PROMOTING READING FOR PLEASURE WITH KINDERGARTEN CHILDREN IN SAUDI ARABIA

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ABSTRACT

The main aim of this study was to promote reading for pleasure by evaluating the impact of an intervention study on kindergarten children in Saudi Arabia. To achieve this aim I undertook an evaluation case study by choosing three classrooms (KG1, KG2 and KG3) in one kindergarten, and implementing an intervention which fostered reading for pleasure. The project consisted of five separate elements, which were identified following a review of the literature on reading for pleasure. These were: using iPads for reading, introducing story sacks and high quality books in the classroom, using an interactive read aloud approach and establishing a home-school relationship. Prior to the project, I interviewed the teachers and observed children. I then undertook /five professional development workshops for teachers and one development workshop for parents and teachers in which the various elements of the intervention project were introduced. Following these development sessions, I observed children as the changes were implemented, and I also interviewed teachers and parents.

The findings of this study indicated that introducing the five elements of the intervention programme into the classroom promoted children's curiosity and engagement with regard to reading for pleasure. In addition, school-home partnerships with regard to reading were enhanced. The findings of the study indicated that children's individual needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness in relation to reading were met as result of the intervention, which contributed to their self-determination. This resulted in children's motivation for, and pleasure in, reading being enhanced. The study has implications for research, policy and practice, identifying that there is a need to develop professional development programmes that promote reading for pleasure in kindergartens in Saudi Arabia.

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SDT	Self-Determination Theory

CHAPTER 1 : INTRODUCTION

1.2 Introduction

Previous studies have revealed that motivated readers are better readers, as the motivation is one of the critical elements that leads to a successful achievement of any learning outcome (Mitchell, 1992). A number of researchers have noted the important role of reading for pleasure or for personal and educational development. They have shown that reading for pleasure is significantly associated with reading attainment(Clark, Woodley, & Lewis, 2011), vocabulary development (Mol & Bus, 2011; Sullivan & Brown, 2013), comprehension (Abdullah et al., 2012), mathematics development (Sullivan & Brown, 2013), achievement in reading (Twist, Schagen, & Hodgson, 2007), a positive reading attitude (Guthrie & Alvermann, 1999), critical thinking (Aarnoutse & van Leeuwe, 1998), general knowledge (Al Aamri, 2016; Al Aamri, Greuter, & Walz, 2013) and future success (Kirsh et al., 2002).

Scholars highlight that children benefit from reading in their daily life, even before school (Mazzoni, Gambrell, & Korkeamaki, 1999). Most research to date has looked at reading for pleasure at different ages: children in elementary school (De Naeghel & Van Keer, 2013), older children (Colombo, Landoni, & Rubegni, 2014), young adolescents (Nippold, Duthie, & Larsen, 2005) and adults (Hawkins, 2012). However, little research has looked at reading for pleasure amongst young children. However, the early years are extremely important, since early childhood is the foundation for future development. This thesis presents a study that aimed to enhance children's reading for pleasure in a Kindergarten in Saudi Arabia.

1.3 Background and Context of the Study

In Saudi Arabia, some children in their daily life do not read for pleasure. This phenomenon has been highlighted recently by PIRLS (Progress in International Reading Literacy Study), which has investigated children's levels of literacy achievement. The findings indicate that although Saudi children do read, they score very low in the 'likes

reading' category (Mullis, Martin, Foy, & Drucker, 2012); children have a negative attitude towards reading and a few of them do it for pleasure (Alhagy, 2002). A report by the Arab Thought Foundation (ATF) in January 2012 found that children from Arabic countries read for pleasure for only six minutes a year on average, whereas Western children spend around 12,000 minutes a year reading (Al-Yacoub, 2012). Alnassar & Mugidel (2010) argue that many students in Saudi Arabia only read to pass tests, as required, to progress in their education. However, reading for pleasure is important in children's lives because, as Guthrie and Wigfield (2000) point out, the child who reads for enjoyment provides themself with opportunities to learn more.

In the school context, a recent study by Humoud (2014) found that 70 per cent of students face difficulties in both reading and writing, according to an evaluation programme carried out by the Saudi Arabian Ministry of Education (Hassen programme). Al-Najim (2016) claims that the environment and culture of Saudi Arabian schools is not conducive to students reading for pleasure. Within the Saudi curriculum, it appears that students' needs are not met and their individual voices are often not heard (Altyar, 2003). Furthermore, there are no programmes in Saudi schools that promote reading for pleasure (Alnssar, 2002).

Alsamadani's (2012) research on reading strategy instruction in Saudi schools found that teachers reported that training programmes only focused on cognitive strategies, such as summarising, using figures and tables and scanning techniques, instead of focusing on meta-cognitive strategies, including comprehension skills, comparing and contrasting techniques, discussing the text with others to support understanding, and relating the text to existing knowledge and experience, which are more valuable at this early stage. In the wider context, Al-Ashraf (2010) suggests three possible reasons for the lack of reading for pleasure in some Arabic countries. These are limited family support for reading, insufficient money to buy books and widespread illiteracy across the community.

In order to engage with this study it is important to have some understanding of the relevance of Islam and Arabic culture, and especially Saudi culture. This includes an awareness of gender separation (other than between relatives) in everyday life, such as in the community, the workplace, schools and mosques. The typical roles of men and women at work and in the home are also influenced by the culture. Although the main

responsibility of the man is to be the financial provider and the woman's main responsibility is taking care of the home and the family, this is not always strictly applied, depending on circumstances. This impacted on the study to the extent that all the parents who participated in it were female.

The education system in Saudi Arabia focuses on formal teaching, which consists of three stages, namely: primary, intermediate and secondary schools. This means that attendance at Kindergarten is not compulsory. In Saudi Arabia, Kindergartens welcome children ranging from three to six years old at three different levels: KG1, KG2, KG3, respectively. Kindergartens have been defined differently depending on the country, the culture and the viewpoint. In this study, the definition used is that given by Al-Khiribi and Ali (2004), that Kindergarten is a school where children between the ages of three and six enroll on three levels to develop various skills and practices for example, social, physical, mental, emotional, moral, linguistic and religious, which may lead to better preparations to the children for learning.

The history of Kindergartens builds on the fact that Saudi Arabian society values childhood. As a result, Kindergartens have been opened across the country. The private sector has initiated attempts to develop Kindergartens and the Ministry of Education has followed this lead. The private sector opened the first Kindergarten in Saudi Arabia and continued to open them until 1965. After that, the Ministry of Knowledge, now known as the Ministry of Education, managed all aspects of Kindergartens. In 1975 the number of Kindergarten centres under private sector control had reached 92. The Ministry of Education (2007) reports that in 1982 the number in the private sector had increased to 103, comprising 591 classes, 18,784 children and 815 teachers. In 1999 there were 472 Kindergarten centres, 2,668 classes, 47,154 children and 4,007 teachers. The number of private Kindergartens continues to increase. After the private sector's efforts, that part of the Ministry of Education previously known as the Presidency for Girls' Education made efforts to set up the first Kindergarten. According to Al-Ktilah (2000), the first Kindergarten centre was opened in the city of Makkah in 1976; it had 10 classes, 200 children and 16 teachers. Since then, the number of centres has increased significantly. Despite the obstacles that the Ministry of Education faced in developing Kindergarten centres, it can be seen that their number has increased significantly. As a result, the numbers of teachers and children attending have increased accordingly, which indicates that parents have become aware of the importance of Kindergartens.

Emphasising the importance of Kindergartens in building the society, the Ministry of Education (MoE) formulated nine goals that should be fulfilled (Al-Hariri, 2010; Al-Jadidi, 2012; Al-Samadi & Marwa, 2006; Ghwaji, 2006). These are as follows:

1. Protect the child's instinct, taking care of the child's mental, moral and physical growth in a natural family and Islamic environment
2. Construct an Islamic trend based on monotheism.
3. Teach the child appropriate behaviour and Islamic ethics, by having teachers act as positive role models
4. Familiarise the child with school conditions, preparing them for the school environment and changing their attitudes from self-interest to a socialised life with their peers
5. Give them confidence in their abilities and information appropriate to their age.
6. Train the child in movement skills, teaching them healthy habits, training their senses and how to use good sense properly
7. Encourage the child's innovative activity and give them opportunities to utilise activities under their control.
8. Cater for the needs of the child, and discipline them as necessary.
9. Protect the child from danger and, in addition, address childhood problems, including behavioural issues.

It has been noted that the MoE has specifically targeted the child's spiritual needs, in addition to other aspects. In Saudi Arabia, Kindergartens started implementing a formal curriculum, including methods of self-learning, in 1981, when it was first established. The self-learning approach was based on a scientific principles that takes into considerations the environment and needs for the children (Al-Shahi, 2004).

Al-Samadi and Marwa (2006) emphasise the need for a Kindergarten curriculum based on self-learning and children's self-activity, which means the child has opportunities to choose to do activities that have been organised to help them discover their abilities and develop them.

The Kindergarten curriculum in Saudi Arabia includes a teacher's guide and a group of units. These include ten educational units that describe daily Kindergarten activities. These ten units are divided into two halves. The first half consists of five detailed units, one unit per book. These units are: Water, Sand, Food, Hands and Living in the House.

The second half contains five short units, all in one book. These units are Clothes, Family, Friends, My Book and My Health and Safety. It can be seen from the above topics that, in the Kindergarten curriculum, the 'My book' unit is the only literacy-related one, which teachers implement for a three-week period during the year. Literacy can, however, be embedded in all units of the curriculum. The current approach to literacy in Saudi Kindergartens is quite instrumental, in that it does not allocate sufficient time for the encouragement or support of reading for pleasure. This research is therefore essential in order to either influence those who design the curriculum and/or maximise teachers' use of the curriculum to promote reading for pleasure.

The educational units focus on an operational approach that claims that children should learn and discover the concepts and meanings by themselves, through interaction between the child and the educational environment. The aim of this approach is to encourage the child to think, analyse, search, try and conclude, in accordance with their ability, interests and needs. Whenever a topic unit is linked to the child's emotions, experience, interest, hobbies and relationships, it will increase the child's interest in the topic, thereby increasing the quantity and quality of learning (Al-Samadi & Marwa, 2006). This approach is, however, not adopted with regard to the teaching of reading, due partly to the way in which reading activities are designed and delivered and to a lack of interaction of children in these activities, as observed in my work experience. This leads to the problem that, although the self-learning approach gives children the opportunity to choose what they do, they are not intrinsically motivated to read for pleasure. This study seeks to tackle the problem by adding a new dimension to teachers' existing teaching practice in order to promote reading for pleasure in early childhood.

1.4 Aims of the Study

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the impact of an intervention study that promotes reading for pleasure in a Kindergarten classroom. The study introduced a range of approaches to foster reading for pleasure, including using iPads and story sacks, providing a variety of high quality books, using an interactive reading aloud strategy and developing a school-home partnership.

1.5 Research Questions

The study has two key research questions. The first one is 'What is the impact of a reading intervention, which introduced five 'elements' (iPads, story sacks, high quality books, interactive read aloud approach and the establishment of a home-school relationship) into the kindergarten classroom?'. This question focuses on the impact of an intervention project that included five different elements, which aimed to promote reading for pleasure. These five elements were identified from a review of the literature on reading for pleasure, and were as follows: using iPads; using story sacks; providing high quality books; using an interactive read aloud approach, and establishing a home-school relationship.

The second question draws on self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2002), which focuses on how individuals become motivated to act in certain ways. The question is, 'How did the project impact on children's self-determination in reading for pleasure?'.

1.6 Terminology

It is important here to clarify exactly what is meant by the terms that are used in this research. First, it is important to justify what 'reading' means to children between the ages of 3 and 6. Whilst it used to be defined simply as relating to decoding skills, reading is now acknowledged to be wider than that for young children, as confirmed by Merchant (2008, p. 3) who referred to the child "learning how to act like a reader". In reviewing previous research on reading in early years (Arizpe & Styles, 2003; Levy, 2009a, 2009b, 2011), the reading of young children in Saudi Arabia can be defined in a number of ways, including looking at pictures, understanding not just the meaning of words but the sub-text, understanding that print moves from right to left in Arabic and making efforts to decode words ('pretending' to read before one is able to decode). Second, the term 'Reading for pleasure' is used in this research to refer to an individual reading something to attain satisfaction from the act of reading, as defined by Graff (1992). For very young children, who are not yet able to read independently, reading for pleasure includes being interested in books, being excited to engage with them and wanting to talk about them and/or play out the stories they hear.

1.7 Structure of the Study

This chapter presents an outline of this study, which seeks to promote reading for pleasure amongst Kindergarten children in Saudi Arabia. This thesis consists of seven chapters. This introduction has explained the background and context of the study and has outlined its research questions, aims, terminology and structure. The second chapter is a literature review in which relevant literature on reading motivation and reading for pleasure is outlined, before the chapter moves on to outline the theoretical framework of the study: Self-Determination Theory (SDT). The methodology is outlined in Chapter Three, in which the interpretative paradigm is outlined along with the design of the case study conducted. The chapter provides an overview of the methods chosen and ethical considerations, and it specifies the data analysis process. Chapter Four introduces the reader to the children who participated in this study, their backgrounds and the changes that occurred regarding their reading for pleasure, whilst Chapter Five outlines the findings of the intervention study. Chapter Six analyses the findings in relation to the theoretical framework of the study, Self-Determination Theory (SDT). The final chapter, the conclusion and recommendations, outlines the key findings and their implications for policymakers and practitioners are identified. In addition, in this final chapter the limitations of the study are stated, a number of recommendations are made for future research, policy and practice, and the future contribution made by this study are highlighted.

In the next chapter, an overview of the literature is provided that has explored issues relating to reading motivation and engagement.

CHAPTER 2 : LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the literature relative to reading in early years. It is divided into three sections, the first of which focuses on the definition and variations of the construct 'reading motivation' and moves on to examine the two aspects of reading motivation: intrinsic and extrinsic motivation.

The second section indicates how teachers and caregivers can promote reading for pleasure in a child's life. I reviewed the literature to determine which aspects of pedagogy and print support were important in fostering children's reading engagement. I identified a number of key strategies and these are set out in the following chapter; they include the use of tablet technologies, story sacks, high quality books, interactive reading aloud strategies and school-home partnership.

The last section of this chapter outlines the theoretical framework of the study, positioning the study in relation to self-determination theory (SDT) as well as discussing its three psychological needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness.

First, however, I consider literature related to children's motivation to read, given it is a central construct in the study.

2.2 Children's Motivation to Read

With regard to the construct of 'reading motivation', Wigfield and Guthrie (2000, p. 405) define it as "the individual's personal goals, values and beliefs with regard to the topics, processes and outcomes of reading". From this definition, it can be understood that 'reading motivation' is multifaceted, and is likely to be different from one child to another. Moreover, Cambria and Guthrie (2010, p. 16) defined it as "the values, beliefs and surrounding reading for an individual", which can be explained as a strong emotion that a person can experience to help him/her engage in reading activities which may lead to achieving personal goals and developing values and beliefs related to reading.

Despite the fact that three terms, “reading attitude’’, ‘‘reading interest’’ and ‘‘reading motivation’’ have been used in research studies interchangeably, the constructs of each are different (Mazzoni et al., 1999). Reading motivation refers to the internal state that makes children read. Alexander and Filler (1976, p. 1) defined “reading attitude” and “reading interest” as “a system of feelings related to reading which causes the learner to approach or avoid a reading situation”. Thus, reading attitude is defined as a child’s feelings about reading, whereas reading motivation is a child’s reasons for reading. Previous study has found that fostering positive attitudes towards reading is just as fundamental as teaching decoding skills and comprehension strategies (Cosgrove, 2001). Reading interest is linked to a person’s preferences for types, topics or conditions (Clark & Rumbold, 2006). Wigfield and Guthrie (1997) illustrated that interest in reading plays a significant motivational role affecting diverse elements of reading performance. A relationship exists between reading interest and intrinsic reading motivation as Guthrie, Hoa, Wigfield, Tonks, and Perencevich (2005) found in their study that the child’s interest in a specific kind of book leads to an increase in the child’s intrinsic motivation in general reading. This finding indicates the importance of finding out about children’s reading interest in order to build intrinsic reading motivation as well as reading for pleasure, by providing books that match the child’s interest.

It can be seen from the previous literature that reading interest, attitude and motivation are important aspects and can be used effectively to enhance children’s reading for pleasure. Despite the number of studies that investigate reading motivation, there has been little discussion about it with regard to pre-school age children. Numerous studies have focused on primary school children or older (Baker & Wigfield, 1999; Guthrie, McRae, & Klauda, 2007; Medford & McGeown, 2012; Nolen, 2007; Smith, Smith, Gilmore, & Jameson, 2012). A lack of research on reading motivation in young children indicates the need to explore this area, as this study does.

The topic of reading motivation has been widely researched in the UK and USA. However, there has been little discussion about it in the Saudi context. Recently, PIRLS (Progress in International Reading Literacy Study) provides information on children’s levels of literacy achievement, including reading motivation, in relation to 4^{th} grade children in primary schools in a number of countries around the world. Unfortunately, Saudi Arabia was not one of the 35 countries in 2001 in the first cycle of this study, nor

was it in the second cycle involving 41 countries in 2006 (Mullis & Martin, 2003; Mullis, Martin, Kennedy, & Foy, 2007). However, on the third cycle of PIRLS in 2011 Saudi Arabia was one of the 49 countries involved. Surprisingly, despite the fact that the findings reveal that Saudi children achieved high scores in reading motivation, their scores in the 'likes reading' category were very low (Mullis et al., 2012). This result suggests that Saudi children are motivated to read but they do not like reading.

Both Wigfield and Guthrie (1997) postulate that reading is an activity, where children can be extrinsically or intrinsically motivated to read. Before this is discussed in more detail, there is a need to explore the concepts of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation for reading. This is now discussed.

2.2.1 Intrinsic Reading Motivation

According to Ryan and Deci (2000), intrinsic reading motivation is associated with the pleasure that children attain when they engage in specific activities for their interest. The term "intrinsic motivation" has come to be used to refer to the desire to read because it is a satisfying or rewarding activity in itself (Schiefele, Schaffner, Möller, & Wigfield, 2012). A child can be motivated intrinsically because the topic or the activities are interesting. For instance, in this way of thinking, a child may read just to learn new things or because s/he loves reading together with his/her friends. That is, children's motivation comes out internally rather than from external sources. A substantial body of research on reading motivation indicates that intrinsic motivation for reading has to be enhanced inside and outside the classroom because it can positively affect: reading enjoyment (Cox & Guthrie, 2001; Wang & Guthrie, 2004); the breadth and frequency of children's reading (Hidi, 2000); and the ability to keep basic information in a child's memory (Guthrie et al., 1998). This literature suggests that if the child is motivated to read s/he will continue reading after school in his/her free time at home just for enjoyment. Wigfield and Guthrie (1997) found that curiosity, challenge and enjoyment are the aspects of intrinsic reading motivation that link to a breadth of reading and reading comprehension; each of these aspects helps the child to keep reading. For example, when a child is intrinsically motivated, s/he would continue reading even though other children are, for example, playing or doing other activities that may distract the child from reading or stop the child's reading. Wigfield and Guthrie

(1997) go on to claim that if a child is not intrinsically motivated towards reading, they may be more inclined to stop reading if distracted by another activity.

As well as its influence on persistence in reading, intrinsic reading motivation helps the child to use reading strategies effectively to complete a reading task (Paris & McNaughton, 2010), since there is a correlation between intrinsic reading motivation and reading skills. Morgan and Fuchs (2007), for instance, reviewed the research on young children's reading motivation. After examining 15 studies, they found that children who were intrinsically motivated tended to read more and demonstrated more skills than children who did not enjoy reading. Conversely, poor readers had low reading motivation. This kind of motivation, therefore, has been highly valued by many researchers in the field of early childhood (Guthrie, McGough, Bennett, & Rice, 1996; Pintrich & De Groot, 1990).

Intrinsic reading motivation is also affected by getting rewards. Previous researchers found that rewards undermine intrinsic motivation, especially if children have their own interest in doing the activity (Deci, Koestner, & Ryan, 1999). In this case, children tend to stop doing the activity if the reward stops, even though they were reading before the reward is given and because they enjoyed doing it (Cameron & Pierce, 1994). This raises the question: what is the best way to motivate children to read. Is it a relevant reward (e.g. a book), or praise, or is no reward necessary? Marinak and Gambrell's (2008) study answered this question, finding that rewarding children with either a book or no reward motivated children more than giving them prizes. Similarly, Deci's (1971) findings indicated that tangible rewards decrease intrinsic motivation. Although a number of studies indicate that rewards have a bad influence, by undermining intrinsic motivation (Deci, 1971), nevertheless, it has been found that rewards supported intrinsic reading motivation in these two cases: first, if the reward is related to reading activities such as giving books, or extra time on reading (Gambrell, 1996) and second, if the child was not expecting a reward (Brennan & Glover, 1980), the level of their motivation might not be affected.

2.2.2 Extrinsic Reading Motivation

Children can be also extrinsically motivated to read. The literature states that extrinsic reading motivation relates to external reasons that motivate a child to read about

particular topics and engage in reading activities (Ollila, 1977; Schiefele et al., 2012; Schulwitz, 1977). For example, a child might engage in a specific reading activity to receive a reward such as grades, or money from parents.

The worth of extrinsic motivation compared to intrinsic motivation continues to be debated. The debate is essentially based on whether the use of extrinsic rewards lessens intrinsic motivation, or not. This argument has been supported by some researchers (e.g.Cambria & Guthrie, 2010; Kohn, 1999). Cambria and Guthrie (2010) found that, in the long run, extrinsic motivation discourages reading achievement, since a student who reads just to get a high score, money or a prize often stops reading after gaining the reward. However, Schunk, Pintrich, and Meece (2008) reported that external rewards which lead to improvement in learning may help children increase their intrinsic motivation when the reward is suitably applied. Bearing this in mind, it has been further argued that the relationship between intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation should not be viewed simply as 'good versus evil', on the grounds that a child can be motivated by both kinds of motivation (Dörnyei, 2001, p. 47). In the early years, for example, a child can be intrinsically motivated to read simply to satisfy his/her curiosity and extrinsically motivated to read by getting literacy-related rewards, such as a book.

Considering the aforementioned discussion and based on the findings of PIRLS, it could be argued that Saudi children might be more extrinsically motivated to read and this is partially attributed to the practices of teachers and their family members of giving them money or gifts or through creating an atmosphere of competition for better grades. In this sense, the Saudis might lack intrinsic motivation. This issue will be one of the points that this study aims to explore.

In this research, my concern is more focused on supporting and enhancing children's intrinsic motivation in reading since extrinsic motivation has a short, limited impact on reading, especially in the early childhood phase, when there is more freedom regarding a child's learning. The teachers' role is to provide a rich, attractive environment and the children are free to choose to participate in their preferred activities that they find interesting (Deci, 1975).

In the next section, I move on to consider the impact of culture and society on reading motivation.

2.3 Sociocultural Perspectives on Children's Reading Motivation

Sociocultural theory is a unified perspective of earlier theories of Vygotsky (1978) and later views on the social formation of the mind that were proposed by some researchers such as Engeström (1999, 2001) and Wertsch (1998). Lantolf (2000, p. 1) points out that the main concept of sociocultural theory is presented by the Russian psychologist Vygotsky (1978) when he states that the "human mind is *mediated*". In this sense, the individual does not work with the world by themselves but rather almost all their actions are facilitated by more experienced human beings (e.g. teachers and parents) and/or by other material and cultural resources (e.g., books, iPads, language). From a sociocultural perspective, children gain knowledge by observing others and participating in activities with their families and communities, who provide learning support and challenges (Rogoff, 1990). Hall (2003, p. 136) noted that 'learning literacy is social and cultural' and it is essential to look at reading in the context in which it has occurred.

From the socio-cultural theory framework, the 'zone of proximal development' (ZPD) is a concept originated by Vygotsky (1978) from his observations of children at play. ZPD plays an essential role in children's language acquisition in the classroom. The idea it promotes is to describe the difference between the novice's accomplishment when acting alone and when acting with a more capable person(s) (Mitchell & Myles, 1998, p. 146). The concept of ZPD is directly linked to Bruner idea, which is 'scaffolding'; this is defined as 'systematic contingent help' offered to the novice when needed and withdrawn when that person shows signs of 'self-regulation' (Pinter, 2006). In this sense, caregivers have an essential role to play in enhancing children's motivation. For example, children attending a primacy school stated that both teachers and mothers have positive effect on their reading interest (Edmunds & Bauserman, 2006). This research emphasised the role of adults in motivating children to read, especially parents and teachers who, being the closest people to children, are their role models. This point will be further explained in the coming section. Thus, effective interactions between adults and children in home and school have a significant role in shaping children' reading motivation (Meece, Glienke, & Burg, 2006). I will now move on to consider literature that has focused on fostering young children's reading for pleasure.

2.4 Reading for Pleasure for Kindergarten Children

According to Graff (1992), the phrase 'reading for pleasure' refers to reading something to attain the satisfaction from the act of reading, and this is pursued through choosing reading materials that suit an one's needs and interests. The focus of this research study was on examining various ways to enhance children's engagement in reading: creating a rich-print classroom environment by, for example, adding iPads, story sacks and high quality books; developing the use of interactive read alouds and establishing a home-school link to motivate children to read and share reading with family member. These aspects are discussed in this literature review to explore and analyse their significance in promoting reading for pleasure.

2.4.1 The Physical Literacy Environment of the Classroom

According to Gue *et al*. (2012, p.309), a physical literacy environment 'refers to the design, arrangement and display of various literacy materials within the classroom'. It also includes the choice of specific arrangements and materials (Morrow, 2007). A large number of published studies describe the positive role of a high quality classroom literacy environment in children's learning and literacy development (Burchinal et al., 2008; Burchinal et al., 2000; Hoff, 2006; Mashburn, 2008; McAllister, 2012; Neuman & Roskos, 1990). Morrow (2007) states that literacy-rich environments have to be well-structured and well-resourced, in the sense that learning corners that contain lots of common literacy resources and environmental print (e.g., posters, coloured pictures, labels) can play a crucial role in maximising dramatic play and literacy development. Han (2007), in turn, points out that literacy materials which promote children's language development should be available across all the play corners and not just in traditional literacy-related areas, so that children can gain sufficient opportunities to engage in a literacy-rich environment in each corner in the classroom. Most of these studies, in effect, basically focus on the impact of positive changes made to provide a rich literacy environment. However, scant attention has been paid to the quality of the changes that are actually needed. In this sense, the availability of literacy materials in the classroom environment is not the only essential variation. The quality of these materials also matter since there are varieties of literacy resources and applications (Loughlin & Martin, 1987). Specifically in relation to reading, the choice of appropriate

books for children which match their interests is essential to promote reading for pleasure (Pumfrey, 1988).

The ‘adapted environment’ has been seen as a part of the physical environment which teachers arrange, “including all space organised through furniture placement, and arrangement of those for the learners’ use” (Loughlin & Martin, 1987, p. 6). The way that teachers arrange the environment is especially important because it depends on the particular needs of the children and the particular kind of activities which will take place in the classroom (Loughlin & Martin, 1987).

Thus, teachers should be cognisant of the influence of an effective environment on children’s behaviour and learning and incorporate that into their classroom arrangement. With regard to Saudi Arabian kindergarten classrooms, it was important in this study to ascertain whether the classroom’s physical environment should be changed in order to enhance children’s literacy. This research, therefore, in line with the literature, investigated a physical literacy environment with a particular focus on the identified issues around reading for pleasure.

The literature on the use of iPads, story sacks and high quality books is reviewed in the following sections.

2.4.1.1 IPads

In order to meet the needs of today’s children, the kindergarten can and should become more educationally advanced through integrating out-of-school, technology-mediated language resources (e.g. laptops, netbooks, tablets, mobile phones, projection technology and visual equipment) into the classroom (Siraj-Blatchford, 2004). This point was previously asserted by Spodek (1986, p. vii) when he suggested that children are ‘more verbal and more knowledgeable today than they were in the past’, and this might be attributed to the fact that they, with the help of more experienced individuals and technologies, can access more information than ever before. It is noteworthy that Prensky (2001) coined the construct of ‘digital natives’ in order to describe children who were born between 1980 and 1994, on the premise that they are more familiar with, and immersed in, digital technologies. Based on that, some researchers in the field of early literacy learning Cennamo, Berrone, Cruz, and Gomez-Mejia (2012) and Reksten,

(2000) have argued that play-oriented experiences, like dramatic play, should not be the only activity that is applied in the classroom to foster children's early literacy, but rather other activities that are based on technologies need to be used by teachers to increase children's interest and enjoyment and to link the external and internal settings, such as, home and school. Gee and Morrow (2005) go further and suggest that the use of technology in the classroom is currently encouraged by some parents, who want more engaging educational experiences for their young children.

Some researchers (e.g. Fullan, 2007, 2012; Heo & Kang, 2009; Moeller & Reitzes, 2011) have discussed factors that can either facilitate or impede the integration of technologies in kindergarten. Some of the major factors raised are organisational support, availability of technologies, funding, technical support, time, children's personal attributes, teachers' positive or negative attitudes and perspectives, teachers' technological competence and teacher training. Moeller and Reitzes (2011), for instance, observed that only 8% of teachers actually integrate technologies in their teaching practices. Fullan (2012, p. 17) contends that 'engagement and efficiency' can be seen as the two essential things that the educational system needs if it wants to integrate technology effectively (Heo & Kang, 2009). On the other hand, teachers who have been used to particular ways, which may considered by the others as out-dated and traditional ways of teaching, might view such innovation as unnecessary and unwanted change (Fullan, 2012). Frequent change, as Fullan (2007) believes, is challenging and associated with anxiety, stress, strife and loss. In addition, Fullan argues that a lack of support, limited preparation through teacher training, a lack of time and the heavy workload, as complained about by teachers, just fuels such anxiety and dissatisfaction among teachers.

There are many modern techniques, methods and tools that have been used to teach literacy skills. In line with that, teachers, educators and policy makers in Saudi Arabia have been trying to promote and develop the teaching and learning atmosphere within the school setting through the use of more modernised and advanced tools. As a result, several schools have become more interested in purchasing digital technological tools such as iPads, tablets or PCs for use in the classroom in order to facilitate, broaden and enhance the teaching and learning process. Therefore, it is crucial to consider using such technology in order to develop appropriate ways of encouraging pre-school children to read.

There has been some research into the use of these new technological tools with young children for pedagogical purposes such as language learning and teaching. For instance, Holloway, Green and Brady (2013) found that parents reacted positively about the use of digital devices by their children as long as they were used for development and learning. Moreover, children and young people are more interested in learning on the screen because they feel they are more independent and can work both individually and in groups (National Literacy Trust, 2014). In line with that, iPads have been one of the main tools that have been used to promote and enhance language skills in general, and literacy skills in particular (Hutchison and Reinking, 2011).

Even though the first version of the iPad was released back in 2010, there was not a lot of focus on this tool being used for teaching students in general, and pre-schoolers in particular (Zhen, Vail, Ayres, 2015). However, recently there has been a dramatic shift in the use of digital media such as iPads in pre-school classrooms. This could be associated with the fact that some researchers have claimed that young children are endowed with brains that can easily adopt digital interactive technology in their play activities and particularly in their learning (Flewitt, Messer and Kucirkova, 2014; Lee, 2015). Hence, it is essential to develop and adapt certain teaching technologies when considering how to enhance the reading skills of early classroom children in Saudi Arabia. In doing so, encouraging children's use of iPads could develop and support their learning skills, leading to positive outcomes and effective use of digital technology for children's learning, as suggested by Lee (2015) in his study, which found that the use of iPads promotes and develops interaction whether with peers or teachers. For example, the pre-schoolers in his study would, most of the time, discuss the assigned tasks with their teachers and their peers and, consequently, would be more engaged in learning individually and collectively (Lee, 2015), which would lead to them building their interpersonal skills. Lee (2015) suggests that for many children, their motivation could be increased if there is more interaction with digital media. He adds that the longer the child uses the iPad, the more interested in learning he/she would be. Hence, the iPad, or other similar tablets, can be used for multiple purposes in order to support the teaching of literacy skills to pre-school children.

It should be noted that not all children are aware of the technical skills required when using iPads (Heft & Swaminathan, 2002; Merchant, 2012), especially pre-schoolers. This lack of knowledge could lead to an inadequate or an insufficient development of

learning. As a result, teachers must bear in mind that some children might not be able to master the use of these tools; they must recognise the importance of explaining to children how to operate and use the iPad properly in order to familiarise their learners with digital technological tools (Flewitt, Messer and Kucirkova, 2014).

Furthermore, literature presented in this review has indicated that the use of iPads has increased children's motivation and meaningful interactions with their peers and teachers in the learning process (Henderson & Yeow, 2012). Merchant (2015a) also suggests that technologies influence the social behaviour of users. Therefore, teachers need to encourage their pre-schoolers to learn, think and communicate with others around them in the classroom when using the iPads, not only when they face problems (Lee, 2015). Subsequently, the pre-schoolers might interact with their peers and teacher in the classroom while using the iPad and, in this way, the iPad can be a promising and a unique instructional device that could be used in early childhood contexts.

On-screen reading (iPads, PCs, Kindles) for enjoyment has increased significantly in the last five years. A study was carried out which suggested that reading on iPads was the most popular activity among the study participants (National Literacy Trust, 2014). This could suggest that the Apple iPads (and similar devices) have gained popularity and, widespread acceptance among many academics and students (Nguyen, Barton, & Nguyen, 2015). Merchant (2015b) commented on how the reading practices of young children have changed since the appearance of the iPad, which many children enjoy using because it is small, portable and has an intuitive touch-screen. Thus, it is essential to assist and encourage children to use such tools in language learning in general, and for reading skills in particular, in order to motivate and engage them in the process of learning.

Reading activities need to be chosen in a way that could benefit the development of reading skills in preschool children. The decision to use iPads in this study is related to the fact that children are often confident, interested and motivated to use this type of technology because such tools are easy to deal with and manipulate (Lee, 2015). In addition, it has been noted that children are driven by the challenges provided by iPads and do not give up easily because they are eager to discover and explore (Lee, 2015). From this perspective, it is essential to assist pre-schoolers in order to motivate them to develop their reading skills and enjoy their learning experiences.

Touch technology can be utilised in various educational contexts for different activities. For instance, children are able to choose and use an iPad on their own to listen, read or write if the apps they use support independent learning. They can also use such technology in groups for different purpose. Such educational and purposeful activities would enhance the children's ability to familiarise themselves. Subsequently, they could develop their reading skills. This work indicates that the role of the teacher has to be limited in order to encourage children to be independent learners (Beschorner and Hutchison, 2013). Therefore, the iPads could be used for one-to-one learning and collective learning purposes with limited input from teachers. In doing so, the children would develop skills in independent learning and collaborative interaction, and have the opportunity to attain high levels of achievement. This, however, depends on the apps used.

It must be acknowledged that some research has identified negative impacts of the use of screen reading, such as reduced comprehension and information recall (Pabion, 2015). In support of that, a Swedish study concluded that children learn better when they read from paper and less when they read from a screen (Wästlund, Reinikka, Norlander, & Archer, 2005). However, in the case of my research, the aim is not to improve reading skills and reading comprehension but to motivate and enhance pre-schoolers to read for pleasure.

From reviewing the literature, as I discussed, most of the studies about using technology with young children focus on using iPads to enhance language and learning as well as to develop reading skills, but there is a lack of research investigating the impact of using iPads for reading engagement. However, an intervention study conducted by Bauman (2014) aimed to ascertain the impact of using iPads with Grade 6 students to develop their comprehension skills as well as their engagement in reading, and found that using iPads positively improved motivation and comprehension.

My study goes further to investigate the impact of using iPads and e-books to engage children in reading for pleasure. As previously discussed, iPads have particular features to enhance the reading experience, thus encouraging children to read more for pleasure. The use of iPads is particularly relevant at the current time, as it has become essential for pre-schoolers to be able to independently use and navigate digital technology. I chose to use the iPad in my study because it uses a touch-screen as its primary input

device and is slightly smaller and lighter than the average laptop. Thus, children can engage in reading by using touch-technology because these tools provide unique ways to utilise language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing); this is especially true for kindergarten children who need support in their reading because of their lack of ability in decoding text. In this case, it could be beneficial for such technological tools to be integrated into the learning context in order to motivate children to read in the classroom. Importantly, it has also been seen as an effective tool that motivates children to read for pleasure as well as motivating children to engage in educational activities (Kitchner, 2012). In effect, this study is unique in that it is one of the first empirical studies in Saudi Arabia that can give some key insights about the practices of teachers in Early Years in a Saudi city with regard to the use of tablet technologies in kindergarten as one of the tools to promote reading for pleasure.

Having discussed the use of the iPad, I now turn to the second tool used to foster pleasure in reading in my study, which is the story sack.

2.4.1.2 Story Sacks

In the 1990s, Neil Griffiths, having found that many children did not enjoy reading, and considered it a chore, developed story sacks (Noonan-Lepaon and Ridgway, 2009). His video (1998) shows how using story sacks can be an enjoyable experience and brings stories to life and so can turn children into life-long readers; in addition, it shows how the children's motivation to read, both at home with their parents and in the classroom, increases, as does their interest. Story sacks can be particularly effective since they can be used in schools to support teaching, and children can borrow them to take home to support their learning with their parents (Taylor, in Fisher and Arnold, 1999).

A story sack is a large fabric bag which encloses a story book and related materials to illustrate the story and to make the experience of reading memorable and enjoyable (Dukes, 2007). A typical story sack contains the following objects: a storybook, a non-fiction book related to the same topic, an audio-tape of the story, language games, puppets of the main characters, educational activities such as memory cards and puzzles, and other items connected with the story (English & Machin, 2005; Noonan-Lepaon & Ridgway, 2009). It also includes cards contain ideas which provide a guide

for both teachers and parents, suggesting ways they can use the contents of the story sack to help develop literacy skills (Barron & Powell, 2002).

Selecting an appropriate book to make a story sack is essential and should take the following into account: good quality illustrations, easy to read aloud, characters for which it is easy to buy or make puppets, a story which can be illustrated with simple props, a story that is popular with children (Dukes, 2007), and a story that has a spiritual, moral or ethical message, promoting the values of honesty, integrity, caring and non-discrimination (Noonan-Lepaon & Ridgway, 2009). Moreover, the level of difficulty and the theme of the story sacks should be varied depending on the age of the children; older children should get more advanced stories, activities and more complex themes than the younger ones (Noonan-Lepaon & Ridgway, 2009).

Many benefits of using story sacks, either in the school or home environment with young children, including those who cannot read yet, have been identified (Brown & Ryan, 2003; Dukes, 2007). One of the benefits is providing opportunities for children to develop listening skills and vocabulary by listening to their teachers or peers (Dukes, 2007). Also children become engaged with the story sacks because of their interactive nature, which can encourage communication and literacy skills by offering a multi-sensory approach (Kelly, 2015), but also because they are fun to use (Noonan-Lepaon & Ridgway, 2009).

They can help enhance children's language skills, imagination skills and problem-solving skills when caregivers use open-ended questions during the activity (Kelly, 2015). Finally, they can also enhance children's physical, creative, spiritual and social development by interacting with the story and communicating with the teacher and their peers (Noonan-Lepaon & Ridgway, 2009). Research has shown that story sacks can be effective, not only to develop literacy, but as a way of introducing and linking to other subjects in the curriculum, such as art, music and science, to engage and motivate children to support their wider learning; for example, a story about a bear that wants to go to the moon (*Whatever Next*? by Jill Murphy) gives teachers an opportunity to talk to the children about gravity (McLeish, 2012). In the same way, the findings of a study by English & Machin, (2005) conducted with first year children suggest that environmental story sacks increased children's awareness and knowledge of environmental issues as well as their enjoyment of the books and activities.

The findings of a study undertaken on story sacks by Barron & Powell (2003) highlight the significance of children making links between the story and experiences in their own lives, that can then help them to develop their understanding of these experiences. This point is supported by Vygotsky who argued that 'thought undergoes many changes as it turns into speech; it finds its reality and form' (1962:126), which means discussing the story ideas with the children can help them understand the concepts and relate the story to their own lives. Barron & Powell (2002) go further to note that story sacks are an effective way of encouraging children to be engaged in exploration of literacy and language with adult's support, which make them to express how they see and understand the world.

From reviewing the literature, it is clear there is some research suggesting the significance of story sacks to language and literacy development, yet there is very limited practical research into their impact (Barron & Powell, 2003). The intervention undertaken as part of this study took a very practical approach to explore the possible impact of story sacks on children's reading for pleasure. In addition to story sacks, the intervention also included a focus on good quality picture books, a topic which is discussed in the next section.

2.4.1.3 Children's Books

Children's books refers to books "that are read to and by children" (Temple et al., 1998, p. 7). They tend to be shorter than books for adults, with a simpler plot, and often with a child as the main character. The origins of children's literature in Arabic countries are based in the oral traditions aimed at adults that were then transferred to paper, primarily for educational purposes and occasionally for entertainment. In Saudi Arabia, there is a lack of research that has investigated children's books. Among the Arabic countries, it has been one of the last to give sufficient attention to children's literature and its importance.

Arabic children's literature comes from four major sources. The first is Islamic sources which includes the Koran and Hadith; these are both full of stories that reflect the Islamic teachings and principles. The second is cultural sources, that is stories based on Arabic history, such as Arabian Nights, Kaleelah wa Demnah and stories about Joha (a witty and wise character who is believed to be from Baghdad). Thirdly, there are

modern translations of stories originally aimed at adults but adapted for children, such as "Cinderella", "Alice in Wonderland" and "Little Red Riding Hood". The fourth is folk tales.

Bataweel (1993) divides the development of Saudi children's literature into five periods. The first period was from 1959 to 1960. In 1959, Al-Rawdha Mapazine was the first children's magazine to be published. Unfortunately, due to financial difficulties, publication was discontinued after just 27 issues. The second period was from 1963 to 1977, when five of the Saudi newspapers started to produce occasional sections within their publications aimed specifically at children. In the third period, 1977 to 1978, Hasan Magazine for children published its first edition but ceased publication in 1978 as Okath Establishment could not cover its expenses. During the fourth period, 1978 to 1980, three publishers became interested in children's literature and published a series of children's books. This is the first period in which Saudi children's books were published and most of them were stories. The fifth period covers 1980 until now. From 1980 writers and publishers began to take children's literature seriously. In addition, Government ministries also started publishing books for children.

This is in contrast to many western countries which recognized the importance many centuries ago and this is reflected in the increase in the number of publications every year (Al-Sudairi, 2000). It is significant to mention that children's books seemed not to be valued in the Arabic culture and very few picture books are published each year; this lack perpetuates the low level of interest in this type of book

However, Al-Sudairi (2000) conducted a study into Saudi children's books and carried out a literary and cultural analysis; she found that the major central themes in children's books focus on religious and moral issues. She argued that writers of children's books should use a variety of themes, as children need to be exposed to a diversity of topics such as religion, culture, adventure, humour and science. In addition, Al-Sudairi's (2000) findings show that the illustrations in the stories misrepresent Arabic clothing and settings. This is a serious issue since when children see positive representations of themselves in stories, it helps develop their self-esteem and a sense of pride in their own cultural background (Glazer, 1997). Misrepresentations of children's appearance and/or their culture may make books less real and less enjoyable. Furthermore, her findings show that the styles of some writers are not suitable for young children due to a lack of

attractive colourful illustrations and rhyming words. She argues children lose interest when they read a book without these or other appealing features. Often, even if there were illustrations, they did not particularly add much to the text. Singh (2003) states that high quality illustrations provide an alternative way for young readers to understand and engage with the story as well complementing the written text.

Issawi (2004) looked at the stories in the Saudi kindergarten curriculum, focusing on the Water Unit, and found that teachers were given no flexibility in the selection of stories to read in the classroom. This is not in line with Glazer (1997. p. 32) who suggests that both teachers and children should have the opportunity to choose reading materials, and that teachers should select literature according to their students' needs and interests. Issawi (2004) also noted that for religious stories, only the title was provided for teachers, and for other topics, text was provided but with no pictures. With regard to religious stories, because they are so well-known, teachers read these aloud without a specific text; it was the teachers' responsibility to present the story using language suitable for 3-5 years old and to focus on the events that children could understand.

However, Issawi (2004) argues that some of the religious stories are difficult for young children to understand since they have abstract concepts, and also not all teachers have the ability to adapt the text to suit young children's understanding. The non-religious stories in the curriculum are also not in book form, only the text is provided for teachers; it is their responsibility to find objects or pictures to show the children while they tell the story. Issawi considers a further disadvantage of non-religious stories is that they tend to be too long for younger children (aged 3-5). For example, one of the stories on the curriculum, the 'Small Fish', contains more than 700 words. In addition, he found that the language used in the selected stories was above the level of children's linguistic development and that in some stories, the message was so explicit that other literary features were neglected making the stories less interesting for children. His findings also showed that there was a complete lack of humour in any of the curriculum stories. These findings raise serious issues which have a negative impact on children's motivation to read; specifically, by not having stories in book form, a gap is created between children and their engagement with books.

Hence, a big shift in culture is required to bring about change. This should include encouraging reading from an early age and introducing young children to high-quality

picture books. This is supported by the study of Robinson, Larsen, and Haupt (1995) which found that children who were given high-quality books to read at home more than doubled the amount of books they read, and increased their daily reading time, compared to those who were not provided with high-quality books. The increase in reading may be a result of the children enjoying the books more. Dwyer and Neuman (2008) argue that selecting high quality books will enhance the pleasure young children get from reading. They reviewed research to identify which features of high quality books promoted children's interests and development, and concluded that to select high quality books the following criteria should be considered: children should find the book enjoyable and this might involve humour, which for young children might be events that are different from what they expected; there should be characters that children can get attached to, either because they are already familiar with them or because the book is one of a series; the level of difficulty of the book content should be slightly challenging; the language in the story should be interesting with the use of word patterns, rhyme and rhythm.

Further criteria have been identified by Singh (2003); these are authenticity, context, perspectives, translation and illustrations and they relate to the extent to which children can recognise and understand the culture, the context and the language of the story. Huck, Helper, Hickman, and Kiefer (1997, p. 7) argue that a children's book can be about any subject as long as children enjoy and want to read it, and that the book has "the child's eye in the center".

2.4.2 Reading Aloud Strategies

Research suggests that teacher-guided activities in the classroom can be used to increase children's motivation. Lantolf (2013) and Segers and Verhoeven (2002, p. 207) highlight the value of scaffolding provided by experienced individuals to children in early years settings because this can support children in understanding that 'print carries meaning, that written text has forms and functions, and that ideas can be expressed with written conventions'. Pintrich (2003), for instance, recommends that teachers should design different tasks that offer opportunities for students in accordance with their level and should offer them accurate feedback.

The literature suggests that the gender of the teacher might play a role in either motivating or demotivating a child to read. In Saudi Arabia, for instance, the educational system, after kindergarten, follows the segregation between male and female students in schools in addition to allocating male teachers to male students, and females are also taught by only female teachers. However, in Saudi kindergartens, all the teachers are female so the issue of any difference in impact of gender on teaching young children does not exist.

The role and gender of the teacher, as mentioned above, can play a key part in the effectiveness of reading aloud. McGee and Schickedanz (2007, p. 742) argued that it is also "the way books are shared with children [that] matters". An interactive read aloud is a strategic approach that gives teachers opportunities "to scaffold children's understanding of the book being read, model strategies for making inferences and explanations, and teach vocabulary and concepts"(McGee & Schickedanz, 2007, p. 743). Interactive read alouds provide valuable learning opportunities, which enable teachers and peers to model and scaffold comprehension strategies, to develop literacy skills, to engage readers, and to promote collaborative learning (Wiseman, 2011). As a literacy tool, interactive reading allows children to have a conversation about the story before, during, and after it is read to them (Justice et al., 2005; WMcGee & Schickendanz, 2007; Sipe, 2000; Myers, 2015). From the literature it is clear that, although teachers have been reading aloud for a long time, this was not a fully interactive process, as in some cases, students were not allowed to make comments or ask questions (May & Bingham, 2015).

From my previous experience in supervising student teachers, I was well aware of the use of this passive approach in Saudi and concerned about the lack of enjoyment for both children and teachers. This prompted me to consider how this could be improved by exploring ways to achieve higher levels of enjoyment in reading aloud, since reading aloud can be a pleasurable experience for both young children and teachers (Kerry-Moran, 2016).

When teachers read aloud, children learn different things; for example they may learn new vocabulary and learn how to use their imagination, learn to calm themselves down to listen to the spoken word, build their self-esteem, enhance curiosity and increase reading for pleasure (Morris, Bloodgood, & Perney, 2003; Pankey, 2000).

The literature suggests that the reading aloud of picture books to kindergarten children is of great value because, having shared the book as a group, this can then enable children to interact with their peers and teachers in the class and with their parents at home (Gambrell, 1996). In storybook reading, caregivers or teachers might utilise some useful reading strategies to support this interaction, such as varying the volume of their voice, asking the child questions about some pictures, and explaining things to encourage a child to be engaged in that activity intellectually and emotionally. For this reason, Albright and Ariail (2005, p. 1) postulate that 'motivation, interest and engagement are often enhanced when teachers read aloud'.

In an empirical study carried out by Sulzby (1985), for example, the stages of reading development of children aged between 3 and 6 years old were tracked by asking them to 'read aloud'. Sulzby (1985) found that pre-school children first treated each page of books as detached units, prior to forming a story. After that, teachers used wording that was more suitable for written patterns, which sounded like reading. It can be inferred that by reading to children, they may develop their skills in literacy..

Read aloud sessions can be extremely beneficial for enhancing the literacy skills of young children as Mulyani (2011) describes interactive read alouds as involving predictions, summarising, making connections, and drawing conclusions to support children's comprehension. Research has frequently shown that children, by being actively engaged in reading activities, acquire skills more effectively; this includes interacting with the teacher (questioning and predicting) as the book is being read instead of just listening (McGee & Schickedanz, 2007). Wozniak's (2010) findings with regard to read alouds indicated that interactive read alouds influence students' comprehension more than read alouds with no interaction as, when the students were asked to retell the story after the session, she found that the group who experienced the interactive read aloud gave more complete and detailed information than the other group. A wide number of research studies found that interactive read aloud strategies have been used to enrich students' comprehension in different grades for example in grade KG2 (Delacruz, 2009), and KG3 (Giroir, Grimaldo, Vaughn, & Roberts, 2015), second grade (Mulyani, 2011), fourth grade (Al-Najim, 2016; Alshehri, 2014), and fifth grade (Wozniak, 2010).

Research shows that interactions with teachers and other children can improve vocabulary development (Gest, Holland, WCoviello, Welsh, Eicher-Catt, &Gill, 2006; Wasik, 2010; Giroir et al., 2015). In addition, it has been demonstrated that creating opportunities for children to learn and to talk about vocabulary supports language development and future academic attainment (Blachowicz & Fisher, 2010; Fisher & Frey, 2014; McClelland, Acock, & Morrison, 2006). This is in line with the findings of Myers (2015) which indicate how beneficial daily, interactive read alouds can be for supporting young children's development. The findings further indicated that children who were deliberately taught new words could then use advanced language when talking to their friends. Interactive-read alouds go beyond comprehension and vocabulary to enable children to develop a wider knowledge of their social environment and the ability to discuss related ideas (Strachan, 2015).

Good expression in reading aloud by teachers is vital if these benefits are to be achieved (Kerry-Moran, 2016). Kerry-Moran (2016, p. 661) puts a lot of emphasis on the importance of good expression in reading aloud in order to fully engage children and help them achieve the benefits of reading. In my experience of supervising trainee Saudi teachers, this was not an issue for concern, as teachers do tend to use expressive voice when reading. However, what was lacking was any interaction during the read aloud sessions, hence the focus of one of the workshops I designed and delivered.

The literature also indicates that reading aloud is a chance for teachers to promote, and support children's ideas within a classroom context. The conversation in the interactive read aloud may teach participation rules integrated with the aspects of reading in the classroom (Allor and McCathren 2003; Justice et al. 2009; Santoro et al. 2008; Wiseman, 2010).

Wiseman's (2010) findings have demonstrated how interactive read alouds can provide opportunities for open dialogue supported by some instruction; this helps children to construct meaning based on the story/text and to develop their existing skills and knowledge. When considering how to construct meaning, it is important to consider the role of dialogue in interactive read alouds. Wiseman (2010) suggest four key aspects to this:

- Confirming: When teachers confirm contributions made by the students it encourages them to discuss their ideas and promotes a positive classroom

environment; it can also lead to discussion and exploration of topics related to the text. Encouragement and feedback during read alouds can be provided by teachers and peers and these play a key role in constructing meaning.

- Modelling: Teachers can support learners during read alouds by modelling how to read, understand and analyse a story in order to develop their thinking and comprehension skills. Modelling has a significant role in young children's reading learning process since they develop many strategies for comprehending any story. However, it is important to balance the guidance from the teacher with the opportunity for students to contribute and engage with the interaction.

- Extending: Extending is a process by which the teacher builds on a student's existing knowledge and supports them to a discover a deeper meaning; this can be done by encouraging students' comments so as to explore a new theme or idea. Children should be exposed to effective reading strategies early in their school-life. It is important for children to relate to the story events and characters on a personal level.

- Building: creating opportunities for students in order to build meaning together. Read alouds that encourage a fully interactive approach with greater focus on the students' contribution have the power to develop children's engagement and motivation with regard to reading.

There is a lack of research on read alouds in the Saudi context. However one recent intervention study conducted by Alshehri (2014) examined the impact of read aloud strategies on the comprehension skills of fourth grade male students. The researcher explained read aloud strategies to the students and found that the strategies had a positive impact on comprehension by connecting the content with participants' own personal experiences. More recently Al-Najim (2016) undertook an intervention that focused on reading aloud and its impact on reading comprehension and engagement of Saudi female fourth grade students and found that the reading aloud practices had a positive effect on students' reading for pleasure and reading strategies. These two studies, to the best of my knowledge, are the only ones to examine the read aloud practice in a Saudi context. However, the participants in both studies were in the fourth grade, and it was the students who were trained in read aloud strategies; they aimed to

enhance students' comprehension. In this present study the participants are pre-schoolers, it is the teachers and parents who are trained. However, it is similar to Al-Najim (2016) study in that it aims to promote reading for pleasure.

The literature has highlighted problems related to effective reading aloud. For example, Slattery and Willis (2001, p. 103) underline that applying the strategy of 'reading aloud' in the classroom is not an easy task for teachers. Often during a read aloud session students are compliant but not always fully engaged, as this requires the teacher to facilitate interactive and productive discussions which is considered difficult. This may be due to teachers often making the mistake of having such a rigid plan that it prevents them from hearing the students' voice and inhibits necessary interaction. No matter how read aloud sessions are delivered, teachers must create opportunities for students to be interactive by asking questions and using their imagination (May & Bingham, 2015).

The literature also suggests some solutions to these problems. In order to read aloud well most people need to enjoy what they are reading. For this reason, when people start reading stories they should be encouraged to choose ones they enjoy and will want to repeat (Harvey 2013; Kosa 2008). Less experienced teachers should start by reading to small groups and planning in advance the type of questions and comments that will enhance the learning experience of the group based on their educational needs (May & Bingham, 2015). A need has been identified for more professional development for teachers in the use of scaffolding, particularly to raise awareness of how children's language and literacy skills can be supported by group read alouds (Pentimonti & Justice, 2010). Professional development on the use of scaffolding at different levels may be valuable for preschool teachers; this will enable them to use high support scaffolds in read alouds for children who need a higher level of support (Pentimonti & Justice, 2010). This is supported by the results of Delacruz (2009) research which indicated that teachers require training in planning and conducting read alouds in order to be effective facilitators and to support students to become active participants. This is also supported by the view of Kerry-Moran (2016, p. 661) who claims that with the necessary support and instruction, it is possible for all teachers to develop their own read aloud skills. He goes on to elaborate how this can be achieved; clearly defining purpose and elements of expressive reading as well as providing strategies for reading aloud, different types of texts; modeling read aloud sessions to teachers; providing guidance to pre-service teachers on how to effectively vary their enunciation, pitch and

volume, using pace and pauses; being mindful of the visual aspects of read alouds and implementing effective strategies to deliver read alouds. In response to Kerry-Moran's recommendations above, I designed and conducted a skills development workshop on interactive read aloud strategies for all the participating teachers, irrespective of their teaching experience.

Interactive read alouds can have important pedagogical implications (Wiseman, 2010). First, the transactional approach demonstrates the benefits of encouraging students to actively contribute and thus develop their literacy skills and comprehension. These interactive conversations should go beyond the text and incorporate the four aspects of modeling, confirming, extending, and building. However, it is also important to remember that while the students should be encouraged to contribute in many ways, the teacher retains an important role in guiding the discussion and instructing the students. Second, the selection of appropriate and relevant texts is vital in encouraging responses from children during read alouds. The books should address topics and themes that reflect and can add to the children's life, experiences, culture and knowledge. Children's literature can provide the prompt for discussions about wider ideas and concepts about the world. These interactions make connections between students' perceptions and the story's features, and create a balance of understanding the literature.

When selecting books for interactive read alouds, teachers need to take into account students' interests and their personal and academic situations. Cremin, Mottram, Collins, Powell, and Safford (2009) argue that in order to promote children's reading for pleasure, teachers need to be supported in two ways; the provision of information about children's literature and being trained to use literature in the classroom effectively.

A further area, which has been found to promote reading for pleasure, is the fostering of school-home links, which is outlined in the next section

2.4.3 Home and Kindergarten Partnership

From a sociocultural viewpoint, children's reading motivation can be strongly reinforced with the help of not only teachers, but also by a host of individuals outside the classroom, in particular parents (Pinter, 2006).

Storch and Whitehurst (2001), for instance, have discussed parents' influence on their children's reading habits, achievement and learning preferences, as they are children's first teachers. Cairney (2003, p. 85) defines 'family literacy' as 'social and cultural practices associated with written text'. Reviewing the previous studies on early literacy learning has shown that children's reading experience at home is mainly influenced by the educational level of the parents (Hart & Risley, 1995; Storch & Whitehurst, 2001), by having older siblings (Elkin, Train, & Denham, 2003; Taylor & Strickland, 1986; Taylor, 1995), by parents' occupations (Mortimore, Sammons, Stoll, Lewis, & Ecob, 1988), by parents' income (Guthrie, Schafer, & Huang, 2001), and by parental gender (Millard, 1997). To clarify this issue, for instance, children who come from advantaged, educated families are more likely to go to school with the assumption that they will become readers like their parents. In addition, it is noteworthy that mothers and fathers might interact differently with their children at story-reading time. Schwartz (2004b) found that mothers used strategies that helped their children to engage in a story and derive a deep understanding, whereas fathers often take up literal strategies and expend less thinking with their children. Schwartz (2004) approved this finding that the mothers in his study spent more time with their children and therefore they deployed more effective reading strategies.

In this regard, the collaboration between teachers and parents is fundamental in enhancing children's motivation to read. Teachers, for instance, can give parents some tips for reading with their children at home in order to bridge the gap between the practices inside and outside the classroom. Fletcher and Reese (2005) contend that parents who read stories aloud to their pre-school children before their entry to school facilitate their children's success in the first few years of school. Similarly, one of the ultimate findings of Hoff‐Ginsberg (1991) study was that the language that mothers used while reading aloud was various and rich in vocabulary than that used in other daily activities. Crain-Thoreson and Dale (1992), in turn, observed in their study the importance of using the strategy of 'reading aloud' in the classroom, since this strategy helped children of low-income and less-educated families maximise their vocabulary inventory after six weeks.

In Saudi Arabia, the context of my research study, a lot of families start to teach their children the Qur'an when they are young, either by reading or memorising or both. Muslims are motivated extrinsically to read, as they believe that there are rewards to be

gained in the second life, either Heaven or Hell, so they read the Qur'an as much as they can in order to go to the better place, Heaven.

In most Arab countries, including Saudi Arabia, children from birth to pre-formal schooling usually use colloquial Arabic dialogue in daily life, whereas the main dialogue that is often used in school and literacy is Modern Standard Arabic (MSA). With this in mind, Arab children apparently confront many challenges when they start going to formal settings to learn literacy. Commenting on this problem, Ibrahim (2011) suggests that it is the responsibility of Arab parents to help their children overcome the difficulty of reading in the MSA through endorsing strategies such as encouraging them to visit libraries and borrow books, or even playing some videos online. To the best of my knowledge, my current study will be the first empirical research study in Saudi Arabia that aims to unearth this point, underlying the pivotal role of communication between individuals inside and outside the classroom to mediate children's early literacy, which is the role of the home/school reading relationship in children reading for pleasure.

So far in this chapter I have reviewed literature that has examined reading for pleasure. This literature informed the nature of the intervention study that I conducted. In the next section I will outline the theoretical framework for the study self-determination theory (SDT).

2.5 Theoretical Framework: Positioning the Study in Relation to Self-determination Theory (SDT)

I have used self-determination theory (SDT) because of its focus on motivation and engagement, and it is useful to enable the researcher to look holistically at the data. This theory was most pertinent for this study because I found that SDT and its three needs (autonomy, competence and relatedness) fits very well with Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory, which I have used. SDT helped me understand the psychological factors that explain the behaviour of children as they become more motivated to read for pleasure. I observed and recorded what happened with the children in my case study then SDT gave me a deeper insight into why it happened that way.

Self-determination theory has been developed for 40 years, initially by Deci and Ryan, and provides a broad framework to explain an individual's motivation to undertake certain behaviour (Deci & Ryan, 1985b; Vansteenkiste, Niemiec, & Soenens, 2010). Deci & Ryan (2002:9) identified a number of mini-theories within SDT which they have developed over the years:

> "Specification of separate mini-theories was, historically, a consequence of building a broad theory in an inductive fashion. That is, our approach has been to research phenomena, construct mini-theories to account for them, and then derive hypotheses about related phenomena. Throughout this process, basic assumptions and approaches remained constant, so SDT mini-theories were logically coherent and readily integratable each with the others. As such, each represents a piece of the overall SDT framework" (Deci & Ryan, 2002, p. 9).

Currently, SDT constitutes six mini-theories or principles, which have emerged gradually since the establishment of SDT in the 1980s. Deci and Ryan (2002) first published four mini-theories; a fifth followed (Vansteenkiste et al., 2010) and more recently, a sixth has been published (Deci & Ryan, 2017). The six mini-theories are: cognitive evaluation theory (CET), organismic integration theory (OIT), causality orientations theory (COT), basic needs theory (BNT), goal content theory (GCT) (Deci & Ryan, 2002; Vansteenkiste et al., 2010), and relatedness theory (SDT Web). However, in this research I used SDT as a whole, without going into the detail of all the mini theories, as I wanted to take a broad approach to the three psychological needs.

Self-determination theory proposes that there are three innate psychological needs regardless of age and gender (Ryan, La Guardia, Solky-Butzel, Chirkov, & Kim, 2005), and culture (Ryan et al., 1999). Those three needs are autonomy, competence and relatedness, and they should be met in order to gain positive outcomes and enhance performance, motivation, and well-being, for a human being's physical, psychological, and social wellness (Deci & Ryan, 2002; Vansteenkiste et al., 2010). The concept of well-being has been viewed in two different ways; one equates to happiness; the other, as defined by SDT, is to be fully functioning (Deci & Ryan, 2002).

However, if any of those needs are thwarted in a social context, or not included in any activities, there will be an occurrence of negative consequences to physical and

psychological well-being (Deci & Ryan, 2002), which "undermine[s] motivation, performance, and well-being" (Deci & Ryan, 2002, p. 27). Sheldon and Filak (2008) stressed that the implicit, powerful negative impact of thwarting the three needs has a larger impact than supporting them. This gives us an insight into the danger of thwarting these needs. Thus, supporting them is essential. Satisfaction of all three needs is required in the social environment to achieve physical health as well as psychological and social wellness (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

In addition to the importance of supporting all the three needs, a balance in need satisfaction is required. The findings of four pieces of empirical research by Sheldon and Niemiec (2006) revealed the significance of balancing support for the three psychological needs of competence, autonomy and relatedness in promoting motivation and engagement

Researchers have shown a strong relationship between supporting the three psychological needs and intrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000b). Activities that satisfy children's need for competence, autonomy and relatedness lead to children enjoying participating in an activity and feeling intrinsically motivated, which in turn positively affects their performance and outcomes (Ryan & Deci, 2009). Stroet, Opdenakker, and Minnaert (2013) reviewed 71 empirical studies and found that there is a clear link between teachers' support of the three needs and students' engagement and motivation. Many studies have applied the SDT framework in educational contexts in order to increase students' intrinsic motivation (Niemiec & Ryan, 2009). A few studies applied SDT principles in reading motivation (Guthrie et al., 2007). SDT gives insights into how students' self-determination has been affected by factors in the home and classroom (Deci & Ryan, 1994). With regard to reading it is suggested that:

> … when teachers adopt a teaching style supportive of students' needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness during reading activities, a greater willingness or higher autonomous motivation to participate in reading is expected to be evoked. From this perspective, the important role of teachers in facilitating students' optimal motivation is stressed.
>
> (De Naeghel, Van Keer, Vansteenkiste, Haerens, & Aelterman, 2016, p. 234).

With specific regard to reading, recent research conducted by De Naeghel et al. (2014) empirically showed the importance of supporting students' needs for competence, autonomy and relatedness in order to be intrinsically motivated to read. In this research study, it was essential to bear this in mind when designing the project for children's reading activities inside and outside the classroom. I will discuss each need separately in the next sub-sections.

2.5.1 Need for autonomy

In SDT, the need for autonomy is one of the three innate psychological needs that must be met to be self-determined and intrinsically motivated (Ryan & Deci, 2000b). Autonomy refers to "the experience of volition, choice and psychological freedom" (Vansteenkiste et al., 2010, p. 138). It is important to highlight that the meaning of autonomy in SDT is not viewed as equal to independence, as it is in other theories. As independence refers to a "lack of reliance on others, [it] can also be characterized by either autonomy or control" (Ryan, 1992, p. 19). In addition, the meaning of autonomy in SDT is not viewed as equal to detachment, as it is in some other theories. However, quality attachment often facilitates autonomy in optimal circumstances (Ryan, 1992). This point is further illustrated by the findings of Ryan and Lynch (1989) that indicated that by ending a relationship, people felt independence and detachment but not autonomy. This point will be discussed in more detail in the 'Needs of Relatedness' section.

Supporting students' need for autonomy and intrinsic motivation has been researched in education at different stages, from elementary school (Assor, Kaplan, & Roth, 2002; Bao & Lam, 2008) to high school (De Naeghel et al., 2014), to college (Reeve, Nix, & Hamm, 2003). A considerable number of research studies showed that supporting students' autonomy had a significant positive effect on a wide variety of outcomes: students' performance (Black & Deci, 2000; Núñez & León, 2015); achievement and motivation (Miserandino, 1996); intrinsic motivation (Sheldon & Filak, 2008); enjoyment (Ryan & Deci, 2000b); comprehension and conceptual learning (Grolnick & Ryan, 1987); attitudes toward learning (Stefanou, Perencevich, DiCintio, & Turner, 2004), learning, persistence, and performance (Vansteenkiste, Simons, Lens, Sheldon, & Deci, 2004) and creativity (Núñez & León, 2015). Researchers stressed that perceived student interest as well as providing autonomy support had a positive impact

on students' intrinsic motivation (Grolnick & Ryan, 1987; Tsai, Kunter, Lüdtke, Trautwein, & Ryan, 2008). All these findings stressed the importance of supporting children's autonomy.

SDT-based practical research indicated that when students are provided with choices, there tends to be support for autonomy and increased intrinsic motivation, whereas controlling events tend to undermine intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 1994; Schraw, Flowerday, & Reisetter, 1998). However, a number of research studies have shown that providing choices does not necessarily equate to autonomy (Assor et al., 2002; Reeve et al., 2003). Katz and Assor (2007, p. 430) suggested that "equating choice with autonomy may be erroneous." In this regard, Reeve et al. (2003) conducted research on 198 undergraduate students to explore whether perceived choice always led to increased self-determination and autonomy. The sample was randomly distributed into three groups. The first group (the assignment condition) had a puzzle to complete. The second group (choice condition) had a chance to choose which puzzle to complete from a set of six puzzles; when the participants made their choice, the other five options were removed. The third group served as a control group. The research findings indicated that providing choices did not increase students' intrinsic motivation. This lack of effect may be because even though the students had opportunities to choose from six options (perception of choice) they did not have a chance to do what they wanted (internal locus) as well as the choice to continue or stop (volition). Another reason that a provision of choice does not affect intrinsic motivation may be due to all the choices being uninteresting or irrelevant (Assor et al., 2002). Providing too many choices does not necessarily mean that a better choice will be made (Schwartz, 2004a) . However, researchers found that increased choices tend to be associated with decreases in well-being, since more choices make it difficult to make the best decision as people tend to like to choose the best option, not one that is good enough (Schwartz & Ward, 2004).

The above research findings showed the inconsistencies in the effect of choice on autonomy but researchers have identified conditions where choice can be motivating, for example, when the options satisfy the students' need for autonomy, competence and relatedness as proposed by Katz and Assor (2007, p. 429). (Katz & Assor, 2007, p. 429) point out that "Choice is motivating when the options are relevant to the students' interests and goals (autonomy support), are not too numerous or complex (competence support), and are congruent with the values of the students' culture (relatedness

support). Given the many factors involved, it is not surprising that in some studies choice was not found to promote engagement. However, when choice was offered in a way that met the needs of the students, it was found to enhance motivation, learning, and well-being".

More specifically, researchers demonstrated that children's autonomy in reading-related activities can be supported in different ways. Providing a variety of choices in reading activities (what to read, how to read), as well as providing children with opportunities to express their opinions about texts, both tended to support children's autonomy (Guthrie & Coddington, 2009). Considering this, recently De Naeghel et al. (2016) asserted the importance of allowing children to choose reading materials that they find interesting in order to support their need for autonomy in reading activities. Experimental studies investigated the role of offering choices in reading on supporting students' autonomy in reading. For instance, Reynolds and Symons (2001) found that providing choices to students in reading had a positive impact on their performance in reading activities.

Aspects other than choice have been seen to be fundamental to the need for autonomy (Katz & Assor, 2007). Stefanou et al. (2004, p. 97) suggested three ways to support autonomy: organizational autonomy support (giving students opportunities for some decision-making), procedural autonomy support (providing information for choices), and cognitive autonomy support (allowing students to evaluate their work). However, Stefanou et al. (2004) argued that even though students' autonomy can be supported by different factors, in actual teaching practice, autonomy support seemed to be synonymous with choice only, since providing significant choice in an academic context is still limited.

Therefore in my research, children's autonomy in reading can be satisfied by providing a wide range of books and book-related activities and giving children opportunities to make decisions in reading. However, the literature influenced my decisions when considering the quality of the choice of reading materials (e-books, story sacks and books) available for the children. I also took into account the quantity by ensuring that materials were added and changed regularly to ensure children were not overwhelmed by choice. Moreover, with regard to children's autonomy and volition, I was aware that reading activity would be driven by questions such as: Do they want to read? What time

of the day do they want to read? For how long? Would they like to read individually or in a group? Would they like to read or listen to someone else reading?

Social context has been investigated by SDT researchers to understand the ways it can enhance intrinsic motivation (Deci, Eghrari, Patrick, & Leone, 1994). Parental autonomy-support has been viewed as an essential factor that supports and enhances children's academic motivation. If parents support their children's autonomy needs in the home, it may lead to an increase in children's intrinsic motivation in learning, whereas when children tend to be controlled by their parents, they will be extrinsically motivated in an academic context (Grolnick, Friendly, & Bellas, 2009). Taking the social context as the classroom setting, Wigfield and Guthrie (2000, p. 411) stressed the role of a teacher in supporting children's autonomy in the academic context by stating "autonomy support is the teacher's guidance in making choices among meaningful alternatives relevant to the knowledge and learning goals."

Skinner and Belmont (1993) asserted that the teacher's role in giving children freedom in their learning activities supports children's autonomy, as does providing activities that match children's interest. There are three conditions in which teachers can support students' autonomy, as identified by Reeve (2009, p 162): "adopt the students' perspective; welcome students' thoughts, feelings, and behaviors; and support students' motivational development and capacity for autonomous self-regulation. The findings go further and show the positive impact of a number of instructional behaviours on children's autonomy: giving students time to work independently, asking what they want, listening to them, giving them positive feedback for any signs of improvement, encouraging them for their effort, giving hints when needed, answering their questions, and acknowledging their experiences and perspectives.

Although extensive research has been conducted on supporting students' autonomy in an academic context, few studies have investigated supporting students' autonomy in reading. Recently, Guthrie and Coddington (2009, p. 505) defined perceived autonomy for reading as referring to "the value of choosing books and the self-direction of reading behaviors". They investigated the impact of children's perceived autonomy in reading activities and found a positive impact on reading achievement (Guthrie & Coddington, 2009). Others investigated the impact on reading comprehension (Grolnick & Ryan, 1987; Guthrie et al., 2007), and engagement in classroom activities (Skinner, Wellborn,

& Connell, 1990). They argued that children's understanding of the significance of reading had a crucial role in supporting children's autonomy.

In contrast to the many ways teachers can support autonomy, researchers have also identified behaviours that can thwart it. Reeve and Jang (2006, p. 216) found that students felt their autonomy was thwarted by teachers in a number of ways:

> Including monopolizing the learning materials, physically exhibiting worked-out solutions and answers before the student had time to work on the problem independently, directly telling the student a right answer instead of allowing the student time and opportunity to discover it, uttering directives and commands, interjecting should/got to statements within the flow of instruction, and using controlling questions as a way of directing the student's work.
>
> (Reeve & Jang, 2006, p. 216)

Guthrie and Coddington (2009, p. 516) add that it can also involve "teachers being domineering in their management, rigid in the use of routines, insensitive to students' interests, and rejecting of students' requests or needs to express opinions"

Reeve (2009, p. 160) highlights that teachers may not deliberately seek to thwart students' autonomy:

> Although teachers do not necessarily set out to be controlling per se, they do sometimes think rather exclusively about student motivation and engagement from their own perspective; intrude into students' ways of thinking, feeling, and behaving; and push and pressure students to think, feel, or behave in a specific way.

The previous quote highlights an important issue, which is that there are negative impacts of thwarting children's autonomy, even if it is unintentional. Assor, Kaplan, Kanat-Maymon, and Roth (2005) investigated the impact of controlling teacher behaviours on children's motivation and found that they decreased children's motivation and increased children's anger and anxiety. It can be seen that the teachers

have a critical role in supporting or thwarting students' autonomy in the learning context.

An effective way to improve the teachers' role in supporting children's autonomy was found to be holding professional development workshops for teachers. The findings of Reeve, Jang, Carrell, Jeon, and Barch (2004) showed that giving teachers one informational session on how to support student autonomy was effective in supporting children's autonomy. However, there have been no "effective autonomy-supportive professional development programs" which "explicitly focused on the promotion of reading motivation" (De Naeghel et al., 2016, p. 235). Hence, there is a need for conducting such professional workshops with teachers that aim to promote children's reading motivation, which this study sought to do.

Studies indicate that autonomy support relates to the needs of competence and the relatedness. Engaging students in activities that satisfy their autonomy leads to enhancing their competence, which in turn increases their enjoyment (Black & Deci, 2000). Guay, Boggiano, and Vallerand (2001) studied which needs affected the others, and their findings indicated that satisfying students' autonomy leads to increasing intrinsic motivation, which in turn enhances student competency. With regard to the need of relatedness, Ryan (1992) argued that autonomy and relatedness are not as antithetical as previously thought; they are complementary and they support each other. This means that the need of autonomy, in some way, supports both the needs for competence and relatedness, which are discussed next.

2.5.2 Need for Competence

It is necessary here to clarify exactly what is meant by competence. Deci and Ryan (2002, p. 7) define competence by stating that it, "refers to feeling effective in one's ongoing interactions with the social environment and experiencing opportunities to exercise and express one's capacities", in order to get desired outcomes (Deci & Ryan, 2002, p. 7). Another definition of competence is "the need to interact effectively with one's environmental surroundings" (Reeve, 2012, p. 104). The need for competence has been studied in different contexts. In the educational context, the need for competence is basically the student's need to understand the school work in order to support the individual need to experience a sense of effectiveness (Stefanou et al., 2004). White

proposed the link between competence and motivation by stating that people tend to participate in activities to feel effective and competent (White, 1959).

There is a direct link and some similarities between competence beliefs and self-efficacy perceptions in that "efficacy beliefs operate as a key factor in a generative system of human competence" (Bandura, 1997, p. 37), and an individual's perception of their self-efficacy is concerned with an individual's belief in what they can do in different circumstances, not with the individual's actual abilities (Bandura, 1997). When students demonstrate a belief in their reading abilities this leads to an increased perception in their competence and thus their effectiveness (Chapman & Tunmer, 1995; Guthrie & Coddington, 2009). In this project, the focus is on competence in reading and the connection is made between feeling competent in, and a recognition of the value of, reading (De Naeghel et al., 2016). Perceptions of competence are linked mainly to feelings of capability and skill in reading (Chapman & Tunmer, 1995).

In line with this, researchers found that intrinsic motivation will not be increased by supporting competence without association with autonomy (Niemiec & Ryan, 2009; Ryan & Deci, 2000a). For example, in reading, if a teacher supports a child's competence by providing structure in a controlling way [pressure], which does not support autonomy, the child's intrinsic motivation for reading will not be increased. However, teachers should provide structure to children in an way that supports their autonomy (Forde & Weinberger), and ensure that reading activities are both supportive (provision of age-appropriate reading, independent reading and relating reading to daily life) and structured (defined expectations, positive feedback, challenging the student) (De Naeghel et al., 2016).

Providing structure can enhance a student's need for competence (Stroet et al., 2013). However, teachers may confuse providing structure to students with a controlling teaching style, as the teachers did in Reeve (2009) study. Structure refers to the amount of information that is required to effectively achieve specific outcomes (Skinner & Belmont, 1993), whereas "controlling style" is used to describe the way in which teachers give instructions which put pressure on the learner to act, think and feel in a particular way (Amoura, Berjot, Gillet, Caruana, & Finez, 2015; Reeve, 2009). Some teachers believe that providing structure means that just their voice should be heard and

the students simply need to follow instructions, as expressed by Wade & Moje, (2000, p. 611) below:

> The classroom structure is one of the teacher interacting with the whole class or working with small groups of students usually differentiated by ability, or of students working alone, monitored by the teacher. The teacher lectures, explains, asks questions, demonstrates, gives assignments or instructions, provides feedback, and assessing students' learning. Student participation consists of listening, responding, reading aloud or silently, working alone ... The teacher is active and in control; students are (or are supposed to be) passive and compliant, generating texts to document their learning of information.

The way teachers provide structure is crucial (Reeve et al., 2004). If structure is provided using non-controlling language to set out expectations and takes the learners' perspective into account, students are more likely to engage with the structure. However, structure is often imposed by use of punishments, forceful language and with no acknowledgement of negative emotions expressed by learners (Sierens, Vansteenkiste, Goossens, Soenens, & Dochy, 2009). Furthermore, providing structure to students is not always associated with a controlling teaching style, since teachers can deliver structure in either controlling or autonomy-supportive ways (Hornstra, Mansfield, van der Veen, Peetsma, & Volman, 2015). Even though these two approaches appear contradictory, they can be used together so that the teacher gives instructions in an autonomy-supportive way. A number of studies have emphasised the role of the teacher in supporting both autonomy and structure (Vansteenkiste et al., 2010). Providing a high level of autonomy support and structure can have a positive impact on children's engagement (Jang, Reeve, & Deci, 2010). Structure can be given in an autonomy-supportive way by respecting children's opinions, letting them participate in the process and giving a rationale when guidelines are required (Sierens et al., 2009). Structure is about ensuring students understand how to achieve desired outcomes. Research shows that when teachers provide this structure in an autonomy-supportive way, it facilitates student engagement (Griffith & Grolnick, 2014).

Black and Deci (2000) argued that giving students instructions in a way that supports autonomy leads to an increase in students' autonomy, competence and performance, as well as a decrease in anxiety. In line with this, another study showed that students who

receive support for autonomy from their parents and their teachers are more competent than those students who do not get this type of support (Vallerand, Fortier, & Guay, 1997). Structure helps students to engage in tasks and to better understand how to accomplish goals (Skinner & Belmont, 1993), since structure is related to "students' engagement and contributes to self-regulated learning, which facilitates supporting competence" (De Naeghel et al., 2016). Self-regulated learning is defined as "self-generated thoughts, feelings, and actions that are planned and systematically adapted to affect a student's academic motivation and learning" (Schunk & Ertmer, 2000, p. 631). For example, De Naeghel et al (2016) state that a structured visit is when a teacher organises a library visit with the students, that is, where teachers tell their students the duration of the visit, and have a discussion with students about their expected behaviour in the library, such as selecting books or so on. The teacher allows self-regulated behaviour within some guidelines by organising a visit that has some structure, but also gives the students some independence.

Many studies have shown that supporting children's competence has positive impacts on different aspects of their learning. For example, Wang, Ng, Liu, and Ryan (2016) found in their intervention study that students' perceived competence was associated with their completion of learning activities. From reviewing the literature, a wide range of research has shown the fundamental impacts of three strategies that teachers can use to support children's need for competence: providing step-by-step guidance (instructions); offering optimal challenges, and providing informative feedback (De Naeghel et al., 2016; Jang et al., 2010; Niemiec, Soenens, & Vansteenkiste, 2014). Offering step-by-step guidance and clear instructions have been found to be essential in enhancing children's autonomy and intrinsic motivation. Vansteenkiste et al. (2010) suggested that competence can be supported through providing (detailed) information and guidance. A well-structured classroom tends to support students' competence (Skinner & Belmont, 1993). There are four components that can provide structure: clarity, where the teacher gives clear, explicit and complete instructions for the lesson; guidance, where teachers monitor students' work or offer help and support when students need it; encouragement, where teachers make students feel they have control over school outcomes by giving students positive expectations about their schoolwork; and constructive informational feedback where teachers help students to have control in order to maximise positive outcomes (Stroet et al., 2013). In their study, Stroet, Opdenakker, and Minnaert (2013) examined the impact of each of these four

components on motivation and engagement and found that there are positive associations between encouragement, guidance, and constructive informative feedback and a student's motivation. However, there is no association between clarity and a student's motivation.

One way to support children's needs for competence is through offering optimal challenges (Clifford, 1990). Reeve (2016, p. 140) argues that:

> Teachers can offer students an optimal challenge in many different ways, such as by introducing a standard of excellence, a goal to strive for, a role model to emulate, or students' own past performance to try to sur-pass. In practice, teachers can start a lesson by introducing a standard of excellence (e.g., write a paragraph with only active verbs, pronounce a foreign language phrase like a native speaker, run a mile in 10 min or less) and then ask students, "Can you do it?" To the extent to which students perceive that they are making progress towards meeting the challenge embedded within the learning activity, they will feel competence satisfaction while doing so.

The main feature of optimal challenges is that the activities or the experiences are not too easy and not too difficult (Niemiec et al., 2014) since either extreme can undermine motivation (Katz & Assor, 2007; Lam, Chow-Yeung, Wong, Lau, & Tse). In the context of reading, if a child chose to read a complex text well beyond their abilities, this would have a negative effect possibly leading to anxiety or boredom and reduced motivation to read (Csikszentmihalyi, Abuhamdeh, & Nakamura, 2014). Optimal challenges tend to energise student curiosity (Deci & Ryan, 1985a).

In order to motivate children intrinsically to do a certain activity, an optimal challenge should be offered (Deci, 1975). A number of empirical studies found that positive feedback tends to enhance competence and intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 1980). Providing feedback needs to be done under some conditions that are autonomy-supportive (for more details, refer to the CET section); Deci and Ryan (1994, p. 8) refer to, "positive feedback that is administered in an autonomy-supportive fashion as being informational". Furthermore, "informational feedback is used only after an incorrect response has been given," (Sales, 1988, p. 228). In contrast to informational feedback, negative feedback that is delivered in a controlling way seems to thwart competence and decrease intrinsic motivation.

In summary, the need for competence is one of three needs in SDT and, if it has been met, children are likely to be intrinsically motivated. Competence can be supported through offering structure, optimal challenges and positive informational feedback. In the next section, a literature review on the need of relatedness will be presented.

2.5.3 Need for Relatedness

The need to feel secure by being connected to other people, and to feel a sense of belonging within a wider social context, has been identified as the need for relatedness. According to SDT, this is one of the psychological needs that should be met in order to be intrinsically motivated (Deci & Ryan, 1985b; R. Ryan & E. Deci, 2000b; Richard Ryan & Solky, 1996). The need for relatedness "refers to warmth and caring received from interactions with others, resulting in a general sense of belonging" (Niemiec et al., 2006, p. 763).

Research has revealed the significance of perceptions of relatedness to intrinsic motivation in different aspects of life (Niemiec et al., 2006, p. 763), and particularly in education (Holtz, Ployhart, & Dominguez, 2005; House, Landis, & Umberson, 1988; Quested & Duda, 2009). In an educational context, in some studies, children's sense of relatedness in the classroom environment has led to a reported increase in students' motivation to learn and in their enjoyment (Connell & Wellborn, 1991; Cox, Duncheon, & McDavid, 2009). Similarly, the findings of Cox et al (2009) show that relationships between students and their teachers and peers are essential for students' perceptions of relatedness, which impact on motivation and enjoyment.

Not all social interactions lead to supporting feelings of relatedness, since in some situations people feel isolated or misunderstood and may feel despaired in their desire for relatedness. Therefore, it is essential to differentiate between those factors of social interactions which truly support feelings of relatedness and those which thwart that experience (Deci & Ryan, 2014). An increasing number of studies have started to investigate the social factors which lead to feelings of relatedness (e.g. Cox et al., 2009) Darner's (2009) findings showed that the possible impact of the classroom community on students' relatedness includes features such as developing a classroom group that respects and values the distinctive contribution of each member of the group. Relatedness can also be supported by providing classroom activities that connect

learners to their own groups via mutually relevant topics. This support for autonomy seems to promote feelings of relatedness. Ryan and Powelson (1991) suggested that there is an inevitable link between support for autonomy and the feeling of relatedness since students tended to describe the teachers who foster independence as "warmer" than those with a more controlling style.

Teachers have an essential role in either supporting or thwarting children's feelings of relatedness. Teachers can thwart learners' needs for relatedness by being unfriendly, creating a cold learning environment, and rejecting some students (Skinner & Belmont, 1993). As Niemiec and Ryan (2009) argue, if teachers reject or are aggressive towards students it will have a negative impact on the students' development and learning; situations which make the student feel rejected or disconnected will adversely affect their autonomous motivation. A good standard of teacher involvement clearly contributes to students' needs for relatedness, where involvement refers to, "the quality of the interpersonal relationship with teachers and peers" (Skinner & Belmont, 1993, p. 573). Teachers can be engaged with their students by investing their time and effort, expressing affection, and enjoying spending time with them (Reeve et al., 2004)..

In the context of reading, SDT demonstrates that children tend to participate in that activity if it is valued by people to whom they feel connected (De Naeghel et al., 2016). When an interpersonal connection is established in the classroom, students tend to adopt and accept the values and actions of the teacher as their own, which leads to a sense of belonging (Niemiec & Ryan, 2009). When teachers consider that a student needs motivational development, they will often provide relatedness support via social interaction (Wigfield & Guthrie, 2000). Collaborative classroom activities can help meet the need for relatedness and once this need is met, "students become intrinsically motivated and gain cognitive expertise in reading" (Wigfield & Guthrie, 2000, p. 412). However, as stated by Maulana and Opdenakker (2014), there is currently no scientific evidence to show whether the student-teacher relationship is equally significant for learners in a non-Western context. Therefore, this study is going to provide an insight to the role of adults (teachers and family) and peers in supporting relatedness in Saudi children.

Parents have a significant role in supporting children's feelings of relatedness. Deci and Ryan (2014) argue that children whose basic psychological needs are supported by their

parents become intrinsically motivated to carry out many activities in their lives. It may be that the role of the parent can be most effective by facilitating their children's motivation regarding school. By getting involved with their children, parents can help them develop beliefs and behaviours that will, in turn, lead to greater engagement. From the perspective of SDT, it will be valuable to carry out further research which explores the possible impact of the parent-child relationship on satisfying the need for relatedness, leading to a greater understanding of the motivational approaches that can improve children's engagement. Until now, for example, there has been limited research that has referred to the importance of warmth with regard to developing a sense of relatedness between a parent and a child and its psychosocial impact on the child (Chew, 2016).

2.6 Chapter Conclusion

From reviewing the literature on SDT, satisfying all the three psychological needs (autonomy, competence and relatedness) is a significant factor in increasing motivation and engagement in many contexts, including education. However, there is a lack of research into the impact of these three needs on reading amongst young children.

Reviewing the literature on the use of the five elements of this study (iPads, story sacks, high quality books, reading aloud and school-home partnership) demonstrates their importance in reading engagement, either in theoretical or practical terms, but there is very limited practical research into how these are used with young children or into their impact.

If the importance of SDT regarding motivation and engagement is taken into account when implementing the five elements of this study, there may be a positive impact on children's motivation for, and engagement in, reading for pleasure. Therefore, there is a clear need for my study to investigate how this positive impact may be achieved by using the five elements identified. In addition, fostering reading for pleasure is a research topic which has been pursued in many countries, but there is a gap in the literature with regard to fostering reading for pleasure at both kindergarten level and within the Saudi Arabia context. This justifies a need to carry out this intervention study in a Saudi context as this study directly addresses this gap in knowledge.

In the next chapter the methods and methodology that have been used in this study will be discussed.

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the methodology that has been implemented in this research. It my decision to use an interpretive paradigm and gives an overview of my positionality. This is followed by a description of the methodology that I used in this research, a justification of my choice of methods (observations and interviews). The chapter also considers the ethical considerations that were taken into account before starting the fieldwork; it explains the steps that were followed to ensure trustworthiness of the study and, finally, it sets out the data analysis process. As a reminder the research questions addressed were:

- What is the impact of a reading intervention, which introduced five 'elements' (iPads, story sacks, high quality books, interactive read aloud approach and the establishment of a home-school relationship) into the kindergarten classroom?
- How did the project impact on children's self-determination in reading for pleasure?

3.2 Interpretive Paradigm

In order to demonstrate the epistemological and ontological context for the work, it is necessary to briefly define these terms. Ontology is the study of being, that is, the nature of existence (Gray, 2009). Epistemology refers to the relationship between the study and the way that reality is conceived. This research aims to promote reading for pleasure in a kindergarten. I believe that reality in social science cannot be understood as consisting of any single entity, since one is dealing with different aspects of awareness, such as the various perceptions and motivations of human beings, and not facts. The study involves ten children and their mothers, and six teachers. All the participants involved in this research are affected by their culture, personal experiences and social interactions, which will affect the way they respond. The study, therefore, can be placed in an interpretive framework (Gray, 2009; Maxwell, 2012).

In my reading of many social science research studies, I noticed that the terms "Constructivist", "Interpretive" and "Qualitative" are used interchangeably with regard to this research paradigm. In the interpretive paradigm, knowledge is often produced in the form of rich narratives or case studies that describe the interpretations constructed as part of the research process. The descriptions provide an appropriate level of detail of both the context and the contribution of the participants (Hatch, 2002). Qualitative research is usually associated with "more closely to a constructivist paradigm, which sees truth and meaning as constructed and interpreted by individuals" (Gray, 2013, p. 191). This research is conducted with an interpretive paradigm, as its focus is on the individual and is concerned with understanding how children can be motivated to read for pleasure.

The choice of research strategy was guided by the main research question: "What is the impact of an intervention study, in an early childhood classroom, which aims to promote reading for pleasure?" in addition to a number of supplementary questions. The purpose was to evaluate the impact of an intervention study and, more specifically, to understand the impact of an intervention study, on children's motivation for engagement in reading, and subsequently to explore the mechanisms behind the changes by determining how change occurred, and understanding why it occurred. Therefore, I chose a flexible design as it develops gradually during data collection. In this context, data are in the form of words, rather than numbers, so it is given the term *qualitative* (Robson & McCartan, 2016). Furthermore, the chosen design for the research is also affected by the researcher's personal experiences, interests and disciplinary background (Creswell, 2009; Wellington, 2015). To ensure good research, it is paramount that the choices made are reasonable and clearly explained in the research (Wellington, 2015). Therefore, in the following section I will discuss the factors that led me to conduct and design this research.

3.2.1 My Positionality and Its Impact on the Research

There are many factors that have led to my interest in this topic. Sikes (2004, p. 18) points out that the term 'positionality' refers to someone's position as a researcher, and his/her previous knowledge *'*in terms of philosophical position and fundamental assumptions concerning social reality, the nature of knowledge and human nature and agency*'*. Similarly, Wellington, Bathmaker, Hunt, McCulloch, and Sikes (2005, p. 99)

argue that ‘the methodology and methods selected will be influenced by a variety of factors, including the personal predilections, interests and disciplinary background of the researcher’. Wellington (2015) suggests that the researcher’s positionality should be stated briefly and only include relevant information that is important for the readers of the research.

My own positionality in this research is affected by both my career position and my personal experience. I will start with my educational background and career position: I have a BA in Early Years Studies and an MA in Psychology. I subsequently worked as a lecturer at Umm Al-Qura University in the Early Childhood department for three years, where I supervised teaching practice students, and attended kindergartens with them. My supervisory role consisted of discussing their style of teaching, observing their teaching practice in the classroom, giving them feedback to aid their improvement and, finally, evaluating their teaching practice.

Through my education and teaching experience, I realised the importance of both the early years phase and reading, and I emphasised that in my teaching. In addition, throughout my supervision periods in kindergarten classrooms, I noticed that children displayed a lack of interest in reading. Although the Library Corner was used, children did not use it as actively as the other corners (e.g. Home Corner, Arts Corner); this seemed to be either because they were not encouraged to use this space by the teacher or the content did not appeal to them (books were not updated regularly and, thus, there was an absence of new books to attract the children). Furthermore, the way in which literacy was supported in the classroom was poor, for example, books were only available in the Library Corner, not throughout the classroom, there was a lack of technology to support reading activities and the read aloud sessions were not interactive. Consequently, all these observations led me to think about the need for research into this low level of interest in reading.

In addition to my academic experience, I am a mother of four children and I am keen to raise their interest in reading. I tried my best to raise my children’s interest in reading for pleasure in Saudi Arabia, but neither the community nor the school supported reading for pleasure. Despite the fact that I lived in a big city, there was no library that provided a children’s section with a range of book options. Also, my children started their early education in Saudi Arabia where schools are more likely to concentrate on

teaching the traditional curriculum; the main role of the teachers is to impart this knowledge and children passively receive it. However, since I moved, and lived with my family in Canada for one year and now in the UK for six years, the educational system experienced by my children has changed accordingly. I noticed huge differences in my own children's attitude towards reading. All of my three older children, when they were in primary school, would choose stories that they liked to bring home to read and share with me. When my daughter started attending secondary school she was surprised at having a huge library in the school containing both stories and academic books which she can borrow at any time, whereas in Saudi schools the library tends to be neglected. My fourth child was born in the UK and grew up attending nursery since she was 9 months old. I noticed that she was motivated to read picture books and more engaged with reading activities than her three siblings were when they were her age; this made me think about the factors that led to the big differences between the UK and Saudi Arabia. Moreover, I am a Muslim and follow Islamic principles, which include encouraging Muslims to read. These impressions made me think about studying the topic of reading for pleasure.

3.2.2 Case Study: Evaluation Research

Evaluation is not a new research strategy, yet it has a distinctive purpose (Robson & McCartan, 2016). An evaluation research design has been used in this research because it is compatible with the research questions, which aimed to find out the impact of a reading intervention on children's motivation to read for pleasure. In this regard, Robson and McCartan (2016, p. 178) state that "the purpose of an evaluation is to assess the effects and effectiveness of something, typically some innovation, intervention, policy, practice or service". My evaluation research aimed to find out how a reading intervention project impacted on children, and why (Henry, Julnes, & Mark, 1998; Pawson & Tilley, 2004). As Wellington (2015) suggests if explanations to the questions 'how' and 'why' are required, then an in-depth approach such as a case study will be appropriate. This research uses a 'summative' evaluation style, which focuses on evaluating the effects and effectiveness of the project by considering the impact of all its elements, including the outcomes of the five workshops, on children's engagement with reading. A case study approach can be used appropriately with evaluations, since most evaluations focus on understanding the effectiveness of a project in specific settings

where the case study has a flexible design in the way it is applied (Robson & McCartan, 2016).

For the purposes of this research, a case study approach was adopted since it helped answer the "how" or "why" questions; it helped examine not just "whether programs work, but how they work" (Rogers, 2000), and to build rich understandings of complex phenomena in real-life situations (Yin, 2014). A case study, "focuses on understanding the dynamics present within single settings" (Eisenhardt, 1989, p. 534). In addition, the researcher in the case study tends to observe individual units in order to identify specific aspects and "the purpose of such observation is to probe deeply and to analyse intensively the multifarious phenomena that constitute the life cycle of the unit, with a view to establishing generalizations about the wider population to which that unit belongs" (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007, p. 181).The 'unit' in this case is a public kindergarten in Makkah in Saudi Arabia. A case study is the most appropriate research strategy to use because this research aims to enhance children's reading for pleasure, which is affected by many factors such as the teachers, the parents, the classroom environment and the children themselves, and this approach facilitates an in-depth understanding of complex issues in a specific setting. To do a case study well is a difficult and demanding task, so it is advantageous if the researcher carrying it out has experience in all the methods required. The researcher should have a thorough understanding of the related literature, be good at asking questions, listening and observing, be flexible, and be reflexive (Wellington, 2015). I have acquired these skills during my education, and through my teaching and research experience at university.

The research uses an 'Organisation and Institution' case study type (Robson, 2011), where an intervention was implemented in one kindergarten in order to understand its impact on children's reading. A case study approach is appropriate here as it gives in-depth knowledge of the research during a limited period of time in a specific place (Bell, 2010) and a specific context (Yin, 2014), which helps a researcher to understand the issues (Flyvbbjerg, 2011). This research seeks to develop and implement a project that aims to promote children's reading for pleasure. If the project works effectively in this case study then it means that the project can be implemented successfully in similar settings. For this reason, the research project will include all the kindergarten stages, KG1, KG2, and KG3, in order to provide a usable study across the three stages. Wellington (2015) argues that case studies, if well presented, can be extremely

informative and provide a very accessible and real insight data for the research and can lead to further research by highlighting issues for further consideration.

Despite the advantages of the case study method, it has some pitfalls. One of the main limitations in using the case study approach is the concern about generalisability, which, "refers to the extent to which the findings of the enquiry are more generally applicable outside the specifics of the situation studied" (Robson & McCartan, 2016, p. 77) Along the same lines, Tellis (1997) argues that it is difficult to generalise the conclusions of case study research since they depend on the exploration of a single case. However, Wolcott (1995, p. 175) argues that a case study can be generalised since "each case study is unique, but not so unique that we cannot learn from it and apply its lessons more generally", and the findings can be generalised if used in similar settings (Bell, 2010). The generalisability of a case study can be increased by providing a rich description of the setting and context that allows the readers to consider to what extent the findings can be applied to similar contexts or other settings (Creswell & Miller, 2000) since life contains aspects that can be generalised across different settings (Bloor, 1997). In the same regard Yin (2014, p. 20) argues that:

> Generalizations in science are rarely based on single experiments; they are usually based on a multiple set of experiments that have replicated the same phenomenon under different conditions. The same approach can be used with case studies but requires a different concept of the appropriate research designs…experiments, are generalizable to theoretical propositions and not to populations or universes. In this sense, the case study, like the experiment, does not represent a "sample," and in doing case study research, your goal will be to expand and generalize theories (analytic generalizations) and not to extrapolate probabilities (statistical generalizations).

He continued his argument stating "analytic generalization, where the findings from a case study can have implications going well beyond the same kind of case and extend to a whole host of other unlike situations." (2014, p. 20). He defined analytic generalizations that "consist of a carefully posed theoretical statement, theory, or theoretical proposition. The generalization can take the form of a lesson learned, working hypothesis, or other principle that is believed to be applicable to other situations (not just other "like cases")" (2014, p. 20).

3.3 Designing the Case Study

A research design forms the logical link between the data and conclusions to the initial questions of study. A research design is "a logical plan for getting from here to there, where here may be defined as the initial set of questions to be answered, and there is some set of conclusions (answers) about these questions. Between here and there may be found a number of major steps, including the collection and analysis of relevant data" (Yin, 2014, p. 20). A diagrammatic overview of the whole research design is shown in Figure 3-1.

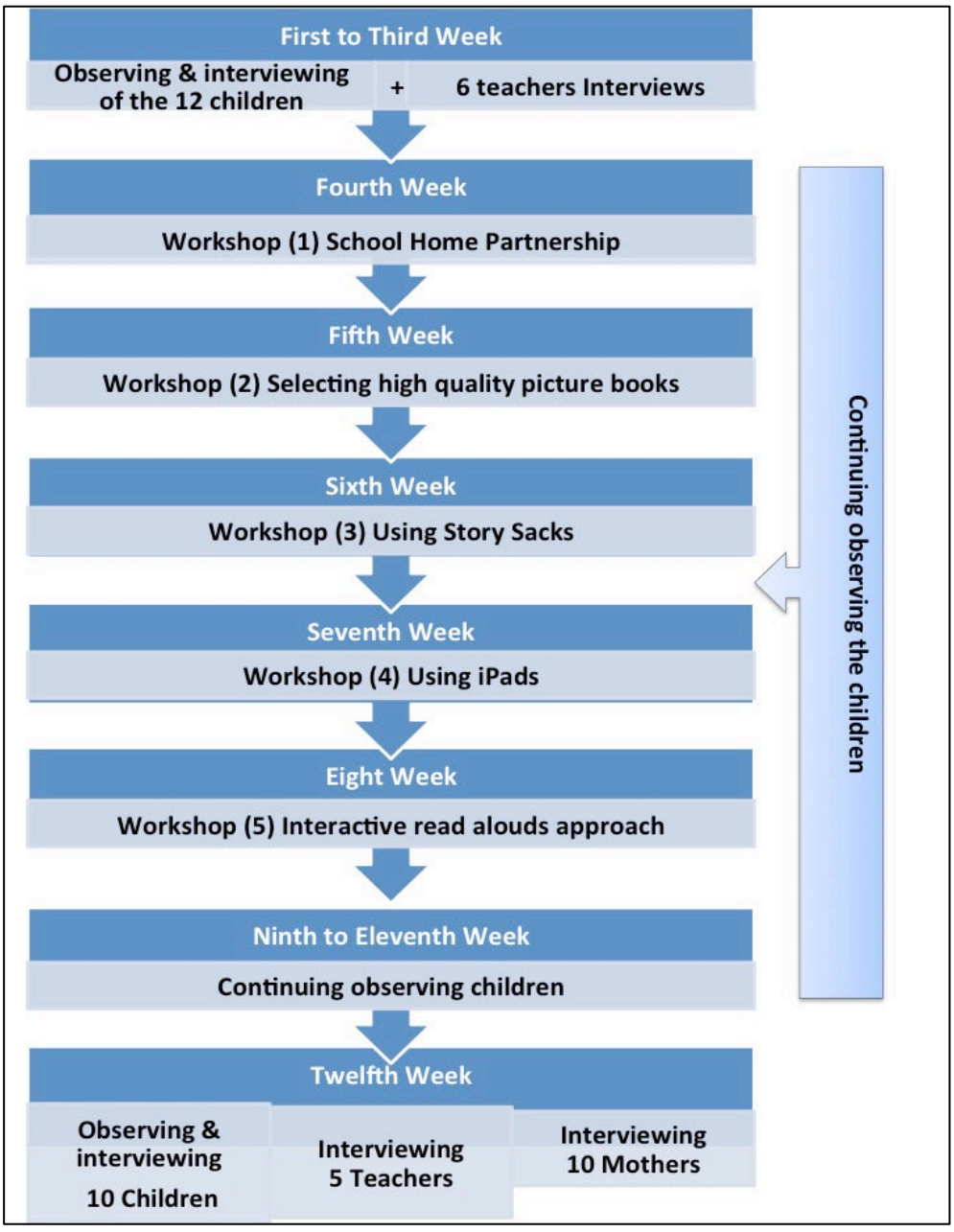

Figure 3-1 : A Diagrammatic Overview of the Whole Research Design

3.3.1 The Context of the Case Study

In order to answer the research questions, as previously mentioned, an 'Organisation and Institution' case study type has been used where an intervention was implemented in a public Kindergarten in Makkah to find out its impact on children reading for pleasure.

3.3.1.1 Sample

It is crucial to reflect on sampling, and explain and justify the sampling procedure in qualitative research (Wellington, 2015). Maykut and Morehouse (1994, p. 121) argue that "the selection of a sampling strategy depends upon the focus of inquiry and the researcher's judgement as to which approach will yield the clearest understanding of the phenomenon under study."

In this research I used a 'convenience sampling' approach where I chose "the nearest individuals to serve as respondents and continue that process until the required sample size has been obtained" (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011, p. 102). I chose convenience sampling since it is widely used when the respondents are students or teachers, accessible and easy to contact (Cohen et al., 2011; Wellington, 2015); I know friends (teachers) who work in kindergartens, which made it easier to gain access and introduce my project.

3.3.1.2 Participants in the Case Study

The city of Makkah in Saudi Arabia was chosen for the location of this research for a number of reasons. Firstly, I noticed the need for investigating this topic in this city, as explained in my positionality statement. It is a large city and I am familiar with the people who live there, and this helped me to work with them. In addition, it is easy to access and conduct my research in these kindergartens. Public kindergartens in Saudi Arabia are appropriate choices for the case study because they are controlled by the government which makes them a particular interest to the theme of my research. If my project is successful, it might mean it could be implemented in all public kindergartens as they all follow the same principles and curriculum, whereas private kindergartens

tend to work independently. The intervention study was implemented over a period of three months.

After gaining ethical approval from the University of Sheffield, I took a number of steps to select a case for my research. I sent a letter to the Ministry of Education of Makkah to get their approval to conduct this study. The letter explained the research questions and purpose, the project elements and the timescale. Once I had received their approval for conducting this study, I visited three kindergartens where I had friends and met with the head teachers to explain my project to them. All of them were enthusiastic about the idea of the project. However, one apologised that their kindergarten is small with just three classrooms, and there had been some unexpected changes, including their teachers being on leave for special circumstances and, therefore, they needed to have new supply teachers. Two welcomed hosting the project so I chose the one nearer to my home. Those kindergartens that volunteered, but were not chosen to participate in the study, will be sent a summary of the study on completion, which will contain suggestions for enhancing practice.

During the first visit to the chosen kindergarten, I introduced myself to the teachers and presented my project at a meeting with all of them. I distributed the participant information sheet and asked for volunteers from the three kindergarten stages (1-3) who would be interested in working with me. Three teachers volunteered to participate in the project and signed the consent forms. The information sheets and consent forms for parents were distributed among the children to take home and sign. After gaining permission from parents, I also got permission from the children by explaining the information sheet to them and asking them to sign the consent form. In the selected classrooms (one each in KG1, KG2 and KG3) I randomly chose four children to observe. In each classroom, I chose an equal number of girls and boys (two girls and two boys) as this matched the overall population of the classroom with regard to gender. The girls' names were written on small pieces of papers and placed in one bowl and the boys' names in another one; I picked two papers from each bowl for each classroom to select the names. For those twelve children, I sent information sheets and consent forms that were slightly different to those sent to everyone else, asking their parents if they would agree to be interviewed after the project. I conducted observations on these twelve children for three weeks before the project was implemented, and had some conversations with them to get in-depth data. The teachers were interviewed before and

after the project. During the project, one of the twelve children had to withdraw from the project since his family had to move to another city. The parents of the ten children were interviewed after the intervention. The main data collection methods were interviews and observations, which I discuss in more details in the methods section.

3.3.1.3 Educational Corners of the Classrooms

Each classroom in the kindergarten contains eight different corners: Art Corner, Writing Corner, Library Corner, Cognitive Corner, Religion Corner, Family Corner, Building Corner and Discovery Corner. At 'Free Play in the Educational Corners' time, an activity takes 60 minutes every day, the children have opportunities to choose to engage in the activities that they want and have opportunities to interact with a variety of tools and people.

3.3.1.3.1 Library Corner

This is a quiet corner, in one corner of the classroom, far from the active corners such as Family Corner and Building Corner. The corner was designed for two children to be there at the same time, with two child-size sofas and a book shelf which has picture books on it.

3.3.1.3.2 Building Corner

Four children are allowed to be in this corner at the same time. In this active corner children build things using different pieces of wood (4-5 years old) or sponges (3 years old). There are around 200 pieces including geometric shapes in different sizes, as well as a changing selection of other toys, such as cars and animals. In this corner, the children use their imagination to build various things.

3.3.1.3.3 Art Corner

In this corner, there can be four children at a time. The children do a lot of art activities that encourage the expression of their abilities individually or in a group. This corner has low shelves that allow the children to take and return tools easily. There are various

educational tools, such as paintbrushes and different kinds of crayons, coloured paper for cutting and pasting, and scissors.

3.3.1.3.4 Writing Corner

Two children are allowed to be in the Writing Corner at a time. The teachers provide plenty of pens and papers and other tools, which encourage the child to write. A number of activities are provided in this corner, such as matching letters with words or pictures and copying words.

3.3.1.3.5 Discovering Corner

This is also called a 'Science Corner'; two children are allowed to be in this corner at a time. Different objects are provided for children to explore and discover. These objects may include several kinds of sand, grain, cotton, iron, leather, seashells, mummified insects, and pets such as fish, turtles, birds and chickens. This corner may contain some instruments such as magnets, a thermometer and a magnifying glass that help children to learn about these specific scientific items.

3.3.1.3.6 Mosque Corner

Just one child is allowed to be in this corner at a time. It has a prayer mat, the Quran (holy book), a hijab and a tape recorder. The child can pray, read and memorise different parts of the Quran, and listen to it on the recorder.

3.3.1.3.7 Family Corner

In the Family Corner there can be four children at the same time. Children usually play games that reflect their real-life experiences. The furniture is child-size and can be changed depending on the unit topic. For example, in the My Health and Safety Unit, this corner can be organised or furnished as a small hospital room. The corner includes a wide range of costumes depending on the furniture. In this corner the child can act out a number of roles: a father, mother, sister, brother, doctor, patient, teacher, student, seller, buyer, accountant, engineer, cook, or a waiter.

3.3.1.3.8 Cognitive Corner

Four children are allowed to be in this corner at a time. In this corner various puzzles and educational games, with different levels of difficulty, are provided to help develop their cognitive skills.

3.3.2 Implementing the Intervention

3.3.2.1 Designing and Implementing the Professional Workshops

The project involved a set of five workshops. As shown in table 3-1 five were with teachers, working on the areas that they had identified as needing improvement to promote reading for pleasure; one was with parents working alongside teachers on five different areas, chosen following my literature review. After each workshop I carried out observations to look at the particular impact on children's motivations for reading and reading engagement. An outline of each workshop is provided in the following:

First Workshop: School-Home Partnership with Teachers (Day 1) for 150 minutes.
The definition of School-Home Partnership.
The importance of School-Home Partnership on children's reading.
Effective ways parents and school can work in partnership.
Ways to encourage parents with their children to read for pleasure at home.
Preparation for Mothers Workshop.

School-Home Partnership with Mothers (Day 2) for 150 minutes.
The importance of the early childhood stage and reading in children's lives.
Effective ways to support children's reading after school, such as using technologies (iPads) and reading- related activities.
The importance of shared reading between parents and their children.
Introducing interactive read-aloud approach.
Practical example of teacher reading aloud in front of mothers.
Displaying examples of high quality children's picture books.
Criteria for selecting high quality picture books.

Second Workshop: Selecting high quality picture books for 120 minutes.

Ways to provide a literacy-rich classroom.

The definition of high quality picture books..

Displaying examples of high quality children's picture books.

Brainstorming for teachers to provide criteria for selecting high quality picture books.

Criteria for selecting high quality picture books from reviewing the literature.

The quality and quantity of picture books in the classroom.

Third Workshop: Using Story Sacks for 120 minutes

What is a story sack?

What does a story sack contain?

Looking at examples of English versions of story sacks and have an open discussion about it.

Criteria to choose a story for a story sack.

The benefits of using story sacks.

Preparation for producing five Arabic story sacks.

Forth Workshop: Using iPads for 120 minutes

The advantages of using iPads in the classroom to support children's reading.

Effective ways to support children's reading with iPads.

Looking at different story apps, and choose ones that are suitable for children.

Criteria for choosing appropriate e-stories for young children.

Fifth Workshop: Interactive read alouds approach 150 minutes

Introducing interactive read alouds approach, its definition, importance, and advantages.

Interactive read alouds approach strategies.

Playing videos for teachers using this approach in the English language, with my translation to the Arabic language.

Table 3-1: The Five Workshops of This Study

Workshop Name	**Was Conducted At …Weeks of the project**	**Participants**
School-Home Partnership	Fourth Week	Teachers & Mothers
Selecting high quality picture books	Fifth Week	Teachers
Using Story Sacks	Sixth Week	Teachers
Using iPads	Seventh Week	Teachers
Interactive read alouds approach	Eighth week	Teachers

3.3.2.2 Selecting Tools and Picture Books

I bought a number of resources to support this intervention. I bought six iPads (three iPads for each classroom), screen protectors, iPad covers, and headphones. I bought a wide selection of new picture books from the international Arabic book fair in Riyadh (see Figure 3-2), (some of these are listed in Appendix A). I bought story character puppets, and animal puppets such as a cat and a rabbit.

Figure 3-2: The Researcher Special Library

3.3.2.3 Introducing the IPad to the Classroom.

After the workshop with the teachers on how to use the iPad in the classroom, the teachers and I had discussions, based on previous research studies, on how to choose good quality e-books for young children, and then we selected several e-book stories. The availability of electronic books in the Apple store in the Arabic language also influenced our choices (see Appendix B for the list of e-books used).

The chosen e-books were available in both Arabic and English. There were a number of features of the e-books that supported early reading. Children could choose to listen to

the narrator and read the text in either Arabic or English. In addition, these books had features that highlighted each word, as it was read aloud, which enabled the child to follow the text while listening to the reader. Furthermore, there were many buttons such as forward, backward, pause, and restart buttons that allowed children to be in control while reading the story. Finally, the stories in the apps were supported by animation and read aloud features. The teachers introduced the iPads to children at the end of Circle Time and briefly showed the children how to use them. Then they placed three iPads with headphones in the Library Corner, so they could use them during Centre Time.

3.3.2.4 Creating An Arabic Version of Story Sacks

After the story sacks workshop, the teachers decided to create their own story sacks in the Arabic language, as story sacks were not available for purchase in Arabic. This decision required the following procedure: at a number of meetings, under my supervision, the teachers chose the stories first and then selected a variety of educational activities based on the story events and the characters. The teachers included activities with a range difficulty levels designed to be suitable for children of all abilities and ages. Teachers successfully created five story sacks named (see Figure 3-3): “The Eid Gift”, “The Five Friends”, “The Caterpillar Khaddorh”, “The Lion and the Mouse” and “Squirrel’s Kite”. Each large sack had the cover of the book printed on it and contained an A3 size version of a story, a ‘normal’ size version of the same book, the story’s characters’ puppets, information books, and different educational activities. The teachers introduced the story sacks at Circle Time.

Figure 3-3: The Five Arabic Version of Story Sacks

3.3.2.5 Reading Aloud Strategy

3.3.2.5.1 Reading Aloud Sessions' Structure Before the Intervention

Before the intervention, I observed six reading aloud sessions with teachers. Briefly, I will describe the ways teachers read aloud to the children prior to the intervention. Every time, teachers started their sessions by reminding the children of the rules that they should obey when listening to a story, which they called the "story rules". Teachers asked the children, "What are the story rules?" and then all the children answered together, "Looking with our eyes, closing our mouths, sitting in our places without moving until the end of the story." Then, the teachers started the session and the children looked at the teacher. Discussions occurred after reading the story when the teacher asked the children some questions about the story, which allowed some interaction by the children. This style of reading aloud, called performance style, is described as follows: 'teachers simply read the text and do not encourage discussions or interactions between the students and the stories' (Militante, 2006, p. 6).

Even though children's interaction in reading aloud is essential, the teachers did encourage discussions after they read aloud (Price, Bradley, & Smith, 2012). From my observations, about 25% to 40% of children responded to the teachers' questions after the reading aloud session. When teachers read aloud, they showed the children the pictures in the book and they read the stories without pointing to the text. Teachers read from different items other than books; for example, they read from pictures, or simply from memory, without any tools.

In response to the question about their frequency of reading aloud to the children before the intervention, all teachers stated that they read aloud to the children once or twice a week, depending on the timetable, which they received each month from the head teacher. With regard to what and when teachers read before the intervention, they read stories from the curriculum in the 'Last Gathering' period of the school day.

3.3.2.5.2 Conducting the Changes to Teachers' Reading Aloud Practices

Based on a review of the literature on reading aloud styles, I found that the interactive read aloud style has been widely researched and been shown to have great influence on

children's achievements, vocabulary and reading skills. However, it had not yet been researched in terms of children's motivation to read, which was the focus of this research project.

After three weeks of observing teachers' reading aloud sessions, I gave the teachers a brief introduction to the interactive read aloud style in informal one-to-one conversations and group discussions, and I proposed that they use it. At the beginning, teachers were not convinced by the new approach and were strongly opposed to using it with the children. They gave me reasons for their refusal, claiming that the teachers and children were used to the performance reading style and that the children were used to obeying the story rules, which do not allow children to interact during reading aloud sessions.

After long, intense discussions with the teachers at the reading aloud workshop, showing them several videos displaying the way of reading aloud by expert teachers in the English language and providing my translation into Arabic, teachers agreed to try to use the interactive read aloud style. Then, I explained it in more detail and described the way to manage children's behaviours and discussions during the interactive sessions.

3.3.2.6 Establishing School-Home Links in Reading

Mothers attended this workshop with the teachers and the researcher and the main focus was to promote the idea of mothers and children engaging in reading at home in enjoyable ways. The workshop topics were: the importance of childhood; the importance of reading in children's lives; ways to promote children's reading for pleasure; an explanation of the ways to promote reading for pleasure outside the kindergarten; and interactive shared book-reading techniques. In the workshop, a teacher performed shared reading in front of the mothers. The mothers worked in groups and actively participated in the workshop, asking lots of questions and demonstrating a high level of enthusiasm. At the end of the workshop the researcher showed the parents examples of different appropriate books for the children's age group, and asked the mothers to choose a book (as a gift) to take home and share with their children. One criterion for the books displayed was that they should be short texts with a lot of pictures to encourage interaction between children and parents (Sénéchal, Cornell, & Broda, 1995).

After the workshop, the teachers created a WhatsApp group with the mothers so that they could communicate easily. In addition, the teachers activated the borrowing system, so that the children could choose a story to take home every day. A borrowing system is a typical practice in Saudi kindergartens. Unfortunately, this kindergarten had not implemented it at the time this case study started despite being one of the biggest kindergartens in Makkah in terms of number of classrooms and space, with a high standard of education compared to the other kindergartens.

3.3.3 Communicating with the Decision-Makers

Towards the end of the project, the teachers and I organised an exhibition about the project activities, based on the principle that "evaluation findings are more likely to influence the real world ... than traditional research"(Robson & McCartan, 2016, p. 177). The evaluation may indicate that changes are necessary, but the findings are only a part of any future approach required to make a programme more effective. It is important that evaluators consider their audiences for the results and implications, not necessarily only their research community peers, but also the client and the decision makers. Researchers need to give careful attention to the communication process (Robson, 2011, p. 188). Therefore, I invited the General Administration of Kindergarten Education in Makkah, who are the decision makers in early childhood education in Makkah region to show them the new ideas and strategies which had been used. In the project exhibition, story sacks, e-stories on the iPad, high quality picture books, and puppets were all displayed. As well as the exhibition, they were invited to attend one of interactive reading aloud sessions. At the end of the day, they expressed enthusiasm for the various elements of the project and were interested to see the findings of the thesis and the recommended practical applications.

3.4 Research Methods

In this section, I will explain the methods (interviews, observation) which were used in the research. I used multiple methods from different types to enable me to triangulate the findings. Since all data collection methods have their individual weaknesses, triangulation helps researchers to balance and increase the validity of constructs (Gray, 2009), as well as improve accuracy (Denscombe, 2010).

3.4.1 Observations

Observation creates opportunities for researchers to study behaviours in real-world settings (Yin, 2014), and "specific settings such as a classroom environment" (Wellington, 2015, p. 137). Observation enables researchers to observe systematically and record participants' behaviour, actions and interactions to obtain detailed descriptions of social events (Hennink, Hutter, & Bailey, 2010). Even though observation is time-consuming to do and analyse, it provides in-depth information in real world settings (Robson & McCartan, 2016). Observation allows the researcher to collect data regarding people's behaviour in natural settings (Woods, 1986).

After getting all the consent forms signed by children's parents and by the children themselves, ten children were observed in the classroom, in reading aloud sessions, and before and after the intervention. I adopted an 'observer-as-participant' role since I did not take any part in the academic activity and was known to the participants as the researcher (Robson & McCartan, 2016). Even though my role was observer-as-participant when I conducted the observations in the classroom, I engaged with the children in their play outside the classroom environment and developed a good relationship with them. Therefore, they felt comfortable with me being in the classroom and observing them. Unstructured observation was chosen based on the research questions evaluating the impact of the interventions on children's reading engagement and on the interpretive paradigm underlying this study. Field notes were used as the data-gathering tool because, as stated by Gray (2013), that allowed me to document behaviours, speech, observations and personal reflections In the field notes I addressed "descriptions of contexts, actions, and conversations" (Hatch, 2002, p. 77) including note-worthy points (Patton, 2002). According to Patton (2002, p. 303) "field notes also contain the observer's own feelings, reactions to the experience, and reflections about the personal meaning and significance of what has been observed" since the "observation is a complex combination of our five senses and our perception, which we use to develop a picture and an understanding of the world around us" (Gray, 2013, p. 412). Therefore, writing my reflections was part of the observation process; I tended to write notes during the observation sessions, then immediately after the observation I spent time reflecting on the process and adding details to the field notes.

The research questions aimed to find out the impact of the research elements on children's reading engagement. In order to observe children's self-directed reading engagement in the classroom, I decided to observe children during 'Free Play in the Educational Corners' time, where the children are free to choose to engage in any activities they like. The children's freedom in choosing the activities that they wanted to engage in was an essential indicator of their intrinsic motivation. I tried to capture the children's behaviour, attitude and their social interactions in reading or reading-related activities during Free Play Time as well as during reading aloud sessions.

Each child was observed during 'Free Play in the Educational Corners' time in the classroom fifteen times during the project. The observations were mainly focused on the child's reading-related behaviour in the classroom and the social interactions that occurred with the activities. During the twelve weeks I attended the kindergarten daily and carried out two full observations of two children each day. Free Play Time in the Educational Corners was at different times in KG1, KG2, and KG3 (in KG1 it was between 7.50-8.50am; in KG2 between 9-10am; and in KG3 between 10.30-11.30am). During my observations, sometimes I sat in a comfortable place near the Library Corner, which enabled me to observe the children in the entire classroom and listen to their conversations in The Library Corner; sometimes I moved around the classroom to observe specific phenomena when required.

3.4.2 Interviews

Interviews are used widely in social research; there are many different types but they typically involve the researcher asking questions and receiving answers from the participants (Robson & McCartan, 2016). According to Perakyla (2005, p. 869) interviews "consist of accounts given to the researcher about the issues in which he or she is interested". In this study, interviews were conducted with teachers, children's parents and children. The interview is an appropriate method in this research since "interviews can reach the parts which other methods cannot reach … allow a researcher to investigate and prompt things that we [researchers] cannot observe. We can probe an interviewee's thoughts, values, prejudices, perceptions, views, feelings and perspectives through their stories" (Wellington, 2015, p. 137). A semi-structured interview style was used (see Appendix C for a full list of the interview questions). However, the question order was often significantly modified based on "the flow of the interview, and

additional unplanned questions asked in order to follow up on what the interviewee says" (Robson, 2011, p. 280). This gives the interviewer the flexibility to determine the scope and order of questions whilst working within established guidelines (Robson, 2011; Robson & McCartan, 2016). This meant that I had a list of specific questions, but with more flexibility than a structured interview provides. For the purpose of this research, open-ended questions were used in the interviews in order to get more depth and resolve any misunderstandings, test the limits of respondents' knowledge, understand what the participant believed and produce unexpected answers (Wellington, 2015, p. 139) . To encourage participants to expand on their responses, the interview included probes which are "a device to get the interviewee to expand on a response when you have the feeling that he has more to give" (Robson, 2011, p. 283). A useful probe is to seek a personal response, such as, 'What is your own personal view on this. There are various 'probe tactics', such as asking "Anything more?"' or "Could you go over that again?" Sometimes, when an answer has been given in general terms, a useful probe is to seek a personal response, such as, "What is your own personal view on this?" (Robson, 2011, p. 283).

I followed advice offered by Robson and McCartan (2016) on the way the interviews should be conducted by endeavouring to listen more than speak, to ask clear, straightforward questions and to eliminate any cues that might influence interviewees to respond in a particular way by giving a 'correct' answer to please the interviewer. In addition, I tried to show my enjoyment during the interview by changing my tone of voice and varying my facial expression. In order to get the information I was looking for and to enhance the trustworthiness of the interview, I avoided certain types of questions when designing the interview, such as long double-barrelled or multiple-barrelled questions, since the interviewee might only remember and respond to one part; leading questions; and biased questions. Robson and McCartan (2016) stated that, provided you are alert to the possibility of bias, it is not difficult to write unbiased questions. I designed an iterative questioning approach that entailed asking the same question in a different way in order to identify any contradictions in the information that participants provided (Robson, 2011; Wellington, 2015). Throughout the question design process, I was always aware of the need to establish a clear link between them and my overall research aims.

A pilot study allows researchers to test their interview procedures and identify any potential bias, and is a standard approach (Shenton, 2004). Therefore, the interview questions were tested by piloting them with three teachers and two parents and three children other than actual participants to make sure the questions designed were understandable, that they solicited the data needed and that the duration of the interview was appropriate. The questions were then revised accordingly in order to refine and amend the interview procedure.

A digital voice recorder was used to record the interviews with the mothers and the teachers (participants confirmed their approval of this by signing a consent form). Recording the children's voices was quite difficult for many reasons. I had conversations with children in the classroom while other children were playing and the teachers were there. I could not get approval to record all the voices nor could I hold the conversations with children on their own in a quiet place, both for ethical reasons and because I wanted to provide the children with a comfortable environment to talk with me amongst their friends. This meant I had to write down everything they said during the conversation.

Interviews with teachers were conducted before implementing the project with six teachers for around twenty minutes each, using semi-structured questions to understand teachers' viewpoints on the meaning of children reading for pleasure. This was in order to establish the current practices they used to promote children's reading for pleasure, understand the obstacles that teachers face and which prevent them from motivating children to read, and to get their recommendations on what should be included in the workshops regarding motivation and how to motivate children to read for pleasure in the professional training workshops. This understanding was essential in order to revise the workshops in the light of teachers' needs and their recommendations. It was important that teachers felt that their opinions and voices were reflected in the proposed intervention. After conducting the intervention, five teachers were interviewed again for approximately 20 to 25 minutes to discover how effective they thought it had been on children's engagement in reading, to identify the obstacles that they faced and to listen to any further suggestions they had to improve the design of the intervention.

Interviews with children were also conducted. During the programme the children were asked how they felt about being involved in reading activities, what they liked the most,

and, if they had started reading, why they read. Interviews with children were ideal as a tool to help me to understand children's attitudes, motivation and feelings during the intervention since the interview has been reported to be the most effective method in accessing participants' feelings (Chenail, 2011, p. 255). Interviews enable researchers to 'reach areas of reality that would otherwise remain inaccessible, such as people's subjective experiences and attitudes'(Perakyla, 2005, p. 869). Interviewing young children is seen as a complex matter since it may raise many issues (e.g. language use, interview context, interviewer gender, confidentiality) (Gray, 2009). It is relevant to the current research that I am a mother of four children who has experience of working with young children. I prefer to use the less formal terminology 'conversation' rather than 'interview' when referring to talking with children. Some conversations were held with two children, who were friends, at the same time so as to give each child a comfortable space in which to discuss the issues, and some with an individual child in the classroom when that child felt comfortable talking in that situation (Abbott, Langston, Lewis, & Kellett, 2004; Christensen & James, 2008; Fraser, 2004). Fraser (2004, pp. 166-167) argues that it is more appropriate to use small group discussions with young children since "groups give children space to raise issues that they want to discuss. In addition, I asked them straightforward, direct questions to help them understand what the questions meant. For instance, if two children did a reading-related activity, I asked them: 'Tell me about this activity' in order to get in-depth responses. I did not use a specific terminology that young children might not understand.

Interviews with children's mothers were conducted on completion of the intervention to ask about any changes they had noticed in their children's reading behaviour, motivation and attitude. They were asked if they (the mothers) had benefited from the parents' workshops in school and if they had made any changes in the home literacy environment and in home reading practices as a result. In addition, they were asked if their children were involved in reading activities out of school, to understand any external factors that might impact on the children's motivation and behaviour.

3.5 Ethical issues

As Association (2004) notes when carrying out educational research, the key BERA responsibility of a researcher is to operate ethically. It is essential for me as a researcher to be aware of the ethics where they are 'concerned with the attempt to formulate codes

and principles of moral behaviour' (Wellington, 2015, p. 125). Ethics has to do with 'the application of a system of moral principles to prevent harming or wronging others, to promote the good, to be respectful, and to be fair' (May, 2011, p. 61). In this section I explain how I ensured that ethical principles were applied at all stages of this research process. The following procedures and actions were put into place during the research to avoid anything that might harm the participants in the study:

3.5.1 Official permission

"The first stage thus involves the gaining of official permission to undertake one's research in the target community" (Sieber, 1993, p. 14). As mentioned earlier, the ethical review was done in both and in Saudi Arabia. Therefore, in Sheffield I got official permission to implement my research from university of Sheffield (see appendix D); in Saudi Arabia permission was approved from the Ministry of Education in Makkah, as well from the school head teacher.

3.5.2 Informed consent

Cohen et al. (2011, p. 81) states that informed consent "refers to the voluntary consent of an individual to participate in research". Burgess (1989, p. 5) emphasised that "researchers must inform each individual about what will occur during the research study. If adults are the participants, they must give their consent". Accordingly, each participant was given the information sheet and invited to engage after getting an overview of the research plan; I gave them time to think about their participation and, once they had agreed, they then signed the consent form. They were informed that they had the right to withdraw from the project without giving any reason; I checked and double-checked that they fully understood the research, and their role and any implications, as suggested by Boynton (2005). In the case of the children, they were given a child-friendly information sheet, received an explanation, and were then asked to sign the consent form or to give me an oral permission, since it is important for the child to understand the research and agree to be involved in it (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 2007). In addition, the parents were asked to talk about the project with their children at home, and sign the consent form according to the child's responses and their decision. Before conducting any conversations with children I gained children's consent, which is part of the ongoing process to develop trust and sensitivity between the researcher and

the participant (Flewitt, 2005, p. 4). All the participants were treated with respect and were informed that the research would be stopped immediately if they decided not to take part, regardless of the stage at which they took that decision.

3.5.3 Confidentiality and anonymity

Robson (2011) points out that all research participants should be told at the outset of the study who will have access to the data. For this reason I explained that the names of the school and the participants would not be published, nor would any personal details of the participants that might reveal their identity; pseudonyms are used for the participants throughout the study.

As mentioned earlier, a digital recorder was used to record the interviews. The digital recordings were made with regard to the sensitivities of both teachers and mothers due to cultural concerns of the women, specifically 'awrah' which means that it is not appropriate for women's voices to be heard by men. All females in the research were assured that no one would listen to the recorded interviews without the participants' permission, other than the researcher, the supervisors and the examiners if required. In addition, they were assured that all the digital recordings would be destroyed when the research had been completed.

The main focus of the next section is discussing ways that were used to ensure trustworthiness of this research.

3.6 Ensuring Trustworthiness

Even though no one can be absolutely sure about the adequacy of date analysis, there are several strategies that could assist researchers in improving the 'trustworthiness' of the research (Henn, Weinstein, & Foard, 2006, p. 74). Some researchers argue, that in qualitative studies, trustworthiness of the research is more important than validity and reliability (Wellington, 2015). Gray (2013) deliberately chooses not to use these terms as they can be used inappropriately. Similarly, Wolcott (1994) states that the trustworthiness of findings from qualitative research is "the subject of much debate". In order to achieve trustworthiness in my research findings I followed the procedure described below.

The first procedure was to gain thick, rich description which described the research setting, the participants and the themes of a qualitative study in rich detail to ensure trustworthiness in research (Shenton, 2004). Providing rich detail can help describe the situation and the context of the research in order to help the reader decide to what extent the findings. If the researcher identifies a series of types and illustrates these, this enables the reader to determine how well they reflect the actual situations (Robson, 2011). As the researcher is unable to present a rich description if data is inaccurate or incomplete, the use of audio- or video-taping is an effective way to deal with this (Shenton, 2004). Therefore, I audio-taped all the interviews except with the children in order to get an accurate description of what the participants said. I tried to seek approval for video-taping observations in the classroom but could not get approval for that from the teachers for religious reasons; the female teachers do not wear the hijab in the classroom and, therefore, cannot be video-recorded. During data collection and analysis, I kept a full record of my activities including the raw data (transcripts of interviews, detailed field notes, and my decisions).

Wellington (2015, p. 168) points out that "case study research is a function of the reader as much as the researcher … [since] a case study can then be rich, interesting and possess wide appeal; readers can draw their own interpretations and use their own experiences to evaluate the data". Therefore, I presented a record of my evidence, in part from the interviews and my field notes, to allow the reader to follow the route from the beginning of this research [research questions] to the justification of the choices of methods and methodology, the reporting of the evidence, right through to the research conclusions (Wellington, 2015). Based on Wellington's (2015) suggestions, I kept a research diary of this study from the very beginning which included a record of what was done, where, when, events observed, people interviewed, observations, field notes, notes of methods, questions, ideas, categories, and themes that seemed to emerge.

In order to enhance the trustworthiness of research data in qualitative research, researchers can use different kinds of data (for example qualitative and quantitative) or different methods of data collection (individual interviews, focus groups, observation) to see whether they corroborate each other (Wellington, 2015, p. 178). This approach ensures that researchers can draw on a range of evidence rather than single incidents or data (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2013; Creswell & Miller, 2000; Shenton, 2004; Silverman, 2013). In my research, I collected data using a variety of methods: individual

interviews with teachers, parents and children, informal conversations with teachers and observation. Triangulation gave me opportunities to view the data from different perspectives and positions, which helped me gain a better understanding of the phenomena and enhanced the trustworthiness of the research (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

Researchers can also enhance the trustworthiness of the study by prolonged involvement, which is the development of an early familiarity with the culture of those participating (Denscombe, 2014). I established a good relationship with all the participants in this study and became familiar with the culture of the participating organisations. I established this relationship from the beginning, in a number of ways: with the teachers during the preliminary visits to the kindergarten to get their approval to implement the study, informal meetings, professional training workshops; with the children by playing with them in the kindergarten yard; with the parents by being part of the WhatsApp group with teachers and mothers, and in the professional training workshops with mothers. With this approach, I gained a thorough understanding of the kindergarten and had a good relationship with all the participants. However, "prolonged involvement can increase the risk of researcher bias either in failing to maintain a neutral role (the 'going native' threat) or in a negative way due to developing antipathy to the participants" (Shenton, 2004, p. 65). I was aware that my judgement might have been affected by my "prolonged engagement" with the kindergarten and having become so immersed in the culture (Robson, 2011, p. 157). Therefore, I tried to maintain a neutral role during the analysis and interpretation of the data.

Throughout this entire study, I had various discussions with peers and colleagues about my research; this procedure is called peer scrutiny of the research project and is recommended by Robson & McCartan (2016). Silverman (2013) stresses the importance of talking over and discussing the data with others who are 'outsiders' to enhance the trustworthiness of the research. The discussions were held at each stage of this research, that is, choosing the design of the study, designing the questions and choosing the methodologies. In the analysis and interpretation of data phase, I had particularly useful discussions with my peers about classifying the codes and themes and their relationship to the evidence and my interpretations. I took all their feedback and comments into consideration and this enabled me to develop more detailed explanations of my research and strengthen my arguments, as Wellington (2015) suggests.

Finally, previous research findings, as proposed by Wellington (2015, p. 151) were used in this research by "examination of previous research findings to assess the degree to which the project's results are congruent with those of past studies". Shenton (2004) stresses the importance of comparing project results with previous studies and considers this as a key requirement of qualitative research. Therefore, I reported on previous studies, taken from the literature, which addressed similar issues and supported my own findings.

3.7 Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was used as a method of analysis, which is "a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It organises and describes your data set in (rich) detail" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 6). Six steps were followed.

3.7.1 Familiarising Myself with the Data

Familiarising myself with the data was the phase where I immersed myself in the data to get an overall sense for it (Wellington, 2015). It is essential to "immerse yourself in the data to the extent that you are familiar with the depth and breadth of the content" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 87). I did so by listening to the recorded interviews and writing transcripts, which has been seen "as a key phase of data analysis within interpretive qualitative methodology" (Bird, 2005, p. 227). Aside from listening to the recorded interviews in order to write transcripts, just listening to the recorded interviews many times was an essential phase that helped me analyse and identify frequent patterns and contradictory emerging patterns; it also facilitated the generation of initial codes since listening to how the participant spoke (the tone of their voice, the speed of their speech) made me think about what they said and the important messages they were trying to convey. While transcribing, then reading and re-reading each transcript and the field notes, it was vital to record my initial thoughts and ideas. I believed that the time spent on transcription was worth the effort, as it helped shape the initial analysis and allowed me to develop a far more thorough understanding of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Examples of the first and the second level coding (see appendix E)

3.7.2 Generating Initial Codes

A code is "the most basic segment, or element, of the raw data or information that can be assessed in a meaningful way regarding the phenomenon" (Boyatzis, 1998, p. 62). The coding is "a procedure for organizing the text of transcripts, and discovering patterns within that organizational structure" (Auerbach and Silverstein, 2003, p. 31) (Robson & McCartan, 2016). Miles and Huberman (1994, P. 56) define codes as "tags or labels for assigning units of meaning to the descriptive or inferential information compiled during a study". Codes identify data that appears interesting to the researcher (Braun & Clarke, 2006).This is the approach that I adopted during my research to identify the codes resulting from my analysis.

I collected a huge amount of data and felt overwhelmed by having so much text to deal with, so I needed to find an effective way to analyse it. They are many different software packages available for analysing data; I chose NVivo for a number of reasons. Firstly, I attended a number of workshops on it and found it easy to use; secondly, the University provided the software free of charge, which gave me the opportunity to download it and try it out; thirdly, I watched the NVIVO-QRS channel on YouTube for practical guidance when I faced any difficulties using NVivo; and lastly, there are books available on this software. All these factors supported my use of NVivo for analysis and, furthermore, I chose to use the NVivo software because of its speed and efficiency in organising, saving and retrieving data, and showing connections between the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The company who created the software state in their website:

> An NVivo project typically includes: data records (e.g, transcriptions, field notes, other documents, video, audio, photographs, web pages); records of the researcher's thoughts about the data (memos); nodes to store coded references to the data; variable-type information (attribute values) relating to sources or cases in the study (e.g., demographic details, responses to categorical or scaled questions, dates); records of and results from interrogative queries conducted on the data; and models showing the relationship between items in the project. (QSR)

All these NVivo features were invaluable during my analysis; I used the software in order to record, manage, and analyse the huge amount of data. Using NVivo to store the analysis of my qualitative data helped me to manage the data, manage my ideas, query

the data and report on it (Basit, 2003; Saldaña, 2012). In this phase, I imported all the interviews and field notes onto NVivo. Then I looked through the entire data set and organised it into meaningful groups and coded it in a named node. I coded some extracts just under one node, and some extracts under many nodes.

I coded my research data in two phases. First I used the 'data driven' process by inductively looking at the data and coding it based on the research questions. Then I looked at the data in relation to SDT and deductively coded the data based on the theory, which is a 'theory-driven' process.

3.7.3 Searching for Themes

When the whole data set had been initially coded and I had a list of the different codes which were identified across the research data set, the third phase of analysis began (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013, p. 23). A theme is 'an outcome of coding, categorization, and analytical reflection, not something that is, in itself' (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 56). This phase of analysis focused on broader themes, rather than codes. It includes grouping different codes into potential themes, and allocating all coded extracted data to these themes. This represented an initial analysis of codes and consideration of how different codes may be combined to formulate an overarching theme (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In order to find the themes and sub-themes from a long list of codes, I found drawing mind maps helped me cluster codes into themes. Whilst identifying themes, I found that some codes worked better as a theme as they linked to other codes. This is consistent with Bryman (2016, p. 578) who said that "for some writers a theme is more or less the same as a code, whereas for others it transcends any one code and is built up out of groups of codes." Drawing mind maps provided me with visual representations of my data, as Bryman (2016, p. 578) suggested: "use visual representations to help you sort the different codes into themes". I found that drawing mind maps was beneficial in analysing the inductive part of the study, which is presented and discussed in the first chapter of findings and discussion, since I found myself getting confused by a long list of codes. However, in the deductive part of the analysis I found myself analysing the data without using mind maps since, either I was guided by the theory principles or I was already familiar with the data from the first phase (inductive analysis), or both. I completed this phase by having identified clearly defined themes and sub-themes with the supporting evidence, but there were also themes that I was not yet certain about.

3.7.4 Reviewing Themes

During this phase, some clarity emerged about the themes which were valid in their own right, those which might merge with other themes and those which might need to be broken down into separate themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 89). Similarly, Braun and Clarke (2006) emphasised the importance of confirming the extent to which the themes are compatible with the raw data

According to Boyatzis (1998, p. 36) this phase involves two levels of reviewing and refining your themes: at the level of the coded data extracts and in relation to the entire data set.

In line with the previous paragraph, during this phase of the analysis I re-read all the extracts in each theme, giving particular consideration to whether the themes appeared to form coherent patterns, and, as a result, I made some changes to the themes where required. I changed some of the text extracts that did not fit with themes that I was not certain about, creating a new theme for the unnamed extracts. I had a 'thematic map' and was in a position to proceed to level two of this phase, at which point I carried out a similar procedure for the whole data set. I considered the validity of single themes related to sets of data, and whether the thematic map reflected the meanings evident in the whole data set 'accurately'. I coded additional data within some themes that had not been coded as the picture was now clearer in this phase since "the need for re-coding from the data set is to be expected as coding is an ongoing organic process" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 91).

3.7.5 Defining and Naming Themes

According to Braun and Clarke (2006), the beginning of phase five is when the researcher actually has a satisfactory thematic map of his/her research data. During this phase I followed the process Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest, that is defining and refining the themes, considering 'what the themes overall, and each theme is about' and determining what aspect of the data each theme captures. I ensured that each theme was not too complex by going back to the data extracts of each theme, and reorganising them as appropriate. For each theme, I conducted and wrote a detailed analysis, identifying its story and considering how it fitted with the overall findings in relation to

my research question. At the end of this phase I was able to "describe the scope and content of each theme in a couple of sentences". I also gave careful thought about the name of each theme, given that "names need to be concise, punchy, and immediately give the reader a sense of what the theme is about." (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 92).

3.7.6 Producing the Report

At the final report stage, the researcher needs to pick out the most significant examples, relate them to the original research questions and refer to the relevant literature (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Once I had completed the analysis and determined the themes and sub-themes, I then selected the most significant examples to support each theme to address the research questions, in order to present my findings.

I also developed a vignette of each child, in order to provide the reader with an overview of the child's individual background and the main changes that occurred in relation to his or her reading practices as a result of engagement in the intervention study. The vignettes were constructed by analysing all of the data sets in relation to each individual child. I noted when the data indicated the child's responses to reading before and following the intervention. To construct the vignette, I then chose extracts from the data that provided typical responses of the child. These vignettes provide an indication of how the ten children responded individually to the project.

3.8 Chapter Conclusion

In this chapter, the research methodology and the methods that were used in the current research have been discussed. Also, the procedures that were followed during the fieldwork and the ethical considerations have been described. The steps that were followed to ensure trustworthiness of the study have been explained and, finally, the data analysis process has been outlined. The next chapter presents vignettes of the ten children who participated in the study.

CHAPTER 4 : VIGNETTES OF THE CHILD PARTICIPANTS

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, brief information will be presented for the ten participant children, as follows. These vignettes provide information about each child, and outline the impact of the project on the participate children.

4.2 Daniah

Daniah is five years and six months old and lives with her parents and three older siblings. Her father is a general manager, and her mother works as a high school teacher. The family's average monthly income is £3000, making the family relatively middle-income.

Before the project, I observed Daniah for three weeks. Overall, she spent most of her time in the classroom in the Arts and in the Building Corner and she seemed to enjoy them, as I observed:

> At 9:00, Daniah chose to work in the Arts Corner, painting shapes with her fingers and decorating them. She left the corner at 9:30 to go to the Building Corner where she joined her friend building zoo animals . . . until 10:00, the end of 'Free Play in the Educational Corners' time (Field notes, March 2014).

Before the project, during all three weeks, Daniah participated in various activities, except reading. I asked Daniah, 'What do you like to do?' She answered:

> *I love this* [pointing to the Building Corner] and there [pointing to the Family Corner*]. I love playing with my friends. I love drawing here* [moving her body towards the Arts Corner]. *I love assembling things here* [pointing to the Cognitive Corner] and writing here [pointing to the Art Corner](Field notes, April 2014).

Then I asked her, 'What about the Library Corner?' She answered, 'I read stories but so so'.

During the project, I noticed changes in Daniah's choices of activity in the classroom. I noticed she engaged much more in literacy-related activities than in other activities. She spent more time in the Library Corner engaging in different reading activities, as shown:

> At 9:15, in the Library Corner, Daniah picked up the story of the day, quickly skimmed through it, and asked the teacher to read it to her. She was happily listening to the teacher reading the story . . . Daniah asked the teacher whether she could take the story home, and the teacher agreed. She left the corner at 9:30 (Field notes, April 2014).

Also, Daniah enjoyed reading stories on the iPad and shared it with a friend, as reported:

> Daniah entered the Library Corner at 9:10. . . . She was concentrating, listening to the story on the iPad until the end, when she said, 'It is a nice story'. She looked at her friend who was busy reading a story on the iPad and said, 'Let me see your story; it is the same as my story'. She then listened with her friend to the story, and she happily said, 'Oh, the ball fell into the hall'. . . . She left the corner at 9:30 (Field notes, May 2014).

In addition, Daniah enjoyed playing with story sacks, as reported:

> At 9:00, Daniah opened the butterfly story sack. She tried to figure the puzzle out, and then her friend joined her to help . . . . Afterward, she redid it by herself. She opened the big story and read it using the pictures. She acted out the story using the dolls for the story's characters with her friend . . . . And then she used the map to tell the story. At 9:40, Daniah left to go to the Art Corner (Field notes, May 2014).

Daniah's mother reported her daughter's change with regard to reading, and her eagerness to share stories:

> *Her personality has changed; she was not talkative. If something happened in the kindergarten, she did not tell us about it. Now, she comes to talk a lot. She tells about the teachers and the stories. She brings her file, shows us the story, and asks us to read it, and if we did not read, she got upset.*

Towards the end of the project, I asked Daniah, 'What do you like to do?' She answered, 'I love this [pointing to the story sack], and the Art Corner, and the Library Corner. I love the iPad and all stories on it'.

4.3 Hani

Hani is five years and nine months old. He lives with his parents and four siblings; his father works in a travel ; agency and his mother works as a high school teacher. The family's average monthly income is £3000, making the family relatively middle-income.

Hani's parents did not support his reading before the project; his mother reported "*Honestly, no we did not read to him."* However, after the project his mother's behaviour changed, and she then read to him *"nearly every day"*.

In the three weeks of observations of Hani before the project, overall, he engaged often in the Art Corner, the Cogitative Corner and the Building Corner. He did not go to the Library Corner in the six observation sessions that I conducted before the project, as I observed:

> At the beginning, Hani chose to visit the Cogitative Corner to solve the puzzle. He left the corner at 9:30 to go to the Art Corner to paint his hand's shape. Then, at 9:40 he moved to the Building Corner. Then, at 9:55 he went to the Writing Corner (Field notes, February 2014).

I asked Hani, 'What do you like doing?' He answered '*I love the Bulding Corner, Art Corner, Cogitative Corner, and the Library Corner'*. I replied: You said you like to be

in the Library Corner, why didn't you go there today? He answered *'I went there before yesterday*'.

During the project, I noticed that Hani had been in the Library Corner in all the observations I made and participated much more in literacy-related activities than before the project. In the Library Corner, most of the time Hani was listening to stories on the iPad, since in all his observation sessions he read stories on an iPad if it was available, as shown in my field notes:

> Hani entered the Library Corner at 9:15. He took an iPad and was concentrating on reading stories on the iPad. He listened to '*Haitham and the Three Thieves*', 'Husam and Mama' and then to 'King Bag'. He listened to all three stories on an iPad from the beginnings to the ends. At 9:35 he moved to the story sack (Field notes, April 2014).

However, if the iPads were used by other children and not available, he visited the Library Corner and read picture books. Then, when an iPad became available, he listened to stories on an iPad, as observed:

> Hani went to the Library Corner to check if the iPads were available; three children were using them. Then he looked at the picture books and chose to read the story of the day. He then pointed with his finger to the text while he was reading the story. When his friend returned an iPad to the shelf, Hani took it and listened to three stories on it from the beginnings to the ends (Field notes, May 2014).

In addition, Hani enjoyed playing with the story sack activities and interacting with his friends and the teacher, as observed:

> At 9:10, Hani opened the Green Caterpillar story sack. He concentrated on solving the puzzle, then he successfully did it. Then he opened the map of the story and held the ladybird puppet, and his friend held the caterpillar puppet. Then they acted the story out using the story map. Opened the Eid Gift story sack and played with his friend using the memory cards, turned the eight pictures down, and guessed which two pictures matched and overturned the cards. At 9:40 he moved to the Library Corner (Field notes, April 2014).

There were changes in Hani's reading, his eagerness to share stories, his interest in the texts around him, and his ability to read, as his mother reported:

> *He wanted to read more; he wanted me not to finish the story because he wanted to do so using his imagination and pictures. I noticed that this affected him in reading the Holy Qur'an; he came to open it, read it and tried to pronounce letters. This became a very clear change. I hope this project will continue. Hani started reading words displayed on the television and spelling words. Even on the mobile he tried to read the names if there was somebody calling. He started to love reading and listening to stories. He listened to the story on the iPad and read it. Before the project, he did not like stories, but now he likes them so much. In addition, I started to love reading. Do you believe that if he does not bring a story home, I get upset because I feel that there is something missing in my schedule with my kids on that day? Before sleeping, I have to read a story to him and his young sister, Wareef. Sometimes, my older son enters to the room while I am reading a story to Hani; he listened to story as well. Now the project is ending, so I have to buy new stories.*

4.4 Fadi

Fadi is five years and seven months old. He lives with his parents and three other siblings. His father is a general manager, his mother is a housewife, and the family's average monthly income is £1600, which is considered a low-income family. The parents somewhat supported reading before the project, as Fadi's mother reported:

> *I use to read to Fadi, but not continually… I read to him from time to time about once a month… from my imagination.*

Before the project, I observed Fadi for three weeks. Overall, in the classroom Fadi spent most of his time in the Art Corner and the Building Corner, and he seemed to enjoy them, as I observed:

> At 9:00, Fadi chose to work in the Art Corner. He made a finger doll and wrote his name on it. He left the corner at 9:20 and went to the Building Corner where he was enjoying building a big car park and organizing the cars in it … until the

> end of ‘Free Play in the Educational Corners’ time at 10:00 (Field notes, February 2014).

Before the project, Fadi participated in various activities, except reading. I asked Fadi, ‘What do you like doing?’ he answered:

> *Nothing. I love to build houses using cubes, I love the Art Corner, I love cleaning my classroom, and I love reading the Quran.*

I asked to him: ‘You love reading Quran, why didn’t you read Quran today?’

> *I memorised* Surat Al-tein Wa Al-zainton*, I learnt all letters in the* Tahviz *(Islamic school).*

During the project, Fadi’s mother shared reading with Fadi, as reported: ‘*Yes I read to Fadi … Almost daily’.*

I noticed changes in Fadi’s choices of activities in the classroom during the project. I noticed he engaged much more in literacy-related activities than before implementing the project. He spent more time in the Library Corner, most of the time he listened to stories on an iPad and recommended them to friends, as shown:

> At 9:00, the first corner Fadi went to was the Library Corner. He picked up an iPad and he said loudly, *‘I want the sheep story. I like it’*, and chose the sheep story and listened to it. He read the same story again and followed the text with his eyes. Then he said, *‘I want the milk-seller story’,* and told his friend beside him, *‘I love this story’*. His friend asked, *‘Which one?’* He replied, *‘the milk seller’*. His friend chose the same story. Fadi left the corner at 9:27(Field notes, April 2014).

He also enjoyed reading stories by himself and sharing picture books with friends, as observed:

> Fadi took the books from the shelf beside the Family Corner. He laid down. Going through the pictures, two children joined him … they enjoyed a great discussion about the animals (Field notes, May 2014).

In addition, Fadi enjoyed playing with different activities in the story sacks and he enjoyed acting stories out, as observed:

> Fadi opened the Five Friends' story sack. He tried completing the puzzle, which was the story characters. He successfully did it. Then he opened the story sack and pretended to be the main character of the story, which is the lion. He covered his body with the net. He pretend that he wanted to escape from the big net, but he could not. The teacher joined him, holding the mouse on her hand, and helped him to escape (Field notes, May 2014).

He actively interacted with the teacher in reading aloud sessions, as observed:

> Fadi was fully engaged with the teacher in the reading aloud session. He happily followed the teacher's instructions, responded greatly to the teacher's questions with long answers (Field notes, April 2014).

Fadi's behaviour has changed with regard to reading and his eagerness to share stories, as his mother said:

> *Fadi was happy because he borrowed a story every day. He insisted on reading it. If I forgot to read it, he reminded me about it … He started to collect stories and care about them. Books easily caught his attention. If he brings a story from his kindergarten, it is necessary that I read it to him at bedtime. If he is so excited about the story, he asks me to read it immediately after coming back from kindergarten. He may ask me to read it again at bedtime… I noticed that he has started to pronounce letters better than before because his pronunciation was not clear, and as he gets better his teachers now also noticed this change.*

Towards the end of the project, I asked Fadi: 'What do you like doing?' He answered,

> *I love iPad … stories. I also love drawing, and playing with that* (pointing to the story sack). *I love my kindergarten, my friends, and my teachers.*

4.5 Roaa

Roaa is five years and three months old. She lives with her parents and an older sister. Her parents are both teachers; the family's average monthly income is £3000. The family is relatively middle-income family. The parents made little effort to support Roaa's reading before the project, as reported:

> *I read to Roaa once a month … Not from a book, from my imagination; or, I sometimes read Cinderella.*

However, after the project, Roaa's mother's reading has changed, as she said:

> *I nearly read every day now from books before bed time.*

In the three weeks of observations of Roaa before the project, overall, she engaged in various activities in the classroom including reading activities, as I observed:

> In the beginning, Roaa chose to work in the Art Corner, sewing. She left the corner at 9:30 to go to the Library Corner where she joined her friend; she sat on a chair in front of the small theatre for dolls ... She chose a small picture book and read it silently until the end. She chose another book, opened it and then closed it when she saw her friend playing. She went and joined her. She then moved to the Cogitative Corner then to the Discovery Corner until the end (Field notes, February 2014).

On another day, I observed that:

> At 9:00, Roaa chose to work in the Art Corner … At 9:20, she moved to the Discovery Corner to do balance weights … At 9:25, Roaa decided to go to the Family Corner to draw a butterfly. At 9:40, she went to the Library Corner and chose a picture book about occupations. She looked at the pictures in the book and read it. She then chose a story and asked the teacher to read it to her. The teacher apologized because she was very busy with other thing. As a result, Roaa moved to the Cogitative Corner at 9:50 to do the puzzle (Field notes, February 2014).

I asked Roaa, 'What do you like doing?' She answered:

I love the Art Corner. *I love butterflies. My grandma has many butterflies in her garden. I love drawing butterflies* (Field notes, February 2014).

During the project, I noticed Roaa participated much more in literacy-related activities than before the project. She spent more time in the Library Corner engaging in different reading activities. For example, Roaa enjoyed listening to the teacher reading aloud in the Library Corner, as shown:

> At 9:15, Roaa joined her friends in listening to the teacher reading aloud the story of the day. She sat beside the teacher and tried to read the words. She started reading the story aloud using both pictures and text … She read another story, then she told her friend '*I like these stories*' (Field notes, March 2014).

Roaa Also enjoyed reading stories on an iPad and discussed them with a friend, as observed:

> At 9:15, Roaa put the bunny doll on her lap and chose one doll story on an iPad until the end, then she chose another story. While listening, she was trying to bring the rabbit's ear closer to the earphone to listen to the story with her. Then she chose the alphabets story on an iPad. After that, she pointed her finger to the screen while asking her friend, '*What is this letter*?' Her friend answered, *'letter A'.* Roaa said, '*I love letter A'*…. Roaa hugged the bunny doll and said '*I love this bunny'* (Field notes, April 2014).

In addition, Roaa enjoyed playing with the activities that are in the story sacks, as observed:

> At 9:25, Roaa opened the Eid Gift story sack. She enjoyed coloring the pictures that from the story. She colored the girl that was printed on the gift-wrap. Roaa opened the information picture book; enjoyed looking at the pictures while three other friends joined her. Roaa said 'Look, there are a lot of pictures'. She turned the page and pointed with her finger to the picture saying, 'I love to take a shower'. The teacher joined and explained and asked questions and the children answered until 10:00, the end of the 'Free Play in the Educational Corners' time (Field notes, April 2014).

Roaa's mother reported her daughter's change in reading, and her eagerness to share stories:

> *She started to write and to love reading. At home, she tries to read everything written on the boxes of juice and cakes. In addition, she has started to join letters to each other. Her personality has changed; she becomes quieter than before as she seems to think more. She keeps asking about when is the time for reading a story. Sometimes, I have just returned from the school and want to get rest, and then she comes and asks me to tell her a story.*

Towards the end of the project, I asked Roaa, 'What do you like to do?' She answered, '*I love the Art Corner*, *and I love playing with my friend here* (moving to the Family Corner). *I love the Library Corner*. *I love the* Mosque Corner'.

4.6 Reetal

Reetal is four years and two months old. She lives with her parents and a younger sister. Her mother is a nurse who works in a hospital, her father is an interior designer. The family's average monthly income is £3000, which is considered middle-income family. The parents made little effort to support Reetal's reading before the project, as Reetal's mother said:

> *Once a week ... from my imagination. I usually look for any mistakes my daughter made, and then I tell her a story about another girl in order to adjust her bad behaviour.*

Before the project, I observed Reetal for three weeks. Overall, in all observations Reetal spent time in the Art Corner, and she was also interested in reading stories in the Library Corner. She reported that:

> *I love drawing very much. I like playing with my friends. I love reading stories.*

In addition, in one of the field notes:

> Reetal went to the Art Corner. She decorated the hand that was given to her. After that she went to the Family Corner to cut her friend's hair. She looked for two

minutes at the hairstyle pictures that were provided to a choose style. She moved to the Library Corner and picked a story. She went through the story and read it aloud from the pictures. Then she finished and said *'the end'*. Reetal went to the Cogitative Corner. She solved the puzzle (Field notes, February 2014).

After implementing the project, however, Reetal's mother's reading had changed, as when asked about frequency of reading she said, she read:

Daily, and when the teachers send books, I read them to her. I bought some stories that she chose by herself.

Reetal continued her passion to read from the picture books after implementing the project, as observed:

Reetal took the book and sat in the Library Corner. She was concentrating on reading the story by looking to the text and pictures, and she read it aloud. Her friend came to talk to her, but she continued reading until she finished the story (Field notes, May 2014).

Reetal was very attracted to listening to stories on an iPad. She read five stories on it with a high level of concentration. She enjoyed sharing the same story with her friend and discussing it:

Reetal listened happily to three stories. She was sitting comfortably on the sofa, concentrating on the events of the stories. Her facial expression changed depending on the story's events. She finished three stories, and then she looked at her friend beside her who was listening to a story on the iPad. She chose the same story her friend was listening to and read it until the end.

Sara: *I have seen the big ant and the small ant like you*.

Reetal: *Yes I like it! Let's repeat it.*

They started the story at the same time and listened to it again. While listening, Sara tried to speak to Reetal about the events of the story, but Reetal ignored her until the end of the story (Field notes, April 2014).

She actively interacted with the teacher during reading aloud sessions, as observed:

> Reetal was fully engaged with the teacher in the reading aloud session. She happily followed the teacher's instructions and responded frequently to the teacher's questions with appropriate answers (Field notes, May 2014).

Reetal enjoyed playing different activities in the story sacks and she enjoyed acting the stories out, as observed:

> Reetal chose the Green Caterpillar story sack. She opened the story and was looking at the pictures. She copied the characters' movements and read the story. After that she listened to her friend reading the story. She held the dolls and acted out the story events. She opened the other story sack and got the puzzle and started putting them its pieces in the right places. She took the pig story and read it until the end. She successfully solved the puzzle. Reetal happily wore the butterfly from the story sack (Field notes, May 2014).

In addition, Reetal enjoyed applying the story to her personal life. For example, one of the stories was about a child who did not prepare a gift to her parents for Eid celebration, and she came up with an idea to cover herself with the gift wrap and tell her parents I am your gift. Reetal did a similar thing to her parents, as reported by her mother when she saw the story sack:

> *Unbelievable* (she looked at the Eid Gift story sacks and the doll, with the gift wrap). *You know what …? Reetal did this, she covered her body with the gift wrap and came to me and her father saying I am your gift. I was wondering why she did that.*

There were changes in Reetal's reading engagement out of the classroom, her personality, and her motivation towards reading, as reported by her mother:

> *Reetal improved so much; she started reading any words presented in the street and saying the names of the letters. She has become a reading lover. Even when she is drawing, she has started writing some words. Her father and I always ask her about the words and the letters presented in the streets or the supermarket … Her personality has changed. I feel that she is getting older, stronger and more*

aware than before. Reading has impacted her greatly and positively ... She has started to care about reading much more than before. When she is drawing, she writes letters and keeps asking about anything that she does not understand. I feel that her mind is getting bigger. She is excited about things and eager to read. I made a special library for her containing more stories than before implementing the project.

4.7 Sahad

Sahad is four years and eight months old. She lives with her parents and two brothers. Her father is an accountant and her mother is a housewife, and the family's average monthly income is £1000. The family is considered a relatively low-income family.

Before the project, Sahad's parents did not support reading at home, as her mother said: '*No, they kept watching TV in their free time.'* However, after the parents' workshop, Sahad's mother started reading every day, as reported: '*Yes ... daily'*.

During my observations in all three weeks before the project, overall, Sahad was more interested in the Family Corner and the Art Corner. In the classroom, she regularly visited these corners. She did not visit the Library Corner, except one day under the teacher's request. She had been there for three minutes watching her friend and then she left. An example of one observation is as follows:

> At 9:00, Sahad chose to work in the Art Corner, doing a triangle. She left the corner at 9:08. Looking around, the teacher asked her to go to the Library Corner since it was not busy. Sahad went there and watched her friend for three minutes. Then she moved to the Writing Corner. She pasted images on a page. Then she moved to the Family Corner, playing with her friends until 10:00, the end of the 'Free Play in the Educational Corners' time (Field notes, March 2014).

I noticed changes in Sahad's choices of activities in the classroom. She engaged much more in literacy-related activities than before the project. In all the observation sessions she visited the Library Corner, reading from an iPad and books, as observed:

> At 9:30, Sahad went to the Library Corner, chose the story of the day, and read it through the text and the pictures from the beginning to the end. She highly

concentrated on reading, regardless of the noise in the classroom. She left the corner at 9:40 (Field notes, April 2014).

Sahad enjoyed listening to stories on an iPad, alone and with a friend.

> Sahad entered the Library Corner, picked up an iPad, placed the headphones on, and listened to the 'Sugar Grains' story until the end. Then she chose the 'Monkey and the Herd' story, and then chose the 'Haitham and the Three Thieves' story. She was concentrating on listening to all three stories on the iPad from the beginnings to the ends (Field notes, May 2014).

In addition, Sahad enjoyed playing different activities in the story sacks.

> At 9:00, Sahad opened the butterfly story sack. She wore the butterfly, picked up the small story, and started reading. The teacher sat beside Sahad and read it aloud to her. Then Sahad read the story again by herself. She acted out the story using the dolls for the story's characters with her friend …. Then she played the memory cards with her friend, then solved the puzzle. Sahad left to go to the Art Corner at 9:25 (Field notes, May 2014).

Sahad enjoyed holding the puppets while reading.

> Sahad held the cat puppet in her lap, opened the story, looked at the pictures, and read the story (Field notes, April 2014).

Sahad enjoyed interacting with the teachers in reading aloud.

> In the reading aloud session, Sahad interacted with the teachers by imitating the characters' movements, answering questions, predicting what will happen next (Field notes, April 2014).

Sahad enjoyed interacting with the teachers in reading aloud, as her mother said:

> *Sahad is so happy. All the time she is following me saying: 'Mum, please read me a story, repeat it to me', even her brother has become like her. They like asking about the characters, so I repeat to them what the rabbit and the dove did. That*

day, the story was about the dove, which had many animal characters. I came to explain to them what each character does in life; we take the eggs from the chicken and the fox eats the chicken. She memorized the job of each character… She becomes more aware because of the stories. Even when watching TV, she keeps asking about the stories and the things that she does not know. She has started to ask more. Before, she would watch TV without saying any words; she did not try to understand the events. Now, she wants to understand the characters; for example, what the sheep produces, something is like that. In addition, I play for her stories on the iPad, stories about children, our prophets, the pillars of Islam or how to pray or perform ablutions. She comes to look for stories of those subjects … Sometimes she imagines and invents stories from her imagination, sitting in the corner alone and talking. I do not know what she is saying. She brings her dolls and says this is the daughter, this is the mother, this is the father. She plays with her brother with their dolls and invents stories and games.

I asked Sahad at the end of the project, 'What do you like doing?' She said, *'I like reading, drawing. I love iPad. And I love playing with my friends.'*

4.8 Baseem

Baseem is three years and seven months old. He lives with his parents and two siblings. His father works as a secretary in an office and his mother is a housewife, and the family's average monthly income is £1500, which makes them a low-income family.

His parents did not support reading at home before the project, as his mother stated:

From time to time. Rarely, when he refuses to sleep, he comes to me and asks me to read a story to him. I say: 'Ok, I will read a story then you sleep immediately'. After finishing my story, he asks for a second one. Honestly, it is rare to read to him a story.

However, after the workshop, Baseem's parents support his reading as his mother said about shared reading with her son: *'Almost four times a week'.* Having previously reported that she only read with her son 'rarely', Baseem's mother went on to state that she was reading 'almost four times a week' following the intervention.

Baseem enjoyed reading in the first week of the observation. He spent more than fifty minutes in the Library Corner. He went through all the books and organised them on the shelves. However, with no changes in the stories in the Library Corner, the time Baseem spent in the Library Corner decreased in the second week, and at the third week Baseem did not go to the Library Corner.

> At 9:00, Baseem chose to work in the Library Corner, chose the alphabetic book, went through it until the end, took another book and read it. He looked at the books available on the shelves, held them, and organized them. He chose a book about occupations. He enjoyed reading the book, pointing to the pictures saying *'the boy went to the doctor'* until the end. Then he chose another story and said, *'this is the mother, this is the boy'*, then turned the page and pointed to the picture saying, *'then the boy went to this'* until the end. He happily returned the story to the shelves, and organized the books again saying, *'goodbye, goodbye'* to the books. Then he started counting the books from one to seven. Then he chose another story and started reading a few pages, then returned it. He looked at his friend reading and joined him. He left the corner at 10:50, the end of the 'Free Play in the Educational Corners' time (Field notes, March 2014).

In the second week I observed:

> Baseem entered the Library Corner at 9:25 … He left at 9:33(Field notes, March 2014).

In the third week I observed:

> Baseem did not visit the Library Corner he went to ... (Field notes, March 2014).

I asked Baseem, 'What do you like doing?' *'Art, play there'* (pointing to the Family Corner). *'I love puzzles'.*

I noticed that Baseem came to enjoy reading, as I had observed him doing in the first week. His enjoyment of reading was consistent throughout the project.

> Baseem entered the Library Corner, picked up an iPad, placed the headphones on and listened to the 'The Letters Ship' story until the end. While he was listening,

> he was saying the letters loudly. Then he chose to listen to the same story in the English language. The chose to listen to 'The Little Tiny Boy' until the end. He said to his friend beside him, '*look at this'*, and continued concentrating on listening to the story from the beginning to the end (Field notes, April 2014).

Baseem enjoyed playing different activities in the story sacks.

> Baseem opened the butterfly story sack. He wore the butterfly, chose the big story and read it, took the small white board and drew a caterpillar (Field notes, May 2014).

Baseem enjoyed interacting with the teachers in reading aloud.

> In the reading aloud session, Baseem happily interacted with the teachers. He imitated the characters' movements, and answered the teachers' questions (Field notes, May 2014).

With regard to change in reading habits at home, Baseem became interested in all texts around him and eager to read stories:

> *He has come to read more. In addition, I noticed something new: when he finds anything written, he calls his sister and asks her to read it to him because she knows how to read. He sits beside her and says: 'Read to me, read to me'. She gets annoyed by his repeated requests, and he gets upset and complains of his sister by saying: 'Mother, she does not want to read it to me'. He wants her to read to him even what is written in the streets or presented on the TV screen.*

At the end of the project I asked him, 'what do you like doing?' He answered: *'I like the Art Corner, Library Corner, iPad, these stories'* (pointing to the story sacks). *'And there'* (pointing to the Family Corner).

4.9 Wafaa

Wafaa is three years and five months old. She lives with her parents and two siblings. Her father is a businessman and her mother is a teacher, and the family's average monthly income is £3200 which makes them a middle-income family.

Wafaa's parents did not support reading at home before the project. Her mother said: '*No, I did not read to her'*.

Wafaa is a very shy and quite girl and speaks quietly, almost whispering. She rarely talks to people around her. Before the project, she never went to the Library Corner; most of the time she visited the Art Corner and the Family Corner.

> At 9:00, Wafaa went to the Family Corner and played with her friends. At 9:34, she moved to the Art Corner. Then at 9:47 she went to the Cogitative Corner to complete the part pictures (Field notes, March 2014).

After implementing the project, Wafaa started going to the Library Corner more often, sometimes to reading books, as I observed:

> Library Corner: 9:00 with her friends playing with dolls; 9:10, chose the story of the day and started reading it by looking at the pictures.

Wafaa was more interested in listening to stories on an iPad than doing other activities. In all the observation sessions, she went to the Library Corner to listen to stories on an iPad.

> Wafaa entered the Library Corner, picked up the iPad, and placed the headphones on. She was looking for a new story on the iPad. She opened two stories to find out whether she had read them or not. The teacher asked her if she needed help. She replied that she wanted the new story on the iPad. The teacher helped her, and she happily listened to the story until the end. (Field notes, May 2014)

Wafaa was very quiet in the classroom, but in the reading aloud session she interacted with the teachers in the session, as I observed:

> In the reading aloud session, Wafaa happily interacted with the teachers. She imitated the characters' movements and predicted some events (Field notes, April 2014).

Wafaa enjoyed playing different activities in the story sacks, and interacted well with the teachers when a story was read aloud, as I observed:

> Wafaa opened the story sack. She ordered the story events using the pictures that were given. She read the big story. The teacher sat beside Wafaa and read the story aloud to Wafaa. Wafaa was happy holding the story character and interacted well with the teacher by answering questions, predicting events, and imitating movements until the end of the story. Then, Wafaa took the doll and started sticking gift wrap on the doll as in the story. Her friend joined her (Field notes, April 2014).

Wafaa enjoyed reading stories outside the classroom. As a teacher, Huda, reported:

> *In the morning, as I was walking through the corridor, I saw the children in the playing area waiting for the bell. Some children were playing, some were siting. I was surprised when I saw Wafaa getting a book out of her bag and reading it. This surprised me because I have not seen any child doing this before.*

Before the project Wafaa did not like her kindergarten, but after implementing the project she loved the changes, especially bringing stories home, as Wafaa's mother said:

> *Before, Wafaa didn't want to go to the kindergarten, but when you came to the kindergarten, my daughter became excited about reading stories. She became very excited to go to the kindergarten. If she tells me I do not want to go today, I just say don't you want to get a story? So, she goes to the kindergarten. Honestly, she goes to the kindergarten only because of the stories.*

Wafaa's mother did not attend the parents' workshop, but she was in the WhatsApp group. She read to Wafaa once a week if she had time, as she reported:

> *Once a week, or depending on my free time, because I do not have a maid who helps me at home in doing chores. Thus, I do not have time to read her a story. When bedtime comes, the only thing that I want is that she gets to sleep quickly.*

At the end of the project, Wafaa reported that she loves stories, iPads, and the story sacks, besides other corners. '*I like Art Corner, stories, iPad, these stories'* (pointing to the story sacks).

4.10 Sufana

Sufana is three years and eight months old. She lives with her parents and an older brother. Her mother is a student, her father is a businessman, and the family's average monthly income is £3000, which can be considered a middle-income family. The parents supported Sufana's reading before the project, as Sufana's mother said:

> *I read to Sufana almost three times a week… Children's stories that include pictures. Their level was higher than my daughter's age.*

Even though Sufana's mother read to her child before the project, after attending the parent's workshop, she was clearly seen to benefit from it, because she changed the quality and quantity of the reading she did with Sufana. She reported the quality of the stories as follows:

> *We benefited from it, especially the way of reading aloud. I was reading the story to my kids but not like this way. This way is more exciting than before… I read to her four times a week from the stories she brought home. We get excited more.*

Before the project, I observed Sufana for three weeks. She was interested in reading stories in the Library Corner by herself or with a friend. As I observed:

> At 9:00 Sufana visited the Library Corner, chose a story, went through it until the middle, and then returned it to the shelves. At 9:10 she moved to the Cogitative Corner to solve the puzzle. She did it and asked the teacher to tick that she'd done it on her sheet. At 9:30 the teacher asked Sufana to go to the Library Corner to read a story to her friend. She chose a story and started reading it to her friend. But he said, 'I want to read.' He read, and Sufana followed him until he had finished. Then Sufana held the story saying, 'Now I am reading to you.' Her friend ignored her and lifted the corner. She got upset, went quickly to throw the book, and then closed it and returned it to the shelves. At 9:48 she went to the Art Corner (Field notes, March 2014).

After the project was conducted, in all the observation sessions I found that Sufana had visited the Library Corner. As I observed:

> Sufana took the book and sat in the Library Corner. She listened to her friend reading. Then she chose a story and read it aloud to the bunny puppet. She read by looking at the pictures and pointing to the text with her finger (Field notes, April 2014).

Sufana was also attracted to the iPad and listening to stories on it. She concentrated on reading stories on it. In addition, she enjoyed sharing the same story with her friend and discussing it.

> Sufana listened happily to a story on the iPad. Then she looked at her friend beside her who was listening to a story on the iPad. She asked her friend to listen to the same story that she was listening to. Her friend chose the same story, and they enjoyed listening to it together (Field notes, April 2014).

She interacted actively with the teacher, reading aloud the sessions, as I observed:

> Sufana was fully engaged with the teacher and reading aloud. She happily followed the teacher by imitating the movement and answering the teacher's questions (Field notes, April 2014).

Sufana enjoyed playing many activities in the story sacks, as I observed:

> Sufana chose The Eid Gift story sack. She looked at the two pictures and was trying to find the differences, and she did it successfully. Then she read the big story. She got the puzzle and started putting them in the right places. She successfully did it twice. She took the pictures of the story events, and with her friend, she put the pictures in the right order. She coloured in the picture of the gift-wrap that covered the story character. She held the doll of the story and stuck the gift-wrap (Field notes, May 2014).

There were changes in Sufana's motivation towards reading, as reported by her mother:

> *She knows how to read by pointing to the print and pictures. In addition, she gets excited about having books. She says to me: 'I want to read a story today, Maha's story or any story.' She is so excited.*

Towards the end of the project, I asked Sufana, 'What do you like doing?' She answered (pointing to the story sack): 'I love to play there with stories and dolls. I love the iPad. I love to watch stories. I love stories, and every day I see it. I love drawing there (pointing to the Art Corner).'

4.11 Fares

Fares is three years and three months old. He lives with his parents and four siblings, and he is the youngest. His father works in another city and comes home at the weekends and holidays. His mother works as a secretary. The family's average monthly income is £1,500, which makes the family relatively low-income.

Fares' parents supported his reading before the project, as his mother reported:

> *I did read but not much... Once in two week... from a story that I already knew from my head.*

In the three weeks of observing Fares before the project, he took part, overall, in different activities except reading. For example:

> In the beginning, Fares chose to visit the Family Corner to do his haircut. He left the corner at 9:20 to go to the Art Corner to paint his hand's shape. Then at 9:40, he moved to the Mosque Corner, and at 9:55, he went back to the Family Corner (Field notes, February 2014).

During the project, I noticed that Fares went to the Library Corner often and participated much more in literacy-related activities. In the Library Corner, Fares was more interested in listening to stories on the iPad, as shown in my field notes:

> Fares entered the Library Corner at 9:17. He took the iPad and concentrated on reading stories on the iPad. He listened to, "My friend, the Hours," "The Little Tiny Boy," and then to "Planet War." He listened to all three stories on the iPad from the beginning to the end. At 9:40 he moved to the Family Corner (Field notes, May 2014).

In addition, Fares enjoyed playing with the story sack activities with his friends, as I observed:

> At 9:40, Fares opened a story sack. He played the remembering game with his friend under the teacher's supervision. Then he said the differences between the two pictures to the teacher. He read the big story with his friend. Then he drew on the small white board until the end of the 'Free Play in the Educational Corners' time (Field notes, April 2014).

There were changes in Fares' reading and his eagerness to share stories. He bought stories and applied them to his personal life.

4.12 Conclusion

These vignettes showed that the intervention led to a number of positive outcomes for individual children, which included an increase in the frequency of shared reading at home, in the use of the Library Corner in the classroom, and in the interest towards, and enjoyment of books, demonstrated by them.

In the next chapter, I move on to consider each of the five different aspects of the intervention project, and outline the responses of children, teachers and parents to them.

CHAPTER 5 : FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I discuss the changes that occurred in the children's engagement in reading as evidenced by the classroom observations before and after the intervention, as well as the interviews conducted with teachers, parents and the children. The changes in the children's reading engagement occurred after the following intervention activities; (1) adding iPads to the classroom environment, (2) adding story sacks to the classroom environment, (3) adding high quality picture books to the classroom environment, (4) applying interactive read aloud strategies in the classroom and (5) establishing a school and home partnership with regard to reading activities. Wigfield, Guthrie, and Kathleen (2004, p. 50) define reading engagement 'as the interplay of motivation, conceptual knowledge, strategies, and social interaction during literacy activities'. A number of these factors were involved in the study.

Although the intervention was designed around the above-mentioned five elements, these elements do overlap as they often worked at the same time to encourage children to read for pleasure. As a researcher, I cannot definitely say that the changes in children's motivation and engagement are related to one specific element. However, for the purposes of this study, I present the children's responses in relation to each individual element according to my understanding and interpretation, as well as the findings of related literature. First, I discuss the impact of using iPads to promote reading.

5.1.1 Impact of Using iPads on Promoting Reading

After adding three iPads to the Library Corner, the observations showed that the children grew quickly in confidence when using iPads from the early weeks of the project. They quickly learnt how to use the iPads effectively. At the beginning, they struggled with some aspects of the technology; for example, they asked the teacher for help in placing headphones on their ears. However, they were able to manage features of the apps by themselves, such as how to choose a story, how to start it, how to pause it and how to replay it.

Even though the iPads were given to the children for the first time in the classroom, they were confident in using them. In addition to knowing how to choose and navigate a story, they could change the language between Arabic and English. The following observation describes a typical example of this:

> Sahad opened the iPad and tried to put the headphones on, but she struggled and asked the teacher for help. The teacher helped her place the headphones on her ears. Then she opened the iPad, looked at the available stories, chose one and opened it. She chose Arabic, listened to the voice, looked at the screen, pressed the pause button, looked at the screen carefully and then pressed the forward button. She completed the story, and then she chose to listen to the same story in English. (Field notes, April 2014)

This indicates that children have a natural confidence with technology as found by Jones and Brown (2011, p. 5) who concluded that "children quickly become comfortable with e-books and welcomed the technology" .The fact that the children did not find the iPads difficult to use appeared to be due to the availability of tablets at home; all the mothers reported in the interviews that an iPad was available for the child to use at home. This seems to be consistent with other research such as that by Merchant (2015b, p. 11) who suggested that children's confidence when using the iPad in an educational setting could be explained by "home iPad ownership".

One of the teachers expressed her amazement at how quickly the children got used to working with the iPads:

> *My kids are three years old; they are so small, I wonder how they learnt to use iPads and choose a story in the first week! It was so fast. I like that the children do not want anything except the story on the iPads. It was marvellous.*

Before the project was implemented, the Library Corner was not very active. From the field notes taken before the project began, it was noticeable that only a few children visited the Library Corner, and sometimes no one used it during a whole day. During and after the project, the number of children who visited the Library Corner increased, especially when the teachers equipped it with iPads; this shows that the iPads had an impact on the children's engagement with reading, as the children enjoyed accessing e-books stories using iPads. A number of themes emerged from analysing the data, which

relate to an increase in: intrinsic motivation, curiosity, involvement, concentration, independent reading and collaborative reading. I will discuss each of these themes in the next sections.

5.1.1.1 Intrinsic Motivation

A child can be intrinsically motivated because the topic or activities are interesting (Seppälä, 2016). Intrinsic motivation arises from the pleasure that children derive when they engage in activities or topics based on personal interest (Ryan & Deci, 2000b). The term 'intrinsic motivation' in reading has come to be used to refer to the desire to read because it is a satisfying or rewarding activity in itself (Schiefele et al., 2012).

The children seemed to be highly motivated to read stories on the iPads, as was evident from observations of them in the Library Corner after the intervention; this is described in the following field notes:

> The Library Corner was very busy. Fadi came to the library looking for an available iPad to use but he could not find one. He asked his friend, who was reading on an iPad, to let him know when he finished using it, and he agreed. Fadi went to the Cognititive Corner and played with a puzzle. While he was playing, his friend came to him and gave him the iPad to use. He held the iPad happily, sat on the sofa and concentrated on reading stories from beginning to end. He read four different stories. (Field notes, May 2014)

This was typical of other children, and in general the children used the Library Corner extensively, which suggests that they were excited to read stories on the iPads and enjoyed reading them. Fadi seemed to be very motivated to read stories on an iPad, and even though the Library Corner was busy, he found a way to get an iPad by asking his friend to give one to him after he finished with it. Other children identified different strategies to access an iPad, such as keeping their eyes on the Library Corner to see if any child had left, leaving an iPad available. If that happened, they quickly finished what they were doing and went to the Library Corner to read on an iPad. These observation notes describe an example of this strategy:

> The Library Corner was very busy. Retaal went to the Library Corner, but there were already three children there. She went to the Building Corner. While she was playing, she kept looking at the Library Corner, and when Sara left it, Retaal went straight there and read stories on an iPad. She read three stories and re-read the last one. (Field notes, April 2014)

When other children could not find an available place in the Library Corner for a whole day, they waited until the next day to read on an iPad. This is clear from the following conversation with Roaa at the end of playtime;

> Researcher: *What corners do you like?*
>
> Roaa: *Arts Corner and Library Corner*
>
> Researcher: *You said you like Library Corner. Why didn't you visit it today?*
>
> Roaa: *Because it was full. Tomorrow I will go there.*

The children were enthusiastic about reading stories on the iPads. This suggests that iPads enhanced their intrinsic motivation to read for pleasure. However as there were only three iPads and a large number of children in the class, there were few chances for the children to get a turn to read on them. The children used many strategies to get an opportunity to use the iPads to read stories. In addition, the number of children who visited the Library Corner increased rapidly after the intervention in contrast with the low number of children who visited the Library Corner before the project, as Teacher Hind reported in her interview:

> *Honestly, before the project, we felt that it was difficult for kids to enter the Library Corner themselves. They did not present themselves there as much; I had to tell them to go there. I used to say, "We have to go to the library, we have to read." I had to repeat my words to convince them to enter and read. I had to stimulate their interest. After the project, they went into the corner frequently themselves, and there was no need to force them to enter it. They started reading on the iPads, looking at the books, and looking at the puppets. They became more interested than before and the place became overcrowded because more children*

wanted to read. Therefore, sometimes I had to ask some children to leave the corner because of the limited places.

In the above quote, one can see a huge difference in the children's motivation towards reading in the Library Corner before and after the intervention, according to the teacher. Before the project, the teacher admitted that she found it difficult to motivate children to use the Library Corner and so they were given specific instructions to do so, whereas after the project, children were very keen to visit the Library Corner themselves, which suggests that the children's motivation for reading for pleasure had increased. The teacher's role was to manage the corner and avoid it becoming overcrowded. Although I added many elements to the Library Corner, the teachers emphasized the availability of the iPads as increasing children's engagement in reading. This teacher reported how excited the children were to read on iPads. She said:

Children were so excited to read the stories on the iPads that at one point they were fighting each other for them. The iPads certainly are a beautiful addition to the library.

The data show that the iPads seemed to attract the children into the library area; however, when they got there they seemed to be engaging with all kinds of texts, including books. This suggests that the iPads seemed to encourage the children to read lots of texts on both screen and paper.

The data showed that these children were keen to use iPads for reading and were highly motivated to read stories on them. This motivation may stem from a number of factors. First of all, the e-book affordances that enable children to interact with books are attractive to children (Kucirkova, 2013). For example, on an iPad, children can open their chosen story, watch the characters' movements, listen to the story as it is read to them, stop it, play it again and change the language. In addition, reading stories on an iPad makes the story more appealing because of the animation and the change in tone of the characters' voices, depending on story events. However other studies argue that using iPads in the classroom may distract learners, for example, by using the Internet for non-related activities (Hoffman, 2013; Kinash, Brand, & Mathew, 2012). However, in this study, the apps that were used in the intervention do not require Internet connection, so the children could not be distracted from reading by other non-related activities.

5.1.1.2 Curiosity

Curiosity is another aspect of intrinsic reading motivation that I explored in this study. Curiosity is defined, in relation to reading, as being when a person wants to read about something due to personal interest (Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997). In this study I found that the children were curious to read new stories on the iPads. One of the teachers reported on the children's motivation to read a new story on an iPad, as follows:

> *When we added the iPads to the library, the children got excited to check and read a new story on an iPad every day.*

The teachers reported that the children were very keen to read "Story of the Day" on the iPads, which suggests that children's curiosity had increased. Every day, teachers added a new story and kept the previous ones; they allowed the children the freedom to select one, which is seen as further motivation for reading (Jones & Brown, 2011). This is supported by a typical comment from a child when using the iPad, such as Wafaa's remark:

> *Where is the new story on the iPad? I want to read it.*

This indicates that the children were more curious about the new stories and so were motivated to read them. This was due to the wide selection of story titles and the variety of reading choices installed on the iPads.

Furthermore, observations of children reading on the iPads showed that the children's curiosity encouraged them to read stories several times, for example:

> Fadi read a story from beginning to end. Then, he repeated the same story. He paused it at some points and looked carefully at the pictures, until he had finished the story, and then he repeated the same story for a third time. When he finished, I asked him:
>
> Researcher: *Why did you read the same story three times?*
>
> Fadi: *Because I like it. Hamza found the diamond and got a nice car.*

Researcher: *Why did you stop and look at the pictures?*

Fadi: *I wanted to see the hole that the ball fell into.* (Field notes, April 2014)

We can see from the above conversation that the child reported reading a story repeatedly because he liked it and was curious to see interesting events. Reading stories on the iPads in 3D seemed to help the children to engage more with events in the stories, which was inspired by their curiosity. Whereas curiosity leads children to read a story, reading stories creates enjoyment, and enjoyment leads children to repeat a story (Clark & Rumbold, 2006). This is consistent with recent research conducted by Østensen, Gjevjon, Øderud, and Moen (2017), who suggest that curiosity leads older adults in residential long-term care to use iPads in their daily lives, whereas this study suggests that curiosity leads young children to use iPads to read e-books.

5.1.1.3 Involvement

Involvement has been seen as a further aspect of intrinsic motivation. It refers to the pleasure that a person gets when s/he engages in interesting topics or activities (Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997). For example, all the children mentioned reading on the iPads as the most enjoyable activity when they were asked about what they liked in the Library Corner. In addition, based on the classroom observation, the children's level of involvement in reading stories on the iPads in the classroom was clear, as the following extract from field note shows:

> Fares chose a story on the iPad with a big smile and read it until the end. He chose a second, a third and a fourth story and read each one to the end. While he was reading, his facial expression changed according to the story events. In some parts, he smiled; in others, he looked focused; and at the end of each story, he smiled happily. He was reading stories on the iPad for 25 minutes. When he finished, he told his friend beside him that he loved reading stories on the iPad, (Field notes, May 2014)

In many of the observations, children chose several stories on the iPads and read them from beginning to end. That children desired to continue reading the stories and for a long time suggests their level of enjoyment was high. I could see enjoyment on their

faces while they were reading stories on the iPads: at times, they looked like they were losing themselves in the events of the story. Furthermore, the children spent almost half of the 'Free Play in the Educational Corners' time reading stories on the iPads (25 minutes out of 60 minutes). This could be seen as a relatively long time compared to the time that children spent in other corners. As Jones and Brown (2011, p5) suggest, "The level and amount of time that a child spends engaged in literacy activities is an accurate predictor of his or her motivation to read."

A possible explanation for children's involvement in reading stories on iPads is the availability of a wide range of stories with different topics, enabling children to choose to read a preferred topic. This result is consistent with other results (Alhinty, 2014; Flewitt, Messer, & Kucirkova, 2014) that lead to similar conclusions. Furthermore, children's enjoyment may lead them to use their imagination when reading stories, as Roaa did:

> Roaa opened the iPad, chose a story and then closed her eyes while listening to the story from beginning to end. When asked why she closed her eyes while reading the story, she said (with a smile) that she wanted to imagine things in her head. (Field notes, April 2014)

Although the story that Roaa was reading on the iPad had pictures, Roaa chose to only listen to the recorded voice. The audio-feature of the iPads enabled her to just listen and use her imagination, which has been shown to be important in children's development.

5.1.1.4 Increasing Children's Concentration when Reading

It was noticeable that the children were able to concentrate more when reading stories on the iPads than when they read picture books. Before the project, when children read stories from picture books in the Library Corner, they easily lost their concentration, stopped reading and moved on to other activities with friends, as shown in my field notes:

> Sahad had just started reading a story in a picture book in the Library Corner. Sara and Marwa were playing in the Family Corner and Sahad was looking at her

> friends. She closed the book, returned it to the shelf, and joined her friends to play with them in the Family Corner. (Field notes, April 2014)

From the above observation, it could be seen that external factors distracted the children when reading picture books. This distraction negatively impacted on the children's reading activity. Distractions in the classroom arise from the fact that, in all Saudi kindergartens, all corners (active and quiet) are built into one classroom, including the Library Corner. While teachers make an effort to place the Library Corner in the quietest corner of the classroom, children were still distracted by other activities because of the limited space in the classroom. On the other hand, reading stories on the iPad offered the children a multi-sensory experience which captured all their senses. It involved moving texts, images, motions as well as the narrator feature. In this project, the children showed more concentration while reading stories on the iPads in their chosen convenient places in the classroom:

> Baseem held the iPad and sat comfortably on the sofa in the Family Corner. He had the headphones on his ears and started reading stories. He was concentrating on listening to the reader as well as following the story events. His close friends were playing enthusiastically in the Building Corner but he did not notice them. He looked like he was alone in the classroom, (Field notes, March 2014).

When children read stories on the iPads, the interactivity captured their attention, even though their friends were playing interesting games in front of them. This is because, when they were using the iPads, the children were more willing to listen to the narrator, follow a readable text and watch story events and the characters' motion.

The teachers also reported on the increase of the level of concentration among children who used iPads for reading stories. For example, one teacher said:

> *The iPads were really effective as well. The children were concentrating on reading and listening to the story.*

5.1.1.5 Independent Reading

The data from this project suggest that the narrator feature on iPads was beneficial for helping children to work independently. This was especially helpful for children aged

between three and five who would otherwise be unable to read a whole text on their own. From what I observed, these children did often ask the teachers to read stories to them, but time was clearly a constraint. Before the project, for example, children were disappointed that no one read stories to them in the Library Corner, as the following observation indicates:

> Fadi was reading a story in the Library Corner. He asked his teacher to read the story to him. The teacher apologised to him because she had to be in the Art Corner to help children there. Fadi was disappointed, looked sadly at some pages, and returned the story to the shelf. (Field notes, February 2014)

Although the children wanted to have stories read to them, this was not always possible during 'Free Play in the Educational Corners' time, as only two teachers were looking after 24 children and both had many duties. In Fadi's case, the teacher's inability to read the story affected him badly, as he stopped reading. In other examples, when the teachers agreed to read stories to the children, they did not agree to re-read them, as requested by the children:

> Retaal was holding a book in the Library Corner. She asked her teacher to read it to her. The teacher did read it to her. Other children joined them and listened to the teacher. Retaal was very happy. When the teacher finished the story, Retaal asked her to repeat it, but the teacher apologised, saying that she had to be in the Writing Corner. (Field notes, February 2014)

However, when children themselves read stories on the iPads, they were able to read them repeatedly, as they were no longer dependent on the teacher:

> Fadi was reading a story on the iPad. He listened happily to the story, using the headphones. He said that he would read the story again and he repeated the same story. After that, he chose a second and a third story, and read them from beginning to end. (Field notes, April)

This suggests that the iPads gave children the opportunity to read and re-read stories as often as they liked, without the teacher's involvement. This result is consistent with the findings of other studies that suggest that iPads support independent reading because they enable children to follow highlighted text at the same time as hearing the words

spoken (Beschorner & Hutchison, 2012; Flewitt et al., 2014; Hutchison, Beschorner, & Schmidt-Crawford, 2012; Lynch & Redpath, 2012).

While interaction with adults in reading is important, there are times when we want to encourage independent reading for the children. Similarly as this data has shown, there are also occasions in the classroom when children want to read but the adult is unable to read with the child. This data shows that the iPads allowed for these children to read independently.

5.1.1.6 Collaborative Reading

Children enjoyed reading stories together on the iPads with their peers, as shown in the observation of children in the Library Corner.

> Yazeed held the iPad with his friends, Mohammed and Ahmed. They sat on the sofa, took the headphones off and listened to the voice on speaker. They started to listen happily to the story, and then they listened to four more. There were three iPads available for use in the Library Corner, but they preferred to share. (Field notes, May 2014)

Even though there were three iPads in the Library Corner, in this instance, three children used one to listen to stories together. Their enjoyment had a positive impact on their reading, as they listened to four stories. This result is consistent with other results that suggest children enjoy sharing iPads with their peers (Alhinty, 2014; Beschorner & Hutchison, 2012; Hutchison et al., 2012)

Furthermore, children enjoyed reading the same stories on the iPads as their peers. At times, when two children had an iPad each, they were observed listening to the same story on separate iPads, as shown from my field notes:

> Reetal listened happily to three stories. She was sitting comfortably on the sofa, concentrating on the events in the stories. Her facial expression changed, depending on the story's events. She finished three stories, and then she looked at her friend beside her who was listening to a story on another iPad. She chose the same story that her friend was listening to, and read it to the end. Sara said, "I have seen the big ant and the small ant like you." Reetal replied, "Yes I like it!

Let's repeat it." They started the same story at the same time and listened to it again. While listening, Sara tried to speak to Reetal about events in the story, but Reetal ignored her until the end of the story. Then they had the following conversation:

Reetal: *The small ant does not listen to the big ant.*

Sara: *Yes, after that, they help the small ant. I like this story.*

Reetal: *I like it too. I want to see this story* (pointing with her finger to 'The Letter' story). They listen to it together.

Reetal: *I finished first.*

Sara: (Pointing with her finger to a new story). *This story, I like it, I want to see it again.*

Reetal: *Ok.* They started enthusiastically reading the third story together and carried on until the end. (Field notes, May 2014)

In the above observation, the children began reading their chosen stories on the iPads independently but, after that, they discovered that they were reading the same stories using separate iPads. They enjoyed reading the same stories at the same time, discussing them and recommending stories to each other. Reading the same stories with friends on the iPads prompted discussion and conversations. It affected both the amount of reading as well the kind of reading they did. This suggests that reading collaboratively on the iPads increased the children's motivation and enjoyment. This result is consistent with those of Sandvik, Smørdal, and Østerud (2012), who found that when kindergarten children worked with iPads they collaborated, discussed and expressed their feelings to their friends. As Guthrie et al. (2007, p. 241) argue, "collaborative activities in reading instruction have also been reported to be enjoyable and may increase intrinsic motivation".

Although technologies including iPads have been generally criticised for isolating children from their surroundings, iPads in this intervention project seemed to enhance interaction and discussions among the children.

In this section, I have provided evidence that the introduction of iPads boosted pleasure for reading in this kindergarten, as they promoted intrinsic motivation, enhanced curiosity, improved concentration on reading and provided opportunities for collaboration.

5.1.2 Impact of Adding Story Sacks on Promoting Reading

Teachers were very excited about the story sack idea in the training session because they could quickly see the benefits of their use. As explained by Teacher Ebteehal, when I asked her to comment specifically on the story sacks training session:

> *It was nice, and its application as well was wonderful. The process of choosing stories and related activities and arranging them after the training needs a lot of thought; we have to look for books here [my special Library] and there [the kindergarten Library] to decide if a story is good or not. The training session was fantastic; it gave us new skills in this aspect.*

Teacher Samah identified the benefits of the workshop on story sacks and how learning was applied in the classroom, as she said:

> *The story sack workshop was useful, especially when we applied it, because it gave us brand new ideas that the children enjoyed.*

Also in this respect, Teacher Hind reported that:

> *The idea of the story sacks was wonderful. It has never been applied before, and its activities are creative. When you presented different pictures of the story sacks and their contents in English, we understood the idea of these sacks. That enabled us to create our story sacks in Arabic.*

After the intervention, a concern arose that story sacks need a special corner, as suggested by Teacher Sana:

> *I think the story sacks are great, useful and full of wonderful ideas, but their presentation needs to be changed. I think they need to be in a special place. Also, to avoid distraction, we may let some but not all children participate in story sack*

activities. Maybe we can distribute the sacks activities among the different corners.

Teacher Sana addressed two related points: many children being engaged in story sack activities at the same time caused some distractions in the middle of the classroom and the children were very excited when playing with the story sacks as a new attractive thing that captured their attention. In addition, teachers also reported that the design of the classrooms had a negative effect on children's use of story sacks. In each classroom, there were eight Educational Corners and a specific number of children (usually three or four), were allowed to participate in each one. However, the classrooms were small and there were no available places for story sacks. The only available place was the Circle Mat, so the story sacks were hung beside the Family Corner. The children tended to choose the story sacks, take them to the Circle Mat and display all the activities on the floor. Sometimes up to eight children were engaged in playing with the story sacks at the same time, as I observed:

> A child opened the story sack, chose a character costume and wore it. Another child took the puzzles from the story sack and started solving them. Then another child came and took the cards out and played with them with his friend. Another child was reading the information book, two children joined him, reading the same book; they read it and discussed it. (Field notes, April 2014)

Teacher Lolo suggested adding an Entertainment Corner when I asked her what she would do as a result of the project:

> *I will add an Entertainment Corner for the story sacks; it will be an independent corner as a gift to the children or as a motivation for them, somewhere new to play with the story sacks.*

The previous extracts show that the teachers were interested in the idea of the story sacks, as they had not come across them before. However, there was a concern that, with small classrooms, story sacks might cause distractions. The teachers made some suggestions to overcome this in future implementations.

5.1.2.1 Impact of Using Story Sacks on Children's Engagement with Reading

From analysing the data, four themes emerged: enjoyment, curiosity, comprehension and re-telling a story. These are now explained.

5.1.2.1.1 Enjoyment

Enjoyment is one of the obvious themes that emerged from the data. When children were asked what their favourite stories were, they all responded very positively, mentioning a name of a specific story in the story sacks or pointing to it. Also, the children enjoyed playing with the various activities in it, as I observed:

> Daniah happily wore the butterfly costume from the story sack and walked around the classroom. Then, she looked at the things inside the sack. She enjoyed playing the memory card game with her friend, under the teacher's supervision. She held the book and started reading it by looking at the pictures and the text. (Field notes, April 2014)

In addition, it appeared that the children enjoyed reading stories from the story sacks because they could use multiple senses while reading and doing related activities, as shown in my field notes (and see Figure 5-1)

> Wafaa opened the story sack. She ordered the story events using the pictures provided. She read the large book. The teacher sat beside Wafaa and read the story aloud to her. Wafaa was happy holding the story character and interacted well with the teacher by answering questions, predicting events and imitating movements until the end of the story. Wafaa then took the puppet and started sticking gift-wrap on the doll, just like in the story. Her friend joined her. (Field notes, April 2014)

Holding the story character while reading the story added to the child's enjoyment; it brings the story characters to life, as sharing story sacks with children offers a multi-sensory approach to the reading process and raises the level of enjoyment (Kelly, 2015).

Figure 5-1: Wafaa Holding the Story Character

The children enjoyed playing with the story sacks and some of them re-enacted the story events in their own lives. For example, one of the stories was about a child who did not prepare a gift for her parents for the Eid celebration, and so she came up with the idea of covering herself in a gift-wrap and telling her parents "I am your gift." Reetal did a similar thing for her parents, as reported by her mother when she saw the story sack:

> *Unbelievable! (she had seen the* 'Eid Gift' *story sack and the puppet with the gift-wrap). You know what? Reetal did this. She covered her body with gift-wrap and came to me and her father saying, "I am your gift." I was wondering why she did that.*

From this example, two main points can be seen. First, the child's enjoyment of the story encouraged her to copy events from it in her own life; in other words, she was seen to imitate a character she liked. The second point is that her enjoyment gave her the ability and understanding to re-enact the story and apply it to her own life, which is discussed in the section 5.1.2.1.3 on comprehension.

5.1.2.1.2 Curiosity

The story sacks fostered the children's curiosity in different ways corresponding to the characteristics of Day's (1982) Zone of Curiosity; these are: exploration, excitement and interest (Day, 1982). In this regard, I observed in the following:

> Baseem opened the "Squirrels' Kite" story sack. He took out the squirrel puppets and looked happily at them. Then he took the rabbit and the mouse puppets out of the sack. He took the kite out and walked with it while holding the string. Baseem then opened up the mat and placed the puppets on it. He opened the story, looked at the pictures and asked the teacher to read it to him. After the teacher had finished reading, he opened the information book about the squirrel and read it. Then, the teacher invited him to play the memory game containing the story characters' photos. Baseem happily played the game by opening two cards to see if the photos matched. Then it was the teacher's turn to choose two cards. Baseem successfully collected six cards. After that he opened the story and read it, before playing with the squirrel puppet and the kite on the mat. Everything he did seemed very relaxed and natural. (Field notes, April 2014)

This observation suggests that the story sack promoted a relaxed environment, which attracted the children and enabled them to discover what the story sack had to offer. The children were curious to explore the story sack activities due to the choice of different, attractive activities contained in them. Baseem's curiosity led him to explore the different activities provided, and this was driven by his interest in, and enjoyment of, the contents of the sack. In addition, as the children engaged in the story sack activities, their level of curiosity increased. For example, in the above field notes, when the child discovered the story character puppets, his interest in reading the story, and finding out what happened to the puppets, increased. Then, reading the story appeared to make him curious to know more about those animals, because he started to read the information book.

The data indicated that the children were attracted to the story sacks because they could choose what they wanted to do, according to their personal preferences, rather than simply responding to a teacher's instructions, as seen in this field notes before the intervention:

> Fares was not involved in any activities at 'Free Play in the Educational Corners' time; the teacher asked him to go to the Library Corner to read (it was empty). He went to the Library Corner and looked at the books on the shelves; he chose a book, looked at the front cover and returned it. Then he left the Library Corner, went to the Building Corner and started to build. (Field notes, February 2014)

The teacher's request to the child to go to the Library Corner did not motivate him to read at all. Instead, he followed the teacher's instructions but did not read since he was not intrinsically motivated to do so. Thus, he left the corner to do something else. In contrast, with the story sacks, the children seemed to be intrinsically motivated to read the stories and the information books provided, and to discover the story characters and various activities and materials included in the story sacks.

5.1.2.1.3 Comprehension

The example of Reetal in the previous not only demonstrated her enjoyment of the reading experience, but also her comprehension as she followed the story events in the same order as the book when re-enacting the story to her parents. This suggests that story sacks could increase children's comprehension of stories, see Figure 5-2 Reetal successfully managed to complete the 'Ordering the Story Cycle' by her-self. This point underlines the significance of children making links between stories and experiences in their own lives (Barron & Powell, 2003).

Figure 5-2: Retaal Completed the Activity.

The scaffolding of teachers to engage children with story sacks played an essential role in enhancing children's comprehension, as I observed:

> Daniah opened the 'Eid Gift' story sack, picked up the story pictures and tried to put them in the right order. There were eight pictures. The teacher sat beside Daniah and asked her, "Did you read the story?" Daniah said, "No." Then, the teacher suggested that she read the story first and then try the ordering activity again. Daniah started reading the story aloud, looking at the pictures, after which she started ordering the story events. She managed to do the first three events correctly, but the fourth one was not in the right order. The teacher asked her what happened in the story after the character had a shower. Daniah answered, "She combed her hair." The teacher replied, "Excellent". Daniah finished ordering the story events, with some help from the teacher. Then she said, "I will do it by myself now." She mixed up the pictures and started again, and this time she managed to order all the events correctly. (Field notes, April 2014)

It is clear that the teacher provided scaffolding to the child to solve the puzzle because, at the beginning, the child could not order the story events correctly without the teacher's assistance. She could not work out how to do it on her own, but with the teacher's scaffolding she had a much clearer idea of what to do.

Also, peers have a significant role in providing scaffolding to other children to enhance comprehension, as seen during my observation of Roaa:

> A child was trying to put story events in the right order. He did step four incorrectly. Roaa joined her friend, looked at the order and said, "No, this happened first." She chose another picture and placed it in position four. Roaa stayed with her friend until they successfully finished ordering. (Field notes, May 2014)

In this example, the child got stuck at a point where he could not move to the next step since he had made a mistake in the order of the pictures that he was not aware of. However, with his friend's help (Roaa), he realised his mistake, fixed it and continued ordering. This shows that the peer assisted the child, which may have promoted the child's comprehension of the story. This shows that scaffolding does not come only from teachers but peers also can provide scaffolding as well (Lai & Law, 2006).

Moreover, the story sack activities enhanced the children's understanding of stories, as I observed (See Figure 5-3):

> Daniah was playing with “The Caterpillar Khaddorah” story sack. She took out the caterpillar, the butterfly and the ladybug puppets to play with them, without reading the story. Then, she started reading the story, concentrating on the text and the pictures. She opened up the story map, which shows the order of the story events, started re-telling the story using the story map and looking at the events order. (Field notes, April 2014)

A week later, I observed Daniah playing with the same story sack, as follows:

> Daniah managed to re-tell “The Caterpillar Khaddorah” story, using the puppets, without any help, (Field notes, May 2014)

At the beginning, Daniah just started playing with the puppets. After looking at the pictures of the story events on the map, she understood the story better and then managed to tell the story, with the story map, without any help. This suggests that the activities in the story sacks acted as instructional materials to promote and scaffold the children’s understanding, which may enable them to do things on their own that they previously needed help with. This result is consistent with the study of McNeill, Lizotte, Krajcik, and Marx (2006), who found that instructional materials assisted the comprehension of seventh grade students.

Figure 5-3: Daniah was Re-Telling the Story Using the Story Map.

5.1.2.1.4 Re-telling Stories

The data also shows that story sacks encouraged the children to re-tell stories in three different ways: orally, physically and in using puppets. I now present how each of them was used below.

First, I observed on many occasions that story sacks promoted children's re-telling of a story orally. For example, in my field notes I recorded the following:

> After reading the story, Hani completed ordering "The Eid Gift" story puzzle. He looked at it happily, and then started re-telling the story events successfully by looking at the pictures and pointing to them. (Field notes, April 2014)

It appeared that his excitement at solving the puzzle successfully, motivated him to re-tell the story.

Second, children were encouraged to physically act out stories, as the following episode indicates:

> The teacher read "The Lion and the Mouse" story aloud with the children. After that, Fadi opened "The Lion and the Mouse" story sack and pretended to be the main character of the story, which is the lion. He covered his body with a big net and pretended to escape from it, but he could not do so because he was trapped. The teacher joined him, holding the mouse in her hand, and helped him escape from the net. This followed what happened in the story. (Field notes, April 2014)

Fadi's enjoyment of listening to the teacher reading aloud, along with the availability of props in the story sack, may have motivated him to act out the story.

Third, children were motivated to re-tell the story using the puppets in the story sacks, as I observed:

> Reetal was playing with "The Caterpillar Khadoorah" story sack. She read the story, looked at the map and held the caterpillar puppet in one hand and the ladybug puppet in the other. She then acted out the story using the puppets and the story map, which shows the order of story events. (Field notes, May 2014)

Reetal's enjoyment of reading stories along with the availability of the puppets may have motivated her to re-tell the story using the puppets.

In the previous three cases, the story sacks seemed to encourage the children to re-tell stories either orally or with puppets, or to physically act them out. This suggests that the children's enjoyment from playing with the story sacks, along with the story sack props and puppets, may have encouraged them to re-tell the stories.

5.1.3 Impact of Adding High Quality Books on Promoting Reading

From my observations, before implementing the project, I noticed that the teachers did not change the books in the Library Corner for three weeks (field notes, February 2014). In addition, in the interview, when I asked Teacher Samah how she organised the Library Corner, she reported as each educational unit :

> *Usually, for each unit (that last 3 or 4 weeks), we change the stories in the Library Corner. Some of the stories are around the unit topic, some are not.*

Furthermore, the kindergarten had a good number of books, but they tended to be quite old and out-of-date. As I reported earlier, I went to a book fair that has a large children's section in order to buy new books for the project. Nobody from the kindergarten appeared to visit fairs like this, and as a consequence they did not appear to know what was new in the field of children's literature. Then, when I brought the new children's books to the kindergarten, the teachers were surprised with the quality and design of the books, and they started to borrow them from my special library. As Teacher Hind said:

> *The books you brought are great. I like their appearance, illustrations and their aims.*

Moreover, I observed that every time a child asked a teacher to read a story to them in the Library Corner, she stated that she was busy with other duties. For example, I observed the following:

> Fadi was in the Library Corner holding a book. He asked the teacher to read it to him. She said, "Sorry, I am now busy in the Art Corner." (Field notes, February 2014)

The teacher's reluctance to read the story to the child before the project may have been due to fact that the books themselves were old and out of date, which may have decreased the teachers' motivation to read to the children. Teacher Hind reported how much she liked the books I brought for the project and how much they encouraged her to read to children:

> *Actually, I became more interested in reading stories I liked ... and I like the presentation of the stories you brought because they are easy to read and have interesting topics.*

All the teachers showed how much they liked the changes implemented through the project. Especially, they liked the new children's books I added to the Library Corner. They also liked the fact that I placed some books across various classroom settings as well as setting up a "Story of the Day" which was displayed on a shelf. In addition I introduced a borrowing system. All these changes had an impact on the children's engagement with reading, as explained below.

Having a range of high quality books increased the children's motivation and engagement with reading indicated in the following example:

> Roaa chose to go to the Library Corner straightaway, at the beginning of 'Free Play in the Educational Corners' time. She picked up the story of the day from the shelf and read it to the end. She looked around the shelves and took another book and read it aloud by looking at the text and pictures in the book. She correctly explained the story, in her own words, and said, "I like this story." (Field notes, March 2014)

Roaa's choice to go to the Library Corner shows that she was excited to read some stories. Her excitement appeared to have come from having a wide selection of different and attractive children's books, which enabled her to choose books that she liked to read. In addition, Roaa might have been attracted to the design of books with high

quality graphics, more pictures and less printed text, which enabled children to understand a story by looking at the pictures.

Displaying the "Story of the Day" on a specific shelf labelled "Story of the Day" was an effective way to promote the children's curiosity. Every day, at the end of Circle Time, the teacher introduced the story of the day to the children, and they were then curious to read it independently, as I observed:

> Daniah was looking for the story of the day on its specific shelf, but the shelf was empty. She asked the teacher, "Where is the story of the day?" The teacher looked at the library shelf and said, "It was on the shelf, I think one of the children read it and did not put it back in its place." She found the book and gave it to Daniah. Daniah happily read the story. (Field notes, April 2014)

Having books placed across various settings seemed to motivate the children to read. After the workshop, the teachers placed shelves with books in different places in the classroom, as I observed:

> Fares was in the middle of the classroom at 'Free Play in the Educational Corners' time. He picked up a book from the shelf near Family Corner, sat in the chair there and enjoyed reading the book. (Field notes, May 2014)

Displaying books in different places in the classroom seemed to encourage the children to read anywhere in the classroom, and the children felt comfortable sitting anywhere. Before the intervention, books were only displayed in the Library Corner and the children were only allowed to read them there. However, with more freedom to read anywhere in the classroom, the children seemed to be more motivated to read.

In addition, having books placed across various areas in the setting may have contributed to reinforcing children's existing knowledge and extending it, as indicated by the following examples:

> Shad was in the Discovery Corner experimenting with mixing two colours to obtain a new one. Then, she took an information book about colours from the shelf next to the Discovery Corner; she went through the pictures until she finished. (Field notes, April 2014)

Another example came from two children who used a book as a source to play a game about mixing colours:

> Fadi and Hani were sitting beside the Discovery Corner reading some information books about mixing colours. Fadi pointed to two colours, yellow and blue, hid the resulting colour with his hand and said to Hani, “When we add blue to yellow what will happen?” Hani replied, “Green.” Fadi said, “Yes. What about red and yellow together?” Hani replied “Orange.” Fadi said, “Right.” These two colours had not formed part of the experiment. (Field notes, May 2014).

Reading an informational book about experimenting with mixing colours seemed to reinforce the children’s knowledge about mixing colours. This book provided more visual information about mixing colours than presented in the classroom experiment, which led to enhancing the child’s acquisition of knowledge in a fun way.

This suggests that these changes to the children’s classroom environment encouraged the children to not only access books on topics that interested them, but engage with these books. .

Moreover, having books spread across the classroom was seen to increased cooperative reading, as I observed:

> Sufana choes a large storybook from the shelf near the Art Corner. She sat on the circle mat in the middle of the classroom, placed the book on the floor and read the story while pointing to the characters. Another child came and sat beside her, looked at the book and listened to Sufana reading. Then, they had a conversation about the story and pointing to a picture. Sufana said, “This is a jungle,” and her friend replied, “A big jungle… .” (Field notes, March 2014)

The Library Corner was located at the edge of the classroom, but if a child was reading in the middle of the classroom, the other children tended to notice this straightaway. This in itself may have been a motivating factor in encouraging the children to read and indeed read cooperatively.

Finally, having a borrowing system for books was very successful in encouraging children to take books home, which will be discussed in more details in Section 5.3.

5.1.4 Impact of Adding Puppets on the Promoting of Reading

The teachers added two different kinds of puppets to the Library Corner: main story characters and domestic animals. Holding a puppet while reading increased the children's enjoyment, as shown in Figure 5-4, as I observed the following:

> At 9:15, Roaa put the bunny puppet on her lap, chose "Doll Story" on an iPad and read it to the end; then she chose another story. While reading, she was trying to bring the bunny's ear closer to the earphone, to make it listened to the story with her. Then she chose the "Alphabet Story" and while she was reading it she hugged the puppet and said, "I love this bunny." (Field notes, April 2014)

Figure 5-4 : Roaa Holding a Puppet

Placing the bunny on the children's lap during reading may provide them with a sense of companionship, which may satisfy children's emotional needs.

Children were motivated to read a story if they had a puppet of the main character of the story, as I observed (see Figure 5-5):

> Yazed went to the Library Corner and placed a Barney puppet on his lap; then he chose the "Barney" story. He read the story from the beginning to the end. (Field notes, April 2014)

The data suggested that adding the story's main character to the Library Corner may have made the child feel more connected to the story by bringing life to it, which may have increased motivation for reading the story.

The addition of puppets appeared to increase the children's engagement with stories on many levels; if a puppet was a main character in a story, the children seemed to enjoy that story more, hugging the puppet and reading simultaneously. Cuddling a puppet during reading appeared to give these children encouragement and an emotional satisfaction even though when it was not the main character of the story.

Figure 5-5 : Yazeed with Barney Puppet

5.2 Reading Aloud Strategies

Previous studies showed that teachers' enthusiasm and enjoyment reflect positively on children's enjoyment (Frenzel, Goetz, Lüdtke, Pekrun, & Sutton, 2009). Theoretically, I draw from a Vygotskian viewpoint (1978), suggesting that "perhaps the most significant influence on the nature of a story-book reading event is the adult participant" (William & Miriam, 2013, p. 323). Therefore, in order to address the effects of that change on children's engagement in reading, it is essential to address the impact of the intervention on teachers' performance in reading aloud first.

5.2.1 Impact of the Intervention on Teachers' Performance in Reading Aloud

After the workshop about using an interactive reading aloud approach, the teachers were not convinced by the new approach and were strongly opposed to using it with the children. The teachers insisted on continuing with their ordinary way of reading aloud and refused to adopt my proposed one. They gave me reasons for their refusal, claiming that the teachers and children were used to their way without interactions. Teacher Ebteehl expressed her difficulties with the proposed change:

> *I have been using our way of reading aloud for twenty years. The children in our class are used to it. I think it is very difficult to change to another way since we are strict with children about being quiet during reading aloud sessions*.

Also, teachers were adamant that the new approach would not work with Saudi children. For example, teacher Hind expressed her opinion of using the interactive read aloud style by stating:

> *With this new approach, we will lose our control over the children, the children's discussions will never stop, and they might go off the topic. As a result, we will never finish the story.*

After long discussions with the teachers, they agreed to give the new approach a try, though with little enthusiasm. Surprisingly, given their initial reluctance, after applying the new approach of reading aloud, their enthusiasm started to increase for using it in the sessions; this will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

After participating in the reading aloud workshop and then using interactive read alouds for a few weeks, the teachers reported that they were very surprised by its effectiveness in children's interactions. Teacher Lolo expressed her amazement, saying:

> *We all thought the new approach would not work at all with the children, but actually it works very well, and I like the children's interaction with the story during reading aloud.*

The change in teachers' perceptions about using the interactive read aloud approach suggests that the actual effect of applying a new approach is sometimes completely different from imagining how it might work.

Three themes emerged from the teachers' performance in reading aloud: teachers' motivation to read, their enjoyment, and their self-efficacy.

5.2.1.1 Teachers' Motivation to Read Stories

After the reading aloud workshop, the teachers changed the frequency of their reading aloud sessions; they started to read stories nearly every day, instead of just once or twice a week. This change was due to the teachers' own decisions, as Teacher Huda said:

> *The workshop had a great impact on my reading aloud. Every day we have 30 minutes for the children to eat in the classroom. The children in my class usually finished eating within 15 minutes, so I decided to use the rest of the time and take 5 minutes from 'Free Play in the Educational Corners' time to read a story aloud, which we all enjoyed.*

And Teacher Samah commented:

> *Now, I read a story aloud to the children nearly every day.*

This change suggests that the teachers' motivation to read aloud has increased. This increase was due to two main factors: teachers' enjoyment of reading aloud and positive changes to teachers' self-efficacy in reading aloud.

5.2.1.1.1 Teachers' Enjoyment

The teachers seemed to be more enthusiastic about reading aloud to the children than before, and they began to enjoy using the interactive read aloud approach, which encourages children's interactions during the activity. The teachers' enjoyment of the reading aloud sessions is clearly noticeable in my field notes observations of teachers' reading aloud before and after the workshop. For example, Teacher Lolo read a story aloud to the class before the workshop:

> First, she asked them to say the story rules — no talking and no moving until the story ends — and then she started reading aloud, using pictures in a drawing book. A number of children were concentrating on her, whereas there were three children sitting in the circle not following the teacher and distracting other children. The second teacher asked them to be quiet. They did as they were told, but after a few minutes they stopped listening to the teacher. When the teacher finished the story, she asked questions related to the story. Only six children out of 24 were fully engaged in answering the questions. (Field notes, February 2014)

In contrast, Teacher Lolo read a story aloud to the class during the project:

> The teacher introduced the story that was going to read, the story title and the author, and then she started reading the story aloud. During her reading, she asked the children a number of questions about comprehension, predictions and the meanings of words. She tried to connect the story events to the children's lives. The teacher was fully engaged with the children; both her body language and facial expressions demonstrated that, and the children were fully engaged with her as well. (Field notes, April 2014)

The teachers expressed their enjoyment at using the new approach when they were asked how the read aloud workshop had changed their way of reading aloud to the children. For example, Teacher Samah stated that:

> *Honestly, before using the new approach, I used not to enjoy reading aloud to children at all. I usually asked the other teacher to do it when it is possible. I had to do it as it is part of the curriculum. The reason that I did not like it as it requires to memorise story events, and to do a lot of preparation before the reading session, but after the project I really like reading aloud to the children … Applying the new approach of reading aloud, and the children's interaction, has provided me with a significant encouragement to read aloud more frequently.*

From the above extract, a huge difference can be seen in the teachers' enjoyment of performing reading aloud—from disliking doing it to enjoying it. Teacher Samah addressed the reasons behind her lack of encouragement in reading aloud. The main one could have been the teachers' lack of self-efficacy in reading. This may have been due to the lack of training sessions for teachers on reading aloud strategies, since all teachers

reported in the interview before the project that there were no available training sessions of this type. The second reason behind it may have been due to the difficulties in preparing for the sessions, including memorising all the story events and reading aloud to the children with just pictures and no text.

However, Teacher Samah reported that her feelings and behaviour regarding reading aloud had changed positively after the workshop, and after implementing the approach with the children. I also observed Teacher Samah reading aloud with small groups (three children) in the Library Corner, while she was using the new approach effectively, interacting confidently with the children and obviously enjoying the experience; this is consistent with the suggestion that less experienced teachers should practice reading aloud with a small group first to develop their skills and confidence (May & Bingham, 2015).

The teachers' enjoyment of reading aloud increased for several reasons. One was the increase in the children's interactions and engagement with the teachers from the beginning to the end of stories. This was evidenced from the comments of Teacher Lolo:

> *I felt that the children became more excited about the new approach, so I decided to read aloud every day instead of twice a week.*

The above extract suggests that the children's enjoyment, and interactions with the teachers in the reading aloud sessions, positively impacted on the teachers' enjoyment when reading aloud. Firstly, the traditional way of reading stories was unidirectional, from teacher to children only, whereas the new approach involved two-way interaction. Secondly, from the beginning of the project, the teachers liked the quality of the stories that I provided to them, as Teacher Huda said:

> *I like the kinds of stories that you brought to us ... I like the way of presenting the events and the vocabulary; the size of the books was appropriate for reading aloud, and I like the themes of the stories.*

Before the project, teachers used to select stories to read aloud based on the topics provided in the curriculum, as they showed me the schedules for all the lessons that they receive from the head teacher every month. This meant that they did not have the option

to choose the story to read to their classes, due to the curriculum restrictions. This goes against the view in the literature that claims that teachers perform read aloud sessions better with books they enjoy (Harvey 2013; Kosa 2008). These restrictions caused another problem: the teachers did not pay attention to the books and stories available to the children, or even tried to find new stories prior to the project. In other words, they had very limited knowledge of children's literature, as confirmed in the interview with them before the beginning of the project. All the teachers responded in a similar way to Teacher Lolo to the following questions:

Researcher: How do you choose books for reading aloud?

Teacher: according to the curriculum. The stories titles should be compatible with the topics of educational units in the curriculum and some stories are already included in the curriculum.

Researcher: How do you find out about new books and stories to use in your classroom?

Teacher: We use what is available in the kindergarten.

Researcher: Are there particular children's authors that you think are suitable for this age group?

Teacher: I do not know the names but I can show you some in the library.

As stated previously, at the beginning of the project, I prepared a special library, which included a variety of children's books that I bought from the annual book fair in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, as a part of preparation for this project. At the book fair there was a large special area dedicated to children's literature called the children's wing. Even though the annual book fair is a very important source of Arabic children's literature from around the Arabic world, none of the kindergarten's teachers attended, as I discovered later. When I asked the teachers to visit my special library they were very surprised by the quality and quantity of children's books available which they have not seen before. All the teachers in interviews before the project admitted that they knew little or nothing about children's literature; they only knew the books that the kindergarten provided for

them each month. I visited the kindergarten's library to have a look at the available books. Surprisingly, only a few of the books that I had bought were available.

However, during the intervention, teachers had the choice to select stories based on high quality criteria and children's interests and needs, resulting in a high impact on the teachers' enjoyment of reading aloud. The teachers were very excited and enjoyed the new reading approach to such an extent that they would never go back to the old approach, as Teacher Ebteehal said:

> *Now I cannot imagine myself reading stories as I used to do, I do not expect to do it like that again at all. I do not think I could use the ordinary way anymore because the new approach has had a positive impact on the children and me, and I feel that it is more beneficial for the children.*

In addition, the teachers reported the need to apply the new approach across the whole kindergarten, since at that point it had been applied to just three classes out of ten, as Teacher Ebteehal said:

> *I want all our teachers in the kindergarten to see it and apply it in their classes. I will use it for my children all the time until I retire. This change, of course, is because of Allah, and then because of you.*

The Director of the Kindergarten Department in the City of Makkah was invited to attend one of the reading aloud sessions with a senior teacher of the kindergarten classes. After the session, the Director asked me to give them written permission to present and apply this approach in all kindergartens in the City of Makkah, as from her perspective it was a successful example of a reading aloud strategy. However, I informed her that I would rather not until I finished my research, in order to obtain clear assessment of the approach's strengths and weaknesses in the Saudi context.

5.2.1.1.2 Teachers' Self-Efficacy in Reading a Story

Teacher self-efficacy can be defined as 'a teacher's belief in his or her capabilities to positively affect students' learning and success, even among those students who may be difficult or unmotivated' (Pedota, 2015, p. 54). Teachers' self-efficacy in reading aloud

changed throughout the project. Before the project, the teachers suffered from a lack of self-efficacy in their reading aloud performance. As Teacher Samah said:

> *Honestly, before the project, I did not like reading aloud to children at all. I thought I was no good at it … Now, applying the new approach of reading aloud and the children's interaction encourage me to read aloud to them more frequently.*

Teacher Lolo felt the same, as she said in an interview after the project:

> *In our kindergarten, all the teachers usually attended my reading aloud sessions as an example, and they said I was perfect. However, "inside myself" I was not fully satisfied with my performance. I felt there was something missing, but now I am completely satisfied with my performance using the new approach.*

This change may be due to attending the workshop on reading aloud, since previous studies showed that training teachers has a positive impact on their self-efficacy (Ciyer, Nagasawa, Swadener, & Patet, 2010; Loreman, Sharma, & Forlin, 2013; Posnanski, 2002). Also, applying the new approaches and giving the teachers feedback to assist them to improve their performance and boost their confidence was effective, as has been developed previously (Khurshid, Qasmi, & Ashraf, 2012). Teachers' self-efficacy may in turn have a positive impact on children's performance (Butt, Khan, & Jehan, 2012), motivation and achievement (Mojavezi & Tamiz, 2012) and perceived learning outcomes (Achurraa & Villardónb, 2013). In addition, a high level of children's interaction and communication with the teacher may affect teachers' self-efficacy (Pedota, 2015). These are consistent with my findings in training teachers to adopt a new approach for reading aloud.

5.2.2 Impact of Interactive Read Alouds on Children's Engagement

As mentioned earlier in Section 3.3.2.5.2 the teachers changed some of their practices in the reading aloud sessions:

- The teachers applied the reading aloud approaches based on strategies introduced in the workshop.

- The teachers changed the frequency of reading aloud sessions each week to almost daily, instead of twice a week.

- The teachers changed the quality of the stories chosen to read aloud based on these criteria: children's interests, topic of the unit or a particular theme, the high quality books.

As a result of the teachers' changes, the children's engagement in reading-related activity appeared to improve. The main change in the children was their interactions with the teachers during the reading aloud sessions, which in turn positively affected their engagement, as discussed in the next section.

5.2.2.1 Children's Interactions While Reading Aloud

Before the intervention the teachers read the story aloud to the children without any interaction with them. However, after the reading aloud strategy workshop, the teachers changed their way of reading from 'reading *to* children' to 'reading *with* children', which involved holding conversations with children, and included factors such as asking questions, stopping, responding, listening, commenting and explaining (Weitzman & Greenberg, 2010). As a result, there was a significant change in the children's interaction during reading aloud sessions, from only passively listening to the teacher to fully interacting and engaging with the teacher. This was evidenced by Teacher Ebteehal, when she said:

> *When we used our ordinary way of reading aloud, the children were very still and quiet; the interaction happened after finishing the story. In contrast, in the new approach, the interactions are clear from the beginning and while reading the story aloud; you can see the interactions clearly happening in the class. Even though the children in my class are just three years old, the level of their interaction was wonderful.*

From the above extract, big differences can be seen in the children's response during the reading aloud sessions between the two approaches, since in the traditional approach, teachers encouraged the children to remain quiet during sessions by reminding them of the story rules, which meant they had to keep silent during the reading session. In

contrast, when using the interactive read aloud approach, the teachers encouraged the children to interact with them during the session. This approach seemed to work very effectively. As a result of using the interactive read aloud approach, there was a significant increase in the children's interactions and engagement in reading aloud sessions.

During the sessions, teachers interacted with the children and encouraged them to interact by using the following techniques: reading the information provided on the front cover aloud; asking the children different questions; connecting the story events back to the children's lives and encouraging the children to imitate the characters' movements. This was evidenced in my field notes when I attended and observed many reading aloud sessions during the intervention. All the teachers used similar techniques, and I will describe one typical reading aloud session below.

> Teacher Hind sat in the chair holding a large picture storybook, and the children sat in front of her. Each child sat comfortably, looking at the teacher. The teacher started the session by introducing the book and reading the title, author's name, illustrator and publisher. She asked the children questions about the characters that appeared on the cover page, including where they lived and what they thought the characters were doing. The children responded, and then the teacher said, "Let us see what happened to the lion in the forest when he was walking." She started reading aloud, pointing to the text with her finger. At each page, the teacher asked some questions, which included word meanings, prediction, inference, description and comparison, and the children actively responded. For example, she asked what the word 'forest' meant and the children gave the answer. The teacher asked the children to work in pairs and tell each other a personal story about seeing a lion. The children were very happy sharing their stories, and the teacher walked round listening to them telling their stories. The teacher then continued with the story, asking the children to imitate the story characters' movements: "Let's all jump like the lion did when he jumped out of the hole." The teacher and the children jumped together, and then the teacher continued reading the story, and the children concentrated effectively on her reading.

> Before turning the page, the teacher asked the children, “What do you think will happen next?” She acknowledged all the answers and said, “Let’s see what happened next.” She turned the page and continued reading. The teacher did similar things throughout the story. The teacher made an effort to control the children’s interactions during the session, saying, “Well done, you have answered my questions only when I asked you to do so,” and, “If you want to answer, put your hand up please.” All the children were engaged with the teacher, and when the teacher finished reading aloud, she asked the children to pat themselves on the back and say to themselves, “Good job.” The children did that happily, with big smiles on their faces. (Field notes, May 2014)

As indicated in the above observation, it is clear that this teacher was now using different techniques to encourage the children’s interaction during reading aloud sessions. Each technique had a positive impact on the children. I will discuss each technique and its impact in the next section.

The first new technique was that teachers began to read aloud all the information provided on the front cover (the author’s name, illustrator, story title and publisher), as suggested by Booth (1998), which drew the children’s attention to this information. Reading aloud the information on the front cover is supposed to be an essential practice that all teachers should do in their reading aloud practice (who says – reference?) but, unfortunately, kindergarten teachers in Saudi never do. I was already aware of this from my supervision of trainee student teachers for three years prior to beginning my PhD. In the intervention, the teachers did not read the information on the cover page in the six observation sessions I attended before the project. This may be because there were no well-known authors writing children’s Arabic picture books, so the teachers ignored this kind of information; in addition it was apparent from their interviews that teachers generally had little knowledge of children’s authors. This highlights a major issue in the Saudi community, which is that there is a lack of awareness amongst kindergarten teachers about children’s authors.

However, after the reading aloud workshop, when the teachers started reading aloud the information on a story’s front cover, they directed the children’s attention towards it. Therefore, this motivated the children’s curiosity to know this kind of information. This

was evidenced by Roaa's mother when I asked her if she noticed any change in Roaa's reading engagement with her:

> *I started reading a story to Roaa from the first page as usual, but Roaa asked me to go back to the front cover and read the information there. She pointed with her finger to the text and asked me, "What is this, Mum?" She even pointed at the author's name with her finger, for me to read it. I was surprised that she cared about it because we never read this before.*

As a result of raising the children's curiosity, they started looking for these details. The information on the front cover of picture books helps children understand the fact that there are different authors, illustrators and publishers. This opens the children's minds to different book genres and can help them determine the type of story they like or are interested in (Spivey, 2016). This affects their way of choosing and borrowing a story for home reading. This was evidenced by Teacher Hind, when I asked her if she noticed any changes in the children's engagement in reading in the classroom:

> *At book borrowing time, the children surprised me. When I asked them to choose the stories they would like to take home, to read with their mothers, they looked carefully at each story and went to the back covers of the books to look at the series of stories. They asked me if I had a particular story by pointing to a picture on the back cover. I was surprised, because when we started borrowing system, the children used to quickly pick up any of the available stories, but a few weeks later, they started to know how to choose a story they liked. I realised that from their mothers' comments on the borrowing sheet.*

It is clear that these children had now developed strategies acquired to choose books that they liked and match it with their preferences. This may have resulted from attending reading aloud sessions with the teachers and, more specifically, from the teachers reading the information on the front cover of a story aloud. As well as encouraging the children to think about factors such as authorship, this may have also opened the children's minds to factors such as different series of stories from the same publisher. The teacher mentioned that when a child likes a specific story, s/he knows that s/he might like others in the series too. So, the child looks for them, and if s/he cannot find them among the books provided, s/he asks the teacher. By raising the children's awareness of authors and genre, they can become familiar with the type of

story they are interested in, which motivates them to read for pleasure. However, Clark and Rumbold (2006, p. 13) highlighted some gaps in research related to children's reading preferences in the Western communities:

> There still is no definitive understanding of what children prefer to read and when these preferences develop. Research findings are also likely to present only a temporal snapshot of children's and young people's reading preferences.

Nevertheless, the current research results suggest that reading aloud the information on the cover page helped children to focus on their preferences in reading at an early age. However, there is clearly a need for more research in this area.

Teachers were also introduced to the technique of pointing to the text while reading aloud. This technique had not been used by these teachers before, resulted in a positive impact on children reading. This technique called *print referencing* refers to "techniques educators used to increase emergent readers' knowledge about and interest in print by highlighting the forms, functions, and features of print during read alouds" (Zucker, Ward, & Justice, 2009, p. 62). My findings suggest that this strategy has positive effects on children's literacy acquisition in two areas: alphabetical knowledge and print knowledge.

I will start with the impact of pointing to the text during reading aloud sessions on children's alphabetical knowledge. Bell and Westberg (2009, p. 18) defined alphabetical knowledge as 'the recognition of letters as distinct symbols that have specific names and specific sounds associated with them'. In this study, the findings provide some evidence to suggest that the children's alphabetical knowledge have developed. For example, when Fares' mother was asked if she had noticed any changes in Fares's literacy related activity at home, she stated:

> *One day when I was reading a story to Fares, I found a difficult word that I thought he might not understand, so I immediately replaced it with an easier word. Then, Fares stopped me, saying, "Mum, read this word; don't change it please." I was surprised that he noticed the change I had made … I was surprised because I felt he was able to read the word by himself.*

This example shows Fares' ability to distinguish the change of word that his mother made, which indicates that Fares' ability to identify print words had developed. Since Fares did not attend any out-of-school literacy activities, this strategy of pointing to the text while reading seemed to have promoted his print awareness and word recognition.

A further point to notes is the impact of pointing to the text during reading aloud sessions on children's print awareness. Print awareness means that the child understands what the print looks like and that there are meanings behind the text (Strickland & Schickedanz, 2004). From the data collected in this study, there is evidence that children's print awareness was enhanced, perhaps due to the teacher using the technique of pointing to the text when reading it aloud. The following two observations (before and during the project) from the field notes illustrate this point:

> Fares opened 'The Five Friends' picture book in the Library Corner with his friend and started reading the story aloud from the pictures. He did not look at the text, concentrating on obtaining the meaning from the pictures. (Field notes, February 2014)

> Fares was sitting in the Library Corner holding the cat puppet beside him; he opened the 'Small Duckling' picture book and started reading aloud to the puppet. He looked at both the text and the pictures and tried hard to decode the words. He pointed to the text with his finger while he was reading. Also, he did read some basic words correctly; he was following the right direction of the text, from right to left and top to bottom. (Field notes, May 2014)

From these two observations, the changes in the child's technique while reading picture books are noticeable. Before the project, the child relied on one technique to get meaning from a picture book, which involved obtaining some meaning from the pictures. After implementing the project, the child acquired different techniques in obtaining the meaning by concentrating on both text and pictures. In this case, Fares read some of the basic words of the text and followed the correct reading direction. When he pointed to the text while reading, it showed that he understood that the text carries a meaning, which is print awareness. This suggests that pointing to the text during reading aloud sessions might develop children's print awareness and alphabetical knowledge. This result is consistent with the findings of Justice and Ezell (2002) study; they found that focusing on print during reading aloud sessions affected children's print

awareness and alphabetical knowledge positively. While their research was on English language, results from this present study suggests that the same is true when reading Arabic.

The study revealed that children's awareness of print leads to an increase in their curiosity to know the meaning of texts around them. This is evident from Baseem's mother's words when I asked her if she noticed any changes in her child's engagement with reading. She said:

> *I noticed something new in Baseem's reading habits: when he finds anything written, he calls his sister and asks her to read it to him, because she knows how to read. He usually asks her by saying: 'Read it to me, read it to me.' She gets annoyed by his repeated requests every time, and he gets upset and complains about his sister, saying: 'Mother, she does not want to read it to me.' He wants her to read everything to him, even what is written on street signs or shown on the TV screen. Also, he asks me to read.*

Even though the child is not yet able to decode the print by himself, this shows that he has become interested in text since he understands that words carry meaning; this may have developed as a result of teachers pointing to the printed text during reading aloud sessions. In addition, the child's repeated requests to read to him show his insatiable desire to derive meaning from text and have his curiosity satisfied.

Connecting story events to the children's personal lives was another new technique that the teachers used in their reading aloud sessions, which also had an impact on the children. Making connections "is a strategy that can assist in making meaning from a text" (Draper, 2010, p. 2). In the reading aloud sessions, the teachers gave the children opportunities to make connections between events in the stories and their personal experience. This observation of a reading aloud session illustrates this point:

> Teacher Sana read 'The Lion in the Forest' aloud … She asked the children to work in pairs and tell their friend a personal story about a similar experience to the story, prompting them with: "Did you ever see a lion in your life; describe it to your friend." The children got into pairs and shared their stories. The teacher walked around the children and listened to their discussions. Then she said, "Let's go back to the story." During the children's discussions, I heard one of the

> children say to her friend, “I saw a lion in the animal park.” Her friend said, “I did not.” The child concluded with, “The lion was very big, and he was asleep. My mum said he is the king of the forest.” The other child said, “I want to see the king of the forest.” (Field notes, April 2014)

Connecting the story to the children’s personal lives helped them to add to their existing knowledge, or acquire new knowledge, by interacting with the teacher and peers. For example, those who had never seen a lion in their life could receive information from their peers, which allowed scaffolding to take place. Also, by doing this, the teacher facilitated the understanding of children who have some knowledge about a lion; they could understand by building on their current knowledge from their personal experience. This also provides scaffolding opportunities and improves the children’s understanding with the help of both their peers and their teachers (Draper, 2010, p. 2). The study suggested that connecting the story to children’s lives scaffold their understanding from teachers and friends.

Imitating the story characters’ movements was a further new technique that teachers used during the reading aloud session that affected the children positively. The observation of the reading aloud session at the beginning of this section demonstrated this point when the teacher asked the children to jump as the lion did in the story to get out of the big hole. Experiencing the movement engaged children with the story so that they seemed to feel excited to learn about what will happen next, and motivate them to concentrate on the teacher’s reading. This was clear from the children’s facial expressions when they imitated the characters’ movements and experienced the characters’ emotions. In addition, imitating the story characters’ movements may facilitate the children’s understanding. For example, in one reading aloud session, the teacher used the following strategy:

> Teacher Hind, was reading the story and then asked the children to creep carefully like the snake between the trees. The teacher moved her body to mimic the snake’s movement, and the children looked at her with interest and copied the movement. One child looked at the teacher and at the other children’s movement, and then he copied them (Field notes, May 2014).

The teacher supported the children's understanding of the word 'creep' by demonstrating the snake's movement using her body, and asking the children to copy it, since some children might not know what the word 'creep' means.

Teachers asking questions during the reading aloud sessions was a technique that teachers did not appear to use before the intervention, yet once they started doing this it appeared to have a positive impact on the children. As mentioned earlier, before the project, teachers read aloud to the children and the children passively listened to the teacher. However, after the intervention, the teachers asked different questions during the reading aloud session to encourage children's interaction. For example the following extract reports an example of a teacher focusing on the meaning of a word:

> Teacher Sana was reading 'The Five Friends' picture book…She turned the page and started reading: 'The rabbit was walking in the forest'. Then she paused 'Uum, what does the word forest means?' A child said, 'A forest has big trees'. The teacher asked, 'Is it a small place or big place?' A child said, 'Big'. The teacher replied, 'Yes, the forest is a big place full of trees.'(Field notes, April 2014).

After the intervention I observed that teachers made a significant effort to support children's understanding during reading. For example, if a child did not understand the word 'forest' at the beginning of the story, and the teacher continued reading without checking his/her understanding, the child might not be able to understand the story. These examples show how the teachers' strategies during the read aloud sessions were able to enhance meaning making and engagement. This suggests that explaining the meaning of some words in the reading aloud session might have a positive impact on children's comprehension. The improvement in children's comprehension is clear from the high level of their interaction during the session. For example, in the interview, teacher Huda said there was a change in Ahmed's engagement in the reading aloud session:

> *Reading aloud in the new approach allowed the children who never participate, to engage. In my classroom, Ahmed rarely engaged in the reading aloud session. However, after using the new approach, Ahmed answered a number of questions that I asked, which surprised me. I am so happy about this change.*

This indicates that the new approach in the reading aloud sessions promoted the increased levels of comprehension.

As well as ensuring that the children understood the meaning of key words, the teachers also asked the children to predict what would happen next in the story; this appeared to be an invaluable strategy, as seen in the following observation:

> Teacher Lolo was reading 'The Eid Gift' story book…On the second page, the teacher read aloud, 'Oh, I forgot to buy the Eid gift for my mum and dad, but I have a good idea'. The teacher looked at the children and said, 'What do you think her idea was?' A child said, 'She bought candy'. Another child said, 'Ice-cream'. The teacher said, 'Okay, let us continue reading to find out the girl's idea'. The children focused on the teacher reading. (Field notes, April 2014).

When the teacher asked the children to predict what would happen next, the children tried to think actively and responded to the question. By acknowledging children's answers and suggestions before continuing reading to see what happened, the teacher drew the children's attention to the story events, which, in turn, motivated them to keep listening in order to learn what happened next. The teacher continued asking the children to predict the next events, which kept the children motivated to hear the story to the end. There was a significant change in the children's interest levels, which indicated an increased motivation to listen to the story after the intervention; this will be discussed in the next section.

Thirdly, the teachers asked inference questions in the reading aloud session, and the following observation demonstrated the effectiveness of this:

> After teacher Samah had finished reading 'The Honesty' picture book, she asked the children, 'Why did Saeed tell his mother the truth? She might become angry at him?' A child said: 'Because when I say the true, God loves me and will take me to the heaven'. The teacher said, 'Yes, exactly, we all have to tell the truth as Saeed did. This is good behaviour and God will reward us for being honest.'(Field notes, April 2014).

From the above example, we can see how the teacher used the story events to prompt a discussion with the children, encouraging them to think about the events of the story

and answer her question. By highlighting the good principles in the story, the teacher gave the children an opportunity to think about these principles and see how they had been applied in the story context. This finding suggests that the reading aloud session may positively impact on children's behaviour and possibly even their personalities. Five out of the ten mothers that I interviewed reported changes in their children's personality even though they were not specifically asked about this sort of change. For example Roaa's mother reported:

> *Her personality has changed; she has become quieter than before, as she seems to think more. Also, she has stopped fighting with her young sister; she lets her use her toys. She is kind to her sister more often.*

The reported change in the child's personality might have been influenced by the teacher's reading aloud, especially by the technique of asking children to make an inference related to the story's main principles, since most children's picture books promote good principles such as honesty, loyalty, kindness and, respect. As a result, children learned about these principles from the read aloud sessions in enjoyable circumstances. However, it may just be the case that the children enhanced their knowledge during the project, and this was not due to the intervention.

Teachers asked questions during the reading aloud session and followed up the children's answers to enhance their oral language. This is evidenced by Wafaa's mother, who pointed to a change in her daughter's oral language:

> *I noticed that Wafaa speaks differently lately. She uses new words that are advanced for her age, and we do not use such words at home. I was wondering where she got these words from.*

Wafaa's extended vocabulary in her conversations with her family and this indicated that her language has been developed. The development of Wafaa's oral language might be a result of the teachers' reading, including her asking questions and engaging the children during the reading aloud sessions. Wafaa was not exposed to shared reading in the home, as Wafaa's mother did not read to her daughter before or during the project. To illustrate, She reported that she could not attend the parents' workshop or engage in reading with her child because…

I am a mother of six children and I am a school teacher... do not have a maid at home. I am busy all the time with my children, my job, and the housework. My priority is to devote time to the older children; they need me more at this age. Wafaa is still very young and does not understand things yet.

The above section discussed the impact of teachers' questions on children's comprehension during reading aloud sessions. The data strongly indicated that these changes in teachers' strategies and techniques in reading and the increase in children's comprehension, seem to be related. In some analytical research on reading aloud interventions, the National Early Literacy Panel (2008) concluded that the impact of reading aloud is greater in oral language than in comprehension. However, I would argue that in my findings, reading aloud affected children's comprehension, possibly even more than their oral language, although it was not possible to measure this of course. This may have been due to the change in the quality of reading aloud, from reading *to* children to reading *with* children, which positively affected children's engagement with the teacher in the reading aloud session and led to greater comprehension.

The Clark and De Zoysa (2011)found that there is a relationship between comprehension, as part of reading attainment, and reading enjoyment. However, Clark and De Zoysa (2011) concluded that their research could not determine the causality of this relationship and what affects what. My research also appeared to indicate that there was a reciprocal relationship between comprehension and enjoyment; in the reading aloud sessions, teachers scaffolded children's understanding and comprehension, which led to more enjoyable reading. In addition, the children's enjoyment appeared to enhance their comprehension of stories.

5.3 The Impact of School-Home Partnership.

The data showed that many positive changes occurred in both parents' and children's reading practices after the workshop.

One of the changes that influenced the home and school partnership was actually attributable to the teachers' practice. Before the project, there was no borrowing system for books in the kindergarten's library and, that because of teachers' objections, as

shown in the interviews, teachers reported some obstacles to implementing a borrowing system. When asked why they didn't have a borrowing system in the kindergarten, teacher Hind replied:

> *Actually, it is a big hassle; allowing the children to borrow books to take home will cause many problems. The books might get lost or come back in bad condition.*

This concern was the biggest obstacle to activating the borrowing system. However, after implementing the borrowing system, the teachers started to accept this system and changed their views for two reasons. First, the children complied with the regulations set by the teachers, and returned the books on time and in good condition. As teacher Samah said:

> *I noticed that children started to know how to choose a story. Children got used to borrowing books and returning them in time and in good condition.*

Secondly, the teachers were happy about the mothers' enthusiasm and their positive comments made on the borrowing sheet, which gave the teacher an indication of the type of stories that the children enjoyed. As teacher Ebteehal said:

> *I was amazed by the parents' enthusiasm about the stories that their children take home; I liked their comments about the stories on the borrowing sheet which guided me on selecting the qualities of the stories that children liked in their borrowing choices.*

As a result, teachers became motivated to continue the borrowing system. All the teachers reported that they are going to keep it in the future. The teachers noted that using the borrowing system motivated children to engage in reading, as teacher Sana said:

> *Children started to ask me when they could borrow books… They have become excited to borrow stories.*

As outlined in the methodology section (3.3.2.6), as part of the parents' workshop a teacher showed parents how to read aloud with their children. This was followed by the

use of a What's App group to enable parents and teachers to maintain the collaboration between the teachers and parents. The following section outlines the results.

5.3.1 The Impact of Enhanced School-Home Partnership on Parents Reading Practices

Before the project it appeared that parents generally did not read with their children or take an interest in cultivating reading for pleasure. Lack of awareness among the parents of the importance of reading in early childhood was one of the themes that emerged, supported by numerous pieces of evidences. Teachers reported that this resulted in a problem when introducing new three year old children to the kindergarten classroom. As teacher Ebteehal explained:

> *At the beginning of every year, I need to introduce stories to the children since most those who come to kindergarten are not familiar with what a story is.*

Teacher Ebteehal highlighted a serious problem when she expressed the view that some three-year old children do not actually know what a story is. This may indicate a lack of families' awareness of the importance of stories in children's lives, and of sharing stories with their children from birth as (Butler, 1998).

In addition, mothers in this study admitted that before the workshop they were not aware of the importance of reading stories to their children. For example Roaa's mother revealed in the interview:

> *Before, I used to read a story to Roaa just because she liked it and to help her to fall in asleep quicker, not because it was an important activity.*

Prior to the project, five children out of ten did not have opportunities to share reading with their family members, as reported in the interviews with the mothers (See Figure 5-6). Although the other five children did have opportunities to share reading with their families at home, these were limited; two mothers read once a month, one read every two weeks, one read once a week, and one read two to three times a week.

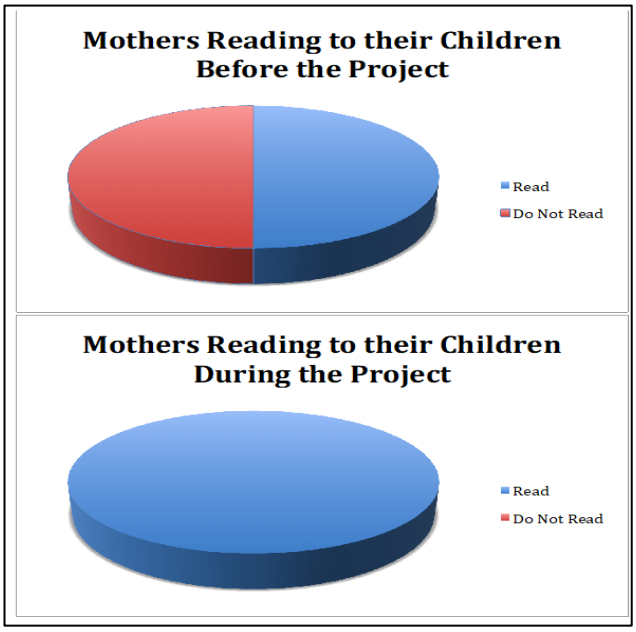

Figure 5-6: Mothers Reading to their Children Before and During the Project

The finding showed that before the project, the families were reading from a variety of sources. One mother read to her child from books; one read either from the Web or from memory and three told stories from memory (See Figure 5-7). The fathers in the research sample never read to their children from books. All this evidence suggests that parents are therefore unlikely to offer children's books to their young children, which may also reflect a low awareness of the importance of reading with young children. Another possible explanation for parents neglecting to read from children's books may be the absence of local libraries in Saudi Arabia to provide a variety of books for children to borrow.

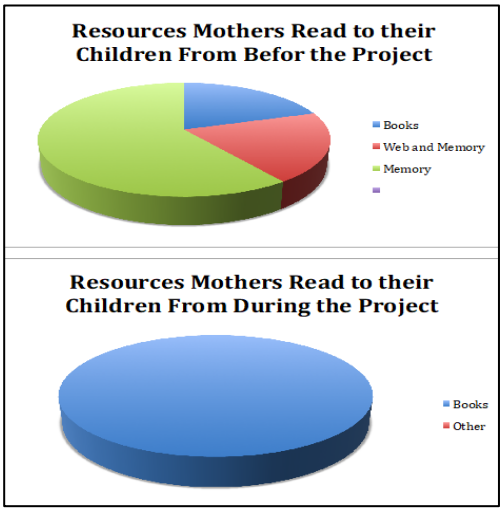

Figure 5-7: Resources Mothers Read From Before and During the Project

From interviewing the mothers participating in this study, there also seemed to be a lack of awareness of the importance of the early childhood phase. This emerged, for example, from the interview with Wafaa's mother who commented that she needed to concentrate on the older children rather than the younger ones in the family. However, some mothers felt guilty for not reading to their children, as Hani's mother reported in the interview:

> *I explained the workshop to my colleagues in the school where I work. When I told them about children and reading and what we should do, they realised that they were not giving their children anything in this respect. They feel guilty about not supporting their children's reading.*

This was a typical response, and indicates that mothers, who had been informed about the importance of reading in early childhood, felt guilty about not reading to their children. It also indicates the mothers' high level of enthusiasm for the change in reading practices with children, as they told friends about the workshop and about the knowledge they had acquired from it. In summary, there is much evidence that, before the project, these mothers engaged in limited reading practices with their young children, which suggests that they had a low awareness of the importance of reading with children.

Previous research suggests that parents should read to children frequently (Baker, Scher, & Mackler, 1997; Villiger, Wandeler, & Niggli, 2014), and yet these parents seemed to be unaware of the importance of sharing reading with their children. The reasons behind the lack of shared family reading in the Saudi Arabia community have been discussed by a number of studies. In one study, one third of Saudi parents stated that they did not have time to read to their children (Al-hibi, 2014). The pressures of parenting are also a factor, as Saudi families have an average of 6.8 members (Argaam, 2015; General Authority for Statistics Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 2013). The demands of a large family may cause stress in parenting, which may have a negative impact on mothers' reading to their children (Karrass, VanDeventer, & Braungart-Rieker, 2003).

There was a significant change in mothers' attitudes and practices towards reading stories to their children following the intervention, which is evident from the changes reported in the interviews. Also, there was an increase in mothers' awareness after

attending the parents' workshop, which affected their reading practices in various ways. Mothers' beliefs have a positive impact on children's literacy development (Bojczyk, Davis, & Rana, 2016; Weigel, Martin, & Bennett, 2006), which was also the case in this study.

First, mothers' motivation to read to their children increased, which resulted in the increase of children's motivation (DeBaryshe, 1995; Gonzalez-DeHass, Willems, & Holbein, 2005; Villiger et al., 2014). This increase was clear from the change in the frequency of mothers reading with their children before and during the intervention. Before the project, half of the mothers never read to their children, while after the project all mothers reported that they did, and eight out of ten read to their children on a daily basis (See Figure 5-8)

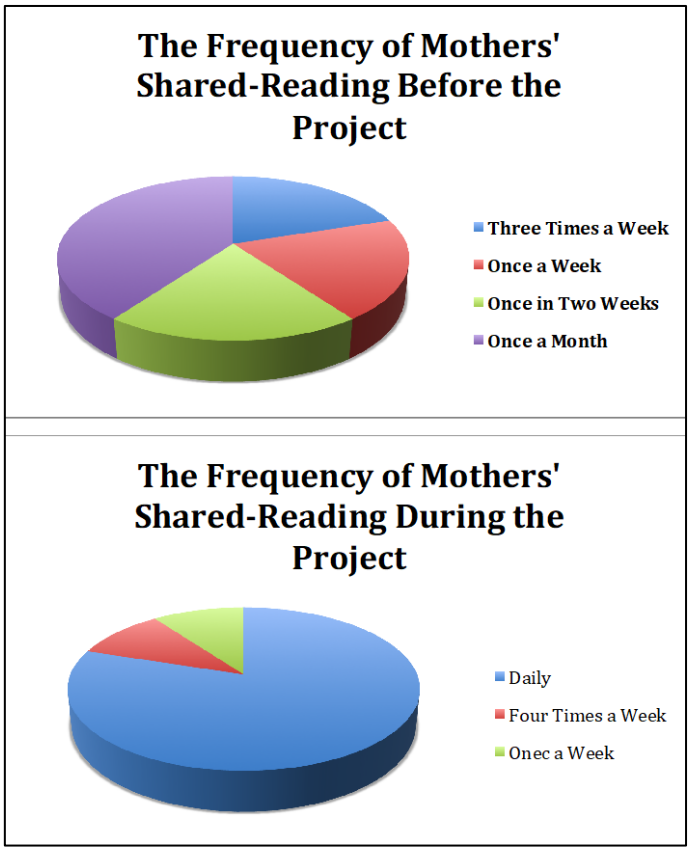

Figure 5-8: The Frequency of Mothers' Shared-Reading Before and During the Project

As a result of this change in the mothers' reading practice with their children, the relationship between mothers and their children strengthened in some cases. For example, according to Roaa's mother:

I feel that she is getting closer to me; while reading, she keeps kissing and hugging me, which she didn't do before. She becomes happy when I read to her.

The change in Roaa's behaviour illustrated the change in the quality of the relationship between the mother and the daughter. This may have happened because her mother started to read to her every day and spend more time with her; this gave them quality time together, and she then became happier and closer to her mother. This suggests that daily, interactive shared reading strengthens the relationship between parents and children. These results are in line with Knopf and Brown's (2009) findings that shared reading strengthens the relationship between adults and children. However, Knopf and Brown looked at the relationship between teachers and pupils, whereas my research extended this finding to include mothers and children's relationships. Furthermore, strong relationships between adults and children are "associated with higher shared reading quality" (Dexter & Stacks, 2014, p. 407). In the literature, there is still ongoing debate on whether the quality or the frequency of parents' interactive shared reading impacts on children reading (Bergin, 2001; Dexter & Stacks, 2014). In my study findings showed that both the quantity and the quality of interactive shared reading had an impact on the children's reading.

Furthermore, daily reading not only strengthened the relationship between mothers and children, but provided the opportunity for them to share some quality time together away from the pressures in their everyday lives. In general, in Middle East countries, mothers usually have a lot of domestic responsibilities which can often lead to stress and anxiety, specifically in a Saudi family as the average number of children is six (Argaam, 2015; General Authority for Statistics Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 2013). Therefore, family size has also been found to affect children's reading. Previous studies showed that children in families with an average of three or more siblings have lower attainment in reading (Sylva, Melhuish, Sammons, Siraj-Blatchford, & Taggart, 2010). Also, the men do not have an active role in the house in Middle East culture; they generally only play the role of the breadwinner to support their families. Therefore, the fathers have less support with their children.

Besides strengthening the relationship between mothers and children and enhancing children's reading motivation, siblings also became engaged by listening to their mothers reading. Hani's mother stated:

> *Every day before sleeping, I started to read a story to Hani and his young sister Wareef. My older son, who is 12 years old, entered the room while I was reading a story to Hani, he sat and listened to the story as well. I was surprised that he also seemed to be interested.*

Also, Baseem's mother spoke about her younger daughter's motivation to listen to the story with Baseem:

> *When Baseem borrows stories from his kindergarten, his younger sister is very happy and asks me to read it to her, so I read the story to both of them.*

This shows that mothers reading benefited not only children who were involved in the project, but also their younger and older siblings, since they were also motivated to share stories.

Secondly, mothers learned how to perform reading aloud to their children. Sufana's mother reported that:

> *We benefited from the workshop, especially learning how to read aloud as the teacher did for us. I used to read stories to my kids but not in this way. This way is more exciting; we have to change our voices, and show different expressions while reading and do different things.*

As mentioned above, five mothers reported that they read to their children before the project, and just one of them read from books. Even those mothers who read to their children said that they did not know the effective way of reading. This may be due to two reasons. Firstly, the fact that in Saudi Arabia, there are not any training sessions available that are designed for parents to develop their parental skills in general, or, more specifically, in reading to the children. Secondly, there are no public libraries available that hold frequent reading aloud sessions, which both the children and their parents could attend. After attending the workshop, all mothers reported that they gained benefits and had a new experience from attending a reading aloud session conducted by a teacher. They realised that reading to children differs from adult reading, which encouraged them to apply reading aloud techniques while reading to their children. Also, mothers read the story on their own before reading it to their

children in order to prepare themselves to read it effectively. As Faris' mother explained:

> *Every day before I read the story to my children, I have to read it first by myself in order to plan how to gesture it out.*

The change in the quality of parents' reading affected children's motivation regarding sharing stories with their parents. Children were happy with the changes in their mothers' performance while reading stories with them, as Roaa's mother suggested:

> *When I was performing reading stories like the teacher did in the workshop, Roaa laughed at me and asked: "Mum, why are you making your voice like this?" then she hugged me. One day, I was in hurry, and Roaa insisted on reading a story to her at bedtime, so I read it in a rush. When I finished reading, Roaa was upset and asked me, "Why have you finished it quickly? Read it again, please."*

In this example, Roaa noticed the change in the quality of her mother's performance in reading, and her reaction towards the change, evidenced in her laughing and hugging her mother, showed that she enjoyed it. On the other hand, the quality of the reading was clearly impaired when this mother was reading in a rush and was therefore not using the strategies taught at the workshop. Roaa noticed that and asked her mother to read the story again, which showed that the child did not like being read to in a hurry. This suggests that the change in reading approach with children increased the children's enjoyment, which motivated them to ask their mothers to read stories and re-read them. After the workshop, mothers acquired some useful techniques for choosing better quality children books; this is important given that research has shown that that selecting appropriate books for a child's age can motivate children to read more (Reference). Furthermore this is especially important given that the quality of parents' shared reading has been found to be a significant factor in children's attitudes towards reading (Dexter & Stacks, 2014) and children's attitudes towards reading (Bergin, 2001).

Thirdly, increasing mothers' awareness helped them to understand which books were suitable for their children's age and interests. There is evidence that before the project, the mothers did not know which stories were suitable for their children's age since a lot

of Arabic picture books do not specify the age range that the book is intended for. , As Shad's mother said:

> *Actually, before the project, I bought many stories for Shad, but she was not interested in any of them. Now I understand the reason why she did not like those books as they were above her age group, with a lot of text and few pictures, but now she likes the books that she borrows from the kindergarten. Recently I bought similar stories to the ones that Shad borrows from her kindergarten, and to those you showed us in the workshop.*

The above quotation indicates the differences in mothers' ability to choose the right stories before and after the workshop, since before the project some mothers were seen to choose books for their children that were not age-appropriate, which resulted in the children's discouragement of reading. After the workshop, mothers acquired some useful techniques for choosing appropriate children's book that could motivate children to read for pleasure. These techniques reduced the negative effect of choosing stories that are not suitable for the child's age, whereas selecting the right stories for the child's age was likely to be more motivating (Bergin, 2001). Another useful technique adopted by the mothers was to let their children choose a story based on their interests, as Daniah's mother explained:

> *She loves stories now. At the weekend, we went to Jareer bookstore, and she bought new stories and said: "My friend Eliyas got this story, and Hani got this one." After checking the books carefully, she chose three stories by herself. I checked if the stories were good for her. Then I bought them and she was very happy that she had new stories.*

Giving children opportunities to choose stories which match their interests seemed an effective way to encourage children to read. However, despite the advice to choose books that are suitable for the age group, the data did reveal, in one case, that when a particular topic was interesting to a child, he persisted in attempting to read a book about this topic that was 'too difficult', thus demonstrating an increased motivation to read more challenging material. Fadi's mother described her son's insistence on buying a book not suitable for his age:

I found that Fadi loved everything about dinosaurs. Last month, we went to buy books for him and he chose the dinosaur information book. I asked him to choose another book but he insisted on having what he wants. I was worried that he might find it difficult to read because there was a lot of text and fewer pictures. But Fadi enjoyed reading the dinosaur book, and sometimes, I read it with him.

This outline the importance of letting children chosen books of topics that interests them. Even though choosing picture books that are not suitable for the child's age may discourage them from reading, having an interest in the topic may motivate children to read books that are actually more challenging for them. This may be due to children's intrinsic motivation, since a high level of curiosity drives them to try to overcome any difficulties they face.

Fourthly, mothers' motivation to buy books for their children increased after the workshop since they learned how important reading is. Before the project, one mother reported that they bought stories for their children, while nine mothers said they did not. However, after the project, the majority of mothers stated that they bought stories for their children. This change indicates an increase in mothers' awareness of the importance of children's reading. It is important to mention that mothers bought children's books based on different aspects; first, at the children's request, and second, based on the mothers' decisions. In some cases, children asked their parents to go to the bookshop to buy books. For example, Fares' mother reported that:

After the project, when we went out, he said: 'Please stop by the bookshop, I want to buy a story.' Before, he kept asking to go to the playground or go swimming. Now he asks to buy stories much more than before.

The children's requests to buy books, after the project, seemed to indicate a rise in children's intrinsic motivation towards reading. In other cases, it was the mothers who decided to buy children's books, as with Baseem's mother:

During the one-week holiday, I took Baseem and the family to buy books. Everyone chose the books they liked. Baseem was very excited and asked me to read his story straightaway.

The decision to buy books for Baseem's family indicates an increase in awareness of the importance of reading within this family, which may lead to increase in the children's motivation to read.

Fifth, the data revealed that even the mothers' motivation to read in their leisure time increased after the parents' workshop. For example, Faris' mother talked about her reading and her children's response to it:

> *I started to love reading. Before I read the story to my children, I had to read it first by myself in order to plan how to act it out, which I enjoyed doing. Now I have started to do some pleasurable reading in my free time. When my children see me holding a book and reading, this is a new thing for them. They ask me, 'What are you reading, Mum?' They look at the book that I am holding. I have already started creating a small library at home for everyone.*

Fares' mother made changes in her family's lifestyle, by not only engaging fully in the reading she shared with her children, but also in developing her own reading habits in her spare time. These kind of changes were also reported by other mothers. The change in mothers' own reading for pleasure may have occurred due to many overlapping factors. It is perhaps the case that raising mothers' awareness of the importance of reading may have encouraged them to read to their children, which in turn may have resulted in their enjoyment of sharing stories and encouraged them to read for pleasure for themselves. Seeing parents read can also positively influence children's motivation to read especially when looking to their parents as a role model for pleasurable reading (Landry et al., 2012). In addition, there are some other studies confirming my results that mothers' reading enjoyment has positive effects on the quality of mothers' shared reading with their children (Bus, Leseman, & Keultjes, 2000) and is associated with children's reading motivation (Baker & Scher, 2002).

It is essential to bear in mind the fact that this study was carried out in Saudi Arabia. While other studies have shown the importance of shared reading, this study is set in a Saudi context, where shared reading with young children is not valued or generally practiced. Although the study was carried out in a limited time period and, arguably, promoted only small changes, it made a significant difference in a context like Saudi Arabia, and shows clearly the importance of such approaches.

5.3.2 The Impact of Enhancing the School-Home Partnership on Children's Reading Engagement

There is no doubt that school-home partnerships have a significant impact on children's behaviour (Muscott et al., 2008), however, this kind of partnership is not generally valued in Saudi context. The findings showed that children were motivated to share stories with their parents as a result of an increase in mothers' awareness of the importance of both reading and of the early childhood phase. This awareness was raised and practiced due to my intervention project and workshop. Furthermore, the children's motivation to share stories with their parents may also be due to their enjoyment of the interactive reading aloud that was carried out with their teachers.

There is clear evidence that the children's motivation to share stories with their parents increased as a result of this project, since all mothers reported in the interview that when children returned home, they asked them to read the stories that they borrowed from school, and then asked again at bedtime. For example, this was evident from Fares' mother's report of her son's reading habits:

> *Usually, when Fares brings a story from the kindergarten, he asks me to read it to him straightaway, but I am usually busy at that time and tell him will read it later. He keeps following me around the house begging me to read the story, and sometimes, I ask his sister to do so. Then I read it to him when I have time during the day and read it again at bedtime.*

The child repeatedly asked his mother to read the story throughout the day, which clearly shows the child's passion for sharing reading with his mother and illustrates his intrinsic motivation to share the story. It was not very clear whether the children wanted to share a story as a result of their curiosity, or because of the enjoyment in engaging in sharing reading with their mothers. Both curiosity and enjoyment are aspects of intrinsic reading motivation and are seen as essential for reading for pleasure. Even though I did not undertake home visits to observe parents sharing reading at home, my interviews with parents raised some useful information about children's interactions with their mothers during shared reading. Interactive shared reading may enhance children's early reading skills, since in shared reading mothers engage in a productive conversation with their children, as Daniah's mother stated:

I noticed that while reading Daniah made lots of comments on the pictures; sometimes her comments are funny, and she asked me a lot of questions about the pictures and we had fruitful discussion.

In the same regard, Roaa's mother reported that

When I was reading one of the stories to Roaa, she borrowed from the kindergarten, in the same way that the teacher showed us during the workshop, she responded to many questions in a way that I did not expect. Also, she asked me good questions about the story. I am very happy with that.

This suggests that reading stories stimulated the children to have various different conversations with their mothers, prompted by both children's comments and questions. These conversations or discussions may lead to similar impact on children's reading to that achieved by the discussions during the teachers reading aloud sessions, as presented earlier (see section 5.2.2), that is: increasing children's motivation in reading, curiosity, knowledge about books, print knowledge awareness, alphabetical knowledge, and oral language. This interpretation is consistent with Villiger et al.'s (2012, p. 79) findings that "the school/home based intervention had significant effects on reading enjoyment and reading curiosity", and Bracken & Fischel's (2008, p. 45) findings that 'parent–child reading interaction and child reading interest were significantly related to children's early literacy skills'.

The findings showed that children enjoyed re-reading the same stories with their families several times, as was evident from their mothers' statements. For example, Shad's mother said:

Shad wanted me to read the same story three or four times a day. I am wondering why she likes that.

The findings suggested that the children might ask their mothers to re-read the same story for several reasons. The child may ask because s/he enjoyed the experience of shared reading with their parents.

The data also indicated that the project appeared to motivate some children to learn the alphabet, as Hani's mother mentioned:

Before the project, I started teaching Hani the alphabet, but he was not interested and he refused to learn, but now he wants to learn the alphabet. So he can read his favourite books by himself.

This pattern, which shows the change in the child's attitude towards learning the alphabet, was also reported by other mothers. This suggests that children's motivation to read for pleasure may further motivate them to learn the alphabet.

In summary, children gained various benefits from the daily shared reading with their families. First, the children became closer to their mothers. Second, there are indicators that the children's language developed in different areas. These developments may have occurred as a result of teachers reading aloud, as well as mothers reading at home. Both practices have similar strategies, but are conducted in a different place (kindergarten or home), with a different reader (teacher or family member) and a different audience (own child/siblings or group of children). Despite the differences in the place, the reader, and the audience, there are similarities in their support to children's reading. Lonigan and Whitehurst (1998) found that teachers' and parents' dialogic reading both positively affected children's literacy skills. However, Lonigan and Whitehurst (1998) found that parents' shared reading had the greatest impact on children's vocabulary when compared to teachers' shared reading and the combination of parents' and teachers' shared reading. The quality of parents' shared reading has been found to be a significant factor in children's language development (Dexter & Stacks, 2014), and children's attitudes towards reading (Bergin, 2001).

5.4 Conclusion

In this chapter I have analysed and discussed the impact of the five elements of the intervention (adding iPads, story sacks and high quality picture books to the classroom environment; applying interactive read aloud strategies; and linking school and home with regards to reading). The five elements of the project had a positive impact not only on the children's reading motivation and engagement but also, beyond that, on both teachers' and parents' performance and behaviour in reading.

As the chapter demonstrates each of these five elements had a positive impact on children's intrinsic motivation, curiosity, and involvement as well as increasing their

reading concentration, reading independence and collaboration when reading. Obviously, it may be the case that children's reading motivation was increased because they had all these five elements going operating at the same time, and all five, or a combination of them, worked together to increase children's love of literature and a love of reading. By reviewing the findings separately with regard to each of the elements, I do not intend to suggest that any one of them is more important or more productive than any of the others. Overall, it may be more important to emphasise the importance of a holistic approach to promoting reading for pleasure in a classroom environment.

In the next chapter, I move on to considering how far the project developed children's self-determination in relation to reading, which in turn would have a positive impact on engagement in, and motivation for, reading.

CHAPTER 6 : FOSTERING YOUNG CHILDREN'S SELF-DETERMINATION IN READING

6.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I presented my research findings. These findings indicated that the project had a significant impact on children's intrinsic motivation to read. In this chapter, I use self-determination theory (SDT) to interpret the data and to explain children's reading motivation. As discussed earlier in the chapter two, SDT proposes that there are three innate needs for the individual: the need for autonomy, the need for competence, and the need for relatedness. When a certain activity supports these needs, the person becomes intrinsically motivated to perform it (Dexter & Stacks, 2014). The intervention appeared to fulfill the three needs of SDT in relation to reading activities, which led to the development of children's self-determination in reading. In order to clarify these results, I present and discuss in detail each change that occurred in the project activity that supported the children's needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness In the first Section of the chapter, I present and discuss how the project supported children's autonomy, this is followed by a discussion in Section two on how the project supported children's competence. A discussion on how project foster children's need for relatedness is presented in Section three.

6.2 Need for Autonomy

The findings indicated that, before the project, the children were provided with a limited choice of reading activities as well as being taught in what can be described as a controlling teaching style, which is likely to have thwarted their autonomy. However, after conducting the project, the findings indicated that the children were provided with a variety of choices and options in relation to reading activities, alongside experiencing the freedom to do what they really wanted without external pressure; this approach seemed to support their autonomy. I present and discuss children's autonomy in both situations, that is, before and after the project was implemented.

6.2.1 Reading Choices Before and After the Project

The findings suggest that children's autonomy was low before the project, which may have resulted from having limited reading choices and few books in the classroom. All the teachers interviewed reported that the book options in the Library Corner had not been updated during the three weeks before the project. For example, teacher Sana said:

> *We change books when the units change [either every three or four weeks]; we change the books in line with the topic of the unit that we are teaching.*

The choice of reading activities was limited as shown in my field notes:

> The children just read from books, not using any other tools or activities. The books have not been changed or updated during the previous three weeks (Field notes, February-March 2014).

This means the children only had books to read which were not regularly updated and were mostly old. This may have led to a low level of children's engagement in reading.

In addition to the limited choice of reading materials, children had no choice in where to read as there was no choice in the provision of places to read, as recorded in my field notes:

> The books are available in just one place in the classroom, which is the Library Corner, and the children always read in it. (Field notes, March 2014)

My findings also indicated that half of the children did not have opportunities to read at home or to share reading with their family members or to read outside the classroom and share books with other people, as discussed in Chapter 5 in section (5.3.2). Although the other half did have opportunities to share reading with their family at home, the amount of time shared-reading was limited as: two mothers read once a month, one read every two weeks, one read once a week, and one read two to three times a week. However, it was interesting to find out that, among those five mothers who reported sharing reading with their children before the project, three read with no books, one read from a book, and one read from a combination of using a web-site and telling stories from her imagination, such as religious 'true' stories, heritage stories, etc

as discussed in Chapter 5 in (5.3.2). This shows the limited opportunities these children had to read alone or with others, which impacted on feeling of autonomy.

Before the project, children's autonomy seemed to have been thwarted by the limited choices of books and places to read, as well as having few people to share the reading activity with. This is in agreement with SDT (Deci & Ryan, 1985b) that proposed that when any of the three psychological needs are thwarted, including the need for autonomy, it leads to a decrease in individual intrinsic motivation.

However, children's autonomy changed during the project, as a result of the teachers providing opportunities for the children to make their own decisions from a variety of choices. Children had choices related to what they could choose to read or they could choose to engage in, other related reading activities. They also had choices related to the spaces in which they could read, and who they could read with. The children were free to choose how to read; they either used the books, the iPads, or the story sacks, as discussed in Chapter 5. The availability of iPads, story sacks and books gave the children opportunities and freedom to make their own decisions and increased their autonomy. For example, it can be seen form figure 6-1 that the children engaged in their chosen activities, two children were enjoying listening to stories using the iPads, while the third child chose to share reading a large picture book with a puppet even though a third iPad was available for him to use.

Figure 6-1: Children Have Different Choices

In addition, each tool offered a variety of topics for them to choose from. For example, in the story sacks, the children could choose to engage with a wide range of activities related to the books that they were reading. On the iPad, in addition to the range of e-stories, the children were provided with a daily e-story in a specific folder. With the books, there was also a 'story of the day' on a specific shelf in the classroom, and teachers regularly updated the books on the four shelves around the classroom.

This also suggests that offering children regularly updated and new books and new resources for reading could encourage children to develop the habit of reading for pleasure. The teacher cannot expect children to be engaged with reading without making an effort to offer regularly new reading materials. The novelty aspect is highly important in capturing the children's attention and building sustained reading habit and autonomy in reading (Haskett & Lenfestey, 1974).

During the project, there were also choices with regard to space. The findings showed that the children enjoyed reading in various places both inside and outside the classroom. In the classroom, the mobility of the iPads seemed to allow the children to move to a place where they felt comfortable for reading. The four shelves around the classroom seemed to give the children opportunities to read the picture books since they had information books (science) in the Discovery Corner, literacy books in the Writing Corner, informational books (social) in the Family Corner, as well as the picture books in the Library Corner. Therefore, the children could read everywhere in the classroom. The story sacks also enabled the children to undertake the activities in any place in the classroom. In addition, implementing the 'Borrowing System' provided the children with other opportunities for reading in different places. For example, reading took place in the kindergarten playground. Wafaa took a borrowed story out of her bag and read it while other children were playing in the morning before going into the classroom, which was something extra ordinary and had never been observed before the project according to Wafaa's teacher. Furthermore, implementing the 'Borrowing System' also provided opportunities for reading at home since all the mothers interviewed after the project stated that their children read at home; 8 out of the 10 reported that their children read every day, one mother reported it was four times a week, and the other reported it was three times a week. This was a clear increase from the pre-project data.

Finally, the project increased the children choices with regard to whom they could read with. Before the project, the children shared reading with peers and they had twice-weekly sessions when teachers would read aloud to them. They rarely shared reading with their teachers and had limited opportunities to share reading with their mothers. However, after the project, the data showed that the children shared reading with several people (teachers, peers, mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, grandparents, friends, housemaids) as well as puppets. This is discussed in detail in the next section (6.4) in this chapter about the need for relatedness. The variety of choices in tools, activities, spaces and reading partners increased children's autonomy. This is consistent with Guthrie and Coddington (2009) who argue that providing wide choices in reading supports students' autonomy. In the next section, I discuss the impact of teaching styles on children's autonomy.

6.2.2 Use of Teaching Styles Before and After the Project

Even though this study did not set out to explore or influence 'teaching styles', it emerged from the data as an important factor that either supported or thwarted children's autonomy. Therefore, teaching styles before and after the project are discussed briefly, along with an analysis of why teachers used a particular style, and how that affected children's autonomy.

Teachers in this project had a tendency to use a controlling teaching style before the project, which emerged from the data as a key factor in thwarting children's autonomy, and thus limiting their intrinsic motivation to read (Deci & Ryan, 2002). A 'controlling style' of teaching refers to the way of giving instructions that pressures learners to behave, think and feel in specific ways (Amoura et al., 2015; Reeve, 2009). The findings of this study indicated that the teachers extensively used a controlling style with the children. For example, teacher Ebteehal used a controlling language to instruct a child to read, as described in the observation below:

> At 'Free Play in the Educational Corners' time, teacher Ebteehal said "Sufana, go to the Library Corner and read a story to Baseem". Sufana went and chose a book, then she sat with Baseem and listened to him reading for a while. She then moved to the Art Corner while Baseem was still reading. (Field notes, February 2014)

In this respect, Teacher Hind said:

> *They [the children] did not go there [Library Corner] very often; I had to tell them to go. I used to say, "We have to go to the library, we have to read." I had to repeat my words to convince them to move to that space and read.*

The teacher's use of language "Go" or "have to" seemed to control the child's behaviour; this led to the child following the order but with low interest, since her behaviour indicated that she was bored and so left in the middle of her friend reading. This is consistent with Moller, Deci, and Ryan (2006) who found that the use of controlling language thwarts autonomous motivation for any activity.

Similarly, the teachers seemed to control the children's behaviour during 'Free Play in the Educational Corners' time before the project, which was supposed to be free playtime for the children. One example is teacher Lolo's approach:

> At the end of Circle Time the teacher called four names and asked them to go to the Art Corner, then she called four names and asked them to go to the Family Corner. She distributed the children to the Educational Corners (Field notes, February 2014).

This example demonstrated the teacher's pressure on the children to participate in certain corners; she did not give the children the opportunity to choose their preferred one. Furthermore, in the interviews with teachers, many of them expressed an interest in attending professional teaching development in different areas. More specifically, teachers showed their interest in the topic of 'effective ways of managing children's behaviour'. For example, when teacher Ebteehal was asked what kind of training she would like to attend, she stated that:

> "*Honestly, I need training in how to manage children's behaviours in pedagogical psychological ways. I need to attend this kind of training topic. Given the very young age of the children in my classroom it is very difficult to deal with them. In this kindergarten, I had good reputation for having strong ways of managing children's behavior, but I feel I need more.*"

Even though this teacher had more than twenty year's experience of teaching children, she used a controlling teaching style. I highlighted these two examples of teacher Ebteehal intentionally, although I had other examples, since these two examples showed that the teacher used a controlling style with the children even though she had a good reputation for her effective way in managing children's behaviour, and is an experienced teacher. With regard to teacher Ebteehal's management of the children's behaviour, I interviewed her before I conducted any observation in the classroom and she told me about her good reputation. Based on that, I was keen to observe the children in her classroom. I was surprised to find that she mainly used a controlling style with the children and, from the literature I found that, unfortunately, some cultures seemed to consider teachers who use a controlling style to be more competent than teachers who use autonomy supportive strategies instead (Reeve, 2009). Despite teacher Ebteehal's good reputation, she expressed the need to take part in professional training sessions in behaviour management. This is an indication that teachers identify their need to have more professional development in this and other topics.

After the project, the teachers tended to use a teaching style that supported children's autonomy as learners, which might be another effective factor in enhancing children's independence and autonomy. The findings showed that the teachers changed their behaviour, moving away from a controlling style towards a more facilitative teaching style. A teaching style that supports autonomy can be defined as one that provides learners with choices and opportunities to allow them to make their own decisions with minimal external pressure (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Orsini, Evans, & Jerez, 2015). The change in teaching style may have resulted from an increase in the teachers' awareness of the importance of children reading for pleasure, which was discussed at the professional development workshops. As teacher Sama reported:

> *After the workshops I realised the importance of reading for pleasure. Before that we focused more on teaching the children letters. But now I can see the difference in the children. I am pleased about this change.*

Having children who seemed intrinsically motivated to engage in reading activities in the classroom seemed to work effectively in changing the teachers' style to be supportive of children as independent learners. The teachers used these phrases to report the children's engagement in reading:

Their [children] interaction with the story was great.

I had children who did not like to be in the library very much. They were not attracted by the pictures or the stories. Now they try to be the first in the library without being told.

Teacher Hind described the children's behaviour towards reading after the project:

After the project, they went into the Library Corner frequently themselves, and there was no need to force them to enter it. They started reading on the iPad, looking through the books, and looking at the puppets. They became more interested than before and the place became overcrowded because more children wanted to read. Therefore, sometimes I had to ask the children to leave the corner because of the limited places.

These examples illustrate the high level of the children's engagement in reading activities, and the project's impact on the role of teachers, which changed from forcing children to read, to managing the children's reading. Another change in teaching style was that the teachers were engaged more with the children in reading related activities, which provided scaffolding opportunities as evidenced in Chapter 5.

Moreover, the teachers provided numerous reading choices for children, as discussed earlier, both inside and outside the classroom. These choices included different topics that were interesting to the children and/or related to their experiences. The teachers played an essential role in providing reading choices to the children that related to their own experiences. For example, when teacher Hind added a book about having a baby to the Library Corner, she did so on purpose, as she reported:

I added the story "A new baby in our home" since we had two boys whose mothers were expecting a baby soon; the boys enjoyed reading the story, and one of them asked me if he could borrow it to take home. When he returned the story I offered it to the other child to see if he was interested in borrowing it to share with his mother, and he took it.

Similarly, a child expressed her love of one of the stories in the following conversation:

Researcher: Could you tell me which stories you liked?
Wafaa: [she went to the Library Corner and picked up a book] This story
Researcher: Why did you love this story?
Wafaa: It's like my home.

These examples illustrate that the children valued books that related to their lives and experiences and they enjoyed reading them. This suggests that the choice is motivating when the options are relevant to the students' experience. This is consistent with the claims by Wigfield and Guthrie (2000) which emphasis the teacher's role in supporting children's autonomy in the academic context by providing choices relevant to the student's knowledge, experiences and interests. Understanding children's interests seemed to result from the strong relationship between the teachers and the children, as will be discussed in Section (6.4) of this chapter. Providing book choices relevant to children's interests seemed to motivate children to read, as was evident when Roaa answered my question, "*Could you tell me which stories you like?".* She replied: "*I love The Small Butterfly story ... I love all butterflies, they are beautiful".* This reminded me of when Teacher Lolo visited my library to collect stories for her classroom; she picked up "*The Small Butterfly"* and said: *"There is a story about a butterfly; I will add it to the classroom library, Roaa will love it."*
Wigfield and Guthrie (2000) asserted the importance of allowing children to choose interesting reading to support their autonomy.

The second thing that the teachers did which can be categorised as supportive of developing children as autonomous learners, was to provide guidelines and instructions for the children, as discussed in Section (6.3.1) of this chapter. These guidelines seemed to help the children understand what they wanted to do by presenting the options that were available for them to engage in. The children were therefore allowed to be self-directing and they experienced the freedom to choose. With the availability of various interesting activities, it was easy for the children to decide what they wanted to read. Thus, when I observed the children, they seemed to know what they wanted to do, and moved smoothly between the reading activities (as discussed in Chapter 5). This is in line with De Naeghel et al. (2016), whose findings showed the positive impact of providing guidelines and instructions on children's autonomy.

In the next section, I move on to consider the need for competence.

6.3 Need for Competence

The findings show that the need for competence was highly supported due to changes that occurred during the project. It is evident from the data that all the changes that were made in the project have played some part in enhancing children's need for competence. The findings indicate that the children who participated in this research enjoyed being competent at completing reading-related activities in the project. The children's sense of competence was supported by a number of factors: by providing structure and clear guidelines for children to follow, offering optimal challenges, and providing informational feedback (Reeve & Jang, 2006). In the following sub-sections I will discuss and analyse how these supportive factors were used in the project in ways that meant they had a positive effect on the children's need for competence. Although I did not use any specific tools to measure the children's competence, my observations during the project allowed me to judge how they became more competent in their reading activities, for example, reading independently, not needing to ask questions, using the different iPad features confidently and effectively.

6.3.1 Providing Structure and Guidelines

Structure and guidelines emerged from the data as an important factor that supported the children's competence. This aligns with SDT theory which suggests that structure enhances the children's need for competence (Stroet et al., 2013). The data showed that structure supported children and helped them master the activities, as structure refers to "the amount of information in the context about how to effectively achieve desired outcomes"(Skinner & Belmont, 1993, p. 572). It is important to recognise the difference between using instructions and guidelines in an autonomy-supportive way, which provides children with freedom of choice, rather than in a controlling way, which thwarts autonomy.

The fact that teachers were providing clear guidelines and instructions for children to follow before adding a new story sack seemed to support competence. This was illustrated at Circle Time, when the teachers gave instructions; for example, this was

evident in field notes during the observation of a teacher (Lolo), who was introducing the Caterpillar Khaddorh story sack:

> *…Teacher Lolo showed the children the Caterpillar Khaddorh story sack and excitedly asked them what they thought the name of the story sack was. She held up the caterpillar puppet and told them the title of the story, then opened the large story-book and started to read it aloud to them. As she was reading the story she introduced the puppets from the sack according to what was happening in the story. After that, she introduced the story activities from the sacks, explained the use of the story map and demonstrated using the puppets to retell the events in the story. She then asked two children, a boy and a girl, to retell the story using the puppets at the front of the class. The boy held the caterpillar puppet and the girl held the butterfly puppet and they happily acted out the story. The teacher showed the children the reference books, where they could get interesting information about caterpillars and butterflies. Then she explained the tips to complete the puzzles, introduced the playing cards and the rules. She demonstrated how the wooden caterpillar eats the wooden apple using the wooden threading apple toy. Then she explained the stages of development a caterpillar goes through in the wooden puzzle. After that, she told the children where she would put the story sacks.* (Field notes, April 2014)

My observation of the teacher introducing the story sacks showed that clear structure and instructions were given for each activity. According to SDT, instructional support and clear structure seem to help children to engage in activities, and understand how to complete activities successfully (Skinner & Belmont, 1993). I observed this when watching Fares successfully acting out the story of "The Caterpillar Khaddorah" using the puppets, and with some help from story map pictures:

> He was playing with the story's puppets: the caterpillar, the butterfly, and the ladybug. He then opened the story map, which has the order of the story events, held the puppets on top of the map where the story began, and started to retell the story using the puppets by looking at the events order on the story map (Field notes, May 2014).

My observation of the child successfully retelling the story using the story map and puppets according to the teacher's explanations indicated that the child understood what he was supposed to do. This suggests that providing structure may have a positive influence on children's achievement of an activity, which enhances competence (De Naeghel et al., 2016) by understanding how the task should be achieved.

Another example of teachers providing high levels of structure and clear guidelines for children, on how to use the iPad and the e-books stories was clear. This was illustrated at the end of Circle Time, when the teachers introduced the children to iPads. The following example describes teacher Hind providing structure, for the first time, on how to use the e-books effectively on the iPad:

> … Teacher Lolo asked the children if they wanted to see what was inside the iPad to which they excitedly agreed. She then asked if they knew how to use it to read interesting stories, to which they answered "No". The teacher pressed the home button and showed the children the iPad screen pointing to the apps saying "It is easy; you can see here different stories, and move your finger this way to see the other options. When you choose a story, just click on the app and the story will be opened. Here we go! I chose a story and it has appeared on the screen now". Then she explained the functions of all the buttons on the e-story: "The first one lets you move forward to the events; use the second button to stop the story and the third to start it again; the fourth one lets you move backwards through the events. Then the teacher explained and demonstrated how to choose another story while one story is already open on the screen. She went on to ask the children if any of them would like to give it a try, and she chose children to do different things on the iPad in front of their friends. Then she said, demonstrating how to do it, "We have headphones that, we can wear like this. I will put the iPads in the Library Corner and if you need any help just let me know. The good news is that every day I will add a new story which you can find in the 'the story of the day' folder, OK?" The children replied "OK". (Field note, March 2014)

The extract above indicates that the teacher introduced the iPad with practical examples and providing the children with clear guidelines and instructions, seemed to support the children's competence in using the iPads as showed in Chapter 5.

According to SDT, instructional support and clear structure help children engage in the activities and feel competent (Skinner & Belmont, 1993). High levels of teacher structure also supported the children's competence in reading e-books on the iPads. This is consistent with other research findings, which showed that providing instructions and guidelines was essential when students used electronic storybooks (De Jong & Bus, 2002; De Jong & Bus, 2004). Even though most children dealt with iPads easily, the data showed that a few children faced difficulties in dealing with e-books at the beginning, when they used the iPad in the first few days, but the structure and guidance offered by the teachers meant that children were able to become more independent in their use, as indicated by Fares.

> Fares opened the iPad, chose the "My Friend, The Hours," story and listened to it. Then he chose to listen to it again in English. He opened "The Little Tiny Boy," story and listened to it until the end. He read the story again. For some of the events he pressed the stop button and looked at the picture. He forwarded the e-story to skip some events and continued again. (Field notes, May 2014).

Teachers made a significant effort to offer a well-structured print-rich environment and provide a clear structure for children to follow, which seemed to enhance the children's competence. These findings are consistent with those of Vardi (2015), who report that creating well-organised and well-structured environments can develop competence. As indicated in Chapter Five, as a result of the project, teachers developed the use of print books in the environment, providing them across various areas. In addition, teachers provided a clear structure for children to follow in their use of the books, as observed at the end of Circle Time:

> Teacher Samah said, "I am going to add these three books about sand in this corner." She walked to the Discovery Corner and placed them on the shelf. "And I will add these books about doctors to the Family Corner there." She put them on the shelf and then said "This book about letters I'll put there in the Writing Corner. You can choose the book you want to read from anywhere you like, and the return it to the shelves. I have more good news; every day we'll have a new story on 'the story of the day' shelf in the Library Corner .You can read it and return it to the shelf when you have finished." (Field notes, March 2014)

It seemed that the provision of structure helped children to engage more in reading by knowing what was happening and understanding the teachers' expectations regarding how to behave; this is evident from my observation of the children, for example:

> Yazzed went to the Library Corner, but the 'story of the day' book was not on the shelf so he went to the teacher asked her, "Where is the story of the day?" The teacher searched for it and found it on the shelves on the floor and said "Here we go, I found it! It's supposed to be here on this shelf" [pointing to the shelf on the wall]. Yazzed excitedly read the story until the end and when he finished reading, he put the book back on the 'story of the day' shelf. (Field notes, April 2014).

This indicates that providing a clear structure which regard to the 'story of the day' seems to support children's engagement and competence.

These results suggest that offering a well-structured print-rich environment and providing a clear structure increased the children's engagement in reading, which supported their feelings of competence. These aspects could also be observed in other areas of the intervention, such as the teachers' read alouds, and their organisation of the school-home reading links. In each case, providing a well-structured and organised framework for these activities contributed to children's feeling of competence.

6.3.2 Optimal challenges

Optimal challenge activities, which are activities or experiences that are not too easy and not too difficult to accomplish (Reeve, 2016), emerged from the data as an important factor that supported the children's feelings of competence when reading. This aligns with SDT theory, which suggests that providing optimal challenges can increase children's feelings of competence (Deci & Ryan, 1985b), since children tend to seek to engage in challenges which in turn support their intrinsic need to be competent (Deci & Porac, 1978) and to have belief in their abilities to master those challenges and feel competent (Hardre & Reeve, 2003). The data showed that optimal challenges seemed to increase children's competence in reading. This is consistent with Turner and Paris (1995) who found that challenging tasks motivate children to read more. When learners test their personal competence by facing an optimal challenge as part of the task experience 'flow', they give the task their full attention and it maximises their cognitive

processes (Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Flow is "a state of peak enjoyment, energetic focus and creative concentration" (Csikszentmihalyi, 2000, p. 231).

There were numerous examples of this aspect of SDT. For example, providing optimal challenges in the story sacks activity supported the children's need for competence. The data show that the teachers provided optimal challenges when they planned and designed the story sack activities, as was evident from this informal group discussion:

> *Researcher: Why did you choose these five stories to make the story sacks?*
>
> *Teacher Lolo: … We tried to choose some stories that are easy, some a bit more difficult and one that is more advanced.*
>
> *Researcher: How did you determine how difficult the stories were?*
>
> *Teacher Samha: We looked at different things in the story to help us choose. The easy stories have more pictures, less text, the story events are basic, not complex. The more advanced story we chose has more text and the story is a bit more complex with more events. You can see [pointing to the stories on the disk] 'The Five Friends' and 'The Caterpillar Khaddorh' are easy stories, 'The Eid Gift' is more difficult, and 'The Lion and the Mouse' and 'Squirrel's Kite' are more advanced.*
>
> *Teacher Sana: "… we tried to design the activities with a range of difficulty, taking into account individual differences between the children. For example, you can see this advanced one [pointing to the puzzle] has twelve parts with smaller pieces, and that puzzle has eight parts with bigger pieces, which makes it a bit easier.*

As can be seen from the data provided by the teachers, various optimal challenges, with different levels of difficulty, were designed for the story sacks activities; this allowed the children to choose the activity that was compatible with their ability. Similarly, teachers chose a wide range of e-book stories based on different factors, including choosing e-book stories with different levels of difficulty. This was apparent from the

informal conversations I had with teachers about the criteria they used to choose the e-book stories. Teacher Lolo said:

> *... The other thing was, we tried to have a range of stories on the iPads with different levels of difficulty so that some stories are easier than others in order to meet the differences in the children's ability.*

The iPad affordances seemed to help children to feel competent in reading e-stories. There is a feature that highlights the text in the iPad e-book stories as it is being read aloud to the child. Thanks to this feature, the children did not need the teachers to help by reading stories to them; this was evident in my observation of the children reading e-book stories on the iPads independently.

> Fadi was reading a story on the iPad. He listened happily to the story using the headphones. He said that he would read the story again and he repeated the same story. After that, he chose a second and a third story and read them from the beginning to the end (Field notes, April).

Teachers also posed optimal challenges for children in reading aloud activities, by asking various types of questions; some were easy to answer and others more difficult, as they required more advanced skills. This was observed in one of the reading aloud sessions:

> The teacher pointed to the front cover of the book asking, "What do you think the story is about? The children responded, and then the teacher said, "Let us see what the girl (Amani) did when she forgot to buy a gift for her parents for the Eid celebration." The teacher started reading aloud, pointing to the text with her finger. She asked, "What does word 'Eid' mean?" The children answered. The teacher went on "Ok, now in pairs tell your friend your story about the Eid gift." The children did this and while they were happily sharing their stories, the teacher went round listening to them. Before turning the page, the teacher asked the children, "What do you think Amani did after she had a shower?" She listened to all the answers and said, "Let's see what happened next." She turned the page and said, "Describe what Amani is doing here [pointing to the page]. She continued reading, and said, "I like what Amani did for her parents. What

> do you think this indicates?" After she had finished reading the story, the teacher asked the children several questions, "What is the name of the girl in the story?", "Why did Amani wrap herself in gift paper?", "What did Amani do when she forgot to buy a gift for her parents for the Eid celebration?", "What would you do if you forgot to buy an Eid gift for your parents?", "What did you like in this story?" (Field notes, April 2014).

It can be seen that the teacher asked various questions with different levels of difficulty and complexity. In order to answer these questions, a range of skills is required, from basic to more advanced. These skills can be identified as follows:

Remembering: "What does the word 'Eid' mean?", "What is the name of the girl in the story?", "What did Amani do when she forgot to buy a gift for her parents for the Eid celebration?"

Understanding: "What do you think the story is about?", "What do you think Amani did after she had a shower?", "Describe what Amani is doing here."

Applying: "OK, now in pairs tell your friend your story about the Eid gifts."

Analysing: "I like what Amani did for her parents. What do you think this shows us?"

Evaluating: "What did you like in this story?"

Optimal challenges provide the kind of scaffolding (Bruner, 1975) that Vygotsky (1978) referred to in terms of his concept of ZPD: the challenges provided by the teachers across various activities developed children's sense of competence in reading.

6.3.3 Informational Feedback

Informational feedback emerged from the data as an important factor that supported the children's competence. SDT proponents suggest that informational feedback supports children by helping them master the activities, and supports their feelings of competence (Forde, Mekler, & Opwis, 2016). As Turner (2014, P. 345) suggested:

> To support student competence, teachers can provide scaffolding for student thinking, give informational feedback, and use formative assessment for students to self-monitor and self-evaluate.

The data showed that positive informational feedback, where teachers supported learners to have more control over their achievements helped children become competent. An example to demonstrate this is when Daniah was about to give up trying to complete the 'Ordering the Story Cycle' activity, having taken a wrong step. The following was observed:

> Daniah was playing the 'Ordering the Story Cycle' activity in the '*Eid Gift*' story sack and she started ordering the story events pictures. She managed to do the first three correctly but the fourth was not in the right order. The teacher, who was observing Daniah, sat beside her and asked "What happened in the story after she had the shower?" Daniah answered, "She combed her hair" and the teacher replied "Excellent.". Daniah corrected her mistake and continued the ordering. She stopped for a while. The teacher noticed that and asked her, "What are you doing now?" She said "I do not know which one I need to choose." The teacher asked her, "Did you go back to the story and check it?" Daniah answered "No, oh, I will do it right now." She went through the story again and successfully finished ordering the story events. Then she said, "I will do it by myself again now.". She mixed up the pictures and started again, managing to put all the events in the right order (Field notes, April 2014).

The observation above suggests that teacher scaffolding (Bruner, 1975) enhanced the child's competence; when the teacher provided encouraging and supportive feedback to the child it had a positive impact on the child's accomplishment and competence. In addition, in the interactive reading aloud sessions, teachers provided informational feedback during their interactions with children, as shown in the observation of the teacher's questions during one of these sessions. Teachers interacted with the children by asking questions and checking they understood the story; they provided informational feedback after wrong answers were given by correcting the answer or giving hints to allow children to come up with the correct answer themselves. This was observed when the teacher Lolo read aloud to three-year old children:

> The teacher asked them "What does the word 'desert' mean?" The children looked at the teacher but did not respond. Then the teacher said, "Look at the picture and tell me what you can see." One child said "Sand.", "Yes, excellent, there is sand in the desert. Is it hot or cold in the desert?" A child answered "Hot." She replied "So the desert is a place with a lot of sand, and hot weather. Is there something that doesn't usually happen in the desert?" A child guessed "People." She replied "Good guess, but there are many people in the desert, the thing is related to water." A child said "Rain." She replied, "Awesome! In the desert there is not much rain. Now we will see what the camel did when he was walking in the desert." (Field notes, April 2014).

Throughout the project, the teachers gave a range of informational feedback to students, which helped them to develop self-monitoring and self-evaluating skills. There had been little evidence of this prior to the project, which means that feelings of competence in relation to reading had not been developed to any great extent.

6.4 Need for Relatedness

After conducting the intervention project, the findings indicated that the children's relatedness was supported by increasing opportunities for social interaction in reading activities inside and outside the classroom. The level of teachers' and parents' involvement with the children in reading had increased, as well as the level of children's active cooperation in reading activities as was evident in the previous chapter. This combined approach seemed to satisfy children's needs for relatedness. The need for relatedness "refers to the warmth and caring received from interactions with others, resulting in a general sense of belonging" (Niemiec et al., 2006, p. 763). Giving children opportunities to satisfy their need for relatedness through meaningful interaction with others (teachers, parents, peers) in order to feel secure and valuable encouraged them to be intrinsically motivated towards engaging in reading activities.

In Chapter 5, a range of findings was presented which outlined how social practices around reading had changed dramatically due to the project. The frequency of teacher-led read aloud sessions increased (from twice a week to daily), as did the frequency of teacher-led small group reading in the Library Corner. The change was not just in the

frequency, but importantly, also in the quality of the involvement. For example, teachers were motivated to read stories to the children for mutual enjoyment, in contrast to the situation before the project. Teacher involvement with children and scaffolding of learning occurred more often, which was particularly noticeable in the use of story sacks. These changes affected the quantity and quality of the teachers' involvement with children in reading aloud which, in turn, seemed to support children's feelings of relatedness.

Similarly, the mothers' involvement with their children in reading activities significantly increased as a result of the project. The reason behind the increase in the mothers' involvement was their greater awareness of the importance of the early childhood phase and of reading in early childhood. Moreover, the teachers' efforts to include mothers in their children's reading by creating a targeted WhatsApp group, letting the children choose stories to borrow and share at home, as well as sending a sheet to get the mothers' opnions about books that were borrowed, were all effective ways to improve the mothers' involvment. These changes positively affected the quantity and quality of mothers' involvement with their children in reading as showen in Chapter 5. The mothers reported that regular involvement in their children's reading led to a stronger relationship between them and their children. The increase in the mothers' involvement with children in reading activity seemed to support children's feelings of relatedness, which partly explained why the children were intrinsically motivated to read.

Further, the involvement of peers in reading activities increased, as discussed in Chapter 5. Children worked more collaboratively in reading and related activities using iPads, story sacks and books. As with other types of involvement with teachers and parents, the result was an increase in children's feeling of relatedness leading to an intrinsic motivation to read. Once again, this is in line with SDT theories about relatedness and motivation (Deci & Ryan, 1985b).

6.5 Conclusion

This chapter indicates that the project addressed three basic psychological needs of autonomy, competence and relatedness. This, in turn, enhanced children's motivation for reading, and developed their sense of self-determination. SDT is a usful tool to reflect on children's reading for pleasure, at it allows an in depth analsys of the way in

which engagment and motivation are fostered. It helps to identify the specific ways in which the project impacted on reading in these kindergarten classrooms.

In the final chapter, I move on to consider the findings in relation to the research questions, and outline the implications for research, policy and practice.

CHAPTER 7 : CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Introduction

In this final chapter, I summarise the key findings in relation to the main research questions, discuss the limitations of the study and address the implications of the findings for future policymakers and practitioners. The final section of the chapter highlights the contribution of the study and suggests future research topics that need investigation in this area.

7.2 Key Findings

The two main research questions of this project were, 'What is the impact of a reading intervention, which introduced five 'elements' (iPads, story sacks, high quality books, interactive read aloud approach and the establishment of a home-school relationship) into the kindergarten classroom?' and 'How did the project impact on children's self-determination in reading for pleasure?'

In relation to the first research question, the findings show that the five different elements of the project (the use of iPads, story sacks and quality books, the interactive read alouds, and the development of a school-home partnership in reading) were very successful in promoting children's reading motivation and engagement. This builds on the work of Guthrie and Coddington (2009), Guthrie et al. (2004), Guthrie et al. (2006), Guthrie, Wigfield, and VonSecker (2000) and Niemiec et al. (2006, p. 763) on reading motivation, by focusing on a different age group (kindergarten) and a different context (Saudi Arabia). The children's enhanced motivation and engagement were clearly demonstrated in the way they expressed enjoyment when reading, spent more time reading, read more books and e-books, and shared reading more widely with friends and family so that reading became one of their key pleasure, as indicated in the vignettes in Chapter 4.

In relation to the second research question, drawing on Self-Determination Theory, it is possible to understand why the project had this level of impact. The children's need for autonomy before the project were not met, either in the resources provided in the classroom environment or in the pedagogical practices the teachers deployed, as the children had limited choices in the classroom environment and the teachers had a tendency to use a controlling teaching style. These findings are in line with Guthrie and Coddington (2009); Guthrie et al. (2004); Guthrie et al. (2006); Guthrie, Wigfield, and VonSecker (2000), who found that the use of controlling language thwarts autonomous motivation for any activity. After the project, however, the children's needs for autonomy were met, as the teachers used an autonomy-supportive teaching style that provided the learners with choices and opportunities to make their own decisions, with minimal external pressure Moller et al. (2006). Moreover, the children had various choices in reading, for example they had different tools to use for reading, such as books, iPads and story sacks; they had different activities related to the use of these tools and different places for reading including for example both inside and outside the classroom and at home. This finding is consistent with Deci & Ryan, (2000) and Orsini, Evans, & Jerez, (2015), who advocated the use of wide choices in reading in order to support students' autonomy.

The children's need for competence was also met as a result of the project. The children received a clear structure and guidelines in all five elements of the project, they were provided with optimal challenges, and their experiences were scaffolded by informational feedback from teachers and parents, all of which enabled them to engage positively in a range of reading activities. This is in line with the findings of De Naeghel, Van Keer, Vansteenkiste, Haerens, and Aelterman (2016), Jang, Reeve, & Deci, 2010 and Niemiec, Soenens, & Vansteenkiste, 2014, and Guthrie and Coddington (2009), all of whom found in their studies that children's sense of competence was supported by providing a clear structure and guidelines for children to follow, offering optimal challenges and providing informational feedback. The culture in Saudi Arabia does not actively encourage an SDT approach in early years teaching, but this study goes some way towards highlighting its value and potential use, particularly with regard to motivating children's reading.

Instructional support and a clear structure seemed to help the children engage in activities and understand how to complete them successfully and thus this had a positive influence on the children's achievement of activities, which enhanced their feelings of competence (Skinner & Belmont, 1993). De Naeghel et al. (2016) suggest that providing instructions and guidelines is essential when students use electronic storybooks. This was certainly the case in this Kindergarten, as the children did need support at times to access story apps effectively.

Providing optimal challenges can increase children's feelings of competence (De Jong & Bus, 2002; De Jong & Bus, 2004), since children tend to seek out challenges that, in turn, support their intrinsic need to be competent (Deci & Ryan, 1985b) and to believe in their ability to master those challenges and feel competent (Deci & Porac, 1978). Hardre and Reeve (2003) found that challenging tasks motivate children to read more. When learners require personal competence and face optimal challenges as part of the task experience 'flow', they give the task their full attention and this maximises their cognitive processes Turner and Paris (1995). In this study, the teachers worked hard to provide reading experiences that offered challenges to the children and allowed them to extend their learning within a supportive context.

The idea within SDT is that positive informational feedback enhances children's need for competence (Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Providing informational feedback is essential to support students' competence through scaffolding their thinking by using formative assessment to self-monitor and self-evaluate (Forde et al., 2016). This point is illustrated by the notion of ZPD, where teacher scaffolding (informational feedback) helps children to achieve the goals they cannot without teacher support (Turner, 2014).

The children's needs for relatedness were fulfilled as a result of the project, by involving teachers, family members and peers in reading and related activties with the children (Vygotsky, 1978). The effects of adults' interpersonal involvement or relatedness on children's intrinsic motivation and autonomous self-regulation have only been explored in a few studies (Deci & Ryan, 1985b).

Table 7-1, below, shows how the five elements of the project motivated children to read by fostering all three key aspects of SDT.

Table 7-1: The Five Elements of the Project Met All Three Needs

Need for	Story Sacks	iPads	Quality Books	Interactive reading aloud	School-Home partnership
Autonomy	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
Competence	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
Relatedness	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
Children were intrinsically motivated to read					

The intervention project was successful due to its focus on the following elements:

- I devised an intervention project that drew from what I had identified in the literature as being important elements for fostering motivation and engagement with reading;
- I discussed my project and the professional workshops, and their potential to improve educational outcomes in the Kindergarten, with the head teacher, both to get her support and to ensure the project was in line with the Kindergarten's culture;
- I provided in-school training for the teachers, in which I modeled relevant behaviours;
- I provided high-quality resources;
- I provided ongoing support for the teachers throughout the project.

A review of the literature on CPD in education shows that there are a number of characteristics that make training programmes more effective. These include the need for senior leaders to understand the potential to improve standards (Ryan & Powelson, 1991); the training content should be challenging, up-to-date and relevant to classroom practice (Pedder & Opfer, 2011); training should be delivered in the workplace,

embedded in daily practice, and should fit with the school culture and values(Brown et al., 2001); the training programme should be followed up with ongoing support to reinforce learning (Donaldson, 2010). My project added to these principles, which may have contributed to its success.

7.3 Limitations of the Study

The main limitation of this study is that it took place in only one Kindergarten, and therefore it is not possible to generalise. However, as all Kin Makkah District implements the same curriculum and daily programme, it is likely that many of the aspects of the study could be found in those other settings, and therefore a similar intervention project might work if extended to other Kindergartens. The study's findings may serve as useful guidelines to improve reading for pleasure in similar educational systems, with similar cultures and shared language.

Another limitation is that the intervention project was limited to twelve weeks, which could have been longer in order to follow changes in the children's motivation for reading in the longer term. It would have been valuable to see if the positive changes were sustained over time. However, I was unable to study any longer due to the constraints of my PhD study, which had a fixed end date; nevertheless, the three months of the study enabled me to collect a wide range of data to inform my analysis.

Finally the project was qualitative in nature and it is not possible to assert a direct correlation between the intervention and the outcomes, as this was not a randomised control trial. Nevertheless, I strove for rigour and validity in reporting the findings, as outlined in Chapter 3, which may enhance confidence in the findings

7.4 Implications of the Findings

The findings of the study have a number of implications for policy, research and practice, which are outlined below.

7.4.1 Implications for policy

The findings of the study have important implications for policy. The study indicates that an intensive, time-focused intervention project for Kindergarten teachers was successful in promoting children's motivation for and engagement in reading. It would be useful, therefore, for policymakers to implement a similar programme more widely,

7.4.1.1 Running Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

Running continuing professional development workshops and training programmes for teachers and principals in other Kindergartens in the country should be implemented in the following topics: using iPads, story sacks, high quality books, interactive read aloud approach and the establishment of a home-school relationship to promote reading for pleasure.

7.4.1.2 Providing Additional Resources

The government could also provide additional resources, such as iPads, story sacks and quality books to Kindergartens, as these were found to be useful for fostering reading for pleasure. Kindergartens in Saudi Arabia are generally not well-equipped, and thus offering such extra provision would be helpful. Finally, the Ministry of Education could facilitate follow-up studies on this topic that involve a larger number of Kindergartens. Creating communities of teachers who could collaborate in this area would be useful for sustaining changes in practice over time.

7.4.2 Implications for Practitioners

This research attempts to influence future plans for teaching practice to be implemented, where appropriate, in accordance with the intervention project's key principles. It also seeks to promote effective methods of teaching, leading towards a high quality Saudi Kindergarten education system.

Teachers could be encouraged and supported to take on board many of the practices developed in my intervention and make them standard practice in the classroom. These practices should take account of the theories explored and presented in this research,

particularly those that relate to the three main psychological needs (autonomy, competence and relatedness) of learners. Teachers should ensure that children are offered opportunities to make their own choices in reading activities (what to read, where, when, how and with whom); these include providing an environment that fosters reading for pleasure by considering the use of iPads, story sacks and high quality books in different educational corners. To maximise the benefits of these tools, Kindergarten teachers in Saudi Arabia need to consider the following issues, based on the successful strategies adopted in the intervention project evaluated in this study.

First of all, apps need to be selected according to children's interests and ability, to provide optimal challenges, to be suitable for their culture and related to their lives and experiences. In addition, the features of apps must attract children's attention by, for example, having a read aloud facility combined with highlighting the text, and should also allow children to have control of their reading by using function buttons to move around the text. Teachers should introduce iPads to children in a way that ensures the children fully understand how to use them, by initially providing clear instructions and guidance and offering ongoing support as needed. Teachers should also exploit the potential of iPads as collaborative reading tools (double headphones, larger screen) to encourage shared reading and maximise children's enjoyment.

Second, there are a number of things that teachers should consider when creating story sacks to maximise their use and their appeal to children. First and foremost, the main characters of any chosen story should lend themselves to wider creative activities, for example, the making or buying of puppets and other props. The topic of the story should be considered in light of how it can either link into the teaching content of other units or relate to children's lives and experiences. Also, the story's lesson or moral should be considered in terms of how it can be applied to children's personal social development. Teachers should develop story sack activities that not only stimulate children's interest and sense of fun, but also help them to develop a deeper understanding of the story and related topics, and offer optimal challenges. One example is creating puzzles around the sequence of the story, which are not only fun to do but also help the children develop comprehension skills and motivate them to re-read the story, either by themselves or with a friend, which leads to a better understanding of the story. Other activities could include memory cards, a story map, jigsaw puzzles and the use of puppets and props.

To ensure the best use of story sacks, the teacher responsible should produce some guidance notes for caregivers in order to support their interactions with the children. Key points to include are the contents of the story sack and how to use them, and suggested questions to use with children during these interactions. Teachers should introduce story sack activities after first reading a story aloud and showing the children character puppets and props. They need to demonstrate to children how to use the different activities by providing clear instructions and guidance, followed by observation and intervention if required, and offering hints and informational feedback. This approach, combined with encouraging collaborative learning, will ensure that children fully understand how to do the activities, feel competent in doing them and so get maximum benefit from them.

Third, high quality books need to be provided in Kindergartens. In order to select these, teachers need to be knowledgeable and up-to-date about the availability of existing children's literature and new publications, understand children's interests and personal circumstances, consider the opportunities that particular books can provide for optimal challenges and determine how a book will link to the content of an educational unit.

High quality books should not be restricted to the Library Corner but should be available across all educational corners and used in a variety of ways. These might include the teacher reading aloud interactively to a child or a small group or providing opportunities for peer collaborative reading. Teachers should also provide puppets in the classroom, either those linked directly to a book to encourage children to read the story or other pet puppets that children can read to and feel a sense of connection with. To maintain a high level of interest and curiosity in books, teachers should adopt the idea of 'Story of the Day', which motivates children to visit the Library Corner every day to find out what is new.

Fourth, teachers should adapt their current passive reading aloud strategies and develop a more interactive approach, which has greater benefits for both teachers' and children's enjoyment and the development of children's comprehension and literacy skills. During reading aloud sessions, teachers should facilitate interaction with and between children and engage them by using the following techniques: reading aloud the information provided on the front cover, pointing to the text while reading, asking the children

different questions during the session, relating story events to the children's lives, and encouraging children to imitate the characters' movements.

Finally, teachers should work closely with parents with regard to supporting children's reading for pleasure. Co-operation can take the form of workshops for parents to provide them with an awareness of the importance of early childhood and reading, highlight the criteria for choosing appropriate, high quality books and present some examples of these, share ideas to encourage reading in their children's daily life, model reading aloud practices and give them the chance to practice reading aloud. Parents should be encouraged to read aloud with their children at home on a regular basis, not only by raising their awareness of the importance of early childhood literacy and read aloud strategies, but also by enabling children to select books, and even story sacks, to take home through establishing a borrowing system.

7.5 Recommendations for Future Research

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations for future research are made:

The first is to conduct a follow-up study by extending the sample of the study to ten Kindergartens over the period of one year, in order to determine the possibility of implementing this project in a larger number of Saudi Arabia Kindergartens.

The second is to examine each supplementary question of this study separately (the use of story sacks, iPads and high quality books, the use of intractive reading alouds, and the development of school-home reading partnerships) to find out their individual and specific impact on children's reading for pleasure.

In addition, further research into the professional development needs of teachers in Saudi Arabia in relation to promoting children's reading and classroom management would be beneficial.

7.6 Contribution of the Study

The distinct contribution of this study is in its seeking to address the lack of reading for pleasure in early childhood education in the Saudi context by offering solutions for practice. Previous research has identified the concept of reading for pleasure in response to issues related to literacy levels and lack of reading for enjoyment, but there has been very limited research on how to solve the problem in the Saudi context and across the wider Arabic region. Worldwide, there is very limited research on this topic at the Kindergarten level. My research study has evaluated the impact of various practical approaches to promote reading for pleasure in Saudi Arabia, specifically at the Kindergarten level, and thus meets a crucial need. It is hoped that in the future years, this research contributes to the enhancement of practice in early years education in Saudi Arabia.

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APPENDIX

Appendix A

Some of the title of children's picture books

The Story's Title English	The Story's Title Arabic-English	The Auther
Lost Wishes	Al-amany Al-Daiah	Dar Alfalah
Like my Mother	mathal umy	Mohamed Bassam
insects	Al hasharat	Dar Al-shimal
Barney What will I Do When I Get Older	Barney mada safal endama osbeh kaberan	Samo Bers Group
My Bbig House	Bayty alkabeer	Mohamed Bassam
What Do Sheep Eat?	mada ta'kl alkeraf	Dar Safeer
Fish Swims in the Water	Samokha tasbah fe almaa	Dar Safeer
Barney is inside, outside and Everywhere	Barney fe aldakel wa alkarej wa fe kl makan	Mary Andiko & Marjy Larson
Kitten	katota	Toneyy Wolf
Animal Farm	haywanat almazraa	Dar Al-Shimal
Pets	alhaywanat al-alifa	Dar Al-Shimal
Little Tiger Discovers	Namoor alsageer yaktashef	Dar Al Maaref
I Love Fish	Aheb alsamak	Seham Kabkebi
Little Lamb Discovers	Alhamel alsageer yaktashef	Dar Al Maaref
Barney Plays a Game of Nose to Feet	Barney yalab lobah men al-anf ela alcademine	Mary Andiko & Marjy Larson
Cat or Fish or Rabbit	kita am samaka am arnab bary	Abada Taqla
Little Duckling Discovers	batot alsageer yaktashef	Dar Al Maaref
The Naughty Ccow	albaqarah al-shaqia	Tony Wolf
The Wolf and the Three Bulls	althb wa atheran athalath	Dar Alfalah
Good Manner	Husn atasarof	Dar Alfalah
The Two Frogs	Al-difda'an	Shada Fareaa and Maher Abdulwahed
Nada Plays the Doctor Game	nada talab lebat altabeeb	Emily Beaumont
Playing Peekaboo	lebat Peekaboo	Jarir Bookstore
The Little Bird	Al-asfoor Alsageer	Shada Fareaa and Maher Abdulwahed
Playground Problems	Mushkelat Malab Al-atfal	Margaret McNamara
Salem's ambulance	sayarat esaf salem	Emily Beaumont
The Cat Fufu	al-qita Fofo	Knooz
The Judger Maimon	Algady Maimon	Knooz
Barney and Baby Bob Visit the Doctor	Barney wa Baby Bob yazoraan altabeb	Margie Larsen
Election Day	yawm al-entekabat	Margaret McNamara
Clothes Do not Grow Up	Al-theab la takbr	Fatenah Wahbi
Bath Time	Waqt Alhamam	Fatenah Wahbi
A Picnic in the Airship	Nozha fe almentad	Fatenah Wahbi
The Bubble Game	Lobat alfoqa'at	Fatenah Wahbi
Carriage Race	sebag Al-araabat	Fatenah Wahbi
The Neglecting Wolf	Altheeb Almu-tanakeer	Jarir Bookstore
ambulance	sayart Al-esa'af	Dar Al Maaref
What is my Favorite Food	Ma howa ta'ami almufadal	Almaaref
Zena Playes the Seller Game	Zena talab leibat albayei	Emily Beaumont
Magda Plays The Home Cleaning Game	Majda tala'ab lobat tandeef almanzel	Emily Beaumont
Martin Luther King's Day	Yom Martin Luther King	Margaret McNamara

Let us pray as the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) taught us	Haya nosaley cama alamna rasol allah	Khalid Miqdad
The Bird's Fridge	Thalajt al-asafeer	Mohamed Makrm
The Lamb Does not Want Water	Alkaroof la yoreed almaa	Mohamed Makrm
Science	Al-oloom	Saniah
The City of Ice Cream and Cream	Madenat al-muthalajat wa alkrema	Abadh Taqla
Who Lives in the New House	man yaskon fe albayt aljadeed	Fateemah Alhamsi
What Do the Sheep Eat?	ma the ta'akle alkeraf	Fateemah Alhamsi
Baby Animals	sgar alhaywaanat	Jarir Bookstore
The Tortoise and the Rabbit	Alarnab Wa Alsolhafa	Knooz
A Friend of Bakur	Sadeg bakoor	Nahed Alshwa
Bakoor's Hat	Tarbosh Bakoor	Nahed Alshwa
The Star	Al-najma	Mohamed Bassam
The Cat Helps Others	Alketa Tusa'eed Alakhareen	Mohamed Bassam
A Different Friend	Shadeq Moqtalef	Ameenh Kaleet
Is it Time?	Hal Han Alwaqt	Mohamed Bassam
I Love Writing	Ana ahob Alketaba	Mohamed Bassam
Tell me Tell me	Akhberni Akhberni	Mohamed Bassam
Andi is the Best Perfume	Andi Atiab Eiter	Nahed Alshwa
The Police Officer	Al-shurtee	Almostqbal Alraqmi
Snow White	Snow white	Jarir Bookstore
peekaboo	leebat peekaboo	Jarir Bookstore
Boney the Little Horse	Boney alhissan asageer	Dar Al Maaref
The Five Senses	Alhawaas alkams	Emily Beaumont
Cinderella	Cinderella	Aydah Hennah
Husam and the Ball	Husam wa alkurrah	Amaat Allah
The Best Present	Ajmal hadeya	Alaa Mazeed
I am not a Girl	ana lasto fatat	Mohamed Bassam
I am the Fish	ana alsamaka	Khiria Dersi
It does not Fly	enaho la yateer	Mohamed Bassam
I know I know	Aaref Aaref	Mohamed Bassam
Where are you?	ayna ant	Mohamed Bassam
Last One	marah okra faqat	Dr.Alber Motlaq
I am the Duck	ana albata	Khiria Dersi
Arwa Draws	Arwa tarsom	Mohamed Bassam
Down	Taht	Seham Kabkeebi
Me and Daddy are Friends	Ana wa baba sadeqan	Leena Ateeh
Bath Time	Al-estehmaam	Alfeer Srtan
The New House	Albayt aljadeed	Alfeer Srtan
The Ugly Duck	Albatta alkabeha	Dar Alshamal
My Little Brother Cries	Akee al-sageer yabkee	Seema Rabeea
The Insects	Al-hasharaat	Jarir Bookstore
I am Now a Man	sert rejal	Alaa Mazeed
Alice in Wonderland	Alice fe belaad al-ajaeeb	Dar Rebeea
Where is my Friend?	ayna sadeeqaty	Wedad Ayash
Nadeems's Shoes	Hetha'a Nadeem	Abeer Altaheer
I am the Butterfly	Ana Alfrasha	Khiria Dersi
Animals in the Zoo	Haywanat algaba	Dar Alshamal
The Red Hat	Al-koba'a alhamra	Dar Alshamal
Barney Goes to the Dentist	Barney yath-hab ela tabeeb	Dar Alelm

	al-asnan	
In the Zoo	Fe hadeygat alhaywanat	Estfan
Bo and Ba in the Party	Bo wa Ba fe alhafla	Olof and Lina Landström
Scribbley the Ktten	karboosh alqet asageer	Almaref
The Cat and the Bell	Al-kit wa aljaras	Jarir Bookstore
Here I am, Barney	Ha ana Barney	Koleen
Colors	Al-alwaan	Dar Alshrooq
Water	Alma'a	Dar Alshrooq
Wild animals	alhaywaanaat albareya	Jarir Bookstore
Barney is Mine	Barney le wahdy	Sheril Birk
Animals in the Zoo	Haywaanat almazra'a	Jarir Bookstore
Who Does this Belong to?	leman takoon hatheh	Zeina Zain
Where Do I Live?	Ayna a eysh	Zeina Zain
Lama's Brother Gets Ssick	ako lama yamrad	Konela Folda
Lamia Plays the Role of Veterinary Doctor	lamia talab daor altabyba albaytaryah	Emily Bomon
Hazelnut	Bondg	Tony Wolf
Let us pray to Allah as the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) taught us	Haya nadwo Allah kma almna rasool Allah	Khalid Miqdad

Appendix B

Some of the title of children's e-books

My Friend The Horse "Al-Husan Shadiqi"

Haitham And The Three Thieves "Haitham wa alwsos althalatha"

The Little Tiny Boy "Esba'a Aklah"

Try And Find Out " Asa'al wa Hawel"

The Letter ship "Sahfinat Alhorof"

Doll With One Leg "Domia be Kadam Wahedah"

Hamza's prize "Ja'ezat Hamza"

Duckling Farfora "Farfora Albatah"

Beware of wolves "Ehzaro Alzeab"

The dwarfs at the bridge "Akzam Aljeser Alkashabi

The monkey and the herd "Alkerd wa Alkateea"

Gazelle Ghosa "Gazelle ghosa"

The Birds Drink Tomorrow "Alkfash Yashrab Gadan"

The Treasure "Al-Kanz"

Just Tash "Alkandeel Tash"

Nona and the Rats "Nona wa Alfe'raan"

Mimi's Milk "Haleeb Mimi"

Sugar Grains "fatafet Alsokar"

Ma'ma And Hossam "Mama wa Hossam"

Waleed and The Thieves "Waleed Wa Allsos Althalatha"

The Peach Trees Friends "Khelan Alkhokh"

Don't Be Angry, Dada "La Yaqdab Dada"

A Beautiful Tree "Shashara Jamilah"

Plant War "Harb Alkwakeb"

Appendix C

The Interview Questions

Interview Questions with Teachers Before the Project

Teachers believes and practices:

1. What do you see as being the most important aims of early childhood and primary education?
2. What do you see as being the most important responsibilities of a teacher with regard to teaching reading?
3. What exactly do you think 'learning to read' means within the context that you work?
4. What strategies do you use to promote reading in the classroom?

Classroom physical environment:

1. How do you feel about your classroom environment? How to promote learning in it
2. Have you got a book corner in the classroom?
3. How do you use the book corner in your teaching activities?
4. Tell me how did you set up the book corner?
5. How did you decide on the books in the library corner?
6. How do children choose to go to the book corner? (Directed, flexibility to choose)
7. What children do in book corner? What kinds of activities children do in book corner?
8. Tell me how the book corner works in your classroom?
9. Are you happy with it?
10. Are they any ways in which you feel it could be developed more fully?

Environment:

1. What features of the classroom environment support children's reading? in what ways?
2. Do you have books around other learning corners in the classroom? (Water area, explore area)
3. Do you have a display on the walls about children's books or stories?
4. What are the corners that have print words or pictures in the classroom?
5. Is there another way in which you promote children's reading through the environment?

Reading Aloud:

1. Do you read aloud to children in the classroom?
2. Do you think this is important – if yes why?
3. Can you tell me how often do you read aloud to children?
4. When do you read aloud?
5. How would you choose the books for reading aloud?
6. Are there specific rules that children should follow during reading aloud time?
7. What techniques do you use in reading aloud practice?

Teachers subject knowledge of children's literature:

1. How would you choose the books for the classroom?
2. Are there particular children's authors that you think is suitable for this age group?
3. How do you find out about new books, and new stories to incorporate in your classroom?

On children practises:

1. Do you think the children in your class are interested in books? If so Which ones? Why?
2. Do they enjoy stories?
3. Tell me the names of the stories that you think children like the most?
4. Why do you think they like it the most?
5. Are there any differences between the types of stories girls and boys read?
6. Is children's play related to stories that they have read or heard?

Using ICT:

1. Do you use technology to promote children's reading in the classroom? If yes what? and how?
2. Do you think children use technology at home that promotes reading? If yes what? and how?
3. Do you use iPad to promote children's reading in the classroom? If yes how?
4. Do you know app's name that promotes reading?

Home school link:

1. Is there any communication between teachers and mothers regarding to reading? If so, what kinds of communication do you have?

2. What about reading for pleasure is there any communication between teachers and mothers? If so, what?
3. What kind of reading experiences do you think children have at home?
4. Have you got children who are able to read but they do not like reading in the classroom? If yes? What do you think the reasons are for this? What do you do to address this?
5. What do you think parents feel towards reading for pleasure?

Initial training:
1. Did you have any teacher training? If so, were you given any training on promoting reading for pleasure and children literature?
2. Are there any teacher training programmes available for you on promoting reading for pleasure and children literature?
3. What professional development training do you have on promoting reading for pleasure and children literature?
4. What kind of (professional development) (teachers' training) would you value in this area?

Final:
1. Do you have any recommendation to promote children's reading for pleasure?
2. Tell me about your own reading for pleasure in your own life?

Questions with Teachers after the Project

How did you find the overall project?
Which training session did you find the most and least useful – why?

Can you comments specifically on:
The training session with parents?
The training session, which was about story sack?
The training session, which was about high quality books?
The training session, which was about using iPad in the classroom?
The training session, which was about reading aloud practice?

Do you feel that the project has altered your classroom practice in any way?

How has the project changed the way you work with parents, if at all?
How has the project changed the way you work in the classroom environment, if at all? In what ways?
How has the project changed the way you read aloud with children, if at all? In what ways?
How has the project changed the way you use an iPad in the classroom, if at all? In what ways?

Did you notice any changes in children's engagement with reading?
What was the most successful aspect of the project from your point of you?
What was the most challenging aspect of the project from your point of you?
Will the project impact on your teaching practise in long term and if so, how?If not, why not?
What you will do as a result of the project?
Would you like to add anything

Questions with Parents (Mothers)

How did you find the overall project?
Did you read to your child stories before the project? If yes when? how many times per week? What kind of books?
Can you comment on the training session that you have attended?
Did you notice any changes in your child's engagement with reading?
What did you notice about your child's engagement in reading over the weeks? in which way has s/he changed, if at all? Could you give me examples?
Did you read to your child stories before the project? If yes how many times per week? When? What kinds of books?
What about after the workshop, did you read stories with your child? If yes how many times per week? what kind of reading do you do – what texts – what time of day – for what purpose etc?
Did your husband read stories to your child before or after the project?
Is there is anybody in your house read to your child? Who? How often?
How has the project impacted on reading activities with your child? Could you give me examples?
Did your child engage in any other reading activities during the project?
Would you like to add anything?

Questions with Children during and after the project

What did you enjoyduring the last weeks? Why?

What is your favourite story?

What is your favourite corner? Why?

What do you like to do in the book corner? Why?

Has anything about the classroom changed over the past few weeks?

What has changed?

What do you feel about it?

Tell me about your reading over the past few weeks.

what do you think about your classroom (environment)?

what do and do not enjoy at school?

what they think about reading?

what do you read – what do/don't you enjoy reading?

Do you like having books/stories read to them etc?

What puts them off reading?

Appendix D

University of Sheffield Ethical Approval

The University Of Sheffield.

The School Of Education.

Sumayah Zafar
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20 December 2013

Dear Sumayah

ETHICAL APPROVAL LETTER

Promoting reading for pleasure with kindergarten children in Saudi Arabia

Thank you for submitting your ethics application. I am writing to confirm that your application has now been approved, and you can proceed with your research.

This letter is evidence that your application has been approved and should be included as an Appendix in your final submission.

Good luck with your research.

Yours sincerely

[redacted]

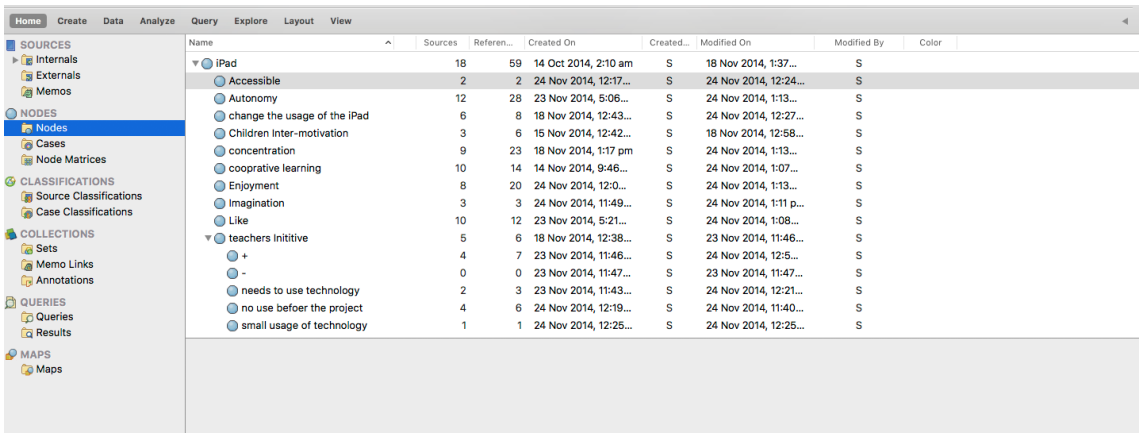
Professor Dan Goodley
Chair of the School of Education Ethics Review Panel

CC Prof Jackie Marsh

Appendix E

Examples of the first and the second level coding

First level coding



Second level coding