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Empowerment of Saudi Women in Secondary School English Language Books: An Analytical Study

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Abstract
The current research aimed to investigate the degree to which women's empowerment dimensions (social, economic, political, and women's issues) are addressed through English language books in Saudi secondary education. It raised a question on the extent to which women's empowerment dimensions are addressed in secondary English language books. The authors followed the descriptive analytical research design. The research utilized a checklist of (19) indicators describing women's empowerment dimensions (social, economic, political, and women's issues). The checklist was designed to measure women's empowerment dimensions in the content and activities in English language books by inferring them from the units of analysis considered in the current research – paragraphs and pictures. Results showed that in the first year of secondary school, political empowerment was ranked first, whereas economic empowerment was ranked last. Additionally, in the second year, women's issues were ranked first, followed by political empowerment, then economic empowerment was ranked last. In the third year, social empowerment came in the first rank meanwhile political empowerment came in the last rank. The study concluded a need to re-evaluate and update the curricula and textbooks regarding women in line with the national goals for women. It is a significant study because it addresses empowering Saudi women in EFL textbooks. It recommends including basic issues, especially woman-related ones, in EFL textbooks.

Keywords: Empowerment dimensions, EFL curricula, English language books, Saudi women, women's empowerment

Introduction

Educational context

The content of school textbooks is considered one of the most important components of the school curriculum, where knowledge and skills are systematically provided in a way that helps in achieving the planned study goals. It is the comprehensive basis for educational opportunities that the learners, with the help of teachers, should benefit from and build their personalities so that they develop their scientific and cognitive careers to meet the requirements of life.

Education is necessary for achieving long-term sustainability and gender equality. Furthermore, developing programs in sustainable leadership education for women is critical for them to gain leadership skills and competencies while also improving their self-perception of their talents (Segovia-Pérez et al., 2019). Education is vital to women's empowerment, prosperity, growth, and well-being(Sundaram et al., 2014). Gender equality and women's empowerment are two of the most important concerns that have arisen due to increased societal awareness worldwide. The core of the gender-biased system is discrimination against women through male-female distinction. Education is the most freeing force that modifies people's progressive outlooks, attitudes, and thinking patterns(Murtaza, 2012). A flourishing society is one in which the female population is empowered. Empowerment benefits women by increasing their decision-making authority, redistribution of social power, and control over resources. Therefore, education can highly contribute to women's empowerment (Trikha, 2015).

One of the key contributions to women's engagement in the workplace and school education is women's empowerment(Shioyama, 2020). Women's empowerment has become one of the major goals of global development. In recent decades, empowerment, defined as the delegation of authority to someone, has been a tool for improving women's personal and professional lives. Education can highly contribute to women's empowerment(Gholipour et al., 2010).

EFL context

In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), teachers consider textbooks as the basis for their teaching and learning (Ahmad & Shah, 2014; Richards, 2017). Textbooks have long played an important and necessary role in current educational systems (Esen, 2007). The state and society are reflected in the textbook. In other words, it follows the state's ideals, principles, social conventions, religion, and ideology. As a result, it should play a role in social renaissance and the resolution of societal issues (Shehata, 2009). Sulaymani (2017) argues that EFL textbooks have a reliable position in Saudi Arabia as they influence learners' ideologies regarding various life issues. Textbooks are essential in EFL teaching since they are the primary source of information about the target language's culture and values. In Saudi Arabia, the textbook is the most influential source of knowledge in the classroom in a nation like Saudi Arabia (Bawazeer, 2015). Despite the ongoing assessments and considerable changes in Saudi EFL textbooks, there is still a debate over how they address culturally and socially relevant concerns like gender representation(Aljuaythin, 2018).

Saudi Arabia is currently undergoing considerable long-term changes, particularly in terms of female roles and opportunities. Starting with the support of women's education, which allows women to work in various sectors, the process of empowering Saudi women has achieved important milestones on social, economic, and political levels (Almghams, 2020). Furthermore, Saudi society has paid attention to the issue of women's empowerment in successive eras (Bin

Husain, 2019). Such attention has recently increased, especially after the announcement of Saudi Vision 2030 in 2016, which draws a map to build a vibrant society, a prosperous economy, and an ambitious nation. The Vision enhances the position of women in development at the local and global levels. It also devotes the necessary efforts to ensure the empowerment of women in societal, political, and economic growth and to highlight them as an active and influential element at all levels. Empowerment expresses building the self-abilities of individuals to become more capable of solving their problems and satisfying their needs by relying on themselves and even as a strategy for developing people's capabilities.

There have been encouraging changes for Saudi women nationally and personally. However, the fact is that in Saudi Arabia, women's political, social, and economic circumstances are largely regulated by local traditions(Fatima, 2008). Mustapha (2013) indicated that the biased representation of males and females highly forms gender identities and beliefs, which may conflict with current society's educational goals, particularly the need for gender equality and women's empowerment.

Representation of women in textbooks is an important social issue. The content of textbooks considerably affects formulating students' perspectives of social roles. To put it differently, students think that people have sex-based roles according to socialization. The content of textbooks reflects the social, economic, and political goals and objectives of society. Therefore, it was necessary for curriculum developers and specialists in education and psychology to review the content of textbooks according to their specializations periodically to make further improvements. To study the content of textbooks, the content analysis method is used, which is one of the scientific methods intended to analyze textbooks to find out strengths and weaknesses according to a number of standards and specifications in line with the needs of society and the students within the framework of the education policy. It is a diagnostic process aimed at developing curricula from several aspects, such as choosing educational goals, teaching aids, and teaching methods.

Due to the above considerations, there is a need to investigate the current status of addressing women's empowerment dimensions (social, economic, political, and women's issues) through English language books in Saudi secondary education.

Research Problem

With its various curricula, education plays a key role in women's empowerment. Because the textbook is an important pillar in modifying the ideas, behaviors, and attitudes of students, it may help disseminate and promote equality and respect for others. It broadens the horizons of thinking and dialog to correct the misconceptions and stereotypes of women. Although English is considered a foreign language in Saudi education, many of its aspects have not been evaluated adequately, especially women empowerment.

The textbook is the most prevalent form of content design and the most influential in the educational situation. It contains an important part of the educational material that highlights the objectives and tools of education (Al-Dabaa, 2006). It has received considerable interest because of its effective role in the education of students. It has a prominent place in the educational context. In turn, it helps build the human personality, communities, and nations. Many authors use curriculum and textbook interchangeably (Al-Suwaid, 2020). Research has documented that learning English as a tool for women's empowerment has a promising future. Further, learning English empowers women from different cultures(Alghamdi & El-Hassan, 2016).

Almoamarey (2009) reported that the textbooks' authors should include woman's untraditional roles in various developmental activities, including industry, agriculture, and medicine. Moreover, the image of the woman should highlight creativity, donation, and contribution to the homeland.

There should be no discrimination based on gender in any aspect of life (Khurshid et al., 2010). Unfortunately, gender prejudice still exists in many civilizations, particularly in developing countries (Amini & Birjandi, 2012). Although practical steps have been taken to empower women through the educational reform process in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, gender stereotypes remain. The results of some studies conducted on Arab and foreign environments showed the focus of the content on the image of men who are portrayed to have the qualities of adventure, strength, ambition, and achievement. At the same time, women appear fearful, untrustworthy, sad, and foolish in high school English language books in Japan (Nakamura, 2002). Besides, women are described to have a specific role in many fields, as described in the Arabic language books in the elementary stage in the State of Kuwait (Mohamed et al., 2004). There is a wide gap between the traditional picture of women and innovation, especially in educational policies. Educational curricula perpetuate the traditional thought of society and define the roles of women based on the dictates of the male society – as reflected in the curricula being taught in the Palestinian Authority (Abu Ayyash, 2006), where only some simple references about the limited role of women in the context of the family are provided in the curriculum of history (Farag, 2006). In Pakistan, the representation of women is low, and the great deeds are attributed to men who usually appear in images of power and sovereignty, in contrast to the woman whose image appears as subordinate personalities, and in certain professions and activities; the stereotypical image of women is still present in textbooks for the eighth grade (Qadri & Affouneh, 2015).

Extrapolating the research literature on women empowerment, the researchers found that English as a foreign language book in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia did not receive an adequate evaluation. Besides, through analyzing the content of the research literature on the dimensions of women's empowerment, it became clear that there is a diversity in these dimensions, as some indicated that the dimensions of women's empowerment are: knowledge dimension, psychological dimension, economic dimension, and political dimension, while others added social, educational, and health dimensions. Some studies also added another cultural and technological dimension. The current research is concerned with the dimensions of empowering women (i.e., social, political, economic, and women's issues) in books of English as a foreign language for the secondary stage prepared for the Saudi context.

Thus, *the research sought to answer the following questions:*
1. To what extent are women's empowerment dimensions (social, economic, political, and women's issues) addressed in first year secondary English language books?
2. To what extent are women's empowerment dimensions (social, economic, political, and women's issues) addressed in the second year secondary English language books?
3. To what extent are women's empowerment dimensions (social, economic, political, and women's issues) addressed in the third year secondary English language books?

Research Objectives

The present research aims at identifying the current status of addressing women's empowerment dimensions (social, economic, political, and women's issues) through English language books in Saudi secondary education.

Research significance

- The study highlights the issues of women and how they are dealt with within the current content of the English language books in Saudi Arabia for the secondary stage.
  - The research provides a reliable instrument for collecting data to help researchers in assessing dimensions of women's empowerment.
  - The research results may benefit those who design curricula and textbooks and educational stakeholders by including topics on empowering women in Saudi society to achieve development at the national level and the goals of Saudi vision 2030.

Limitations of the research

  – The current research dealt with analyzing what is related to women's empowerment dimensions (social, economic, political, and women's issues) in the content of English language books in Saudi secondary education. It was delimited to the first semester of the academic year 2021. It was also delimited to the English language books assigned to the second stage with its three grades in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Definitions of terms
Women's empowerment

Mosedale (2005) defined empowerment as making key life decisions and being able to carry them out. Further, Page & Czuba (1999) defined empowerment as a multi-dimensional social process that helps people gain control over their own lives. It is a process that fosters power (that is, the capacity to implement) in people for use in their own lives, their communities, and their society by acting on issues they define as necessary. Moreover, Ahmad (2011) referred to women's empowerment as a multifaceted process that enables women to fully understand their identity and power in all aspects of life. Women's empowerment entails strengthening women socially, economically, and politically so that they may challenge male dominance and demand equality with males. It aims at developing women's authority in terms of self-reliance and internal strength to make life decisions involving both resource and ideology restrictions.

Procedurally, women's empowerment is demonstrated in the current research in terms of the following dimensions:

- *Social empowerment:* It is represented in the role of women in forming positive values at the family level and the community level as well, their participation in societal issues locally and in the Arab world, providing services that help women achieve a balance in their responsibilities and their developmental role, and raising awareness to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women.
- *Economic empowerment*: This reflects women's participation in the labor market and the extent to which they benefit from the return on participation in development, increasing their capacity and self-reliance in order to contribute to economic life, and enacting

legislations and policies to increase their role in economic development in various sectors.

- *Political empowerment:* It indicates the political participation of women and the representation of women in decision-making positions in civil society organizations and Arab, regional, and international institutions.

- *Women's issues:* This dimension reflects the attention to the legal rights of Arab women and some of the issues that have emerged strongly, such as violence against women and combating discrimination against them.

English language books: the content of the English language books (Traveller: KSA Edition) issued by the Saudi Ministry of Education for the three secondary school grades in the academic year 2021.

Literature Review

Women's empowerment has been addressed in various academic contexts. Al-Asali (2006) conducted a study to explore woman's image and how it was included in civic education textbooks for the 7 th , 8th, and 9th grades in the Palestinian curricula. The author analyzed the syllabus and found that women were represented in civic education textbooks but in a random and unsystematic way.

Binali (2009) showed the disparity of the images of women included in the national education textbooks in Bahrain. They were high in the social and cultural fields and were either low or almost completely absent in the legal, political, and economic fields. Al-Maamari (2009) concluded that the vocabulary of the image of women was not distributed equitably in the content of social studies books for grades five to ten in the Sultanate of Oman, and he focused the greatest attention on the social, health, educational, political and economic fields. Gholipour et al. (2010) conducted a study to identify the role of education in the psychological empowerment of women. Six hundred female participants completed a scale as a research instrument. The results of the study showed that higher education could determine women's psychological empowerment level. Al-Naji and Al-Rifai (2011) concluded that women's roles are ranked as follows: religious, historical, educational, traditional, professional, family, and moral in Arabic language books and social materials in the first to ninth primary grades in Saudi Arabia.

Al-Agha (2012) revealed that the content of Arabic language textbooks does not include many of the roles of women in general and that there is less interest in the political, national, and professional roles of contemporary Palestinian women, and a lack of focus on women's rights and issues. The order of women's roles in the Arabic language books for the primary stage in Jordan is as follows: the family role, the educational role, the social role, the professional role, the literary role, and the political role (Al Momani, 2012).

Sundaram et al. (2014) conducted a study to raise women's knowledge about various forms of empowerment and determine the role of education in women's overall empowerment. A total of 455 women between the ages of 20 and 50 were chosen for the research. The study's findings suggested that education plays an important part in women's empowerment. The study concluded that if women's empowerment is to be achieved, it can only be done via education.

Qallab (2015) revealed that the image of women was included in the national and civic education textbooks for the higher basic stage in Jordan, with a high percentage in social and

family roles, as well as in professional, political, and contemporary national roles, and then their characteristics and personality.

Al Jumiah (2016) conducted a study to investigate social power dynamics in terms of gender and race in foreign EFL textbooks written for the Saudi setting at the high school level. Results showed that gender ideologies like male domination and women's marginalization were replicated and reinforced via hidden discourses in EFL textbooks. Benyunis (2016) showed that women's developmental roles are currently overlooked in textbooks for the sixth year of basic education in Tunisia. Sulaimani (2017) conducted a study to examine international EFL textbooks made for the Saudicontext at the university level. Results showed that the textbooks were skewed, favoring men as women were dismissed in over half of the sections. Women were less frequently characterized than men.

Faiad and Hazaimeh (2018) showed that the roles of women in Arabic language books for the secondary stage in Jordan were as follows: social and family roles 60%; political, historical, and religious 13.1%; the personality of women and their characteristics 11.8%, professional roles 10.2%, rights and the problems they suffer 4.2%. Further, Allehyani, Burnapp, and Wilson (2017) analyzed two EFL textbooks used in Saudi Arabia; the first, "English for Saudi Arabia", and the second, "Traveller 5", to determine the extent to which these textbooks refer to inner-circle culture (countries that use English as a first language such as the UK/USA). Two methods were applied: a content analysis of the textbooks and an interview with the educational supervisors. The results showed that "English for Saudi Arabia" concentrates on Saudi local and Islamic culture, while, although "Traveller 5" refers to multi-cultural topics.

Aljuaythin (2018) conducted a study to investigate the representation of gender in English as a Foreign Language textbooks for elementary students in Saudi schools. The description stage's analysis phase focuses on four aspects: the frequency of male and female occurrences, the types of activities that the two genders participate in, graphical representations of the two genders, and the social and household duties connected with males and females. The analysis of the two textbooks indicates a male-biased gender imbalance. As a result of this disparity, women are portrayed as disadvantaged and stereotypical individuals. According to this study, such a lack of representation of women might create a false reality around women's perspectives and obstruct the process of attaining human equality.

Sulaimani and Elyas (2018) conducted a study to analyze factors of gender in one of the presently utilized English language series, New Headway Plus: Special Edition. The series is utilized in the foundation year curriculum at King Abdulaziz University in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, for female and male adult language learners at basic to intermediate levels. The study used Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to examine the images in the series in terms of gender representation in images. In terms of gender representation, findings revealed that the series is biased. There was a significant disparity in the quantity of male and female images. Additionally, compared to females, males were shown a wider range of social circumstances in their single images. Further, in all of the books under examination, males had a greater rank than females in single images.

Al-Zabout (2018) found that women's social and familial roles reached 49%, which is the highest percentage compared to other roles in the Arabic language and Islamic studies curriculum at the secondary education stage in Jordan. Bin Husain (2019) concluded that the availability of women's rights in social and national studies textbooks at the secondary level is insufficient.

Al Abiky (2019) investigated the gender roles in two EFL textbooks, Traveller 1 and Traveller 2. The researcher used a mixed method; content analysis and quantitative data, in which the corpus of the two English textbooks were analyzed, and frequencies and percentages of gender appearances and activities were calculated. Results indicated that the textbooks contained some obvious gender bias and imbalance; males were predominant, whereas females were completely absent or marginalized; females' pictures and participations in dialogues were very limited; dialogues were largely male-male predominant and were about various topics; males signed to gender roles significantly higher and more aggressive. In contrast, females had weaker roles and were never seen as symbolic or significant social figures.

Alshahrani, Samani, and Marinova (2020) distributed a survey among students in the secondary stage in Makkah, Jeddah, and Al Taif. The participants who were taught Traveller (6) were 195, while the ones who were taught Flying High were (84); the other EFL textbook series used for the secondary stage in Saudi Arabia. The objectives were to determine the extent to which the EFL curriculum reflects the economic empowerment of women, the presentation of women in general, their contribution to the labor force, and whether women's roles, if present, are in accordance with those anticipated in Vision 2030. The results revealed that 152 of 195 students who were using the Traveller series saw that women were not adequately represented. Yet, (166) students thought that the presentation of women in the textbook, whether traditional or non-traditional, did not affect their employment pathway later on in the labor market, and (136) students saw the textbook prepared them for their new roles in Vision 2030.

Almghams (2020) studied gender representation in private Saudi primary school English as a Foreign Language textbooks. The following are the study's main findings: First, in terms of appearance, females were underrepresented. Second, males dominated the themes of reading passages and discussions. Third, females are more likely than males to be mentioned in sentences. On the other hand, males were exposed to a broader range of jobs and had a greater total level of employment and a broader range of spare time and leisure activities than females. Fifth, home chores were distributed equally between males and females, and female activities were not limited to passive interior activities.

The literature review shows that previous studies analyzed the student's textbooks without giving attention to the student's workbooks. In contrast, the current study sample includes all English language books in the first, second and third grades of secondary school – students' textbooks and workbooks. It is evident from the previous studies that there is a deficiency in including the image of women, their roles and empowerment in different textbooks in different grade levels. The current study is different from the previous studies in its approach to English language books at the secondary stage by its analysis to identify the degree of women's empowerment at the social, economic, and political levels and some issues of concern to women.

Methodology
Approach
The content analysis method was used to identify the percentage of inclusion of indicators of women's empowerment dimensions (social, economic, political, and women's issues) in the content of English language books in secondary education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Research Design

Due to the descriptive nature of the research, it followed the analytical descriptive design. It aimed at collecting data about the current status of addressing women's empowerment through English language books in Saudi secondary education using a checklist as a research instrument and analyzing the obtained results.

Sample

The current research is based on content analysis of the English language books; Traveler (KSA Edition): (1-6) Student's Book, Traveler (1-6) Student's Workbook, and (1-6) teacher's guide, for the six academic levels of the secondary stage in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in the three grades during the academic year2021, with the total of eighteen books.

Instrumentation

A checklist was designed to identify the current status of addressing women's empowerment through English language books in Saudi secondary education. Based on the relevant literature review and surveying some specialists' opinions, the preliminary form of the checklist was prepared. The checklist was assessed by a group of referees specialized in sociology, media, psychology, curricula and methods of teaching English at the University of Jeddah in order to ensure the relevance of the indicators and their relevance to the dimensions that they measure. The checklist consisted of 4 dimensions comprising 19 indicators, represented by (social empowerment) which included 7 indicators, the political dimension, which included 4 indicators, the economic dimension, which included 6 indicators, and the women's issues dimension, which included 3 indicators.

The indicators were formulated in the form of phrases describing the requirements for empowering women in the social, economic, and political domains, in addition to the dimension of women's issues. These indicators were used as a measure of empowerment in analyzing the actual content and activities in the English language books by inferring them from the units of analysis taken in the current research, which are: paragraph and picture. Frequencies and percentages were recorded for the two analysis categories.

Checklist Validity

The validity of the checklist was assessed by a group of referees, as it was presented in its initial form to seven referees who specialize in sociology, media, psychology, curricula and methods of teaching English at the University of Jeddah in order to ensure the relevance of the indicators and their relevance to the dimensions that they measure. According to the referees' suggestions, some phrases were modified, and all the indicators of the list were retained as the percentage of agreement between the arbitrators came to 100%.

Checklist Reliability

The author analyzed the content of all units of textbooks in the three grades of the secondary stage using the analysis checklist. Its reliability was confirmed by re-analysis by another researcher. The percentages of agreement between the results were calculated using Holsti's equation Holsti's method (1969) is a variation of percentage agreement. When two coders code the same units of the sample, percentage agreement and Holsti's method (Holsti, 1969) are equivalents. The general percentage of the matching results of the two analyses was equal to 89.8% for the first secondary

grade, 90.3% for the second secondary grade, and 91.1% for the third secondary grade. These ratios indicate that the checklist is reliable and suitable for the research purpose; therefore, the analysis instrument has become applicable.

Analysis Procedures

The current study adopted two units of analysis, which are (the paragraph unit and the picture unit). The analysis process focused on the content taught, activities, questions and exercises; with the information it includes, whether directly or indirectly. The main analysis categories were represented in indicators of empowering women dimensions (social, economic, political, and women's issues) that should be available to the English language learner. They were distributed in four dimensions with (19) empowerment indicators.

Results of the research

1. To what extent are women's empowerment dimensions (social, economic, political, and women's issues) addressed in first year secondary English language books?

To answer the first question, the frequencies and percentages of each indicator were calculated separately for each dimension of women's empowerment in English language books (Student Book 1, Student Book 2, Activity Book 1, Activity Book 2) in first year secondary for each of the two units of analysis (paragraph, picture where the total number of paragraphs that included in these books is 283, and the number of pictures is 557, as shown in table (1).

Table 1. *Frequencies and percentages of indicators and domains of women's empowerment in English language books for the first- year secondary*

Domains (rights and responsibilities)	Indicators	Frequency		Percentage %	
		Paragraph	Image	Paragraph	Image
Social empowerment	The role of women in consolidating positive values at the family level	0	6	0	1.08
	The role of women in consolidating positive values at the community level	0	2	0	.36
	Participation of women in community issues at the local level	2	2	.71	.36
	Participation of women in community issues at the Arab level	0	0	0	0
	Raising awareness of the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women	0	2	0	.36
	Providing services that help women achieve a balance between their responsibility and their developmental role	5	2	1.77	.36
Total		7	14	2.47	2.51
Total of Paragraph & Image		21		2.64	
Economic empowerment	Women's participation in the labor market	5	4	1.77	.720
	The extent to which women benefit from the return of participation in development	0	0	0	0
	Increasing women's capacity and self-reliance to contribute to economic life	0	5	0	.89
	Legislation that increases the role of women in economic development	0	0	0	0
	Highlighting the role of institutions that are concerned with women	0	0	0	0
	Providing policies to improve the status of women in different sectors	0	0	0	0
Total		5	9	1.77	1.62
Total of Paragraph & Image		14		1.76	
Political empowerment	Women's political participation	1	0	0	.35
	Representation of women in decision-making positions	1	0	0	.35
	Representation of women in civil society organizations	0	0	0	0
	Representation of women in Arab, regional and international institutions	0	0	0	0

Total		2	0	0	0
Total of Paragraph & Image		2		.25	
Women's issues	Legal rights of Arab women	0	0	0	0
	The issue of violence against women	0	0	0	0
	Combating discrimination against women	0	2	0	.36
Total		0	2	0	.36
Total of Paragraph & Image		2		.24	
		37		4.65	

Table 1 shows that the indicators of social empowerment in English language textbooks in first year secondary represented 2.64% of the total number of paragraphs and images. The most prominent indicators within this domain are women's participation in the community, issues on the local level, raising awareness to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women, and providing services that help women achieve a balance in their responsibilities and developmental roles. Indicators that were not represented: the two indicators for women's participation in community issues on the Arab level and providing services that help women balance their responsibility and developmental role. The table also shows that indicators of social women's empowerment are represented by the images in the books by 2.51%, followed by the paragraphs by 2.47%.

As for economic empowerment of women, it was at a rate of 1.76% of the total number of paragraphs and images that were represented in the books through the two indicators: women's participation in the labor market and the increase in women's ability and self-reliance, to contribute to economic life. Meanwhile, no attention has been paid to the extent to which women benefit from the return on participation in development and legislation that increases the role of women in economic development. The table also shows that the representation of the indicators of economic empowerment of women is represented by the images in the books by 1.77%, followed by the paragraphs by 1.62%.

As for the political empowerment of women, it was at a rate of .25% % of the total number of paragraphs and images that were represented in the books through the two indicators: "women's political participation" and "representation of women in decision-making positions". Meanwhile, no attention has been paid to the "representation of women in civil society organizations" and the "representation of women in Arab, regional and international institutions". The table also indicates that the representation of indicators of political empowerment of women is represented in only two paragraphs, mentioned in the four books by .23%. In contrast, it was not represented in the sentences and images.

Concerning women's issues, it was at a rate of .24% of the total number of paragraphs and images represented in the books through the two indicators, the "legal rights of Arab women" and "combating discrimination against women". Table (1) also clarifies that the representation of indicators of women's issues is represented in the (2) paragraphs that were mentioned in the books by .24%, followed by the images by 0%.

In light of the previous data, it is clear that indicators of women's empowerment dimensions in English language books for first year secondary were available to a varying extent. Political empowerment was ranked first in terms of representation, whereas economic empowerment was ranked last.

2. To what extent are women's empowerment dimensions (social, economic, political, and women's issues) addressed in second year secondary English language books?

To answer the second question, the frequencies and percentages of each indicator were calculated separately for each dimension of women's empowerment in English language books (Student Book 1, Student Book 2, Activity Book 1, Activity Book 2) in second year secondary for each of the two units of analysis (paragraph, picture), as shown in table (2).

Table 2. *Frequencies and percentages of indicators and domains of women's empowerment in English language books for the second year of secondary school*

Domains (rights and responsibilities)	Indicators	Frequency		Percentage %	
		Paragraph	Image	Paragraph	Image
Social empowerment	The role of women in consolidating positive values at the family level	3	2	1.26	.36
	The role of women in consolidating positive values at the community level	2	2	.84	.36
	Participation of women in community issues at the local level	3	1	1.26	.18
	Participation of women in community issues at the Arab level	0	0	0	0
	Raising awareness of the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women	0	0	0	0
	Providing services that help women achieve a balance between their responsibility and their developmental role	1	1	.42	.18
Total		9	6	3.78	1.16
		15		1.79	
Economic empowerment	Women's participation in the labor market	1	1	.42	.18
	The extent to which women benefit from the return of participation in development	0	0	0	0
	Increasing women's capacity and self-reliance to contribute to economic life	3	2	1.26	.35
	Legislation increasing the role of women in economic development	0	0	0	0
	Highlighting the role of institutions that are concerned with women	1	0	.42	0
	Providing policies to improve the status of women in different sectors	0	0	0	0
Total		5	3	.84	.53
		8		1.01	
Political empowerment	Women's political participation	0	0	0	0
	Representation of women in decision-making positions	0	0	0	0
	Representation of women in civil society organizations	0	0	0	0
	Representation of women in Arab, regional and international institutions	0	0	0	0
Total		0	0	0	0
		0		0	
Women's issues	Legal rights of Arab women	0	0	0	0
	The issue of violence against women	0	0	0	0
	Combating discrimination against women	0	1	0	0
Total		0	1	0	.18
		1		.13	

Table 2. shows that social empowerment in English language textbooks in second year secondary was at a rate of 1.79% of the total number of paragraphs and images. The most representative indicators, respectively, were: "Providing services that help women balance their responsibilities and their developmental role", "the role of women consolidating positive values at the family level", "the role of women in consolidating positive values at the community level", "participation of women in community issues on the local level", "raising awareness of the elimination of all

forms of discrimination against women", "participation of women in community issues on the Arab level" and finally, "providing services that help women balance their responsibility and developmental role". The table also shows that the representation of the indicators of social empowerment of women is represented in the paragraphs included in the books by 3.78%, followed by the images by 1.16%.

As for economic empowerment of women, it was at a rate of 1.01% of the total domains of empowerment as stated in the paragraphs and images that were represented in the books through the two indicators: "women's participation in the labor market, increasing women's capacity and self-reliance to contribute to economic life and highlight the role of institutions that are concerned with women", whereas, no attention was paid to the rest of indicators. Table (2) also indicates that the representation of the indicators of economic empowerment of women paragraphs by .84% and followed by the images by .53%.

As for the political empowerment of women, it was at a rate of 0% of the total empowerment domains in the second-year secondary textbooks.

Concerning women's issues, it was at a rate of .13% of the total domains of empowerment as stated in the paragraphs and images that were represented in the books through one indicator: "combating discrimination against women".

The table further reveals that the representation of indicators of women's issues is represented in the images included in the books by .18%, followed by the paragraphs at a rate of 0%.

In the light of the previous data, the dimensions of women's empowerment in English language books for second year secondary were available at low rates. Women's issues were ranked first in the order of these dimensions, followed by political empowerment and then economic empowerment.

3. To what extent are women's empowerment dimensions (social, economic, political, and women's issues) addressed in the third year secondary English language books?

To answer the third question, the frequencies and percentages of each indicator were calculated separately for each dimension of women's empowerment in the English language books (Student Book 1, Student Book 2, Activity Book 1, Activity Book 2) in third year secondary for each of the two units of analysis (paragraph, picture), as shown in table three.

Table 3. *Frequencies and percentages of indicators and domains of women's empowerment in English language books for the third- year secondary*

Domains (rights and responsibilities)	Indicators	Frequency		Percentage %	
		Paragraph	Image	Paragraph	Image
Social empowerment	The role of women in consolidating positive values at the family level	5	6	2.10	1.16
	The role of women in consolidating positive values at the community level	7	0	2.94	0
	Participation of women in community issues at the local level	3	0	1.26	0
	Participation of women in community issues at the Arab level	0	0	0	0
	Raising awareness of the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women	1	0	.42	0
	Providing services that help women achieve a balance between their responsibility and their developmental role	2	7	.84	1.26
Total		18	13	7.56	2.42

		31		4.65	
Economic empowerment	Women's participation in the labor market	0	0	0	0
	The extent to which women benefit from the return of participation in development	0	0	0	0
	Increasing women's capacity and self-reliance to contribute to economic life	6	3	2.52	.54
	Legislation increasing the role of women in economic development	0	0	0	0
	Highlighting the role of institutions that are concerned with women	0	0	0	0
	Providing policies to improve the status of women in different sectors	0	0	0	0
Total		6	3	2.52	.54
		9		1.13	
Political empowerment	Women's political participation	0	0	0	0
	Representation of women in decision-making positions	0	0	0	0
	Representation of women in civil society organizations	0	0	0	0
	Representation of women in Arab, regional and international institutions	0	0	0	0
Total		0	0	0	0
		0		0	
Women's issues	Legal rights of Arab women	0	1	0	.18
	The issue of violence against women	0	0	0	0
	Combating discrimination against women	8	0	3.36	0
Total		8	1	3.36	.18
		9		1.13	

Table 3 shows that the family and social empowerment in English language books for third year secondary was at a rate of 4.65% of the total domains of empowerment, where indicators of this domain were represented in paragraphs and images, and the most representative indicators were respectively: "the role of consolidating positive values at the family level", "providing services that help women balance their responsibility and developmental role.", "the role of women in consolidating positive values at the community level", "providing services that help women to bring about balance in their responsibilities and their developmental role", and "the role of women in consolidating positive values at the community level". Meanwhile, the Arab participation of women in societal issues has not been paid at all.

The table also shows that the representation of the indicators of social empowerment of women is represented in the paragraphs included in the books by 7.56%, followed by images by 2.42%.

As for the economic empowerment of women, it was at a rate of 1.13% of the total domains of empowerment as included in the paragraphs and images, and the representative indicator is: "increasing women's capacity and self-reliance, to contribute to economic life. Table (3) also shows that the indicators of economic empowerment of women are represented in the paragraphs included in the books by 2.52%, followed by the images by .54%.

As for the political empowerment of women, it was at a rate of 0% of the total domain of empowerment in the books of third year secondary.

Regarding women's issues, they were at a rate of1.13% of the total empowerment domains as stated in the paragraphs and images that were represented in the books through the one indicator: "combating discrimination against women".

Table (3) also shows that the indicators of women's issues are represented in the paragraphs included in the books by 3.36%, followed by the images by .18%.

According to the previous data, the dimensions of women's empowerment in English language books of third year secondary were available at various degrees. Social empowerment came in the first rank, but political empowerment came in the last rank.

Discussion

Women are still frequently depicted as having lower status and a smaller variety of occupations and activities than males. This issue may not reflect reality in much of the actual world, particularly in Saudi Arabia, where major demographic changes are occurring at a rapid pace, particularly among women. They are now looking for more equality and hope for a more gender-equal society, and textbooks should reflect this as much as feasible (Almghams, 2020).

The results of the study showed the low rates of women empowerment in social, economic, and political empowerment dimensions and highlighted some women's issues in the books of the three grades of the secondary stage. Third year secondary books obtained the highest percentage of women's empowerment (6.92%), followed by the books of the first secondary (4.65%), then the books of the second year secondary (3.02%).

The results also indicate that the social empowerment of women came first in the books of the first, second and third grades, followed by economic empowerment, then women's issues, and then political empowerment, at low rates, as shown in tables (1, 2, 3).

The results of this research regarding the dimension of social empowerment are consistent with the results of other studies, e.g. (Al-Zabout, 2018; Al Momani, 2012; Faiad & Hazaimeh, 2018), which concluded that social roles came first in their inclusion of the books on those studies in subjects other than English.

The low rates in the economic empowerment of women in English language books are inconsistent with the Kingdom's implementation of the recommendations and principles of Vision 2030 that encourage Saudi women to participate in the labor market and interest in developing their talents to contribute to investing their capabilities, all of which enabled them to obtain appropriate opportunities to build their future, and help them contribute to the development of their society and economy as well as their families (Saudi Arabia, 2016). The vision agendas included executive programs to achieve the strategic goals. The beginning was with launching the National Transformation Program, which included 36 strategic goals that support the economic empowerment of women and increase their participation in the labor market. The focus was on empowering Saudi women through a planned system of social services and developing programs to ensure women's participation in volunteer work, all of this contributes to the advancement of women's roles, but the authors of English language books did not take this into account, bearing in mind that the school curricula are a reflection of the visions and aspirations of societies.

The lack of representation of indicators of economic empowerment of women in the books may be due to the lack of awareness of the authors of the content of books about these indicators. In Saudi Arabia, there is a high indicator of women's participation in the labor market "for the first quarter of 2020 ", where the target was (24%), while the index achieved an increase to reach (27.5%), which reflects the success of the Saudization and empowerment plans, the high level of awareness of the importance of women's participation in the labor market, and the role that empowerment plays in economic indicators.

The reality of Saudi society also indicates that women's work has become a driving force that is gaining attention and expansion in the labor market, which is not new. Women's work in Saudi Arabia is considered a progressive and intensive step to regulate women's participation in economic development in accordance with the controls and legislations specified for their work and in line with the goals of the Kingdom's vision2030. This helps to empower women and the related laws and educate students about the importance of their roles in the development process. It also helps to introduce the initiatives, programs and projects that will advance their career and contributions to the labor market and enable them to obtain their rights in society.

The low rate of including some women's issues in the content of English language books can be attributed to the failure to respond to the premises of Vision 2030, which emphasizes that Saudi women are an important component of power in the Kingdom. The Vision also entails that all institutions in the country should work to develop women's talents, invest their energies and enable them to obtain appropriate opportunities to build their future and participate in community development.

A lack of representation of the indicators of political empowerment of women is shown in the second and third grades, where the percentage of representation was (zero), and in the books of the first grade of secondary school, it reached (25). These results could be justified by insufficient knowledge of book authors about Saudi women's status and the new developments regarding empowering them with the leadership skills necessary to practice their work efficiently and increase their ability to positively influence their performance in the various political institutions, e.g. the Shura Council, and local councils.

This result may also be attributed to the fact that the idea of the presence of women in political positions is a recent idea of Saudi society and that the majority of society still adopts the eastern perception that women do not need to work in certain jobs. It contradicts what is stated in Article (8) of the Basic Law of Governance in the Kingdom, which states that "Governance in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is based on justice, *shura* (consultation) and equality according to Islamic *Sharia*". This means that citizens are treated equally without discrimination, whether based on race, gender, or color.

The research results can also be explained by the fact that curricula developers are still restricted to ideas that marginalize the role of women. They may have a defect in understanding the nature of the roles that Saudi women can play. This result may be due to the weakness of modern women leaders in preparing and highlighting successful female models and experiences.

This result is consistent with the result of Binali (2009) that social and cultural fields were high, while political, legal, and economic fields were low. It also agrees with the results of Lee and Collins (2010), which found that women are represented weaker and more negatively in the content of courses than males. Additionally, this result somewhat agrees with Aljuaythin (2018) that indicated a male-biased gender imbalance. Similarly, the result goes in line with a study conducted by Al Abiky (2019), who concluded that the textbooks contained some obvious gender bias and imbalance; males were predominant, whereas females were completely absent or marginalized. On the contrary, it differed from the result of Yang (2011) that showed that males and females are equally represented in content and activities in textbooks, and this difference may explain the difference in the environment in which the study was conducted compared to the nature and culture of Saudi society.

These results generally indicate that school textbooks still display a stereotypical image of women, and to a lesser degree than the reality that women have reached in the Kingdom, which

also neglects the change that has occurred in the role of women in society through the increase of their participation in many areas of public life. The reflection of women's image in the curricula and textbooks was not matched in parallel, and this reflects the stereotype that those in charge of designing the curricula and setting their standards are still subject to and may insist on keeping them, even though the author of English language books is a foreign company that has experiences in building curricula. These results make the English language learning experience ineffective by distancing it from the interests of modern Saudi women, especially after the recent changes in Saudi society, which were based on firm decisions by the state, and this also gives an unrealistic picture of what women can do and what they can achieve. Thus, the student loses twice, once by losing the desire and not being interested in learning the English language. Consequently, she loses sufficient opportunities to train in the language by imposing a stereotype on her, and once by wasting opportunities to educate males about the capabilities that women in general and Saudi women in particular, social, and economic domains, which negatively affects her career when she finds herself in the future among those who still view her as a follower and not an addition.

Recommendations

- Conducting a comprehensive evaluation in light of analyzing the content of books and school curricula for the various educational stages in the Kingdom to improve the image of women
- Including women's issues in the curricula and linking them to economic, social, and political development plans
- Indulging the roles of contemporary Saudi women that reflect their true image in the EFL textbooks
- Including the achievements of Saudi women in the EFL textbooks in an appropriate manner that equitably highlights their image to the media
- Paying attention to the quality of women's representation and removing them from the realm of stereotypes in line with the reality of current societ

Suggestions

- Conducting more studies on the empowerment of women in all areas of life, in the educational curricula of the different academic stages
- Conducting studies analyzing the content of school curricula in the light of women's rights
- Conducting studies that design educational models that include lessons on Saudi female personalities with social and political roles
- More research is needed to measure the extent to which those in charge of the educational process are aware of how the roles, jobs and rights of women are presented in the curricula

Conclusion

Women represent one of the elements of society's strength, empowering them socially, economically and politically, and providing a safe environment and services that facilitate them to carry out their national duties while ensuring that they enjoy their full rights in all areas, will contribute to advancing development in a way that achieves one of the strategic goals of the Kingdom's vision 2030 for sustainable development. The school textbook is one of the important

pillars that schools rely on for modifying the ideas, behaviors and attitudes of students, as it is a successful tool in correcting their concepts and promoting and disseminating a culture of equality and respect for others through thinking about women and dealing with special educational patterns and images. The current research shows a need to re-evaluate and update the curricula and textbooks regarding women in line with the national goals for women. Considering the importance accorded to books of English as a foreign language in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, it seems that it did not receive an adequate evaluation, especially regarding women's empowerment. Therefore, it is necessary for the authors of EFL books to include the basic issues on which society is based, especially women's issues, in a balanced manner with other issues that are covered in the books to ensure building the confidence of students (male and female) by giving them opportunities to learn and practice the language inside and outside the classroom. These opportunities contribute to stimulating discussions between students themselves and their teachers as well. Furthermore, the research proposes including a number of activities based on images and pictures, with the aim of communicating and creating experiences in the use of the English language and making the material more interesting for learning and acquisition.

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