

**Comparing the Degree of Similarity and Dissimilarity  
between Children's Taste and Critics' and Referees'  
Taste in Selecting Superior Books**

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**Introduction**

Based on the researches conducted, Iranian children's literature has been growing both qualitatively and quantitatively in the 14th century, especially in the last few decades. It is an obvious necessity to address children's literature and examine it comprehensively. Experts, critics and referees of children's literature choose and introduce selected works in various programs every year, but are their selections compatible with the children's taste? No proper scientific research has been conducted on this subject yet.

The Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Adolescents updates its information every couple of years; therefore, it is possible to obtain the most read children's works since 2006. The main questions of the present study are these: are children's books

selected by critics and referees as the prominent books the same as the ones children admire and show interest in? If not, where is the problem?

### **Methodology, Purpose and Review of Literature**

This is a qualitative-deductive content analysis. First, the most read and selected books are analyzed and then compared with each other.

The statistical population of this study is the books of the Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Adolescents and the statistical samples are the most read books of the Institute during the years 2006-2016 and the once which achieve the most awards.

In the first stage, we visited some of the Institutes for the Intellectual Development of Children and Adolescents and prepared a list of the most read books during the years 2006-2016 after checking the list of the books, which were published by the Institute, and the number of their readers. In the second stage, we prepared a list of works which have achieved the most awards after reviewing the award-winning works.

Child educators and readers were also asked for their opinions through a questionnaire in order to investigate the subject precisely. It is worth mentioning that in this research, the distribution of questionnaires and interviews has been just done in the Institutes of Fars province; however, the most-read books of the Institute have been surveyed in the whole country.

The works were analyzed based on the results of the questionnaires, and then a comparison was made among the most read and awarded works from the perspective of critics of children's literature. Finally, by reviewing the most read and selected works and comparing them with

each other, the degree of similarity of the views of referees and critics with the tastes of children and audiences of the works was determined. The purpose of this study is to diagnose the pathology of children's literature and to recognize the differences and similarities between the opinions of referees and critics of children's literature and children's own tastes; and finally, to review the usual approaches in order to obtain and add criteria according to the tastes of the audiences of the works for selecting the best books.

In studies conducted previously, sometimes the text has been criticized and sometimes the images have been criticized from different perspectives. Sometimes the most read works have been reviewed and criticized in a certain period. Among the conducted studies and in the search process, no research was found that compared the most read works with the selected works, in a certain period of time, in order to achieve the position of children in the field of children's books criticism and to recognize the differences between these two groups.

### **Discussion**

It can be said that all conferences in their regulations have paid attention to the content, language, technical issues, the process of creating a work, and the quality of the illustration. Therefore, a methodology that fully addresses all of these criteria was the basis of this study.

In the first years of its establishment, the Children's Book Council set the criteria for evaluating children's and adolescents' books in terms of content quality, quality of construction, quality of language and writing style and quality of images and presentation. In this study, books from four perspectives of content quality, construction quality, language and

writing style, and presentation quality were investigated because the reviewed books were mostly fiction and the selected works were chosen in terms of text (not images) as statistical samples, and also because the study of images of all books needs to be conducted in a separate research.

### **Conclusion**

After reviewing the awarded and the most-read books, it was concluded that in the conferences, a very small number of the most-read books were awarded. It seems that sometimes the referees of the conferences choose the books for children based on their mature tastes without considering the childish tastes of audiences. However, the most-read books are selected based on the tastes of their audiences. Among the most read books, the two components of kindness and helping others had the highest frequency. Some of the awarded stories, such as the collection stories of *Bazi Shadi (Game of Happiness)* written by Murtaza Khosrownejad, did not have an educational aspect while all the most-read stories had educational points and the characters in these stories were treated in a way that the child could identify with. The most-read stories followed the classic plot; while some awarded stories did not follow this structure. Some of the awarded books were presented in a way that is difficult for all audiences in age groups B and C to understand; while the most-read books were written in a language and expression that was simple and understandable to the target age group. According to quality of presentation, all awarded and the most-read books were bound with cardboard covers along with printing and

writing paper or coated paper. Most of the books were in large quarto trim size and then in folio size.

**Keywords:** awarded books, most-read books, children and adolescents, similarity and dissimilarity.

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