

Using Raz-kids Reading Program to Enhance Fifth Grade EFL Omani Students' Reading Comprehension Skills and Boost their Motivation

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Abstract: This study aimed to evaluate the impact of Raz-kids program on the reading comprehension of fifth-grade students using a quasi-experimental design. A total of 64 students from Welayat Bidbid School in A'Dakhilia Governorate in the Sultanate of Oman, were divided into two groups: control and experimental. Over a two-month period, the experimental group used Raz-kids reading program daily at home, engaging in reading activities, listening exercises, and quizzes to enhance their reading skills. The findings indicated a noticeable improvement in reading comprehension scores, although it is not statistically significant, among participant students in the experimental group compared to the control group. Also, it was found that, the program positively influenced students' motivation towards reading, with participants expressing a willingness to recommend it to their peers. These results suggest that Raz-kids program is an effective supplementary tool for improving reading comprehension and fostering positive attitudes towards reading among fifth-grade students.

Keywords: Reading comprehension, Raz-kids program, motivation.

استخدام برنامج القراءة (راز كيدز) لتعزيز مهارات الاستيعاب القرائي في اللغة الانجليزية لدى طلاب الصف الخامس العمانيين وزيادة دافعيتهم

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المستخلص: هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى تقييم أثر برنامج راز كيدز في الفهم القرائي لدى طلاب الصف الخامس الأساسي باستخدام التصميم شبه التجريبي. تم تقسيم 64 طالباً من مدرسة ولاية بدبد بمحافظة الداخلية بسلطنة عمان إلى مجموعتين: ضابطة وتجريبية. على مدار شهرين، استخدمت المجموعة التجريبية برنامج القراءة راز كيدز يومياً في المنزل، وانخرطت في أنشطة القراءة، وتمارين الاستماع، والاختبارات لتعزيز مهارات القراءة لديهم، وأشارت النتائج إلى تحسن ملحوظ في درجات الفهم القرائي، وإن كانت غير دالة إحصائياً. لدى الطلاب المشاركين في المجموعة التجريبية مقارنة بالمجموعة الضابطة، كما تبين أن البرنامج أثر بشكل إيجابي على دافعية الطلاب نحو القراءة، حيث أبدى المشاركون استعدادهم للتوصية به لأقرانهم، وتشير هذه النتائج إلى أن برنامج راز كيدز يعد أداة تكميلية فعالة لتحسين الاستيعاب القرائي وتعزيز الاتجاهات الإيجابية نحو القراءة لدى طلاب الصف الخامس. الكلمات المفتاحية: الاستيعاب القرائي، برنامج راز كيدز، الدافعية.

1- Introduction.

Reading is often regarded a crucial language skill that enhances several other skills, such as listening, speaking, vocabulary development, and writing. Moreover, proficiency in reading is necessary not only within the educational setting but also for functioning as a prosperous and self-reliant individual in current society (Al-Owais, 2021; Al-Jaref, 2023). Proficiency in reading is essential for adults to effectively perform professional tasks, maintain familiar relationships, and fulfil daily responsibilities. Consequently, students without essential reading abilities are unable to extract meaning from their reading material, resulting in diminished motivation to engage in reading. They have a lack of motivation when it comes to engaging in activities related to reading and writing (Al-Qathani, 2016). Reading is considered to be one of the most crucial academic skills in educational institutions. Proficiency in reading is a prerequisite for children to pursue other academic subjects. When engaging in the study of subjects such as mathematics, physics, and social studies, students are obligated to peruse instructions, word problems, and passages from textbooks. Students who fail to attain autonomy in reading frequently, experience difficulties in other academic domains, leading to a widening disparity in academic performance as they progress through school (Melekoglu & Wilkerson, 2013). Moreover, reading holds significance beyond the academic realm; proficiency in literacy is essential for functioning as a prosperous and self-reliant individual in modern society. Reading is a multifaceted task that necessitates various skills, including deciphering unfamiliar words, recognizing familiar terms, understanding specialized vocabulary, and remembering information and events from the book. Lacina (2006) identifies five fundamental ideas that are crucial for reading instruction: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Phonemic awareness emerges from early childhood (Moutsinas & Juan Orosco, 2023). The majority of young students are expected to possess knowledge of most alphabet letters and their corresponding phonetic sounds upon starting school. Phonics instruction aims to support pupils in deciphering and constructing words by emphasizing the distinct sounds of vowels and consonants, together with their corresponding symbols. When encountering an unfamiliar word, students need to utilize their phonics abilities (Virgilli, 2020).

An effective approach to address this issue is to involve children in collaborative reading activities. Shared reading allows students to engage with a variety of texts, which can help boost their motivation to read (Thoermer & Williams, 2012). In recent times, educational institutions have been acquiring web-based supplementary reading programs to enhance students' reading skills and boost their extracurricular pursuits.

Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) has facilitated the integration of technology into the classroom as an additional instructional tool (Khayabani, 2014). Learners get engaged in competition which lead to satisfaction from the sense of accomplishment at the end of each level, as feedback is promptly sent in the majority of digital books and interactive reading passages (Marchand, 2015).

Utilizing technology as a means to assist young children is considered one of the tactics employed in early reading instruction (A-siyabi, 2016). Multiple software applications and on-line platforms are specifically designed for the purpose of reading. Raz-Kids is an on-line computer application designed for young readers (Yeh Ho & Smrekar, 2020). It was initially introduced as a component of the Learning A-Z resources in 2004. The aim of this program is to enhance the accessibility and pleasure of reading for youngsters (Carroll et al., 2007). The program's functions allow students to engage in activities such as listening to proficient reading, recording their own reading for practice, and taking a quiz upon completion of their reading. Furthermore, it enables teachers to generate distinct profiles for individual students, so enabling them to engage in self-directed reading at their own proficiency level (Toste et al., 2020).

1-2-Statement of the Problem:

Proficiency in reading is widely considered to be the most crucial academic skill since it allows students to gain the necessary knowledge in various subject areas. According to Carnine and Carnine (2004), students who do not develop fundamental reading abilities throughout their early years of schooling are unlikely to achieve advanced reading skills and academic performance in subsequent grades. The act of reading poses challenges across several educational stages in Oman. According to Al-Rashdi (2016), tenth-grade pupils have a low reading frequency and lack the chance to choose their reading materials. Furthermore, the majority of students engage in repetitive reading assignments each year for their independent reading, irrespective of their proficiency level and personal interests. Additionally, most of the teachers are responsible for selecting the reading materials for their students. A'thehli (2015) observed that the motivation of Omani students to engage in reading is adversely impacted, leading to a lack of interest even in

simple reading assignments. In their study, Al Seyabi and Al Amri (2016) investigated the attitudes of Omani students towards English as a Foreign Language (EFL) reading during two educational stages: the final two years of secondary school (grades 11 and 12) and their initial year of university study when they join English foundation programs. The study discovery of students' failure to apply the reading abilities learned in school to the university environment is highly concerning, since it highlights a significant disparity between these two settings. The purpose for this study emerges due to the scarcity of research in Oman addressing the benefits of using reading applications to enhance reading comprehension and students' desire towards reading, as stated in the literature. Various reading programs have been devised and implemented worldwide as supplementary resources in educational institutions. Subsequently, they were showcased as programs on Google Play and Apple Store to streamline the accessibility and purchase procedure. One of these programs is Raz-kids program. The effectiveness of incorporating technology into education to enhance students' literacy development lies in its capacity to foster critical thinking, cooperation, constructivism, efficiency, and information assessment, all of which are essential skills for the modern period (Asselin, 2001). E-books have emerged as a new and effective solution for kids who are hesitant to engage in reading. Given the predominant interests of the current age. Curiously, children engage in their task and complete their responsibilities without experiencing boredom (Carroll, 2013). Many schools in Oman can benefit from using Raz-kids reading program to enhance students' reading comprehension and cater to the needs and interests of learners, fostering a lifelong love for reading. The present study aimed to facilitate the seamless incorporation of digital reading into both home and classroom settings for instructors and parents. This might be achieved by familiarizing Parents with various reading devices, reading apps, and digital reading formats. The findings are expected to provide guidance for optimizing the utilization of devices and applications to cater to the digital reading requirements of Arab youngsters.

1-3-Research Questions:

The study is designed to answer the following questions

- 1- Are there any statistically significant differences between the experimental group and the control group's scores in the reading post-test scores attributed to the implementation of the Raz-kids program?
- 2- What are Omani six graders attitudes towards using Raz-kids program to enhance their reading skills?

1-4-Research Purpose:

This study aimed to examine the effectiveness of Raz-kids' internet-computer-based reading program in enhancing students' reading comprehension and fostering their independent reading habits. The study also sought to examine students' attitudes towards this program and the extent to which they perceived it as beneficial.

1-5-Significance of the study:

The findings of the current study are expected to help in various areas:

1. Raising the awareness of the impact of technology on teaching and learning English.
2. Infusing Raz-kids program in teaching reading as an independent reading task in cycle one and cycle two schools in the Sultanate of Oman.
3. Boosting students' self-reliance in monitoring their own progress.
4. Raising students' motivation toward reading.

1-6-Definition of Terms

- **Raz-kids Program:** Raz-kids is an on-line reading program designed for young readers that was introduced in 2004 as a component of the Learning A-Z resources. The program's functionalities enable learners to engage in activities such as listening to proficient reading, recording their own reading for the purpose of practice, and completing a quiz at the conclusion of the reading material (Carroll et al., 2007). Additionally, it enables teachers to establish separate accounts for each student, so enabling individual students to engage in independent reading at their own proficiency level. Points are given as a reward for engaging in the activities of listening to and reading the story, as well as taking the quiz.

- **Reading Comprehension:** According to Carnine and Carnine (2004), reading comprehension refers to the capacity to understand symbols and use them for effective communication. Reading comprehension, from the researcher's perspective, refers to the learner's capacity to grasp the meaning conveyed in a text.
- **Motivation:** Motivation encompasses both intrinsic and extrinsic aspects that stimulate students to engage in learning with enthusiasm and pleasure. It can be measured using a motivation scale and it has a beneficial impact on students' reading comprehension.

2-Literature Review and Related Studies.

2-1-Literature Review.

2-1-1-Raz-Kids Program and Reading Comprehension:

Students derive advantages by engaging in storytelling and active listening. By engaging in storytelling, kids are exposed to unexpected language patterns and knowledge of new vocabulary (Al-Musawi et al., 2017). Research has demonstrated that actively listening to a proficient reader can enhance one's reading fluency and facilitate the expansion of vocabulary (Cunningham, 2005). In a study conducted by Marchand (2015), the objective was to ascertain the efficacy of the computer application Raz-Kids in promoting independent reading and enhancing a student's guided reading level, fluency, and comprehension. The study involved four first graders who had a learning problem. The Raz-Kids on-line reading program was assigned for individual use, with each session lasting 15 minutes. This allocation occurred during the literacy intervention phase, taking place 3 times a week for a total of 16 weeks. The Developmental Reading Assessment was administered monthly to assess student proficiency in guided reading, fluency, and comprehension. The study employed a single-subject design featuring A B phases. The findings indicated that the students who took part in the program experienced a notable improvement in their guided reading levels and fluency. The researcher hypothesized that incorporating the Raz-Kids program into reading teaching and small group guided reading would prove advantageous for struggling readers. Multiple studies, including this one, have demonstrated that the Raz-Kids program fosters a favourable classroom atmosphere, resulting in heightened student involvement in reading activities, favourable attitudes towards reading, and a greater inclination to read autonomously.

2-1-2-Motivation and Reading Comprehension:

Reading motivation is distinct from an individual's long-lasting enthusiasm for participating in reading activities. The importance of reading motivation stems from its association with academic success and behavioural consequences. According to Grabe and Stoller (2002), reading motivation is essential since it increases students' motivation to understand written content. Enhancing reading motivation is crucial for English learners to enhance their comprehension of written text. In general, a lack of incentive to read suggests that pupils are reading at a level lower than their grade level. The issue of insufficient motivation arises throughout the initial phases of the student's prior academic years, leading to a detrimental impact on the student's self-confidence. In order to address this issue, the initial measure entails granting students the opportunity to engage in reading. There is a belief that the level of understanding of kids improves in direct proportion to the amount of reading they engage in. According to Patchman and Wilson (2006), it is crucial to offer students a diverse range of resources that align with their interests in order to stimulate their motivation to read. Allowing readers to choose their own reading materials will increase their desire to read more, as they come to realize that reading is an enjoyable pursuit. Hence, utilizing reading applications proves to be an efficacious method for promoting reading.

Alowais (2021) conducted a study in the UAE to investigate the impact of a structured intervention on the reading comprehension abilities of fourth-grade students. The objective of the study was to improve reading comprehension and assess students' capacity to extract specific information from texts. The guided program sought to systematically diminish the teacher's involvement while concurrently augmenting the learner's participation. The findings demonstrated a noteworthy enhancement in pupils' comprehensive abilities as a whole. According to Al-Jarf (2023), a survey was conducted in Saudi Arabia involving 178 parents. The purpose of the survey was to investigate the reading technologies utilized by children under the age of 12, their digital reading habits and interests, the extent to which parents encourage digital reading, the impact of digital reading on children's reading skills, and to compare digital reading patterns before, during, and after the Pandemic. Survey results indicate that every youngster in the sample utilizes a smart phone to access applications, games, cartoons, and You-tube videos. The study found that 75% of Saudi children in the

current study utilize touch screen devices for gaming. This is due to the user-friendly nature of I Pads, tablets, and smart phones, as well as the wide range of free game apps available on Google Play and Apple Stores that cater to the specific interests and preferences of young children. The children, particularly those in grades 4-6, perceive educational and reading apps as tedious and believe that touch screen devices should be reserved for fun purposes rather than serious academic pursuits or reading. In contrast, the study found that younger children derive pleasure from acquiring knowledge of the alphabet and reading text on touch displays. The results somewhat align with the findings of a study conducted by Kucirkova and Hiniker (2023), which revealed that 60% of youngsters frequently utilize digital media for recreational purposes, such as playing games and watching television, in contrast to 42% who employ them for educational purposes. Al-Qahtani and Lin (2016) verified that Saudi students had the lowest TOEFL test scores compared to their counterparts in other Middle Eastern countries in all four skills: listening, speaking, writing, and particularly reading, as reported in the "Test and Score Data Summary" by the Educational Testing Services (2009, 2010, 2011, 2012). Thus, Al-Jarf suggests incorporating digital reading into the educational syllabus, while also increasing the knowledge of parents and teachers regarding digital reading devices, reading applications, and websites that offer interactive elements in order to inspire youngsters to engage in reading.

Al-Musawi et al. (2017) did a study in Oman to examine the disparities in using e-books against printed books in order to stimulate reading motivation and improve text comprehension among kindergarten students. The study sample consisted of 28 pupils, with ages ranging between 5 and 6 years, who were enrolled in Al-Aisary's Reading Centre or so called The Genius Reader School. The sample consisted of two groups: a control group of 14 kids, and an experimental group also consisting of 14 both groups included both genders. All of the youngsters were of Omani nationality. The results indicated that there were no notable disparities between the two groups in terms of motivation. Nevertheless, children who engaged in reading from printed books achieved higher marks on the comprehension post-test. The researchers contended that at a particular educational level in Oman, particularly in schools with pre-established conventional learning environments like the one where this research was conducted, students may show a preference for adhering to their familiar techniques. Al-Musawi et al. hypothesized that older students who utilize electronic books may show enhanced performance on comprehension assessments. An inherent constraint of the study was that certain students possessed prior knowledge of the stories prior to their classroom reading. Consequently, the researchers suggested that for reading e-books on tablets, it may be preferable to install programs. Based on this restriction and suggestion, the researcher of the present study has implemented Raz-kids application specifically with pupils in the fifth grade.

2-1-3-Commenting on Literature and Previous Studies:

The review of literature and previous studies examined the influence of technology on students' academic performance and educational results. This study investigates the relationship between the utilization of instructional technology and improved academic achievement in different academic disciplines. Furthermore, it analyses the function of technology in facilitating customized learning, adaptable teaching, and individualized feedback, thereby addressing the varying requirements and preferences of students. Prior research findings offer validation for the utilization of computer-based reading programs as supplementary resources. Clearly, the Raz-Kids program demonstrates its efficacy as an adjunctive tool for enhancing reading proficiency and fostering self-directed reading.

3-Methodology

3-1-Research Design:

This study adopts a quantitative research design, specifically the quasi-experimental design that aims to investigate cause-and-effect relationships through the direct manipulation of the independent variable (Raz-kids reading program) and observes the effect on the dependent variable (the students' reading comprehension and motivation). So basically, the type of this quasi-experimental study is "non-equivalence control group design". Two non-random classes were selected: a class was chosen to be the experimental group that adapted Raz-kids reading program, and another class was chosen to be the control group that followed the conventional strategy of teaching reading skills.

3-2-Setting:

Two grade five classes were involved from "Welayyat Bidbid" cycle two school in Al-Dhakiliya governorate in the Sultanate of Oman. This school is purposefully chosen since the researcher has a good relationship with teachers and the administration. In

addition to that the researcher has had access and permission to use the computer lab in the school. The activities were chosen according to the themes and units of grade five English textbook. The study was conducted during semester two of the academic year 2023-2024. The treatment of the study took around two months.

3-3-Population and Sample

The population of the study is all grade-five students in the Sultanate of Oman. However, the sample of the study is two classes of about 64 female students from grade five. The sample of the study is selected non-randomly by the convenient sampling method that is considered suitable for a quasi-experimental study. The two classes were mix-ability classes that included three proficiency levels: high-achievers, average achievers, and low-achievers. They have almost equal achievement levels in English based on student's grades in the previous semester's final exam to avoid any effect of extraneous variables. All the participants are Omanis with Arabic as their native language.

3-4-Research Instruments

Three instruments were developed and validated to be used to collect data for this study:

- 1- Raz-kids is an internet-based reading program that was purchased by the researcher for students in the experimental group. The participant students who are enrolled in Raz-kids program signed in and read the e-books there based on their proficiency level. However, the beginning should be the same for all the students and then students proceed based on their levels. This reading is tackled individually by the students as it is considered an independent reading activity. The teacher followed up with the students based on the points they collected and the amount of time they spent reading. The content validity of the program is obtained since the program is designed for kindergarten to grade six students and the stories were viewed by three grade five English teachers to examine its suitability level to grade five Omani students.
- 2- Pre-post reading tests were developed by the researcher based on the content and the learning outcomes of grade five students' textbooks and following the Ministry of Education final exams' specification.

3-5-Test Validity and Reliability

To check the face validity of the tests, a jury of three grade five English teachers reviewed the test items to determine its suitability to measure the reading proficiency of grade five level. Furthermore, the test was administered to a pilot group to ensure its reliability. The Cronbach's Alpha was used to calculate the reliability of the tests. The consistency of the responses is 0.83 which indicates good reliability.

- 3- Students' perception questionnaire: It aimed to seek out students' perceptions towards using Raz-kids reading program. The questionnaire was developed by the researchers. It was administered to the students in both languages English as their foreign language and Arabic as their mother tongue. The content validity of the questionnaire items was examined by two English professors from the College of Education at Sultan Qaboos University. In addition to face validity, the questionnaire was piloted to examine its stability.

3-6-Treatment

Raz-Kids on-line reading program was provided individually. Each student worked independently at home and went through all the activities: listening, reading, and doing quizzes on the books designated for their level. The teacher scaffolded the students and followed them up by making sure that they were engaged in the program. The teacher used to allocate five minutes at the beginning of each reading session to ask the students about the names of stories they read at home to ensure that they were using the program daily.

4-Results

4-1-Research Question 1

Are there any statistically significant differences between the experimental group and the control group's scores of the reading post-test attributed to the implementation of Raz-Kids program?

Before the intervention, a pre-test was administered for both the experimental and control groups to measure the initial reading comprehension performance. Another aim of administering the pre-test is to measure the degree to which the two groups are homogeneous in regard to their reading comprehension performance. In order to compare the pre-test scores of the experimental and control groups, an independent sample t-test was run. Table 1 below shows the means and standard deviations of the experimental and control groups' pre-test scores.

Table 1 Means and standard deviations of the experimental and control groups' pre-test scores

Groups	N	M	SD	Sig.
Control	32	7.6	1.6	0.5
Experimental	32	7.6	1.6	

According to the result in table 1, there was no statistically significant difference between the pretest scores of the control and experimental groups, $p=0.5$. Hence, it can be said that both groups were homogeneous when it came to their reading performance at the outset of the experiment.

Table 2 Independent sample t-test of the reading comprehension scores in the post test of the two groups

Groups	N	Mean*	t-value	Sig.
Control	32	8.34	1.9	0.120
Experimental	32	8.94		

*Total mean score=10

When comparing the mean differences for the control group with the mean difference of the experimental group, it appears that the experimental group, which used the Raz-Kids program, had a slight higher mean than the control group. The experimental groups' mean scores =8.94 compared to the control group's mean score= 8.34, indicating a good improvement in reading comprehension. However, based on the p value $0.120 > 0.05$, this difference is not significant statistically.

Consequently, the null hypothesis which claimed that there is no statistical significant difference in mean scores of the comprehension reading test between the control group and the experimental group attributed to Raz-Kids reading program

To compare the results of the pre-test and post-test within the same group, a paired sample t-test was calculated. Table 3 shows the mean difference between the student's scores in pre-test and post-test of the experimental group.

Table 3 Paired Sample t-test for the pre- and post-test of the experimental group

Experimental group	N	*Mean	t-value	Sig.
Pre-test	32	7.9	-5.46	0.001
Post-test	32	8.94		

*Total mean score=10

A paired samples t-test was performed to evaluate whether there was a difference between the reading performance before and after students received the Raz-Kids program. The results indicated that the post-test of reading performance after they received the program ($M=8.94$, $SD=1.46$) was significantly different from the pre-test before they received the program ($M=7.69$, $SD=1.66$), $t(31)=-5.46$, $p=0.001$.

The same statistical analysis was applied for the control group. A paired sample t-test was conducted to illustrate the mean difference between the scores.

Table 4 Paired Sample T-test of the Control Group

Control group	N	*Mean	t-value	Sig.
Pre-test	32	7.9	-3.59	0.001
Post-test	32	8.34		

*Total mean score=10

A paired samples t-test was performed to compare the mean score of the pre-test and post-test of the control group. The results indicated that the post-test of the control group performance ($M=8.34$, $SD=1.56$) was significantly different from the pre-test reading performance ($M=7.69$, $SD=1.67$), $t(31)=-3.59$, $p<0.001$.

4-2-Research Question 2

What are grade five Omani students' perceptions towards using Raz-Kids program to enhance their reading comprehension skill?

The survey results indicated varying degrees of students' perceptions regarding the implementation of Raz-kids program in reading comprehension. A majority of students, accounting for 53.1%, expressed a strong liking for using technology in the classroom. Similarly, 47% found using Raz-Kids program easy, while 56% felt they comprehended the program features well, particularly concerning pictures, reading aloud, and tasks. Moreover, 53.1% of students believed that Raz-Kids program has significantly improved their reading comprehension. Additionally, while 50% of students felt motivated to read more due to the program, 28% reported spending their free time engaged in it. Furthermore, 41% of the participant students were motivated to be independent readers by the program's rewards, and 56% felt empowered to select books at their appropriate reading levels. Over 44% of students found the program very effective and useful. Overall, 53.1% expressed a liking for the Raz-kids program, with a substantial majority (63%) expressing a desire to share it with friends and other students. However, there were some dissenting voices, with a small percentage expressing disagreement or strong disagreement with certain aspects of the program.

Table 5 Students' attitudes towards using Raz-kids program

N	Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	I like using technology in the classroom.	3.1%	9.4%	9.4%	25%	53.1%
2	I found using Raz-Kids program to be easy.			12%	41%	47%
3	I felt I understood what I read regarding the program features of pictures, reading aloud, and tasks.		3.1%	9.4%	31%	56%
4	Raz-kids program improved my reading comprehension.		6%	9.4%	31%	53.1%
5	Raz-kids program motivates me to read more.		9.4%	12%	50%	28%
6	I spend my free time reading from Raz-kids program.		22%	16%	28%	34%
7	The rewards in the program motivate me to be an independent reader.		16%	16%	28%	41%
8	Raz-kids empowers me to choose books at my appropriate reading levels.			12%	31%	56%
9	I feel that this program is very effective and useful.		6%	12%	38%	44%
10	I like the Raz-kids program.			9.4%	28%	53.1%
11	I would like to share this program with friends and other students.			12%	25%	63%

Table 5 presents the mean (M) and standard deviation (SD) values for eleven statements regarding students' perceptions of Raz-kids program's implementation in reading comprehension. The statement "I like using technology in the classroom" received a mean score of 4.16 with a standard deviation of 1.14, indicating a generally positive attitude towards technology use. However, "I found using Raz-kids program to be easy" had a slightly higher mean score of 4.34, suggesting the ease of use of the program, with a relatively low standard deviation of .7. Conversely, the statement "I felt I understood what I read regarding the program features of pictures, reading aloud, and tasks" received a higher mean score of 4.4, suggesting a strong understanding of the program's features among students, with a low standard deviation of .79, indicating consistency in perception. Similarly, "Raz-kids program improved my reading comprehension" garnered a mean score of 4.3, indicating a positive impact on comprehension, albeit with a slightly higher standard deviation of 0.89. Additionally, "Raz-kids program motivates me to read more" and "I spend my free time reading from Raz-kids program" both received mean scores below 4, suggesting some room for improvement in motivation. However, "The rewards in the program motivate me to be an independent reader" received a mean score of 4.00, indicating a generally positive influence of

rewards on independence. Moreover, "Raz-kids empowers me to choose books at my appropriate reading levels" and "I feel that this program is very effective and useful" both received mean scores above 4, indicating strong

agreement with these statements. Furthermore, "I like Raz-kids program" received a mean score of 4.23, reflecting overall satisfaction, with a moderate standard deviation of .66. Finally, "I would like to share this program with friends and other students" garnered the highest mean score of 4.50, indicating a strong willingness to recommend the program, with a relatively low standard deviation of 0.71, suggesting consistent agreement among respondents.

4-3-Discussion

This study was conducted to assess the impact of Raz-kids on the independent reading attitude and overall reading comprehension of grade five Omani students. The primary objective of this investigation was to determine whether providing students with appropriately levelled electronic books through computer would have a favourable impact on students' attitudes to engage in independent reading. Even though the data showed insignificant differences between the experimental and control group scores in the post-test attributed to intervention, the obtained data indicated that the intervention group experienced more significant improvement in reading comprehension (8.94) compared to the pre-test results (7.69). Therefore, a longer duration of intervention may have resulted in a more noticeable difference in the scores.

Regarding the first research question, the results of this study indicated that there is no statistically significant impact of Raz-Kids program on grade five students' evaluative reading comprehension performance. The findings contradict previous research that highlights the positive impact of educational technology, including Raz-kids program, on reading proficiency and attitude towards reading. A Study by Marchand (2015) has shown increased reading proficiency levels and positive attitudes towards reading among students using Raz-kids. Additionally, the findings support the broader trend of educational technology positively impacting teaching and learning, as noted by numerous studies (Yah & Smerker, 2020; Gibson et al., 2011; Greenlee-Moore & Smith, 1996).

Contrary to some earlier findings (Leong, 1995), which suggested no benefit in using computer-controlled reading, the study demonstrates a positive impact of the Raz-kids program on reading comprehension. This discrepancy could be attributed to advancements in technology, changes in program design, or differences in the student population studied. Additionally, while Al-Musawi et al. (2017) found no significant differences between e-books and printed books in terms of motivation and comprehension among kindergartens, the study suggests that older students, such as grade 10 students, may benefit more from digital reading applications like Raz-kids.

Regarding the second research question on students' perception towards using Raz-kids program in reading comprehension, the analysis of the questionnaire revealed very agree to agree attitudes. The majority of students had positive responses to Raz-kids program. Items 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11 received predominantly positive responses, indicating that students felt the program improved their reading comprehension, motivation, and ability to choose appropriate books. These findings corroborated the result of Marchand (2015) that showed a positive effect of Raz-kids program on students' motivation toward reading since it has the feature of choosing the books that suit their level. Grade five students also found the program effective, and enjoyable and were willing to share it with others. This finding supported the study done by Al-Jarf (2023) that indicated using technology for recreational reading resulted in higher levels of satisfaction among children compared to regular reading materials used in schools.

However, there were some mixed responses, particularly in items 1, 2, and 6. While most students liked using technology in the classroom and found the Raz-kids program easy to use, some disagreed or felt neutral about spending free time reading from the program. This can be explained by the fact that most of the students don't have their own devices to read from and they rely on shared devices with other members of the family.

Item 6 had the most varied responses, with some students strongly agreeing, some disagreeing, and some feeling neutral about spending their free time reading from Raz-kids program. The results suggest that Raz-kids program has a positive impact on students' reading comprehension and motivation, but there may be areas for improvement, such as increasing engagement during free time and addressing any challenges with using technology.

4-4-Implications: Implementing a special area in schools for students to engage in technology-assisted reading would undoubtedly bolster their focus and stimulate their interest in reading which will lead to improved book reading.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Further research should be conducted with a larger sample size, ensuring equitable access to intervention resources, and extending the duration of the intervention period for more thorough evaluation of the program's effects. Additionally, it would be advantageous if the meetings could take place in an environment devoid of any interruptions. Future studies should incorporate additional groups where participants receive guidance using printed versions of the books in the teaching sessions. If students encounter technological difficulties accessing the program, they can use the printed ones to read at home. There are multiple methods for teaching reading that might help to inspire readers and foster their motivation for engaging in reading tasks. The reading applications allow learners to actively participate in their learning process and aid in the development of language fluency. Moreover, these applications furnish the teacher with data regarding the progress of each student in reading.

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