Study on Selection Factors of Children’s Magazines

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Abstract—Reading ability is competitiveness. Children’s reading habit is mainly developed in the family and parents play critical role to promote reading. This study aims to analyze selection factors to subscribe children’s magazines according to experts’ opinions. Finally, based on findings, this study constructed an objective selection standard as reference for parents to select various kinds of children’s magazines in the market. To meet the above objective, this study conducted literature review, modified Delphi Method and AHP. Based on related literature, it constructed a theoretical framework and developed 4 principal criteria and 17 secondary criteria through modified Delphi Method. Then, AHP questionnaire of “Selection factors of children’s magazines” was designed. After calculation of hierarchical analysis, as to principal criteria, the score of “cultivation of multiple capacities” is the highest; as to total criteria, the top six are “enhancement of children’s life knowledge and capacity”, “learning of interpersonal and living attitude”, “learning of celebrities’ stories and allusions”, “learning of current events and trends”, “increase of knowledge of popularization of science” and “enhancement of international view”.

Keywords—Modified Delphi Method, AHP, Children’s Magazine

I. INTRODUCTION

It is the era of knowledge economy and knowledge is based on reading. The advanced countries have actively promoted the movement of children reading. In Taiwan, since 2001, the Ministry of Education has launched national reading project. With national reading policy implemented by government, publication for children has increased. Due to the growing knowledge education of parents and fewer children, most of parents have the intention to spend more money on children’s books in order to cultivate their children’s reading ability and competitiveness. Children’s magazines are published weekly or monthly. They reflect current events and satisfy children’s needs to absorb new knowledge, current events and science. They expand children’s vision and are attractive for children. Thus, magazine becomes one of the priorities of children’s books purchased by parents.

However, consumption of children’s magazines is unique since buyers (parents) and users (children) are not the same. The subjects who purchase magazine are mainly parents; however, most of parents are not the experts of children’s books. Ke et al. [1] suggested that if children’s books purchased by parents are full of knowledge and are
similar to “textbooks”, for children, reading becomes learning pressure instead of interest. Thus, students’ reading intention is low and they cannot accomplish “profound reading, enhancement of capacity and creation of educational value”.

Currently, there are more and more children’s magazines with rich content for parents. Thus, this study first reviews literatures on children’s magazines and collects experts’ opinions by modified Delphi Method to screen appropriate selection criteria. AHP is adopted to develop the ranking of selection factors of children’s magazines and construct objective and professional evaluation indicators as reference for parents to select children’s magazines.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

This section reviews the literatures on children’s magazines, modified Delphi Method and AHP.

A. Children’s magazines

In selection of excellent publication for secondary and elementary schools, in 2012, the Ministry of Culture [6] suggested that children’s magazines are based on children as main reading subjects and they are the regular and serial publication between books and newspaper. In 2014, it indicated that magazine is “the journal” with variety of items. It includes the work of writers and painters and the content refers to almost all categories of book, including literature, language, comics, new scientific knowledge, art and knowledge. Children can acquire knowledge or entertaining information by reading magazine and it enhances their study or recreation and living attitude.

As to content of children’s books, the scholars’ opinions are shown as follows:

Su [4] suggested that there are five characteristics of books for children’s reading: image, childish, educational, artistic and interesting. Thus, it matches children’s physical and mental development and content and presentation will match the age and propriety.

Li [5] indicated that content of extracurricular readers for children should be simple and the illustrations are interesting. The descriptions are coherent and match life. Layout of pictures and words is appropriate. There are also the concerns of fonts, sizes of word, lengthen and thickness, page and weight of paper. Hence, excellent children’s illustration books should be “childish” in terms of them, layout design and painting skills.


Form: fonts of words should be appropriate. The printing is clear and the illustrations are aesthetic. Layout should be organized, creative and aesthetic. Paper should not reflect light and the layout should be innovative.

Content: the topics are based on life. The themes should be planned. It is associated with current events and it can be based on national and foreign works. The content should be educational and not serve as doctrines. The author’s writing and angles match the readers’ age. The copyright is acquired legally and the authors should be informed.

B. Modified Delphi Method

Delphi method is anonymous absorption of experts’ prediction. Each expert has free and independent judgment. By several rounds of feedback, the experts reach common consensus. Murry and Hammons [10] suggested that due to time,
manpower and funds, in the process of research, brainstorming open-ended questionnaire survey is skipped and after review and modification of great number of literatures, structural questionnaire is directly developed as the first round questionnaire. It is called “modified Delphi Method”. By structural questionnaire, the experts can immediately focus on the research topics without raising questions on the open-ended questionnaire.

C. Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP)

Saaty[11] proposed the AHP in 1971 and it is mainly applied to uncertainty and decision-making problems with several evaluation criteria. Complicated problems are simplified as hierarchical structure system. After collecting experts’ opinions and pairwise comparison of factors, by quantitative process, this study establishes pairwise matrix and obtain eigen vector and eigenvalue. The eigen vector represents ranking of factors at certain level. It provides decision makers with sufficient information to select proper plans to avoid the risk of decision-making errors.

Deng and Tseng [12] suggested that AHP can be divided into 3 steps:

Step 1: Construction of hierarchical structure. Hierarchical structure is established to determine the relationship of different levels
Step 2: Calculation of weights of criteria at different levels
Step 3: Calculation of total hierarchical weights

III. RESEARCH METHOD AND PROCEDURES

This study first establishes research topics and collects literatures to find the possible dimensions and criteria to select children’s magazines. Through modified Delphi Method, it constructs expert validity. Finally, AHP is adopted to obtain the weights of selection factors. The research procedures are shown in Figure 1

**Figure 1. Process of research steps**

**Step 1:** Establishment of research topic and collection of related literatures

First, this study establishes the research topic and generalizes literatures on children’s magazines. Based on research of Su [4], Li [5], Fang [7], and Li
[9], this study establishes dimensions of AHP questionnaire and assessment criteria.

**Step 2: Construction of expert validity by modified Delphi Method**

According to literature review, this study designs the “Questionnaire on importance of selection factors of children’s magazines” and adopts modified Delphi Method expert questionnaire survey to reasonably and objectively integrate experts’ opinions. Based on Delbecq et al. [13] who suggested that Delphi method experts should be 5~9 people, this study selects 3 experienced educators of elementary school, 3 reading teachers and 2 librarians to be the subjects of modified Delphi questionnaire.

According to importance of selection factors of children’s magazines, the experts’ scoring is by Likert 5-point scale. The questionnaire is based on Taylor and Judd [14]. The first round questionnaire includes open-ended items and the column of “others”. The experts filled in the suggestions or opinions to modify the criteria in the column as reference to improve this study and construct content validity of questionnaire.

As to questionnaire result, when the mean is below 3, it means that the item is not important and can be eliminated. According to standard proposed by Chang et al. [15], when CV < 0.3, it means that the experts and scholars reach high degree of common consensus; 0.3 ≤ CV ≤ 0.5 means that it is acceptable for experts and scholars. When CV > 0.5, the reason should be explained. After two rounds of modified Delphi Method questionnaire survey, it reaches expert consensus and can be the AHP framework of this study. The results of modified Delphi questionnaire survey are shown in Table 1:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective of Level 1</th>
<th>Dimensions of Level 2</th>
<th>Evaluation criteria of Level 3</th>
<th>The second round of Delphi questionnaire</th>
<th>Acceptance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Selection factors of children’s magazines</td>
<td>Cultivation of multiple cultures</td>
<td>Increase of children’s life knowledge and capacity</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>4.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Learning of interpersonal and living attitude</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>4.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Enhancement of language capacity</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>4.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Enhancement of thoughts and imagination</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>4.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Increase of extracurricular knowledge</td>
<td>Learning of celebrities’ stories and allusions</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>4.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Increase of knowledge of popularization of science</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>4.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Learning of current events and trends</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>4.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Enhancement of international view</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>4.56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Step 3: Weights of selection factors by AHP

According to the result of the second round Delphi questionnaire, means and coefficients of variance have met the standard proposed by Chang et al. (2002).

Based on two rounds of Delphi questionnaire, there are 4 dimensions at Level 1 and evaluation criteria of Level 2 matches the principle suggested by Satty: > 7 factors at each level. Hence, this study treats result of the second round Delphi questionnaire as AHP framework to construct hierarchical structure to select children’s magazines. There are 4 principal criteria and each of them is further classified into 17 secondary criteria, as shown in Figure 2:

Figure 2. Hierarchical structure to select children’s magazines
Pair comparison is conducted on the factors of different levels, based on those at the previous level. Questionnaire is designed for each pair comparison and the scale is 1-9 and filled by experts.

To determine the importance of selection factors of children’s magazines, this study treated publishers of children’s magazines, librarians, experienced educators and mothers of elementary school students as the subjects. Questionnaires were distributed by mail. The research period was from December 10 to 30, 2014, and valid samples were retrieved for empirical analysis.

### IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

By AHP empirical analysis, from experts’ perspective, this study selected the key factors of children’s magazines. After consistency test, it acquired total weights and ranking of importance.

#### A. Importance analysis of principal criteria

This study first analyzed questionnaire result of principal criteria, and conducted pair comparison on 4 principal criteria. Weights of principal criteria are calculated as shown in Table 2:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ranking</th>
<th>Weights</th>
<th>Magazine quality and price</th>
<th>Recreation and entertainment</th>
<th>Increase of extracurricular knowledge</th>
<th>Cultivation of multiple capacities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.4819</td>
<td>4.214</td>
<td>3.591</td>
<td>2.558</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.3113</td>
<td>4.429</td>
<td>3.612</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.391</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.1266</td>
<td>2.076</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.277</td>
<td>0.278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.0802</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.482</td>
<td>0.226</td>
<td>0.237</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

C.I.= 0.0526, C.R.= 0.0584, C.I. < 0.1, C.R. < 0.1 meets the requirement of consistency. When experts select principal criteria of children’s magazines, the most important is “cultivation of multiple capacities” and the following are “increase of extracurricular knowledge”, “recreation and entertainment” and “magazine quality and price”. According to the result of weights, when experts select children’s magazines, they pay attention to cultivation of children’s multiple capacities. The importance is nearly 50% in principal criteria. 30% experts agree that children’s magazines can enhance children’s extracurricular knowledge. These two items represent virtue and knowledge. Thus, when experts select children’s magazines, cultivation of virtue and communication of knowledge are key factors.

#### B. Importance analysis of secondary criteria

In this study, there are 4 dimensions and 17 secondary criteria. After AHP analysis on hierarchical factors, the description is as follows:

"After pair comparison of secondary criteria of cultivation of multiple capacities, the pairwise comparison matrix is as shown in Table 3"
TABLE 3. IMPORTANCE ANALYSIS OF SECONDARY CRITERIA OF CULTIVATION OF MULTIPLE CAPACITIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultivation of multiple capacities</th>
<th>Enhancement of children’s life knowledge and capacity</th>
<th>Learning of interpersonal and living attitude</th>
<th>Enhancement of language capacity</th>
<th>Enhancement of thoughts and imagination</th>
<th>Weights</th>
<th>Ranking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enhancement of children’s life knowledge and capacity</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.541</td>
<td>3.733</td>
<td>2.541</td>
<td>0.4516</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning of interpersonal and living attitude</td>
<td>0.394</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.348</td>
<td>3.171</td>
<td>0.3189</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhancement of language capacity</td>
<td>0.268</td>
<td>0.230</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.192</td>
<td>0.1096</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhancement of thoughts and imagination</td>
<td>0.394</td>
<td>0.315</td>
<td>0.839</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.1199</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

C.I.= 0.0653 , C.R.= 0.0726, C.I. < 0.1, C.R. < 0.1 meets the requirement of consistency.

Importance rating of secondary criteria is as follows: enhancement of children’s life knowledge and capacity >learning of interpersonal and living attitude >enhancement of thoughts and imagination >enhancement of language capacity.

After pair comparison of secondary criteria of increase of extracurricular knowledge, the pairwise comparison matrix is as shown in Table 4:

TABLE 4. IMPORTANCE ANALYSIS OF SECONDARY CRITERIA OF INCREASE OF EXTRACURRICULAR KNOWLEDGE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Increase of extracurricular knowledge</th>
<th>Learning of celebrities’ stories and allusions</th>
<th>Increase of knowledge of popularization of science</th>
<th>Learning of current events and trends</th>
<th>Enhancement of international view</th>
<th>Weights</th>
<th>Ranking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning of celebrities’ stories and allusions</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.795</td>
<td>0.981</td>
<td>1.163</td>
<td>0.2943</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase of knowledge of popularization of science</td>
<td>0.557</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.917</td>
<td>1.046</td>
<td>0.2106</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning of current events and trends</td>
<td>1.019</td>
<td>1.090</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.839</td>
<td>0.2941</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhancement of international view</td>
<td>0.860</td>
<td>0.956</td>
<td>0.544</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.2010</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

C.I.= 0.0192 , C.R.= 0.0214, C.I. < 0.1, C.R. < 0.1 meets the requirement of consistency.
Importance rating of secondary criteria is shown as follows: learning of celebrities’ stories and allusions > learning of current events and trends > increase of knowledge of popularization of science > enhancement of international view.

**TABLE 5. IMPORTANCE ANALYSIS OF SECONDARY CRITERIA OF RECREATION AND ENTERTAINMENT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recreation and entertainment</th>
<th>Educational and entertaining; release of stress</th>
<th>Positive activity after school</th>
<th>Regular reading and cultivation of reading habit</th>
<th>Reading between parents and children; exchange of affection</th>
<th>Weights</th>
<th>Ranking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Educational and entertaining; release of stress</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.586</td>
<td>2.647</td>
<td>2.806</td>
<td>0.4755</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive activity after school</td>
<td>0.279</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.129</td>
<td>2.902</td>
<td>0.2015</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular reading and cultivation of reading habit</td>
<td>0.378</td>
<td>0.886</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.001</td>
<td>0.2281</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading between parents and children; exchange of affection</td>
<td>0.356</td>
<td>0.345</td>
<td>0.250</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.0949</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

C.I. = 0.0837, C.R. = 0.0930, C.I. < 0.1, C.R. < 0.1 meets the requirement of consistency.

Importance rating of secondary criteria is shown as follows: educational and entertaining; release of stress > regular reading and cultivation of reading habit > positive activity after school > reading between parents and children and exchange of affection.

**TABLE 6. IMPORTANCE ANALYSIS OF SECONDARY CRITERIA OF MAGAZINE QUALITY AND PRICE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Magazine quality and price</th>
<th>Ease of reading of layout</th>
<th>Sentences match children’s intellectual development</th>
<th>Rich and aesthetic illustration</th>
<th>High-quality paper and appropriate fonts</th>
<th>Price of each issue</th>
<th>Weights</th>
<th>Ranking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ease of reading of layout</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.974</td>
<td>2.116</td>
<td>2.186</td>
<td>3.857</td>
<td>0.2713</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentences match children’s intellectual development</td>
<td>1.027</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.881</td>
<td>4.500</td>
<td>5.286</td>
<td>0.3986</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After pair comparison of secondary criteria of recreation and entertainment, the pairwise comparison matrix is obtained as shown in Table 5:

After pairwise comparison of secondary criteria of magazine quality and price, the pairwise comparison matrix is as shown in Table 6:
Importance rating of secondary criteria is shown below: sentences match children’s intellectual development > ease of reading of layout > rich and aesthetic illustration > high-quality paper and appropriate fonts > price of each issue.

**C. General analysis of selection indicators of children’s magazines**

After total analysis on 4 dimensions and 17 evaluation factors, the ranking of weights of the factors is obtained. The relative importance of factors is shown in Table 7:

As to secondary criteria, the experts pay the most attention on “enhancement of children’s life knowledge and capacity”, followed by “learning of interpersonal and living attitude”. The purpose of reading magazine is to teach children to have correct thoughts, solve problems in life and cultivate the virtue. Hence, as to ranking of secondary criteria, “cultivation of multiple capacities” refers to the top 2 factors. It shows the importance of the item.

As to increase of extracurricular knowledge, scores of 4 secondary criteria are high. Therefore, the experts suggest that content of children’s magazines tends to be educational and knowledge is more precise. Magazine editors must examine, screen and develop the ideas and layout for proper concepts to children in order to expand their vision and world view and upgrade their competitiveness.

Besides educational purpose, “educational and entertaining; release of stress” is also important for experts. Interesting content and absorption of knowledge are ideal condition of reading. When the content is full of knowledge and too difficult, children may consider reading magazine as learning pressure instead of interest. Hence, their reading intention will be low, and they cannot accomplish “profound reading, enhancement of capacity and creation of educational value”.

The score of “sentences match children’s intellectual development” is the tenth. As to experts’ view on children’s reading content, it must meet children’s physical and mental development by words matching the age in order to be “childish”. As to 4 principal criteria, score of “magazine quality and price” is the lowest. It shows that when experts select children’s magazines, they treat propriety of magazine content and educational characteristics as the priority. Most of parents have the intention to spend money on children’s books to cultivate children’s reading ability and competitiveness. Thus, “price of each issue” is the last among all factors.
V. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

A. Conclusion

Based on the results, the conclusions are proposed as follows:

This study determined the selection factors of children’s magazines. According to classification of AHP, the levels of factors are as follows:

Cultivation of multiple capacities: enhancement of children’s life knowledge and capacity; learning of interpersonal and living attitude, enhancement of language capacity and enhancement of thoughts and imagination.

Increase of extracurricular knowledge: learning of celebrities’ stories and allusions, increase of knowledge of popularization of science, learning of current events and trends and enhancement of international view.

Recreation and entertainment: educational and entertaining; release of stress, positive activity after school, regular reading and cultivation of reading habit, reading between parents and children and exchange of affection.

Magazine quality and price: ease of reading of layout, sentences match children’s intellectual development, rich and aesthetic illustration, high-quality paper and appropriate fonts, price of each issue.

Increase of extracurricular knowledge: learning of celebrities’ stories and allusions, increase of knowledge of popularization of science, learning of current events and trends and enhancement of international view.

Recreation and entertainment: educational and entertaining; release of stress, positive activity after school, regular reading and cultivation of reading habit, reading between parents and children and exchange of affection.

Magazine quality and price: ease of reading of layout, sentences match children’s intellectual development, rich and aesthetic illustration, high-quality paper and appropriate fonts, price of each issue.

Increase of extracurricular knowledge: learning of celebrities’ stories and allusions, increase of knowledge of popularization of science, learning of current events and trends and enhancement of international view.

Recreation and entertainment: educational and entertaining; release of stress, positive activity after school, regular reading and cultivation of reading habit, reading between parents and children and exchange of affection.

Magazine quality and price: ease of reading of layout, sentences match children’s intellectual development, rich and aesthetic illustration, high-quality paper and appropriate fonts, price of each issue.
development, rich and aesthetic illustration, high-quality paper and appropriate fonts and price of each issue.

According to questionnaire result of selection factors of children’s magazines, among 4 principal criteria, “cultivation of multiple capacities” is the most important for experts and the following are “increase of extracurricular knowledge”, “recreation and entertainment” and “magazine quality and price”.

As to 17 secondary criteria, “enhancement of children’s life knowledge and capacity” is the most important factors for experts who also pay attention to “learning of interpersonal and living attitude”, “learning of celebrities' stories and allusions”, “learning of current events and trends”, “increase of knowledge of popularization of science” and “enhancement of international view”. Therefore, experts pay the most attention on education of children’s magazines and intend to reinforce children’s virtue and intelligence by reading magazine.

Regarding 17 secondary criteria, experts pay attention to “educational and entertaining; release of stress”, “enhancement of thoughts and imagination”, “enhancement of language capacity”, “sentences match children’s intellectual development”, “regular reading and cultivation of reading habit” and “positive activity after school”. Although experts suggest that content of children’s magazines should be educational, interesting and entertaining characteristics are also critical. By explanation of profound content by simple words, the magazines will be attractive for children.

Items of low importance for experts include “price of each issue”, “high-quality paper and appropriate fonts”, “reading between parents and children; exchange of affection”, “rich and aesthetic illustration” and “ease of reading of layout”. Generally speaking, when experts select children’s magazines, content propriety and education are more important.

**B. Suggestions**

Based on research findings, experts pay attention to “education” in content of children’s magazines. Hence, this study proposes suggestions as follows:

High-quality content of children’s magazines should be associated with children’s life experience. All things are observed from children’s perspective instead of adults’ thoughts, so that we can approach children’s physical and mental feelings. In addition, communication of “positive” information and development of children’s “positive” vision are the keys.

Reading children’s magazines should be relaxing. Therefore, interesting content and simple words are important. However, it is challenging for writers and editors to maintain the literary characteristics in “childish words”. In order to approach children’s lives, some authors use new terms or usage of internet. Besides, to enhance the interesting characteristics, they include vulgar comics or online articles which lower the literary value. Noticeably, entertainment should not be more significant than literary performance in order to reinforce children’s language capacity.

Children’s magazines can provide children with multiple kinds of extracurricular knowledge. “Precision” is important regarding science and current events. The authors or examiners of the content should have professional knowledge and they carefully examine the content. The pictures and
images should be indicated with origins. The authors have neutral positions. Thus, the children can absorb the correct thoughts.

Rich and colorful layout of images and words can increase children’s reading interest. However, popular vulgar computer images will lower the artistic level. Layout design and propriety of fonts are the details concerned by experts who select children’s magazines.

VI. REFERENCES


