a role in supporting children's literature ?

5. Have you contributed to the writing of literature books related to the primary education curriculum ?

6. How do you find children's public libraries in Bahrain in terms of the quantity and quality of books ?

7. Do you consider the number of locally published children's literature books each year is adequate in comparison to the number of Bahraini children and their needs ?

8. Do you think the quality of the locally produced literature books which are presented to children in public libraries and book - shops in Bahrain satisfies children's literary needs ?

9. How do you find the extent of co-operation between you, as an author of children's literature, and the governmental or private institutions in presenting quality literature to children in Bahrain?

10. Currently, what is the role of traditional heritage in children's literature in Bahrain ?

11. Do you face any difficulties as an author of children's literature in Bahrain ?

12. Do children in Bahrain face any difficulties in accessing their literature?

Appendix I

The Arabic and English versions of both the letter of request for approval and the letter of approval

بسم ا لله الرحمن الرحيم

الى سعادة الاستاذ الفاضل مدير التعليم الابتدائي بوزارة التربية والتعليم المحترم ،
عن طريق عميد كلية التربية بجامعة البحرين المحترم ،

تحية طيبة وبعد :

ارفع اليكم كتابي هذا طالبا فيه من سيادتكم التكرم بالايعاز في السماح لي بتطبيق الجانب العملي من دراستي المكثفة للدكتوراه في ميدان أدب الطفولة وذلك بتوزيع بعض ألاستبيانات لأولياء أمور الأطفال والمدرسين والتلاميذ وأمناء المكتبات في عشرين مدرسة ابتدائيه بنين وبنات مع العلم ان كل الاستبيانات متعلقة بواقع كتب الأطفال الأدبية وميولهم القرائية في سن ٦ الى ١٢ ، هذا ومدارس البنين ألمراد تطبيق الدراسة الميدانية فيها هى :

١ – مدرسة حطين الابتدائية للبنين
٢ – مدرسة أم الحصم الابتدائية للبنين
٣ – مدرسة المتنبي الابتدائية للبنين
٤ – مدرسة الرشيد الابتدائية للبنين
٥ – مدرسة مدينة حمد الابتدائية للبنين
٦ – مدرسة عالي الابتدائية للبنين
٧ – مدرسة بدر الكبرى الابتدائية للبنين
٨ – مدرسة المأمون الابتدائية للبنين
٩ – مدرسة الطبري الابتدائية للبنين
١٠ – مدرسة الامام مالك الابتدائية للبنين

اما مدارس البنات المراد تطبيق الدراسة الميدانية فيها فتشتمل على ما يلي :

١ – مدرسة القدس الابتدائية للبنات

٢ – مدرسة مريم بنت عمران الابتدائية للبنات

٣ – مدرسة سمية الابتدائية للبنات

٤ – مدرسة أم أيمن الابتدائية للبنات

٥ – مدرسة السلمانية الابتدائية للبنات

٦ – مدرسة مدينة عيسى الابتدائية للبنات

٧ – مدرسة زبيدة الابتدائية للبنات

٨ – مدرسة عين جالوت الابتدائية للبنات

٩ – مدرسة البلاد القديم الابتدائية للبنات

١٠ – مدرسة السنابس الابتدائية للبنات

هذا وسوف أحتاج الى تسجيل بعض المقابلات مع الأطفال في المدارس من مختلف سنوات المرحلة الابتدائية وذلك للوقوف على انطباعات التلاميذ حول كتبهم الادبية وميولهم القرائية لمحاولة رفع مستوى أدب الاطفال محليا وذلك من خلال جهود كلية التربية بجامعة البحرين . هذا وستجدون برفقه افادة المشرف على دراستي بجامعة Durham الدكتور Peter Millward وذلك بخصوص الموضوع ، هذا بالاضافة الى نماذج من الاستبيانات المراد توزيعها بالمدارس المذكورة .

ختاما تفضلوا بقبول فائق شكري واحترامي.

توقيع

محمد النوخذا

٢٠ / ٩ / ١٩٩٥

جامعة Durham

STATE OF BAHRAIN
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

دولة البحرين
وزارة التربية والتعليم

الى السيد الفاضل/ الاستاذ محمد النوخذا ،

تحية وبعد ،

فانه بالرجوع الى طلبكم المؤرخ بتاريخ ٢٠ / ٩ / ١٩٩٥ وهو حول توزيع مجموعة من الاستبيانات المخصصه لمدرسي وتلاميذ وأمناء مكتبات مجموعة من المدارس الابتدائية بنين وبنات ، وذلك لأجل تطبيق الجانب العملي من دراستكم الميدانية حول موضوع كتب الأطفال الأدبية وميولهم القرائية ، فنود احاطتكم علما بأنه لا مانع لدى ادارة التعليم الابتدائي من قيامكم بتطبيق الجانب العملي من دراستكم في المدارس التي ذكرتموها ما دامت أهداف الدراسة هي لتطوير العملية التعليمية ومحاولة وضع الخطط والاقتراحات لتنمية الميول ألقرائية ألأدبية لدى أطفال المرحلة ألابتدائية بالبحرين .

ختاما وفقكم الله والى
مزيد من البحث والعطاء.

مدير التعليم الابتدائي
وزارة التربية والتعليم
٢٥ / ٩ / ١٩٩٥

P.O. Box 43, Manama, Telex: 9094 Tarbia BN
Tel: 680071 - Fax: 680161

ص.ب : ٤٣ ـ المنامة ـ تلكس: ٩٠٩٤ تربية بي إن
تليفون: ٦٨٠٠٧١ ـ فاكس: ٦٨٠١٦١

To: The Directorate of Primary Education
Ministry of Education
Via The Dean of College of Education at Bahrain University.

Date: 20/9/1995

Dear sir,

I am undertaking a Ph.D. programme in the field of children's literature at the University of Durham in the U.K . My study is based on an empirical work to be carried out in 20 primary schools of Bahrain (10 Boys' and 10 Girls' Schools) in order to collect as much information as possible regarding children's literature books and their reading interests at the age of 6-12.

The empirical side of my study includes quantitative and qualitative surveys to be conducted in the schools sampled for the study. The quantitative survey includes four questionnaires prepared to be distributed to different samples in the selected schools (i.e., teachers, librarians, children and parents). The qualitative survey includes interviews to be conducted with primary school children of age 6-12 .

The names of the Boys'schools sampled for the study are as follows:

1 - Hautteen Primary Boys' School

2 - Umm Al-Hasam Primary Boys' School

3 - Al-Mutanabi Primary Boys' School

4 - Al-Rasheed Primary Boys' School

5 - Hamad Town Primary Boys' School

6 - Aali Primary Boys' School

7 - Badr Al-Kubrah Primary Boys' School

8 - Al-Mamoon Primary Boys' School

9 - Al-Tabary Primary Boys' School

10- Imam Malek Primary Boys' School.

The names of the Girls' schools sampled for the study are as follows:

1 - Al-Quds Primary Girls' School

2 - Mariam B. Omran Primary Girls' School

3 - Sumayya Primary Girls' School

4 - Um Ayman Primary Girls' School

5 - Al Salmaniya Primary Girls' School

6 - Isa Town Primary Girls' School

7 - Zubeidah Primary Girls' School

8 - Ain-Jaloot Primary Girls' School

9 - Bilad Al-Qadeem Primary Girls' School

10- Al-Sanabis Primary Girls' School.

Thus, I would be very grateful if you would please give me the permission to conduct my survey study in the above mentioned primary schools. This will allow me a great opportunity to identify the present situation of children's literature books and their reading interests through the samples selected for the study.

Enclosed you will find a copy of the advice provided by my programme advisor, Dr. Peter Millward, at the University of Durham, together with copies of the questionnaires prepared for the study.

Please accept my sincere thanking and gratitude .

Yours faithfully,

Mohamed Al-Nokhada
University of Durham
School of Education
20 /9 / 1995.

Mr. Mohamed Al- Nokhada

With reference to your request dated 20/9/1995, for our permission to distribute your survey questionnaires among the samples of teachers, librarians, children, and their parents in the schools sampled for the study, we would like to declare that we have no objection that you carryout your empirical work in the mentioned primary schools.

We believe that the main objective of your study is to improve the educational process in Bahrain through the suggestions and recommendations which you will submit in an attempt to develop the reading interests of primary school children.

Please accept our best wishes.

Yours faithfully,

The Directorate of Primary Education,
Ministry of Education.
25 / 9 / 1995

Appendix J

The Arabic and English Versions of the Acknowledgment Letter

رسالة شكر وتقدير

ألاستاذة الفاضلة مديرة مدرسة البلاد القديم ألابتدائية للبنات المحترمة ،
عن طريق ادارة التعليم الابتدائي بوزارة التربية والتعليم .

تحية طيبة وبعد :

يطيب لي أن أتقدم اليكم بوافر شكري وتقديري لشخصكم الكريم والى جميع من ساهم مخلصا في الاجابة على الاستبيانات المتعلقة بالدراسة الميدانية لواقع كتب الاطفال ألأدبية وميولهم القرائية بالمرحلة الابتدائية هذا وأن تلك المساعدة وألتسهيلآت التي حظيت بها ان دلت على شيء فا نما تدل على مدى ما وصلتم اليه من روح تعاونية رفيعة المستوى وذلك لخدمة المصلحة العامة ورفع المستوى الثقافي للطفل البحريني بصورة خاصة.

ختاما أكرر جزيل شكري وتقديري لكم
وتقبلوا فائق تحياتي والسلآم .

توقيع الباحث

محمد النوخذا

تحريرا في ٢٨ / ١٢/ ١٩٩٥

To: The Headmaster / Headmistress of the ..... Primary School for Boys / Girls School.

Via The Directorate of Primary Education
Ministry of Education.

Dear: Mr / Mrs.

I would like to express my sincere thanks and gratitudes to you personally and to all those who contributed in answering the questionnaires about the situation of literature and books presented to children in Bahrain and the reading inclination of primary school children aged 6-12.

I am very grateful for the assistance and co-operation I gained from you and from the teachers and librarians in your school, which has facilitated my work throughout the study.

Yours faithfully,

Mohamed Al-Nokhada
University of Durham
School of Education
28 / 12 / 1995

Appendix K

Transcripts from the responses to the open-ended questions of the questionnaire for Teachers, Librarians, Parents followed by the translation to English language

Transcripts from the responses to the open-ended questions of the Questionnaire for Teachers followed by the translation to English language

الجزء الثاني :

الرجاء إبداء ملاحظاتكم ألشخصية وإقتراحاتكم ألمناسبة للنقاط التالية .

١- مدى توفر الكتب الأد بية ألمناسبة للأطفال فى المدرسة ، مثل القصص والأناشيد والشعر والمسرحيات وذلك للقراءات الحرة .

تفتقر المكتبة المدرسية الى مثل هذه الكتب الأدبية وفي اغلب الاحيان غير متوفرة .

٢- قراءات الأطفال المفضلة داخل الفصل، والتى لها علاقة بأدب الأطفال .

قراءات الأطفال المفضلة هي قراءة المجلات المتوفرة دائماً وجميع اعدادها تقريباً مثل مجلة ماجد - مجلة أحمد - باسم وأحياناً تلجأ المعلمات لقراءة القصص الدينية المتعلقة بسيرة الانبياء تعزيزاً للدرس وبأرشاد من المعلمة .

وتحب التلميذات وترغب دائماً في قراءة القصص المصحوبة بالصور المعبرة الملونة .

٣- الأسلوب الأمثل لتنمية خيال الأطفال داخل الفصل .

- طلب من التلميذات التخيل في موضوع ما ثم مناقشته وسرده على الزميلات

- كتابة قصة غير كاملة وعلى التلميذات تكملتها

- عرض صور لقصة ناقصة وعلى التلميذة ذكر بقية القصة

- رسم موضوع من خيالها والتعبير عنه .

٤- الأسلوب الأمثل لتنمية لغة الأطفال وتقويتها داخل الفصل .

- قراءة القصص المتنوعة .

- الاستماع الى القصص من خلال السجل .

- التحدث مع الزميلات واجراء حوار جماعي داخل الفصل .

- الذهاب إلى مراكز بها أساليب لتنمية اللغة .

Part two:

Please provide your personal views and suggestions in respect of the followings:

1 - The provision of children's literature and books in your school.

The school library lacks the provision of literature and books and in most times these are not available.

2 - Children's reading preferences in respect of literature.

- children tend to prefer reading the magazines written / produced for them such as "MAJID", "AHMED" and "BASEM" magazines.
- female children like to read religious stories related to their syllabus and which are suggested by their teachers.
- female children also like reading illustrated books which are full of colours and pictures.

3 - The efficient methods/aids to develop children's imaginations.

- motivating children to imagine a particular theme and then present / discuss it with their teacher and colleagues.

- the teacher can write / present part of a story and then request children to write the missing part of it.

- presenting incomplete pictures of a particular story and requesting children to draw the missing part as they imagine it.

- requesting children to draw a particular theme from their imagination.

4 - The efficient methods/aids to develop children's language.

- reading various types of stories.
- listening to stories read through a cassette recorder.
- discussing particular themes with each others in the classroom.
- visiting language development centres.

الجزء الثاني :

الرجاء إبداء ملاحظاتكم ألشخصية وإقتراحاتكم ألمناسبة للنقاط التالية .

١- مدى توفر الكتب الأد بية ألمناسبة للأطفال فى المدرسة ، مثل القصص والأناشيد والشعر والمسرحيات وذلك للقراءات الحرة .

القصص الادبيه نادراً ما توفر في المدرسه .
وخاصه فيما يتعلق بالشعر والمسرحيات فإنه إهتمام التلميذه لكونه عادة منصب على المجلات وما تحتويه من مسابقات وغيره إضافه إلى الاهتمام المركز بالمنهج المدرسي . مما يؤدي إلى تقلص في ثقافه التلميذه .

٢- قراءات الأطفال المفضلة داخل الفصل، والتى لها علاقة بأدب الأطفال .

بالنسبه إلى حصه المكتبه تحتاج حصه إلى القراءه الخارجيه بالنسبه إلى داخل الفصل فإنه قراءه التلميذات تقتصر فقط على بعض الموضوعات المقرره في المنهج المدرسي اما بالنسبه إلى القراءات المتعلقه بأدب الطفل فإنه التلميذات يميلن أكثر شيئاً إلى القصص الخياليه .

٣- الأسلوب الأمثل لتنمية خيال الأطفال داخل الفصل .

تمثيل الدروس المدرسيه أو دروس المنهج في
هيئة مسرحيه أو قصه، تقوم مجموعه من التلميذات
بلعب هذه الأدوار والتمثيل فيها . مما يؤدي إلى
إستيعاب التلميذه للدروس بصوره جيده
إضافه إلى اثراء خيالها وتنميته من خلال
هذه الأدوار .

٤- الأسلوب الأمثل لتنمية لغة الأطفال وتقويتها داخل الفصل .

إكساب التلميذه مواضيع خارجيه اي خارج المنهج
ثم مناقشتها وكتابه الموضوعات التي تميل لها التلميذات
مثل موضوعات الصلاه - الصوم وغيرها ثم الطلب من
التلميذه ابداء رأيها في تلك الموضوعات وما هو الواجب
عليها تجاهها وبالتالي مطالبتها بانه تعبر باسلوبها في
كراستها حول تلك الموضوعات .
واذا عبرت التلميذه باسلوبها في موضوعات خارجيه
هذا يؤدي إلى اثراء اسلوبها ولغتها .

Part two:

Please provide your personal views and suggestions in respect of the followings:

1 - The provision of children's literature and books in your school.

- children's literature and books are not abundantly provided in the school library especially poetry and theatre-plays books. Consequently, children's attention is drifted towards children's magazines and the syllabus books.

2 - Children's reading preferences in respect of literature.

Children of my class are interested in reading fictional stories. But unfortunately, their reading in the classroom is limited to their syllabus books. The timetable is so extensive that it doesn't allow them the opportunity to read literature books.

3 - The efficient methods/aids to develop children's imaginations.

- Role-playing the stories of their syllabus books. This helps children to grasp the concept of the story in addition to the development of their imaginations.

4 - The efficient methods/aids to develop children's language.

- request children to read particular subjects and then to express their opinions and feelings in respect of the same subject in writing. This will certainly develop children's language and writing skills.

الجزء الثاني :

الرجاء إبداء ملاحظاتكم ألشخصية وإقتراحاتكم ألمناسبة للنقاط التالية .

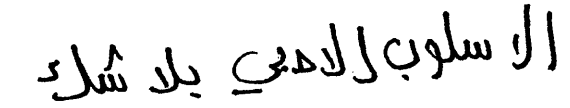
١- مدى توفر الكتب الأد بية ألمناسبة للأطفال فى المدرسة ، مثل القصص والأناشيد والشعر والمسرحيات وذلك للقراءات الحرة .

تتوفر و لكنها ليست كافية

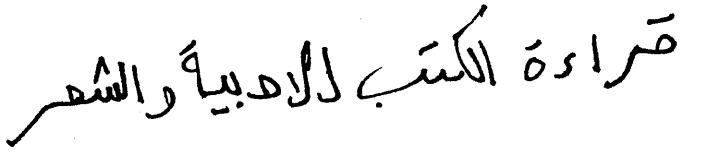
٢- قراءات الأطفال المفضلة داخل الفصل، والتى لها علاقة بأدب الأطفال .

قراءة القصص والاناشيد

٣- الأسلوب الأمثل لتنمية خيال الأطفال داخل الفصل .



٤- الأسلوب الأمثل لتنمية لغة الأطفال وتقويتها داخل الفصل .



Part two:

Please provide your personal views and suggestions in respect of the followings:

1 - The provision of children's literature and books in your school.

Children's literature and books are not abundantly provided.

2 - Children's reading preferences in respect of literature.

Stories and poetry.

3 - The efficient methods/aids to develop children's imaginations.

surely, through literature.

4 - The efficient methods/aids to develop children's language.

through reading literature books.

Transcripts from the responses to the open-ended questions of the Questionnaire for Librarians followed by the translation to English language

الملاحظات الشخصية والمقترحات

الرجاء كتابة أى ملاحظات شخصية متعلقة بكتب الأطفال الأدبية وإبداء اقتراحاتكم المناسبة لأجل النهوض والارتقاء بأدب الأطفال في البحرين وذلك من خلال النقاط التالية:

١ – مدى توفر كتب الأطفال الأدبية لاسيما القصصية منها والمناسبة لمستوى سن أطفال المرحلة الابتدائية من عمر ٦ سنوات إلى ١٢ سنة .

كتب الأطفال الأدبية (القصص) غير متوفرة بشكل جيد ، قد تتوفر قصص لعمر ٦ سنوات أو لاسنوات أكبر من ١١ أو ١٢ سنة مما يجعل الطالب لايرغب في قراءة القصص لأنها ليست في مستوى عمره .

٢ – وضع كتب الأطفال الأدبية والمؤلفة محليا بالبحرين على أيدي كتاب بحرينيين، هل هى كافية من حيث ألكم ومرضية من حيث المضمون ؟

كتب الأطفال المؤلفة محلياً غير كافية ولكن المؤلفات الأطفال الموجودة حالياً مرضية من حيث المضمون .

٣ – وضع مكتبات الأطفال في المدارس الابتدائية بالمدن والقرى ومدى الاستفادة منها من قبل الأطفال.

بالنسبة لمكتبات الأطفال في المدارس الابتدائية بالمدن أحسن حال بكثير عن القرى وليس من حيث الكم فقط، ولكن من حيث الإستفادة من قبل الأطفال واهتماماتهم.

٤ – اسلوب تنظيم مكتبات الأطفال المدرسية وتصنيف الكتب فيها.

هذا لو إتصفت جميع مكتبات الأطفال بالدولة (في المدارس الخاصة والحكومية وفي المكتبات العامة على طريقة تصنيف موحدة لمحتويات مكتبات الأطفال حتى لا يشتت عقل الطفل من حيث التصنيف.

Part three:

Librarians' Recommendations
and Suggestions.

Please write down any particular notes about any current problems, and suggested solutions related to the quality of literature available to children in Bahrain and library services offered to them with regard to the following points:

1 - The provision of literature books in the library for children of age 6-12.

Children's literature books are not adequately provided, especially for children of ages 11-12. These children find it uninteresting to read books unsuitable to their ages.

2 - The provision of locally written literature books which reflect the social life in Bahrain.

Despite the fact that the provision of the locally written literature books is not adequate, these books are satisfactory in terms of content.

3 - The provision of public libraries in cities and villages of Bahrain.

The provision of public libraries in cities of Bahrain is far more better than their provision in the villages.

4 - The designing system of children's school libraries and the classification of books or other educational aids.

I would suggest that the designing system of all children's libraries in Bahrain is to be standardised in order to facilitate their use by children.

الملاحظات الشخصية والمقترحات

الرجاء كتابة أى ملاحظات شخصية متعلقة بكتب الأطفال الأدبية وإبداء اقتراحاتكم المناسبة لأجل النهوض والارتقاء بـأدب الأطفـال في البحريـن وذلك من خلال النقاط التالية:

١ – مدى توفر كتب الأطفال الأدبيـة لاسـيما القصصيـة منهـا والمناسـبة لمستوى سن أطفال المرحلة الابتدائية من عمر ٦ سنوات إلى ١٢ سنة .

تتوفر كتب الاطفال من سن ١٠ — ١٢ سنه (الكلمه ب)
اكثر من الاطفال من سن ٧ — ٩ سنوات (الكلمة أ)

٢ – وضع كتـب الأطفـال الأدبيـة والمؤلفـة محليـا بـالبحرين علـى أيـدي كتـاب بحرينيـين، هـل هـى كافيـة مـن حيـث ألكـم ومرضيـة مـن حيـث المضمون ؟

الكتب الأدبية والمؤلفه محليا بالبحرين غير كافيه
لا من حيث الكم ولا المضمون لكلا الكلمتين (أ – ب).

٣ – وضع مكتبات الأطفال في المدارس الابتدائية بالمدن والقرى ومدى الاستفادة منها من قبل الأطفال.

وضع مكتبات الاطفال في المدارس الابتدائية لا بأس به
ولكن يلاحظ عدم توفر الكتب بشكل جيد ومتساوي في
جميع اقسام المعرفة ويفضل توفر اغلى المناهج الدراسية
عند اختيار وتزويد المدارس بالكتب من قبل الجهة المختصة
بالوزارة .

٤ – اسلوب تنظيم مكتبات الأطفال المدرسية وتصنيف الكتب فيها.

يتبع الآن اسلوب جديد في تنظيم مكتبات الاطفال
وهو تقسيم الكتب إلى حلقتين وتقسم كل حلقة إلى كتب
حقائق معلومات وقصص . وهذا الاسلوب ساعد
الاطفال والهيئة التركيز على الحصول على مصادر
المعلومات بطريقة سهلة وسريعة .

Part three :

Librarians' Recommendations
and Suggestions.

Please write down any particular notes about any current problems, and suggested solutions related to the quality of literature available to children in Bahrain and library services offered to them with regard to the following points:

1 - The provision of literature books in the library for children of age 6 - 12.

There is a lack in the provision of literature books for children of ages 7-9, whereas these books are adequately provided to children of ages 10-12.

2 - The provision of locally written literature books which reflect the social life in Bahrain.

The provision of the locally written literature is not adequate in terms of quantity and quality.

3 - The provision of public libraries in cities and villages of Bahrain.

The provision of public libraries in Bahrain is not bad.

But, the provision of children's literature books in these libraries is not adequate.

I would rather that the syllabus is taken into consideration when providing children's books.

4 - The designing system of children's school libraries and the classification of books or other educational aids.

The designing system of our school library is very good and the books are classified in an easy way for children to select what they like to read.

الملاحظات الشخصية والمقترحات

الرجاء كتابة أى ملاحظات شخصية متعلقة بكتب الأطفال الأدبية وإبداء اقتراحاتكم المناسبة لأجل النهوض والارتقاء بـأدب الأطفـال في البحريـن وذلك من خلال النقاط التالية:

١ – مدى توفر كتب الأطفال الأدبيـة لاسيما القصصيـة منهـا والمناسبة لمستوى سن أطفال المرحلة الابتدائية من عمر ٦ سنوات إلى ١٢ سنة .

ونظراً لقلة الميزانية من حكومتنا فإننا نفتقر إلى الكتب الأطفال المختلفة .

٢ – وضع كتـب الأطفـال الأدبيـة والمؤلفـة محليـا بـالبحرين علـى أيـدي كتـاب بحرينيين، هـل هـى كافيـة مـن حيـث ألكـم ومرضيـة مـن حيـث المضمون ؟

إن كتب الأطفال بالبحرين حيث قلة المؤلفين المتخصصين أرى كلياً من كتب الأطفال حيث هي ليست كافية ومرضية .

٣ – وضع مكتبات الأطفال في المدارس الابتدائية بالمدن والقرى ومدى الاستفادة منها من قبل الأطفال.

منادي حيث تقديم الكتب في القرى، كذلك
من الكتب فإنها تفتقر إلى مكتبات الأطفال
وبذلك لا يمكن الإستفادة منها.

٤ – اسلوب تنظيم مكتبات الأطفال المدرسية وتصنيف الكتب فيها.

تحتاج إلى تطوير دورات كذلك قلة
الميزانية أدت إلى قلة إقراء الكتب
من المكتبة.

Part three:

Librarians' Recommendations
and Suggestions.

Please write down any particular notes about any current problems, and suggested solutions related to the quality of literature available to children in Bahrain and library services offered to them with regard to the following points:

1 - The provision of literature books in the library for children of age 6 - 12.

- due to deficiency in the budget, our library lack the provision of literature books.

2 - The provision of locally written literature books which reflect the social life in Bahrain.

- the small number of children's authors in Bahrain has caused lack in the provision of literature books in general.

3 - The provision of public libraries in cities and villages of Bahrain.

- public libraries do not exist in most of the villages in Bahrain. They exist only in the main cities and still lack the provision of children's literature books.

4 - The designing system of children's school libraries and the classification of books or other educational aids.

- need to be developed by an additional budget assigned for this purpose.

Transcripts from the responses to the open-ended questions of the Questionnaire for Parents followed by the translation to English language

ألجزء الثاني :

الرجاء إعطاء ملاحظاتكم الشخصية المختصرة واقتراحاتكم ، وذلك حول النقاط التالية :

١ – نوعية الكتب التي تفضل أن يقرأها أطفالك في المنزل وذلك أثناء قرآوآتهم الحرة .

- المجلات الرسومية مثل مجلة مصطفى
ومجلة احمد وماجد
- القصص القصيرة

٢ – أهمية القراءة المنزلية بالنسبة لأطفالكم .

- تزيد من رصيد الطفل اللغوية وتثري حصيلته اللغوي
- تساعد الطفل على التعبير عما يدور في نفسه بصورة أفضل
- تساعد الطفل على الانطلاق خارج نطاق الاسرة والاعتماد على نفسه من خلال الثقافة التي يكتسبها .

Part Two:

Please give your brief personal comments and suggestions with regard to the following:

1 - The kind of books you prefer your children to read at home.

- the weekly produced magazines such as " MUSTAFA", "AHMED" and "MAJID" magazines.

- the short stories.

2 - The importance of reading at home to your children.

- develops children's language and adds much to their linguistic dictionary.

- assists children to express their feelings in a better way.

- assists children to be independent humanbeings.

الجزء الثاني :

الرجاء إعطاء ملاحظاتكم الشخصية المختصرة واقتراحاتكم ، وذلك حول النقاط التالية :

١ – نوعية الكتب التي تفضل أن يقرأها أطفالك في المنزل وذلك أثناء قرآوآتهم الحرة .

١- الكتب العلمية (تجارب كيميائية - اختراعات)
٢- الكتب الدينية
٣- القصص الاجتماعية

٢ – أهمية القراءة المنزلية بالنسبة لأطفالكم .

١- تنمية القدرات اللغوية القرائية لديهم
٢- تنمية التعبير الحر لديهم
٣- قراءة الكتب الدينية تساعدهم على التعمق في الإسلام
٤- وترسيخ الإيمان بالله في قلوبهم وتنمية اتجاهات إيجابية نحو الإسلام
٤- تساعدهم على تذوق العلم من قراءة الكتب العلمية وتقدير جهود العلماء ودورهم في التقدم العلمي والتعرف على المنجزات العلمية .

Part Two:

Please give your brief personal comments and suggestions with regard to the following:

1 - The kind of books you prefer your children to read at home.

- Science books.
- Religious books.
- Social stories.

2 - The importance of reading at home to your children.

- develops children's language / reading abilities.
- improves their ability in expressing themselves.
- reading religious books develops children's faith and creates in them positive values towards their religion.
- reading science books introduces children to science and scientists and increases their appreciation to their role in the development of the world.

الجزء الثاني :

الرجاء إعطاء ملاحظاتكم الشخصية المختصرة واقتراحاتكم ، وذلك حول النقاط التالية :

١ – نوعية الكتب التي تفضل أن يقرأها أطفالك في المنزل وذلك أثناء قرآءآتهم الحرة .

أ- افضل ان يقرأ اطفالي قصصاً تعرفهم بتاريخ بلدهم وآثاره ، وكذا بطريقة سهلة واسلوب سلس وممتع .

ب- أتمنى ان يهتم أطفالي بقصص ان بتكاثف والاختراعات العلمية التي تنمي تفكيرهم العلمي ..

ج- اجيد ان يقرأ اطفالي قصصاً تعلمهم الاخلاق الحميدة والعادات الطيبة وكيفية التعامل مع الآخرين.

٢ – أهمية القراءة المنزلية بالنسبة لأطفالكم .

أحاول قدر الامكان ان اجعل اطفالي يجدون متعة خاصة في القراءة ويهتمون بذلك منذ الصغر ، حتى تنمو معهم هذه الرغبة في القراءة ، خاصة وان القراءة تجعل من الصغير شخصية واثقة من نفسها ، وتجعله لبقاً ، متحدثاً جيداً ، يستطيع التعبير عن رأيه بسهولة ومناقشة مختلف الامور ، فهي – أي القراءة توسع الافق ، وقد تنمي موهبة الكتابة عند الطفل بحيث يصبح له شأن ما في المستقبل.

Part Two:

Please give your brief personal comments and suggestions with regard to the following:

1 - The kind of books you prefer your children to read at home.

- books that easily an attractively present the history of their country (Bahrain).
- science books which present stories of the scientific inventions / inventors.
- books which teach children good values so they be able to deal with others in the right manner.

2 - The importance of reading at home to your children.

I try my best to help my children to love reading because:

- it develops their language skills.
- it assists them to be independent and confident of themselves.
- it assists them to express their feelings and also to discuss different matters with others.
- it expands their imaginations and develops their skills in writing.

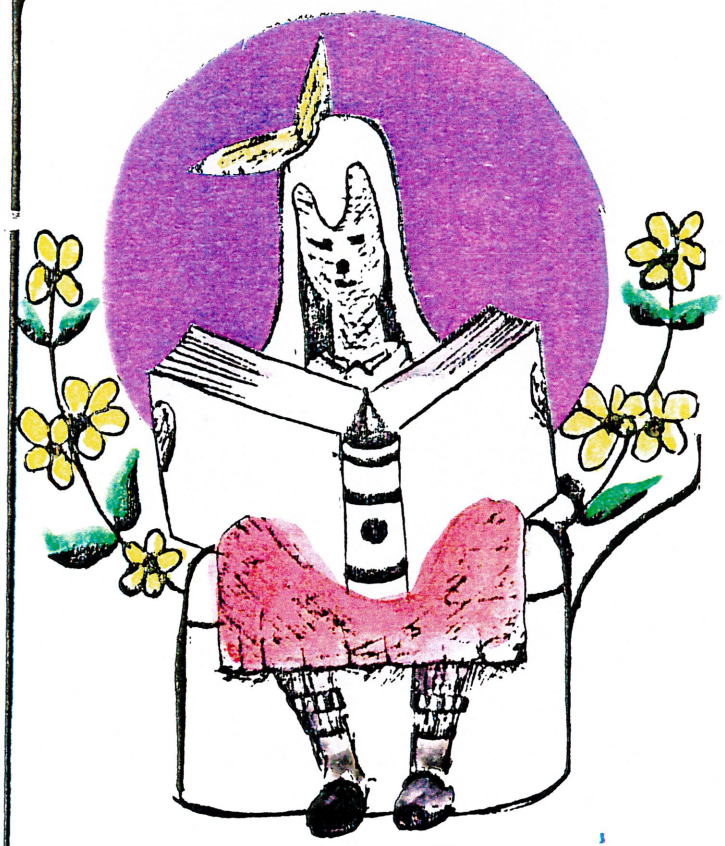
Appendix L

A short story written by a girl aged 10 from one of the primary schools (sample of the study) followed by a summary of it in English.



عروسة جديدة

بكت البنت كثيراً لأن أمها
رفضت أن تشتري لها عروسة
شاهدتها في أحد المحلات.
فأخبرت والدها بذلك
وقالت له صحيح إنها غالية
الثمن لكنها جميلة يا أبي.
فقال لها: سبق إن اشتريت لكِ



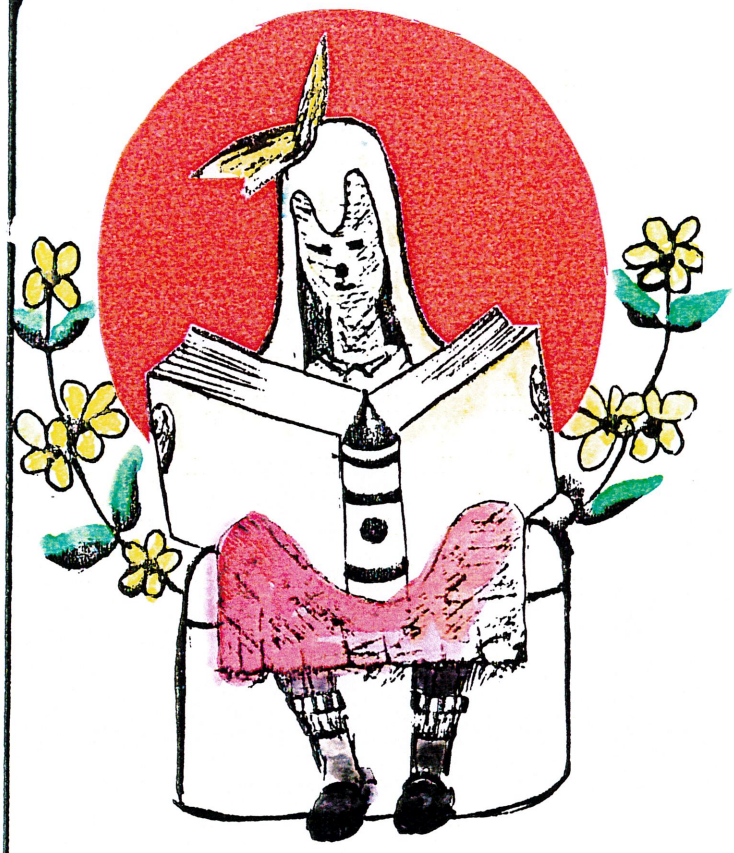
والدتكِ اكثر من عروسة أينهن ؟

قالت : أنني لعبت بهم كثيراً ولا أدري أين هن الآن .

قال لها والدها : أمكِ عندها حق إنك لم تحافظي على العرائس وأمك دفعت فيها مبالغ كثيرة

وبالطبع العروسة الجديدة مصيرها مثل الأخريات

لو كنتِ حافظتِ عليها لكان عندك مجموعة جميلة من العرائس أذهبي إلى والدتكِ واعتذري



لها لأنها على حق.

سمعت البنت كلام والدها وقالت لها أمها بإذن الله سوف أشتري لك عروسة جديدة حين يكون المال متوفراً لدي

فقالت لها شكراً يا أمي العزيزة وأنا سأحافظ عليها هذه المرة.

إعداد الطالبة: ميساء الطليحي.

٣/٢

إشراف السيدة: مراتب الخيال

A New Doll

A girl asked her mother to buy her a doll which she saw in one of the toy shops. But, the mother refused to buy the doll and the girl cried a lot.

The girl told her father about the doll. "I know that the doll is expensive but it is very beautiful" she said... "but your mother had already bought you a lot of them, where are they?" her father said.

"I have played with them a lot, and I don't know where they are now !", the girl said.

The father replied:

"Your mother is right ... she spent a lot of money in buying you so many dolls, but you didn't take care of them. If you had done so, you would have gathered a beautiful group of dolls. Go to your mother and apologise to her because she is right ".

The girl listened to her father's advice and apologised to her mother. The mother promised her daughter that she is going to buy her a beautiful new doll once money is available with her. The girl thanked her mother very much and promised that she is going to take care of her dolls everafter.



Author: Maysaa Al-Qulaihi
Age : 10 years old
School: Isa Town Primary School (for girls)
Class : 4th Primary Class.