A STUDY OF SOCIAL FACTORS AFFECTING ENGLISH LANGUAGE READING HABITS OF JORDANIAN ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE (EFL) STUDENTS IN SELECTED SCHOOLS IN AL-MAFRAQ GOVERNORATE

by

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AGFI	Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index
AIC	Akaike Information Criterion
AMOS	Analysis of Moment Structure
ANOVA	Analysis of variance
AR	Accelerated Reader
AVE	Average Variance Extracted
CB-SEM	Co-variance Based Structural Equation Modeling
CFA	Confirmatory Factor Analysis
CFI	Comparative Fit Index
CMV	Common Method Variance
CR	Construct Reliability
CTML	Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning
DF	Degree of Freedom
EFA	Exploratory Factor Analysis
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ESL	English as a Second Language
ER	Extensive Reading
ERFKE	Education Reform for the Knowledge Economy
GFI	Goodness-of Fit Index
IFI	Incremental Fit Index
JMOE	Jordanian Ministry of Education
LSAC	Longitudinal Study of Australian Children
MBRAM	Mikuleccky Behavioural Reading Attitude Measure
MLE	Maximum Likelihood Estimation
MSN	Windows Live Messenger
NFI	Normed Fit Index
NNFI	Non-Normed Fit Index
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
PDA	Personal Digital Assistant
PGFI	Parsimony Goodness of Fit Index
PIRLS	Progress in International Reading Literacy Study
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment

PNFI	Parsimonious Normed Fit Index
RFI	Relative Fit Index
RMSEA	Root Mean Square Error of Approximation
RMSR	Root Mean Square Residual
SEM	Structural Equation Modeling
SES	Socio-Economic Status
SNS	Social Network Sites
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Science
TESOL	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
TLI	Tucker-Lewis Index
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
USM	University Science Malaysia
WLR	We Love Reading
X^2	Likelihood-Ratio Chi-Square Statistics

KAJIAN TENTANG FAKTOR SOSIAL YANG MEMPENGARUHI TABIAT PEMBACAAN BAHASA INGGERIS DALAM KALANGAN PELAJAR JORDAN YANG MENGIKUTI KURSUS BAHASA INGGERIS SEBAGAI BAHASA ASING (EFL) DI BEBERAPA BUAH SEKOLAH TERPILIH DI DAERAH AL-MAFRAQ

ABSTRAK

Penyelidikan ini dijalankan untuk mengkaji pengaruh faktor sosial terhadap tabiat pembacaan bahasa Inggeris dalam kalangan pelajar Jordan yang mengikuti kursus bahasa Inggeris sebagai bahasa Asing (English as a Forring Language, EFL) di sekolah menengah di daerah Al-Mafraq. Kesan pengantara daripada atitud pembacaan bahasa Inggeris terhadap perkaitan di antara faktor sosial dan tabiat pembacaan dikaji. Kajian ini mempostulat sebuah model teori untuk menentukan sejauh mana pengaruh faktor diri, rumah, sekolah dan media sosial terhadap tabiat pembacaan bahasa Inggeris. Sampel populasi mencakupi 275 orang pelajar daripada beberapa buah sekolah di daerah Al-Mafraq. Bagi menjawab persoalan penyelidikan, kaedah pengumpulan data bercampur diaplikasi dalam dua fasa. Dalam fasa pertama, daripada 275 set soal selidik yang diedarkan dalam kalangan pelajar EFL Jordan, 268 set soal selidik diterima dan boleh digunakan. Dalam fasa kedua pula, sepuluh temu bual separa struktur dijalankan bagi mengesahkan keputusan kuantitatif. Data dianalisis menggunakan analisis ANOVA satu hala, analisis kekerapan dan CB-SEM (Co-Variance Based Structural Equation Modeling) dalam perisian AMOS 21.0. Keputusan daripada data kuantitatif menunjukkan bahawa tidak terdapat perbezaan dalam tabiat pembacaan bahasa Inggeris berdasarkan gender, umur, dan status sosioekonomi. Oleh itu, faktor diri termasuk gender, umur, dan status sosioekonomi, tidak mempunyai impak terhadap tabiat

pembacaan bahasa Inggeris. Keputusan kajian juga mendapati bahawa faktor rumah termasuk pengaruh ibu bapa, pengaruh adik-beradik, pendedahan media massa dan ketersediaan bahan bacaan bahasa Inggeris tidak mempunyai impak langsung terhadap tabiat pembacaan bahasa Inggeris dalam kalangan responden. Dapatan menunjukkan bahawa di antara faktor sekolah, hanya perpustakaan mempunyai impak langsung terhadap tabiat pembacaan bahasa Inggeris. Sehubungan dengan media sosial, kajian menunjukkan bahawa pembacaan melalui internet didapati mempunyai pengaruh langsung terhadap tabiat pembacaan bahasa Inggeris. Sementara itu, faktor lain tidak memainkan sebarang peranan dalam mempengaruhi tabiat pembacaan bahasa Inggeris pelajar. Akhir sekali, dapatan kajian menunjukkan bahawa perkaitan di antara faktor rumah (pengaruh ibu bapa dan pendedahan pada media massa), faktor sekolah (pengaruh guru bahasa Inggeris dan rakan sebaya) dan media sosial (melayari internet dan pembacaan melalui internet) dan tabiat pembacaan bahasa Inggeris responden disederhanakan oleh atitud terhadap pembacaan.. Namun demikian, tiada bukti ditemui bagi menyokong kesan pengantaraan daripada sikap pembacaan terhadap perkaitan di antara pengaruh adik-beradik dan ketersediaan bahan pembacaan dan tabiat pembacaan bahasa Inggeris responden. Dapatan temu bual mengesahkan keputusan yang diperoleh daripada analisis kuantitatif, yang dilakukan dalam fasa pertama kajian. Justeru, dicadangkan agar kajian yang bakal dijalankan pada masa depan menggunakan sampel yang lebih besar dalam konteks yang berbeza, seperti sekolah atau wilayah yang berbeza. Di samping itu, kajian pada masa depan juga boleh mengkaji faktor lain yang mungkin memberi kesan terhadap tabiat pembacaan bahasa Inggeris dalam kalangan pelajar EFL Jordan, dalam cara yang lebih tuntas, dinamik dan kreatif. Kajian ini mencadangkan bahawa pelbagai pemegang taruh seperti Kementerian Pendidikan,

pembuat dasar, pihak pentadbiran sekolah dan para ibu bapa sepatutnya ikut serta serta terlibat dalam perkembangan tabiat pembacaan bahasa Inggeris bagi mencipta budaya membaca, di samping memotivasi pelajar dengan sikap suka membaca.

A STUDY OF SOCIAL FACTORS AFFECTING ENGLISH LANGUAGE READING HABITS OF JORDANIAN ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE (EFL) STUDENTS IN SELECTED SCHOOLS IN AL-MAFRAQ GOVERNORATE

ABSTRACT

This research was carried out to study the influence of the social factors on the English language reading habits of Jordanian EFL secondary school students in Al-Mafraq governorate. The mediating effect of attitude towards reading in English on the relationship between social factors and English language reading habits were also studied. The study has postulated a theoretical model to depict the extent of the influence of personal, home, school factors and social media influence on English language reading habits. The sample population comprises 275 student form six different schools in Al-Mafraq governorate to participate in this study. To answer the research questions, the current study has applied mixed method of data collection in the two phases. In the first phase, 268 usable questionnaires were received out of the 275 distributed to Jordanian EFL students. The second phase of the study was aimed at validating the quantitative results by ten semi-structured interviews. The data analysis for this study is done by conducting the One-Way ANOVA analysis, frequency analysis and Co-Variance Based Structural Equation Modeling (CB-SEM) in AMOS 21.0 software. The results from the quantitative data indicated that there are no differences in English language reading habits based on gender, age, and socio-economic status. That is, personal factors including gender, age, and socio-economic status have had no impact on English language reading habits. The results also revealed that home factors including parental influence, the influence of siblings, exposure to mass media and availability of English language

reading materials have no direct impact on the respondents' English language reading habits. The findings showed that only the school library among all the other school factors has a direct impact on English language reading habits. Concerning the social media, the study indicated that reading on the internet was found to have a direct influence on the English language reading habits while the other factors do not play any role in influencing the students' English language reading habits. Finally, the findings from the current research revealed that the relationship between home factors (parental influence and exposure to mass media), school factors (the influence of the English teacher and peer influence), and social media (surfing the internet and reading on the internet) and the respondents' English language reading habits was mediated by the attitude towards reading. However, no evidence was found to support the mediating effect of attitude towards reading on the relationships between the influence of siblings and availability of English language reading and the respondents' English language reading habits. The results from the interviews confirmed and validated the results obtained from the quantitative analysis done in the first phase of the current study. Based on the findings it is suggested that future studies can use larger samples in different contexts, such as in different schools or provinces. Future research should also investigate other factors which may affect the English language reading habits of Jordanian EFL learners in a robust, dynamic and creative manner. This study recommended that the various stakeholders such as the Ministry of Education, policy makers, school administration, and parents should participate and be involved in the development of English language reading habit for creating a reading culture and therefore motivate the students to be avid readers.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 Overview of the Concept of Reading

Reading is important for all societies and being literate is one of the keys in achieving success inside and outside educational institutions (Borton, 2012). Wolfe and Nevills (2004:1) stated that the development of reading skills in a society could serve as a basis for all learning activities in the schools. Students who do not have the ability to read will find very limited opportunities in attaining academic achievements and occupational success. In general, reading is considered a total integrative process, appearing in the affective, perceptual, and cognitive domains of the reader (Rubin, 2002). Reading for pleasure is viewed as the most significant indicator associated with the future achievement of the child (Douglas, 2013). Reading can serve both integrative and instructional functions. One of the main goals of education is to produce a literate person. Reading is also the cornerstone of literacy as it is considered one of the reading skills (Onukaogu, 2002) and an interactive process in which a reader combines the information in the text with the prior knowledge he/she possesses (Shen,2008). Comprehension is regarded as one of the main skills of reading. The efficient and successful reader is the one who understands what he/she has read. As such, many researchers consider reading a process synonymous with decoding and comprehension (Snowling & Hulme, 2005; Kendeou, van den Broek, White, & Lynch, 2009). Reading comprehension includes the two main processes, specifically decoding printed text and comprehending the

language accessed through the process of decoding (Hogan, Bridges, Justice, & Cain, 2011). Hence, in general, skilled reading comprehension or "rapid and thorough assimilation of information from text" is essential in order to achieve success in all facets of current life, especially education, productivity in society, and in the employment world (Hogan et al, 2011, p. 1).

There are three key reasons as to why people read. Firstly, individuals read to collect information for the sake of assisting them to learn, create, and write. This sort of reading is an expectation in the classroom, as it is required in almost all subject areas for students' success. Secondly, people read for pleasure. This type of reading takes place when they select a book because it attracts them not for the sake of finding an answer to a science question but because they want to read it for enjoyment. Finally, people read to become life-long learners. To achieve a life-long learning, people need both reading for information and reading for pleasure (Borton, 2012).

1.1.2 The Reading Habit

A habit is a repeated action which people do often and regularly, sometimes without knowing that they are doing it. It is a pattern of behaviour which acquires constant, regular, often unconscious inclination to perform an act through frequent repetition which is applied to any activity established during a course of time as a part of the personality of an individual (Good, et al., 2008).

The process of reading is considered a habit when it is done frequently. Reading habits can be measured based on the amount of materials being read, the repetition of reading, and the extent of time spent on reading (Wagner,2002). Sangkaeo (1999) defined the reading habit as the behaviour in which individuals express the love for reading, types of reading, and tastes of reading. It can be regarded as a pattern which enables the individuals arrange his or her reading. Pandian (1997) defined reading habits as an action which an individual undertakes automatically within a situation where, books, magazines, newspapers, comics and journals are easily available and accessible to him or her. He also confirmed that the amount of time spent on reading in daily life would give an indication of his or her habit of reading.

Similarly, Shen (2006) regarded reading habit as how much, how often, and what kind of materials the individuals like to read. Over the past ten years, researchers have carried out in-depth studies in examining the reading habits among learners (Mokhtari & Sheorey, 1994). Based on their studies, these researchers have found out that reading habits are correlated positively with individuals' gender, age, educational environment, professional growth, and academic performance.

1.1.3 The Importance of the Reading Habit

The reading habit is seen as vital and significant in constructing a literate society. It also plays an important role in the formation of the reader's personality and it assists readers to develop the appropriate thinking methods and in order to produce new

ideas (Palani, 2012). The reading habit is considered essential because it adds a quality to life and it provides access to culture and cultural heritage. It also empowers people and brings them together (Holte, 1998). The success and failure of children in schools rely to a large extent on their capacity for reading. Reading can be viewed as a basic skill which students acquire and therefore each attempt must be developed at an early age. Studies done on reading indicated that parents and friends significantly influence children more than schools and teachers. It is always helpful for children to interact with the people who popularize reading and learning as they spend the most amount of time with the individuals who control their thoughts and direction in life. Conversely, children may encounter some hindrances when growing up if they lack of reading habits (Chettri and Rout, 2013).

Reyene (1998) mentioned that children can unconsciously improve their language skills when they read for enjoyment. Bignold (2003) asserted that the habit of reading can develop Children's reading skills. Thus, the habit of reading is essential for widening the experiences and knowledge of young people whether it is for pleasure or for the purpose of learning (Green, 2002).

Grabe & Stoller (1997) confirmed that a good reading habit is significant for individuals to develop their personalities and mental abilities. On the one hand, it is important for healthy intellectual growth while on the other, it plays a fundamental role in enabling an individual to acquire the proficiency of language. Reading books on a consistent basis as well as having a good reading habit enable the individuals to analyze the ideas of the others, which will develop the critical thinking skills of

readers. Furthermore, the amount of reading within and without the school significantly influences reading in terms of fluency, speed, verbal capacity, overall knowledge and academic achievements (Cunningham & Stanovich, 2001). Similarly, Cook, Halleran & Brien (1998) stated that reading is a valuable source of understanding, knowledge, and provides a sense of values which allow the readers to develop the capacity for the purpose of understanding the individuals' beliefs on a regular basis (Cook, Halleran and Brien**,** 1998**).**

1.1.4 Social Factors Affecting Reading Habits

Recent studies have shown that certain factors have had a great influence on the development of reading habits (Krolak, 2005; Geski & Ozola, 2008; Adekola, 2012; Tse & Xiao, 2014). It has been found that demographic factors including the educational and income levels of parents are linked to the quantity and quality of the literacy practices carried out at home (Baker, Scher, and Mackler, 1997). Adetunji (2007) pointed out that personal characteristics of children such as age distribution, social class, and the occupation of parents have an impact on attitudes to reading and reading behaviour. The findings from Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) in 2001 and 2006 indicated that there is a positive relationship between background variables and reading habits at the fourth grade (Mullis, Martin, Kennedy, & Foy, 2007). Scales and Rhee (2001) mentioned that gender differences of students, race, and educational background can be viewed as predictors of their reading habits and patterns.

Pandian (2000) mentioned that the students' reading behaviour may be influenced by factors related to their backgrounds, home and school environments. He also added that the development of reading habits is associated with certain factors such as exposure to media and computer. It has been noted that home factors including socio-economic status of parents, exposure to language at home, and home facilities such as availability of materials affect the development of reading habits (Adekola,2012; Adetunji & Olagunju, 2014). Lee & Yeo (2014) mentioned that home environment support including availability of reading materials and the frequency of reading to the children contribute to the formation of positive attitudes towards reading. Sanacore (2002) stated that when students read for pleasure each day, they will acquire experiences to read with a larger sense of purpose which further develops their reading habits. Likewise, Adetunji and Oladeji (2007) regarded environmental influence, parental influence, peer influence, school curriculum, and teachers influence as other factors which can either support or stand against better reading habits. Nathanson, Pruslow, and Levitt (2008) proved through their study that parents have a considerable influence on their children if they are to become enthusiastic readers. In a study conducted in Jordan, Banihani and Abu Ashour (2015) mentioned that parents play a significant role in encouraging their children to read by being role models, discussing reading with them and creating a reading environment at home through providing interesting reading materials and comfortable places for reading. School factors including library facilities, teacher influence, and peer influence were found to have a direct influence on the acquisition of reading habits (Pandian, 1997b). It was also revealed that teacher influence is a good predictor of children's school performance (Adekola, 2012; Adetunji and Olagunju, 2014). The influence of parents, siblings, peers, and teachers

is seen important in the socialization of children as they play a significant role in the engagement of children in the literacy occurrences. The interaction between children and adults are considered essential to obtain literacy (Pianta, 2004). Furthermore, it has been revealed that the attitude towards reading is as important at home and in school in the development of reading habits (Kim, 2003).

1.2 Background of the Study

1.2.1 Overview

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan has made great strides in positioning itself as a modern country on the world map. These efforts have contributed to making education one of the top priorities of the government and it has been given the greatest significance. The Jordanian government has invested heavily in its education system with a special focus on the computerization of education. This has driven the government to allocate a budget for education higher than most countries. Data obtained from the 2008 UNESCO report revealed that the public expenditure on education amounts to 20.6% with about 13% of this amount allocated to elementary and secondary education (UNESCO, 2008). The Jordanian government has shown an unprecedented commitment towards educational reform through a sequence of initiatives including the first phase of the Education Reform for the Knowledge Economy Program (ERfKE) from 2003-2009 which was created to improve the learning environment in all schools and promote early childhood education. The second phase from 2009-2015 aims to develop the quality of teachers, assess the students, and upgrade the curriculum for the sake of sustaining education to cope with the needs of globalization and the labour market (Batainah

& Al-Barakat, 2009). The Jordanian government has concentrated largely on increasing the number of schools in the country to allow all children access to schools. According to the statistics gleaned from the Jordanian Ministry of Education Report (JMOE), the number of schools reached an exceptional number- 6181-in 2011/2012. Furthermore, 106403 teachers offered the educational services for about 1690172 pupils (JMOE, 2012). It is important to note that schools in Jordan can be divided into two types: public and private schools. According to the Ministry of Education, Jordan has 6614 schools, 3906 government schools and 2708 private schools. The Ministry is in-charge of 56% of the schools; while the private sector is responsible for 40% of the schools (JMOE, 2012).

Geographically, Al-Mafraq governorate (see figure 1.1) is situated in the north-eastern part of the Kingdom of Jordan and it borders Iraq (east and north), Syria (north) and Saudi Arabia (south and east). It has an area of 26,552 km^2 making up 29.6% of the total area of the country. The population amounts to 287,000 with a population density of 9.5 per km^2. For the educational sector, Al-Mafraq consists of three directorates of education: Mafraq Qasabah, North East Badia and North West Badia. These directorates include 558 schools and the number of students amounts to 117504. With regards to the secondary schools, Al-Mafraq has 183 schools which include 12109 students (6112 males and 5997 females) (JMOE, 2014).

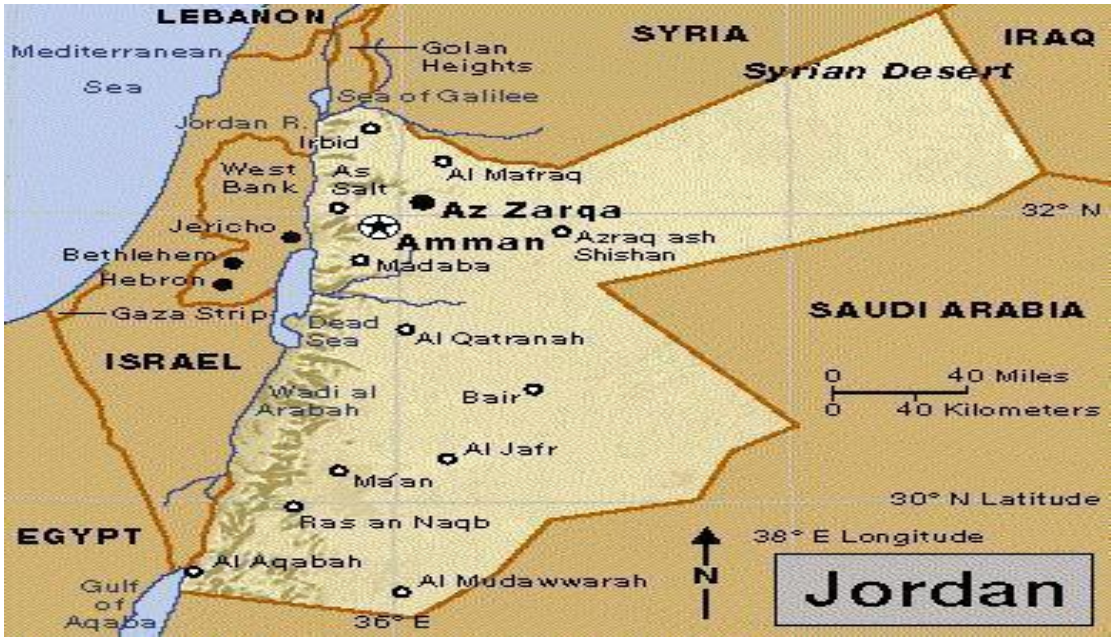

Figure 1.1 Map of Jordan

1.2.2 Literacy in Jordan

Over the few past years, the Jordanian educational system has witnessed a sharp increase in the percentage of people who read as the rate jumped from 47 percent in the seventies to 86 percent in 1996. In the beginning of 2000, the Jordanian government set a goal to increase the literacy rate in Jordan to 96 percent by 2003, but that goal has not been reached yet because only 86 percent of people surveyed claim that they have the ability to both read and write. Thus, during the seven years after 1996, the proportion of illiterate people aged 15 and above has not decreased (UNDP, 2000).

Jordan has the highest literacy rate among young people compared with the rest of the Arab countries. Although the younger males between the ages of 15 and

19 years are more literate than the elderly by up to 94 percent, this percentage is quite alarming compared with females of the same age as about 97 percent of females are literate. For the 15 – 24 age groups, it was found that 95 percent of males are literate, while 97 percent of females are literate. However, it was also found that the proportion of illiterate people aged between 40 – 44 is 11 percent and this gap increased gradually with age (UNDP, 2003).

At the beginning of 2003, the literacy levels in Jordan increased in a consistent manner thus reducing the number of illiterate people to an all-time low in 2011 (163,948). The increasing percentage of the literacy level in Jordan (98%) compared with the other Arab countries is a clear testimony of the commitment of the Jordanian government to address the challenges facing the problem of literacy in Jordan. Recent studies have shown that Arab countries including Jordan have not valued reading in the same way as in the western countries. According to Arabia News, Arab students including Jordanian students read for pleasure on a rate of half a page per year, while the people in the United States and the United Kingdom read an average of eight to eleven books a year. This low figure among Jordanian students is consistent with the results of a report released by UNESCO in 1991 and the findings of a US working paper for the 2004 G8 Summit issued in 2005, which indicated that Arab students including Jordanians read six minutes a year (Al-Yacoub,2012). Thus, in spite of the high literacy rate in Jordanian society, the readership of Jordanian students is the second lowest in the Arab world by up to 7 percent (The Jordan Times, 2014). Banihani & Abu-Ashour (2015) confirmed that reading outside school is not popular in Jordan, although some people are serious readers. Adnan Badran, the former prime minister, who is the current president of

the University of Petra, stated that Jordanian educational system is responsible for the unpopularity of reading (The Jordan Times, 2014). Since reading is not a priority in Jordan, it is uncommon for Jordanians to read in public. For example, it is hard to see people reading in buses or in coffee shops or at the very few public parks.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Reading has numerous benefits that improve a person's language acquisition, cultural enrichment, critical thinking and social skills (Cunningham and Stanovich, 1997 & Holden, 2004). The importance of reading cannot be denied (Akinbola, 2007). Although a number of researchers, such as (Arumugam, 2004; Adetunji and Oladeji, 2007; Iftanti, 2015 & Lim et al., 2015) have emphasized the significance of social factors including parental influence, siblings influence, availability to reading materials, teacher influence, peer pressure, library facilities, and social media in the development of EFL students reading habits in English. However, literature has shown that there are still a large number of people with poor English language reading habits especially EFL secondary school students (Camiciottoli, 2001; Shannon, 2003; Bendriss & Golkowska, 2011& Al-Qahtani, 2016).

In the Jordanian context, the Jordanian government in collaboration with Jordanian Publishers' Association has taken serious steps to participate in the launch of awareness campaigns concerning the significance of reading through increasing the number of public libraries, assessing the previous teaching programs, encouraging intellectuality in addition to the good research practices (Abdelkhaleq

et al., 2011). The initiative of We Love Reading (WLR) was established in Jordan in association with a non-governmental organization, Taghyeer to create a generation of children who love reading books. This program aims to build a library in every neighborhood in Jordan and to promote the value of reading broadly. This initiative also seeks to change attitudes and encourage people from various age groups to read (UNESCO, 2014). The Jordanian Ministry of Culture has also set plans in recent years for the sake of increasing readership among Jordanian people, through its initiative "Reading For All" (The Jordan Times, 2014).

In spite of these efforts to encourage reading, Jordanian EFL secondary students in Al-Mafraq governorate schools do read but their reading is limited to the reading for school exams (Al Regeb, 2009; Haddadin, Dweik & Sheir, 2008). They are reluctant to read for pleasure because they have never been taught how to love reading (Dajani, 2009). Al Debes (2005) mentioned that the practices which were applied in Jordanian schools showed that the majority of students read only to learn assigned material or achieve good grades for school assignments. All Jordanian students obtain information from materials that they read and so far most of them do not read. It was also found that 18 percent of Jordanian students have limited reading practices as many of them do not read for pleasure regularly (OECD, 2010). This decline in English language reading habits has been detected in a study conducted by Amoush (2012) who indicated that Jordanian EFL students are reluctant to read texts written in English excluding the textbooks which are taught in their classrooms for the sake of passing school exams. The disinclination to read has been recently raised by Banihani and Abu-Ashour (2015) who affirmed that Jordanian EFL secondary students do read but because the focus is more on

academic materials, they rarely read for pleasure. Jordanian EFL students have often associated reading with school purposes and not for gaining knowledge or enjoyment.

Reading reluctancy which has emerged among Jordanian EFL students tends to lead to the problem of poor English language reading habits among the students. Al-Othman (2013) confirmed that Arab EFL students including Jordanian students who do not read for pleasure may become poor in reading. Al-Mahrooqi and Roscoe (2014) supported Al-Othman in his claim that Arab students who lack of English language reading habits are more likely to become poor readers. Al-Sawalha and Chow (2012) pointed out that Jordanian EFL students rarely read materials written in English language and this causes great frustration especially when they encounter obstructions while trying to arrange their ideas in the literacy learning framework. Moreover, the reluctance to read may slow the acquisition of English language (Ferriman, 2007). Ignoring reading reluctancy will be a foolhardy action as it will surely cause the emergence of another generation of reading problems in the school as the children of non-reading parents will act as their models. Furthermore, if reluctance is left unchecked, the nation will eventually rest among reluctant readers: that is, to people who are 'retarded' in terms of knowledge and maturity, let alone intelligence. Leaders who are not intelligent will not be able to develop the country nor meet the complex challenges of the reluctant readers (Pandian, 1997).

Neglecting the problem of reluctancy will be also an expensive dilemma for parents, teachers and ultimately the nation (Arumugam, 2004). Reluctant readers

will lack the intellectual development and social consciousness, which will eventually lead to weak leadership (Pandian, 1997). In addition, Banihani and Abu-Ashour (2015) mentioned that in Jordan, EFL secondary students associate reading with the school tasks and not for fun. The non-reading problem among Jordanian students has been related to the poor English language reading habits outside of school as the educational system in Jordan emphasizes on schoolwork and earn better grades. Reluctant readers are a problem in all types of classrooms. This reluctance stems from a variety of social causes or pressures on the students. In some countries, especially eastern Mediterranean countries, secondary students are burdened with extremely heavy reading lists for homework. Reading is, therefore, associated with memorizing and regurgitating information and hard work which is not fruitful. Reading is no longer a pleasurable activity, and the teacher, aware that learning is taking place on a cognitive level only, may reluctantly be forced to abandon the attempt altogether, knowing that it is accomplishing very little of the intended original aim. Students who are not as academic as others are also unwilling or reluctant readers. Reading is, for them, a passive, boring activity, performed consistently in isolation and perhaps associated with skills which they feel they do not possess (Greenwood, 1998).

To date, little empirical research has been done in Jordan on the social factors which affect English language reading habits by specifying the major factors and making comparisons to identify their influence on English language reading habits. This study therefore seeks to fill this gap by examining how (personal factors including age, gender, and socio-economic status, home factors including parental influence, the influence of siblings, mass media, availability of reading materials,

school factors including school library influence, English teacher influence, and peers influence, and the influence of social media including surfing the internet, reading on the internet and time spent on online reading) influencing English language reading habits amongst secondary EFL school students in Al-Mafraq governorate.

1.4 The Objectives of the Study

The present study attempts to:

1. Examine the relationship between personal factors including gender, age, and socio-economic status and Jordanian EFL students' English language reading habits.

2. Scrutinize the relationship between home factors including parental influence, siblings influence, exposure to mass media, and availability of reading materials and Jordanian EFL students' English language reading habits

3. Investigate the relationship between school factors including school library influence, English teacher influence, peer influence and Jordanian EFL students' English language reading habits.

4. Identify the level of influence of social media including surfing the internet, reading on the internet, and time spent on online reading on Jordanian EFL students' English language reading habits.

5. Examine the role of attitudes towards reading as the mediator in the relationship between the social factors and Jordanian EFL students' English language reading habits.

1.5 Research Questions

The study attempts to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the relationship between personal factors and Jordanian EFL students' English language reading habits?
    a. Is there a relationship between gender and Jordanian EFL students' English language reading habits? If so, is that relationship statistically significant?
    b. Is there a relationship between Jordanian EFL students' age and their English language reading habits? If so, is that relationship statistically significant?
    c. Is there a relationship between Jordanian EFL students' socio-economic status and their English language reading habits? If so, is that statistically significant?

2. What is the relationship between home factors and Jordanian EFL students' English language reading habits?

a. To what extent does parental influence affect Jordanian EFL students' English language reading habits?

b. To what extent does the influence of siblings affect Jordanian EFL students' English language reading habits?

c. Is there any relationship between the exposure to mass media and Jordanian EFL students' English language reading habits? If so, is that relationship statistically significant?

d. Is there any relationship between the availability of English reading materials and Jordanian EFL students' English language reading habits? If so, is that relationship statistically significant?

3. To what extent do school factors influence Jordanian EFL students' English language reading habits?

a. To what extent do school libraries foster Jordanian EFL students' English language reading habits?

b. To what extent do English teachers affect Jordanian EFL students' English language reading habits?

c. To what extent does peer influence affect Jordanian EFL students' English language reading habits?

4. To what extent does the social media influence Jordanian EFL students' English language reading habits?

a. What activities do Jordanian EFL students carry out when they surf the internet and what is its influence on their English language reading habits?

b. What do Jordanian EFL students read on the internet and what is its influence on their English language reading habits?

c. How much time do Jordanian EFL students spend on online reading?

5. To what extent does the attitude towards reading in English play a role in mediating the relationship between social factors and Jordanian EFL students' English language reading habits?

1.6 The Significance of the Study

This study is important as it sheds light on the social factors affecting English language reading habits of Jordanian EFL students in selected schools in the Al-Mafraq governorate. By understanding the factors, appropriate measures can be taken to encourage the next generation of Jordanian EFL students, to read as widely and as broadly as is possible. The information obtained through this study can be used as guidelines for parents, stakeholders (government and school) and policy makers to cultivate good reading habits among EFL students in Jordan.

This study is significant to parents as it provides insights on Jordanian EFL students' English language reading habits. Thus, by knowing the student's English

language reading habits, parents are able to introduce the benefits of English language reading habits at an early stage of life and transform their ways of encouraging the student's English language reading habits. Parents can encourage and enhance the level of the student's reading by providing rewards. For example, parents can establish private libraries at home to inculcate the reading habit in their children. Furthermore, a room in the house can be set aside for this purpose. It should be equipped with shelves and reading desks. The purchase of books for the library should be done gradually as the information needs of the children grow.

Findings from this study may help the stakeholders in schools by providing appropriate plans to improve the students' English language reading habits through establishing a reading corner or library in each classroom that consists of books from various genres. This would be in addition to refurbishing and stocking existing language resource centres/libraries with good English language reading materials in all subject areas as well as with books for recreational or supportive reading. Library periods should be included in the timetable of primary and secondary schools. It should be carried out in such a way that a class would have at least one-and-a-half-hours per week for library use. This is an instrument of reading culture development.

The results of this study will be beneficial to Jordanian government by highlighting the importance of the English language reading habits in developing nations. Consequently, the government may provide local libraries in every city or district where people can borrow and read books so that they will become avid readers. Government can also promote English language reading habits in all sectors

of society through the establishment of book clubs. A robust book club campaign would add meaningful value in our endeavours to address the lack of a culture of reading, which is one of the pressing challenges that confront us as a nation.

The results of this study will be beneficial to the policy makers in the Ministry of Education because it highlights how the social media can be used to improve the English language reading habits in Jordanian schools; in addition these results of the study will be a fillip for decision makers to collaborate with the educational publishers to integrate the instructional content and the study activities online. Since easy access to reading materials plays critical role in improving students' English language reading habits, policy makers can work with book companies and educational publishers to produce more learning opportunities over the internet and create commercial software products to help students from solid and robust online reading habits.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

Limitations are defined by John and James (1998) as conditions that cannot be controlled by the researcher and this may restrict the conclusions of the study and limit their applications to other situations.

1. The study is confined only to 275 EFL secondary school students who were chosen randomly from six government secondary schools in Al-Mafraq governorate.

2. This study only intends to investigate variables such as personal factors, home factors, school factors, and the social media which affect English language reading habits.

3. The study is limited to ninth, tenth and eleventh grade students in English language reading lessons.

4. Only six schools in the governorate of Al-Mafraq: First Secondary School for boys, First Secondary School for girls, Sama Alsarhan Secondary School for boys, Mogayyer Alsarhan Secondary School for girls, Rawdit Bassma Secondary school for boys, and Umm Al-Jmal Secondary School for girls, have been chosen as the representative sample for both rural and urban schools in this district.

1.8 Definitions of Terms

1.8.1Reading Habits

Habit is defined as a tendency to do actions or a tendency to repeat an action in the same ways (Pandian, 1997:27). Therefore, reading habits in the current study refers to an individual's initiation to read on a regular basis for the sake of enjoyment. It can be measured through the variety and extent of English materials read, readiness to read, value attached to reading and degree of habitualness in reading.

1.8.2 Extensive Reading

It is defined as reading in quantity to develop good reading habits, to build up knowledge of vocabulary and structure, and to encourage a liking for reading (Richard, Platt & Platt 1992: 133).

1.8.3 Krathwohl's Taxonomy of the Affective Domain

It was developed from Bloom's original and is the best known of the affective domains, it includes concepts such as receiving ideas; Responding to ideas, phenomena; Valuing ideas, materials; Organization of ideas, values; Characterization by value set (or to act consistently in accordance with values internalized). The learner moves from being aware of what they are learning to a stage of having internalized the learning so that it plays a role in guiding their actions (Seels & Glasgow, 1990).

1.8.4 Social Factors

According to Arumugam (2004), social factors can be classified into four groups; personal factors include ethnicity, sex, and socio-economic status. Home factors include parents, siblings, friends, reading materials, and exposure to language (radio and television). Information and communication technology (ICT). School factors include teachers, peers, and school administration. In this study, 'social factors' refer to personal factors including gender, age, and socio-economic status, home factors including parental influence, the influence of siblings, availability of reading

materials, and exposure to mass media, school factors including school library influence, English teacher influence, and peers influence, and social media including surfing the internet, reading on the internet, and time spent on online reading.

1.8.5 Reading Reluctancy

This term refers to the phenomenon of students who can read but choose does not to read (Pandian, 1997; Al-Saleem, 2012). In this study, reluctant readers are students who are able to read but have no interest in reading for different reasons.

1.8.6 Personal Factors

Personal factors are defined as biological, psychological and socio-cultural characteristics, which might affect behavior. They include gender, ethnicity, age and socio-economic status of the respondents (Hagerstrom, 2010). In this study, 'personal factors' are related to variables such as age, gender, and socio-economic status of the participants of the study. Socio-economic status represents parents' educational achievement and their household income.

1.8.7 Home Factors

Home factors refer to the availability of reading materials (the variety and amount of English reading materials received as presents from parents), parents and siblings as reading models and exposure to mass media such as radio and television (Jaki, 2006;

Aruguman, 2004; Pandian, 1997). In this study, "Home factors" consist of parents and siblings as reading models, and the availability of reading materials which are received as presents from parents and exposure to mass media via radio, television.

1.8.8 School Factors

School factors refer to the amount and variety of reading materials in English available in the school and also the availability and adequacy of reading area in the school library. School factors also include the influence of teachers and peers on the students in the school (Jaki, 2006). In this study, 'School factors' are related to the variety of reading materials written in English which are available in the school and also the availability and adequacy of a reading area in the participants' school library. School factors also encompass participants' teachers and peer influences.

1.8.9 Reading Attitude

Attitude is defined as a predisposition or a tendency to respond specifically towards an object, situation, or value which is generally accompanied by feelings and emotions (Mangal and Mangal, 2013). In this study, attitude refers to the way an individual thinks and feels towards reading and also the value one places on reading.