

## Research Article

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## The Extent of Soft Skills Integration in the Revised Arabic Language Textbooks for Fourth Grade Students in Jordan

Iman Ali Muhaidat<sup>ID</sup>, Rateb Qasem Ashour<sup>ID</sup>

### Abstract

**Background.** Soft skills are increasingly recognized as essential for student development in the 21st century. This study examined the extent to which these skills are integrated into the revised Arabic language textbooks for fourth-grade students in Jordan.

**Methods.** A descriptive analytical approach was employed using a content analysis checklist developed by the researchers. The checklist was based on a framework of eight core soft skills and their corresponding 60 sub-skills. The analysis focused on Arabic language textbooks officially introduced in the 2023/2024 academic year.

**Results.** The findings revealed that while all targeted soft skills were present to some degree, their inclusion was generally limited and uneven. Skills such as communication, digital literacy, and critical thinking were more prominently featured, whereas others, like decision-making and problem-solving, appeared less frequently and were often addressed superficially.

**Conclusions.** The study concludes that the current textbooks may fall short in fostering a balanced and comprehensive development of soft skills among students. It recommends a more systematic and deliberate integration of soft skills into textbook content, activities, and assessments. Further research is suggested to assess the integration of soft skills across different grade levels and to explore how effectively these skills are taught and applied in classroom settings.

## 1. Introduction and Background

Education is a fundamental pillar in shaping learners and advancing societies. Therefore, countries place great importance on continually reforming and developing their educational systems to ensure that learners are well-prepared for life. The school textbook serves as a key source for equipping students with the skills that support and prepare them for their future roles in the workforce. This includes integrating and developing modern skills in alignment with cognitive competencies, with the aim of providing learners with diverse and evolving skill sets (Jordanian Ministry of Education, 2020).

The textbook is the primary source of academic content and a key component of the educational process. It serves as the main reference from which learners derive their knowledge, as it contains all the instructional units proposed in the curriculum. These units are designed to build specific educational skills across various levels in a manner aligned with learners' cognitive competencies (Mithans & Grmek, 2020).

Textbook plays a vital role in shaping the perspectives of both teachers and learners (Hashim et al., 2025; O'Keeffe, 2013). It serves multiple functions: a formative function by providing learners with knowledge, information, and skills; an organizational function by structuring various types of knowledge into organized units scheduled according to specific timeframes; a skills-based function by equipping learners with competencies such as reading and writing; and a social function by contributing to the learner's proper development, enabling them to integrate effectively into society. Thus, the textbook remains an essential foundation of the educational process that cannot be dispensed with. Accordingly, education in the modern era has become increasingly important, as it ensures that learners not only acquire knowledge but also develop broader capabilities to navigate the complexities of an ever-evolving world (Atay & Vafadar, 2023; Sofa et al., 2023).

Accordingly, the acquisition of soft skills by learners supports their overall learning, enhances their ability to interact positively, solve various problems they may encounter, and make appropriate decisions. It also influences how learners perceive themselves and others, as a result of the effective use of these skills. This, in turn, boosts their self-confidence and increases both their cognitive and communication productivity (Chiavaroli, 2019). In recent years, the term "soft skills" has become increasingly prominent. These are essential skills related to a learner's ability to interact and engage effectively with others (Abdelwahid, 2016; Fayyouni et al., 2024).

Soft skills have been defined as a set of personal attributes related to communication and interaction with others, reflecting the ease with which a learner engages with their surrounding environment. These skills are linked to the learner's ability to express themselves and to interact effectively with the demands of the technological revolution, which has become a fundamental requirement in the present era. This includes, for example, the use of social media networks and the skill of presenting ideas in an attractive, enjoyable, and coherent manner (Khamis, 2013).

The importance of integrating soft skills into fourth-grade textbooks lies in the fact that it represents a strong foundation for building resilient learners. It marks the true beginning of a comprehensive development process for enhancing learners' cognitive abilities and serves as a key pillar in preparing and nurturing them for the advanced stages of their lives. This stage encompasses all members of society, and it is essential to provide them with the right skills, experiences, and knowledge needed for both their academic and professional lives (Al-Sibiya, 2023). The integration of soft skills into textbooks also reflects a deeper understanding of the roots of the educational process by creating a systematic vision for the use of digital technology and educational knowledge. This knowledge is linked to the values of learning and education within the culture of society and its various dimensions (Howard, 2018).

The researcher believes that integrating soft skills into Arabic language textbooks serves an important purpose by enhancing the educational system. It provides the opportunity for effective interaction and communication, as well as the development of a deep understanding of the subject. Soft skills are a fundamental pillar on which the cognitive, emotional, and skill-based domains of the educational system are built. They serve as educational tools, reliable sources of information, and stimulants for scientific thinking. There is a strong relationship between educational textbooks and the development of skills, which continually adds to the growth of knowledge content.

### **1.1. Literature Review**

The Arab Organization for Education, Culture, and Science (ALECSO) classified the soft skills mentioned by Al-Eid (2019) into three main areas: First, advanced thinking skills, which include critical thinking, problem-solving, creative thinking, and emotional intelligence. Second, personal skills, which encompass communication and interaction skills, teamwork, decision-making, adaptability to change, and self-management and initiative. Third, information technology skills, which include digital technology skills, computer and internet usage, information literacy, and media literacy (Al-Eid, 2019).

The study by Alhomidhi & Alakshan (2024) aimed to determine the level of inclusion of soft skills in English textbooks for sixth grade in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The researchers used a descriptive approach, and the study tool was a content analysis card consisting of three main skills. The sample of the study included sixth-grade English textbooks. The results of the study revealed a low inclusion rate of soft skills in the English textbooks. The study recommended increasing the inclusion of soft skills in English textbooks and emphasized the need for English teachers to become familiar with and receive training on soft skills to acquire knowledge about them and help learners improve these skills (Alhomidhi & Alakshan, 2024).

Alluhaibi (2023) in her study aimed to determine the extent of inclusion of soft skills in the Language Proficiency Curriculum for secondary school students in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The researcher used a descriptive analytical approach, and the sample of the study consisted of the Language Proficiency Curriculum for first-year secondary school students. The study tool was a content analysis card that included three main skills and 35 sub-skills. The results of the study revealed a (low to moderate) inclusion of soft skills in the Language Proficiency Curriculum. The study recommended the need to focus on incorporating soft skills into the Language Proficiency Curriculum, especially digital culture skills, and enhancing positive attitudes toward technology, along with training on using digital information sources (Alluhaibi, 2023).

The study by Al-Balushi & Al-Kaf (2023) aimed to identify the extent of availability of soft skills in the reading lesson activities in the "My Beautiful Language" textbooks for the fifth and sixth grades in the Sultanate of Oman. The researchers used a descriptive analytical approach, and the study sample consisted of all reading lesson activities in the "My Beautiful Language" textbooks. The study tool was a content analysis card consisting of three main skills. The results of the study revealed a low availability of soft skills in the reading lesson activities. The study recommended linking Arabic language textbooks with digital culture skills and utilizing the list of soft skills identified in the study to develop reading lesson activities across different grade levels (Al-Balushi & Al-Kaf, 2023).

Al-Haidan (In press) in her study aimed to assess the extent of inclusion of soft skills in the Arabic Language curriculum – Linguistic Competency – for the first year of secondary school in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The researcher used a descriptive analytical approach, and the study tool was a content analysis card developed based on a list of soft skills, consisting of 30 sub-skills distributed across five main skills. The study sample included the Arabic language textbooks for the first year of secondary school. The results of the study revealed a moderate inclusion of soft skills in the Arabic language curriculum. The study recommended the inclusion of the soft skills that the analysis showed

were not present in the curriculum content at the general education stages to address the challenges and requirements of the modern age (Al-Haidan, in press).

Nassar (2022) conducted a study aimed at assessing the extent to which 21st-century skills are included in English textbooks for basic education in Palestine. The researcher used a descriptive analytical approach, and the study tool was a content analysis card that consisted of four main skills and 30 sub-skills. The study sample included English textbooks for the fifth, seventh, and ninth grades for both the first and second semesters. The results of the study revealed variations and gradations in the percentages of 21st-century skills included in the English textbooks. The researcher recommended the inclusion of these skills in the curricula and giving them special attention in scientific research (Nassar, 2022).

In light of previous studies, it is evident that there is a scarcity of research on the integration of soft skills in Arabic language textbooks for fourth-grade students in Jordan. This gap highlights the scientific originality of the current study, which aims to address this underexplored area. While some studies have focused on the availability of soft skills in reading lesson activities or extracurricular contexts (Al-Balushi & Al-Kaf, 2023), others have examined the inclusion of soft skills in Arabic or English textbooks (Al-Haidan, in press; Alhomidhi & Alakshan, 2024; Nassar, 2022). However, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, no prior studies have specifically addressed the inclusion of soft skills in the newly developed Arabic language textbooks for fourth-grade students in Jordan.

This study adopts a descriptive analytical approach to examine the extent of soft skills integration in these textbooks. It focuses on identifying essential skills such as digital technology, communication and interaction, decision-making, problem-solving, critical and creative thinking, educational knowledge, and emotional intelligence. These skills are crucial for mastering cognitive content and fostering learners' interactive engagement with educational situations and problems. Integrating soft skills into Arabic language textbooks is essential, as it supports personal development and prepares learners to effectively utilize these skills in real-life situations.

The uniqueness of this study lies in its focus on newly developed Arabic language textbooks for fourth-grade students, reflecting a modern educational trend aimed at enhancing students' skills to meet contemporary demands. By analysing these textbooks, the study contributes to the educational literature by addressing a topic that has received limited attention, particularly within the Jordanian context.

The integration of soft skills in school curricula is essential for equipping learners with the competencies needed to thrive in the modern world. Despite recent efforts by the Ministry of Education in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan to revise Arabic textbooks for fourth-grade students (starting from the academic year 2023/2024), there is limited research on the extent to which these textbooks incorporate essential soft skills. This gap is particularly concerning given the central role of Arabic language textbooks in supporting other subjects. Field observations and previous studies (Al-Haidan, in press; Alluhaibi, 2023) indicate a lack of sufficient integration of soft skills in Arabic curricula. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the content of the developed Arabic textbooks to identify the presence and representation of soft skills, providing insights into areas requiring further enhancement.

The present study aims to determine the extent to which soft skills are incorporated into the developed Arabic language textbooks for fourth-grade students by answering the following two questions:

1. What soft skills are included in the developed Arabic language textbooks for fourth-grade students?

2. What is the degree of inclusion of soft skills in the developed Arabic language textbooks for fourth-grade students?

This study seeks to provide a theoretical background on the concept of soft skills and is expected to contribute to the preparation of training courses for Arabic language teachers on the importance of soft skills and how to apply them in educational contexts. It may also assist curriculum planners and developers in identifying weaknesses and gaps in the inclusion of soft skills within the Arabic language textbooks, with the aim of addressing and improving them. Furthermore, it could serve as a foundation for future research focusing on soft skills and how they can be incorporated into Arabic language textbooks across different educational stages.

This study was limited to the newly developed Arabic language textbooks for fourth-grade students, including both the first and second semester books: the "Student's Book" and the "Workbook," which have been officially implemented since the academic year 2023–2024. The study's findings were confined to what was revealed by the study tool, based on its established validity and reliability.

## **2. Literature Review**

### ***2.1. Study Methodology***

The researchers employed the descriptive analytical approach, as it aligns with the objectives and procedures of the study. The researcher analyzed the content of the developed Arabic language textbooks prescribed for fourth-grade students in Jordan to determine the extent to which soft skills were integrated. The Arabic language textbook was selected as the central reference among the other textbooks to examine the extent to which the developed Arabic language textbooks for fourth-grade students incorporate soft skills, and to identify areas of weakness and deficiency in the inclusion of soft skills in these textbooks (Fayyoubi et al., 2024).

### ***2.2. Study Population and Sample***

The study consisted of the newly developed Arabic language textbooks for fourth-grade students, which include four books in total for the first and second semesters (Student's Book and Workbook). The number of instructional units analysed from these textbooks is 20 units. Thus, the study population is identical to the study sample.

### ***2.3. Study Instrument***

The study instrument was a content analysis checklist developed by the researchers after a thorough review of previous studies (Al-Haidan, in press; Alluhaibi, 2023) to inform the design of the content analysis tool. The development of the checklist involved the following steps: first,

the soft skills included in the newly developed Arabic language textbooks for fourth-grade students were identified. These consisted of eight main skills and sixty 60 sub-skills. Second, the checklist was reviewed by a group of curriculum and instruction specialists to provide feedback and suggestions regarding its appropriateness, clarity of language, and relevance of sub-skills to the main skills and to the appropriate age group. Based on their feedback, necessary modifications were made, including the deletion and merging of some skills, resulting in a total of sixty 60 sub-skills distributed across eight main skills. Third, the validity of the content analysis checklist was confirmed through the approval of the main and sub-skills by the expert reviewers.

## **2.4. Instrument Reliability**

### **2.4.1. Internal Reliability**

The researchers collaborated with a specialist in Arabic language curricula and teaching methods. Together, they randomly selected one study unit and analysed it twice, with a time interval of three weeks between the first and second analyses. The reliability coefficient (correlation) between the two analyses was calculated using Holsti's formula (Holsti, 1969), yielding a coefficient of 0.95, which is appropriate for the purposes of the study.

### **2.4.2. External Reliability:**

The researchers collaborated with four specialists in Arabic language curricula and teaching methods, who were trained on how to conduct the analysis based on the study instrument. A randomly selected study unit was analysed, and inter-rater agreement was calculated using Holsti's formula. The agreement reached 0.88, which is considered acceptable for conducting this study.

## **2.5. Analysis Procedures**

The researchers conducted a detailed and in-depth reading of the content in the Arabic textbooks to identify soft skills, recording each skill's explicit appearance and frequency. Each contextual question was treated as a paragraph representing a specific idea. Additionally, each Quranic verse, Hadith, poetic line, title, or literary text (whether poetic or prose) was considered an independent paragraph. Visual elements, including images, drawings, and illustrations, were included in the analysis and treated as independent paragraphs. The analysis encompassed all book components: listening and speaking skills, reading texts (poetry and prose), comprehension and analysis, literary appreciation, linguistic topics, exercises, writing tasks, activities, and self-learning sections. Frequencies and percentages were calculated for each sub-skill within the broader soft skills categories, both individually and collectively.

## **2.6. Statistical Procedures**

Holsti's Formula was used to calculate the reliability coefficient of the instrument (the content analysis card) (Holsti, 1969). The frequency of each sub-skill was determined for every topic in each textbook, followed by calculating the total frequency of all sub-skills combined. The percentage of each sub-skill was calculated by dividing the number of times a sub-skill appeared by the total frequency, then multiplying the result by 100. The percentage of each main skill in each textbook was determined by dividing the total frequency of its associated sub-skills by the overall total frequency, then multiplying by 100.

## **3. Methodology**

The first research question states: "What soft skills are included in the newly developed Arabic language textbooks for fourth-grade students in Jordan?". The analysis identified and examined a list of soft skills. These included eight main soft skills: digital technology, communication and interpersonal skills, decision-making, problem-solving, critical thinking, creative thinking, educational knowledge, and emotional intelligence. From these core areas, a total of 60 sub-skills were derived and incorporated into the content analysis tool. The selection and classification of these skills were validated through the consensus of expert reviewers. This comprehensive set of main and sub-soft skills was then used to examine the content of the newly developed Arabic language textbooks for fourth-grade students. Table 1 provides a list of the soft skills and subskills.

**Table 1.** List of soft skills and their subskills

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**Digital Technology Skills**

1. The content includes educational situations that require employing and using modern technologies.
2. The content promotes positive attitudes toward the use of modern technology.
3. The content provides educational situations related to gathering information from multiple technological sources.
4. The content explains the rules of digital behaviour related to the use of digital information sources.
5. The content develops a culture of digital responsibility in learners regarding the transmission and exchange of information.
6. The content allows learners to publish on certain educational websites such as "Good Read."
7. The content encourages learning the ethics of using digital technology to access information.
8. The content includes situations that illustrate the importance of modern technology in scientific advancement.
9. The content presents examples for learners to use modern technologies, such as referring to the World Wide Web (Internet).
10. The content provides learners with dramatized scenes and situations that require listening through links or QR codes.

**Communication Skills**

1. The content includes educational situations to develop verbal communication skills.
2. The content includes educational situations to develop written communication skills.
3. The content encourages learners to convey information accurately to others.
4. The content focuses on helping the learner translate ideas into symbols.
5. The content focuses on helping the learner translate ideas into forms.
6. The content focuses on helping the learner translate ideas into drawings.
7. The content provides the use of communication to achieve various goals, such as guidance.
8. The content provides the use of communication to achieve various goals, such as persuasion.
9. The content provides the use of communication to achieve various goals, such as motivation.
10. The content encourages learners to communicate effectively with collaborative groups.

**Decision-Making Skills**

1. The content includes situations that develop decision-making skills.
2. The content provides alternatives for decision-making.
3. The content clarifies the goals required for decision-making.
4. The content offers situations that encourage learners to search from various sources.
5. The content provides learners with executable decisions.

**Problem-Solving Skills**

1. The content includes situations to accurately identify the problem.
2. The content encourages the learner to choose the appropriate method for solving the problem.
3. The content encourages the learner to implement the proposed solution in a structured way.

4. The content provides different types of problems and methods for solving them using both traditional and innovative approaches.
5. The content includes reviewing new situations based on solved problems.
6. The content emphasizes using past experiences to solve problems faced by the learner.
7. The content encourages the learner to gather information about the problem.
8. The content trains the learner to formulate hypotheses for solving the problem.

#### **Critical Thinking Skills**

1. The content encourages discussing and interpreting information.
2. The content helps the learner draw conclusions.
3. The content includes situations that help identify the relationship between cause and effect.
4. The content encourages identifying similarities and differences in certain topics.
5. The content encourages identifying facts in certain topics.
6. The content encourages identifying opinions on certain topics.
7. The content includes situations for judging the correct directions of shapes and objects.
8. The content includes situations for evaluating education (pattern systems).

#### **Creative Thinking Skills**

1. The content encourages the learner to produce as many linguistic or grammatical responses as possible.
2. The content encourages the learner to rephrase some ideas in their own words.
3. The content includes questions within higher levels of thinking, such as "What if?".
4. The content encourages adding new details to clarify the idea.
5. The content focuses on using previous experiences to generate and learn new ideas.
6. The content encourages completing incomplete ideas or tasks.
7. The content encourages the learner to form a personal opinion that expresses their thoughts.

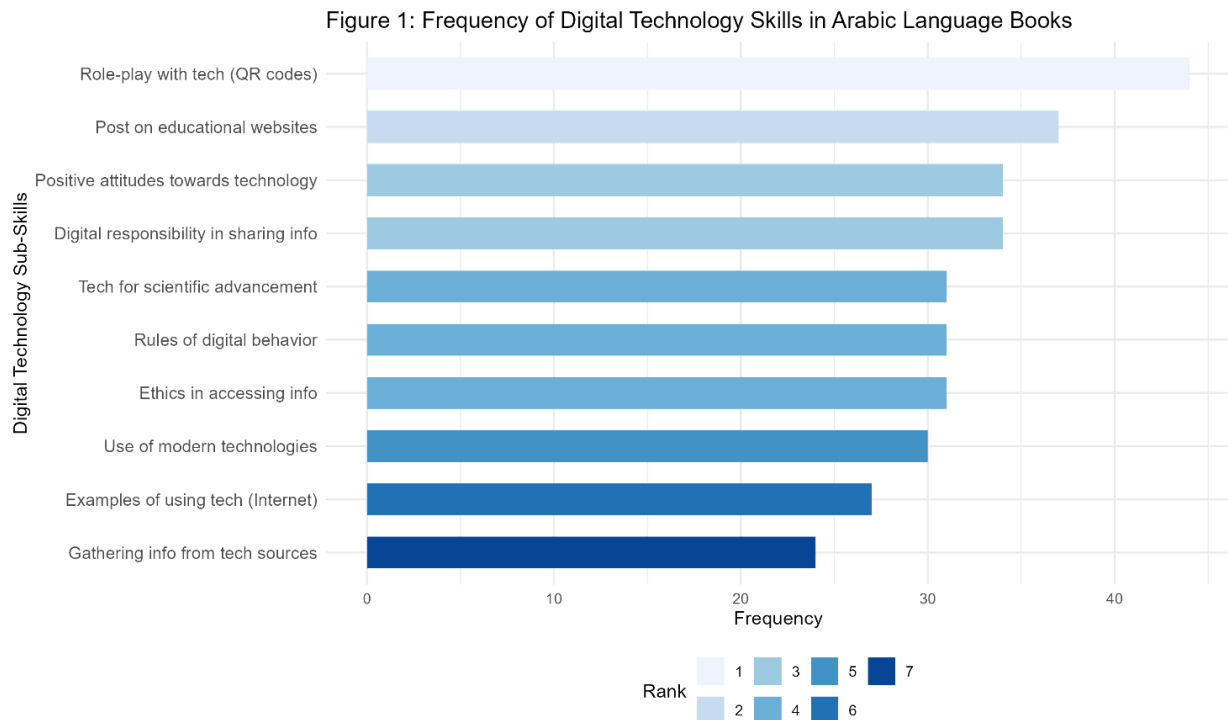
#### **Educational Knowledge Skills**

1. The content trains the learner on methods to acquire and discover information.
2. The content encourages presenting an image of both present and past education.
3. The content motivates the learner to interact with various social groups.
4. The content includes different types of educational materials: readable, audible, and visual.
5. The content encourages the learner to open up to global cultures.
6. The content highlights the benefits and types of education.

#### **Emotional Intelligence Skills**

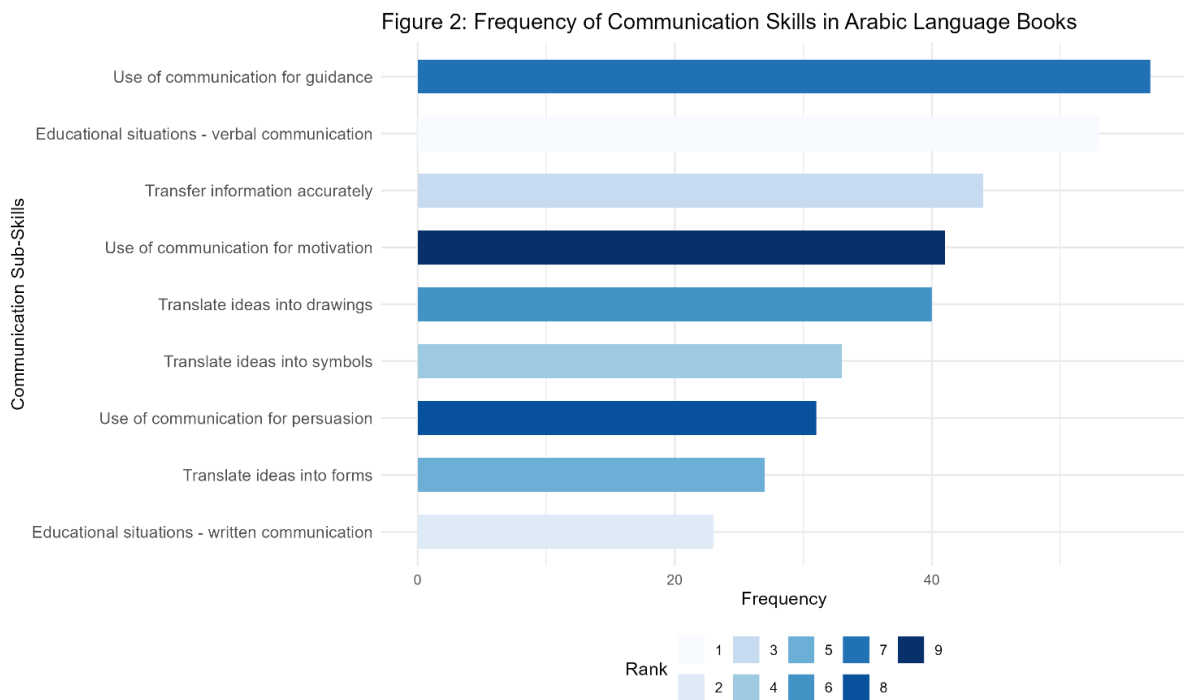
1. The content includes situations that demonstrate the impact of the learner's emotions on others.
  2. The content provides situations that prevent the learner from rushing to make judgments and jumping to conclusions.
  3. The content trains the learner to take responsibility and inspire through a persuasive vision.
  4. The content trains the learner on how to use persuasion techniques in certain situations.
  5. The content enhances the learners' abilities through feedback and guidance.
  6. The content encourages the learner to share their problems and emotions with others.
-

The second question, which states: What is the extent of inclusion of soft skills in the developed Arabic language books for fourth-grade students? to answer this question, the content of the developed Arabic language books for fourth-grade students was analyzed, and the frequencies and percentages for each sub-skill were calculated. A total of 60 sub-skills from the eight main soft skills were counted, both individually and collectively.



It is evident from Figure 1 that the total number of sub-skills for the digital technology skill is 323. The skill "The content provides the learner with role-playing scenarios and situations that require listening via links or QR codes" ranked first with a frequency of 44, and a percentage of 13.6%. The second rank was occupied by the skill "The content allows the learner to post on educational websites such as 'Good Read'" with a frequency of 37 and a percentage of 11.4%. The second-to-last position was taken by the skill "The content presents examples for learners to use modern technologies, such as accessing the global information network (Internet)" with a total frequency of 27 and a percentage of 8.4%. Meanwhile, the skill "The content provides educational situations related to gathering information from multiple technological sources" received the lowest frequency (24) and a percentage of 7.4%.

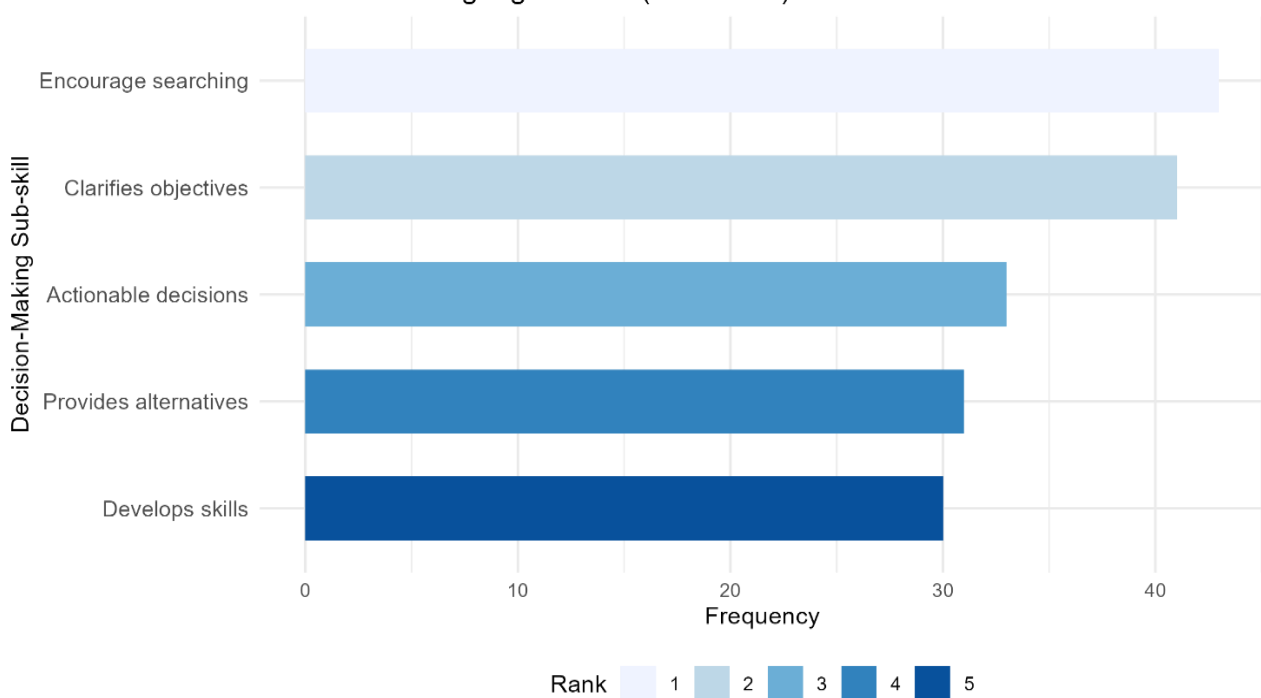
Secondly, the sub-skills of the communication and interaction skill are illustrated in Figure 2



It is clear from Figure 2 that the sub-skills of the communication and interaction skill had a total frequency of 390. The highest-ranking sub-skill was "The content provides the use of communication to achieve various goals, such as guidance," with a frequency of 57 and a percentage of 14.6%. The second-ranking sub-skill was "The content includes educational situations to develop verbal communication skills" with a frequency of 53 and a percentage of 13.6%. The second-lowest-ranking sub-skill was "The content cares about making the learner translate ideas into forms" with a frequency of 27 and a percentage of 6.9%, while the lowest-ranking sub-skill was "The content includes educational situations to develop written communication skills" with a frequency of 23 and a percentage of 5.9%.

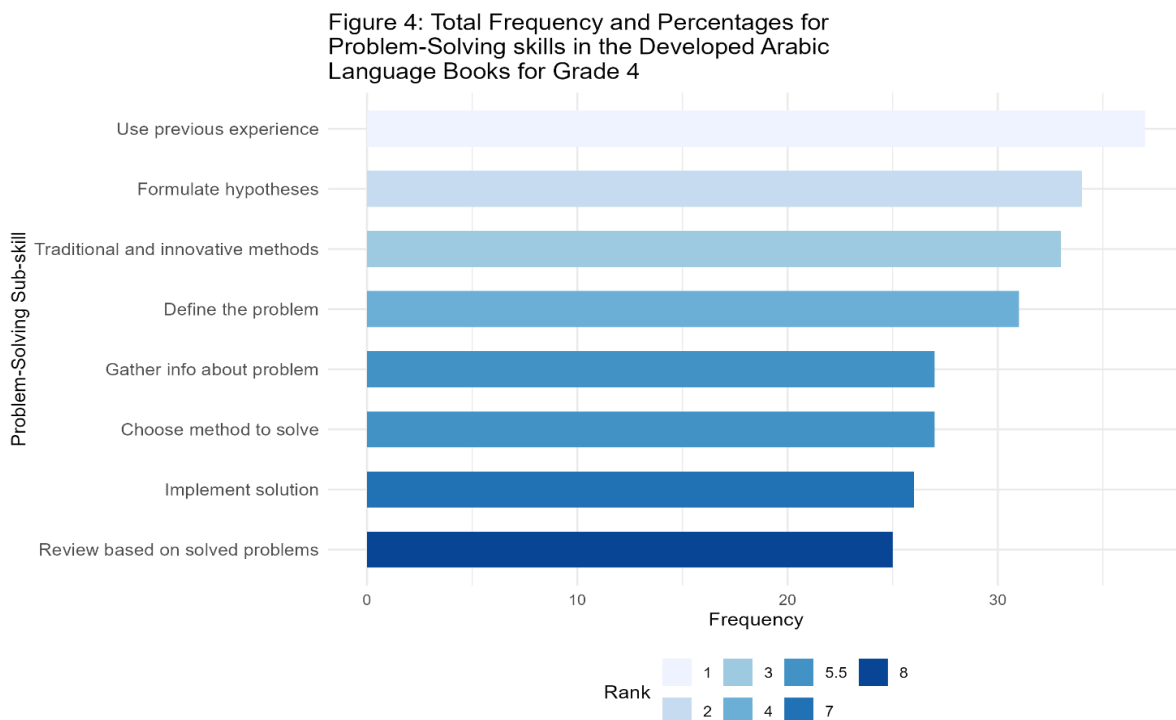
Thirdly, the sub-skills of the decision-making skill are illustrated in Figure 3

**Figure 3: Frequencies of Decision-Making Sub-skills in Arabic Language Books (4th Grade)**



It is clear from Figure 3 that the total number of sub-skills for the decision-making skill is 178. The sub-skill "Provides the learner with situations that encourage searching from various sources" ranked first with a frequency of 43 and a percentage of 24.2%. The sub-skill "Clarifies the objectives required for decision-making" ranked second with a frequency of 41 and a percentage of 23.03%. The sub-skill "Provides multiple alternatives for decision-making" ranked second to last with a frequency of 31 and a percentage of 17.4%. The sub-skill "Includes situations that develop decision-making skills" ranked last with a frequency of 30 and a percentage of 16.8%.

#### Fourth: Sub-skills of Problem-Solving Skills, as shown in Figure 4



It is evident from Figure 4 that the total number of sub-skills for problem-solving skills is 240. The sub-skill occupies the first rank "The content focuses on utilizing previous experiences to solve the problems facing the learner," with a frequency of 37 and a percentage of 15.4%. The second rank goes to the sub-skill "The content trains the learner to formulate hypotheses to solve the problem," with a frequency of 34 and a percentage of 14.2%. The sub-skill holds the second-to-last rank "The content encourages the learner to implement the proposed solution in a structured manner," with a frequency of 26 and a percentage of 10.8%. Finally, the last rank is given to the sub-skill "The content includes reviewing new situations based on solved problems," with a frequency of 25 and a percentage of 10.4%.

#### Fifth: The Sub-skills of Critical Thinking, as presented in Figure 5

Figure 5: Total Frequencies and Percentages of Critical Thinking Skills in the Developed Arabic Language Textbooks for Fourth Grade

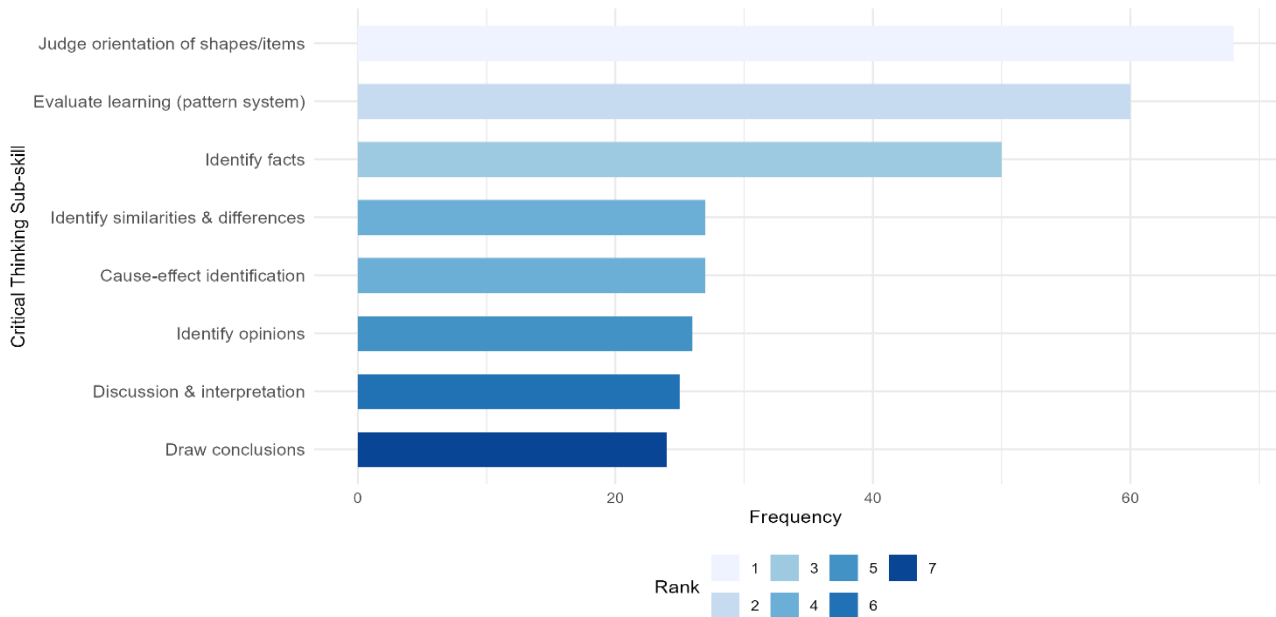


Figure 5 shows the total number of sub-skills related to critical thinking, which amounted to 307. The highest-ranked sub-skill was "Includes situations to judge the correct orientation of shapes and items", with a frequency of 68 and a percentage of 22.2%. The second-ranked sub-skill was "Includes situations for evaluating learning (pattern system)", with a frequency of 60 and a percentage of 19.5%. Near the bottom of the list was the sub-skill "Encourages the discussion and interpretation of information", which had a frequency of 25 and a percentage of 8.1%. The lowest-ranked sub-skill was "Focuses on helping the learner to draw conclusions", with a frequency of 24 and a percentage of 7.8%.

#### Sixth: The Subskills of Creative Thinking Skill as Presented in Figure 6

Figure 6: Total Frequencies and Percentages of the Creative Thinking Skill in the Developed Arabic Language Textbooks for the Fourth Grade

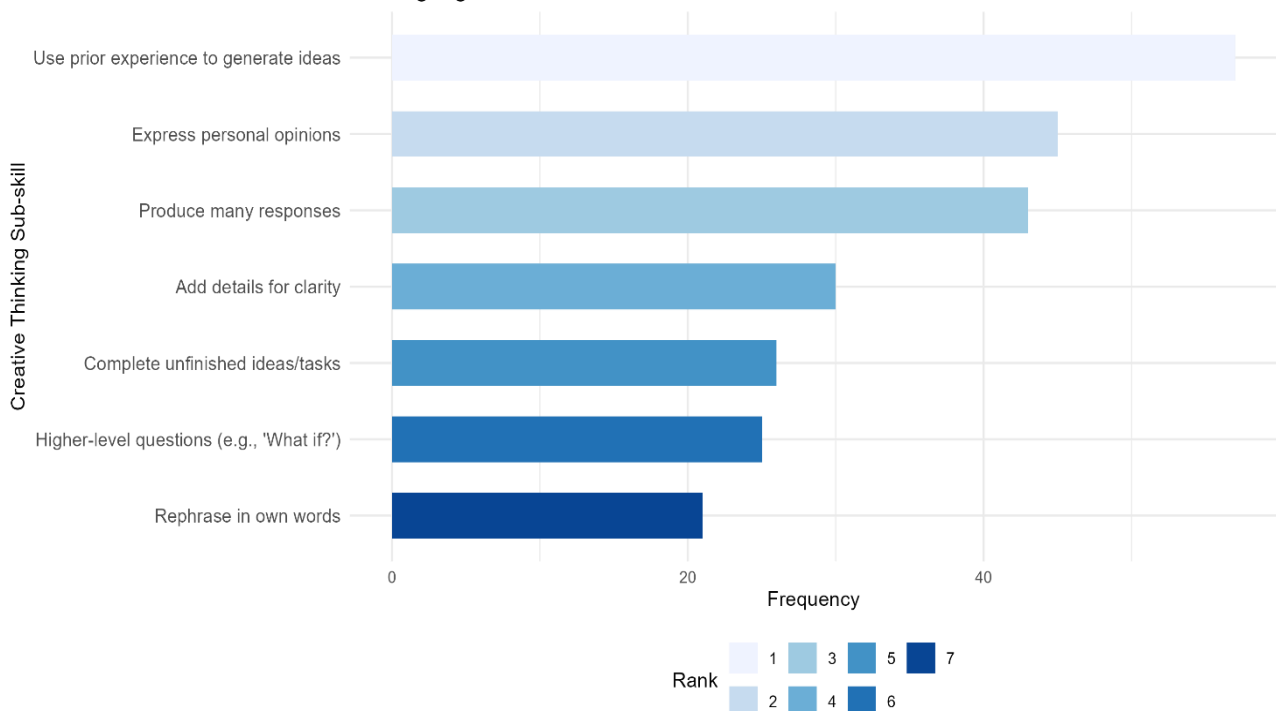


Figure 6 shows that the total number of subskills related to creative thinking is 247. The highest-ranking subskill was "Focuses on utilizing previous experiences to generate and learn new ideas," with a frequency of 57 and a percentage of 23.07%. The second-ranked subskill was "Encourages the learner to express personal opinions that reflect their ideas," with a frequency of 45 and a percentage of 18.2%. The subskill "Includes questions at higher levels of thinking, such as 'What if?'" ranked second to last with a frequency of 25 and a percentage of 10.1%. The lowest-ranking subskill was "Encourages the learner to rephrase some ideas in their own words," with a frequency of 21 and a percentage of 8.5%.

### Seventh: Subskills of Educational Knowledge

**Table 2.** Total Frequencies and Percentages of the Educational Knowledge Skill in the Newly Developed Arabic Language Textbooks for Grade Four

| No.          | Subskill                                                                     | %           | Frequency  | Rank |
|--------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|------------|------|
| 1            | The content trains the learner on ways to obtain and discover information.   | 20.08%      | 49         | 2    |
| 2            | The content encourages highlighting the image of present and past education. | 11.8%       | 29         | 5    |
| 3            | The content stimulates the learner's interaction with segments of society.   | 22.1%       | 54         | 1    |
| 4            | The content includes types of educational material: written, audio, visual.  | 19.6%       | 48         | 3    |
| 5            | The content encourages the learner to be open to world cultures.             | 14.3%       | 35         | 4    |
| 6            | The content highlights the benefits and types of education.                  | 11.8%       | 29         | 5    |
| <b>Total</b> |                                                                              | <b>100%</b> | <b>244</b> |      |

It is evident from Table 2 that the total frequency of the subskills related to the Educational Knowledge skill is 244. The subskill ranked first is "The content stimulates the learner's interaction with segments of society," with a frequency of 54 and a percentage of 22.1%. Ranked second is "The content trains the learner on ways to obtain and discover information," with a frequency of 49 and a percentage of 20.08%. The subskill ranked second to last is "The content encourages the learner to be open to world cultures," with a frequency of 35 and a percentage of 14.3%. Finally, the last rank was shared by two subskills: "The content encourages highlighting the image of present and past education" and "The content highlights the benefits and types of education," each with a frequency of 29 and a percentage of 11.8%.

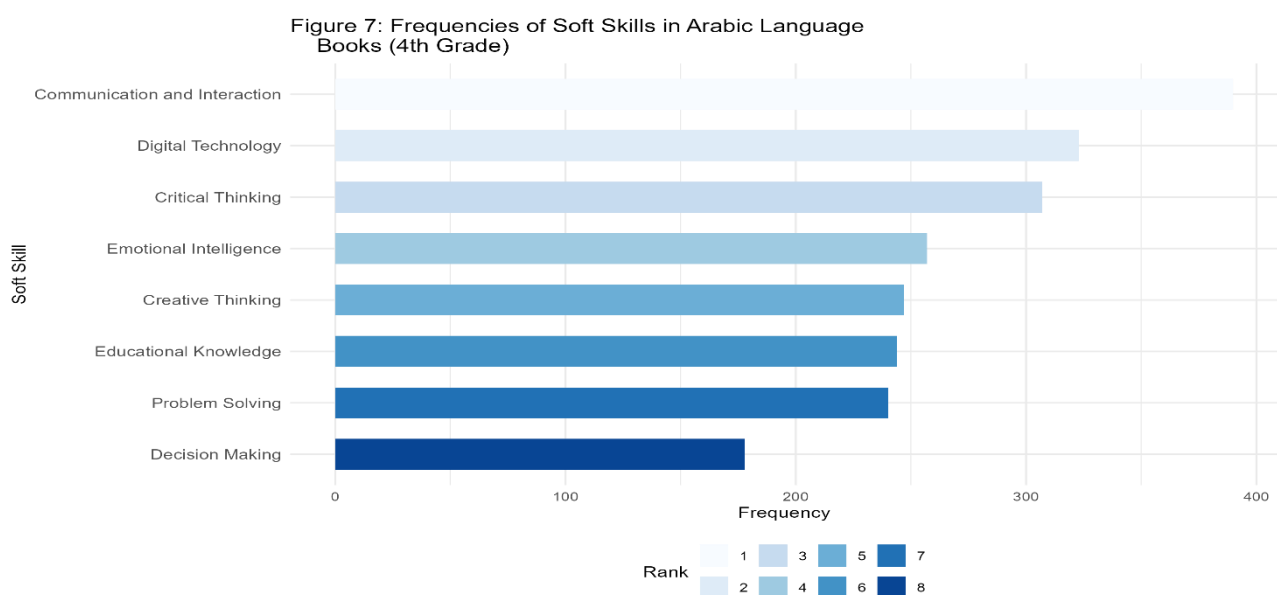
### Eighth: Subskills of Emotional Intelligence Skill, as shown in Table 3

**Table 3.** Total Frequencies and Percentages of Emotional Intelligence Skill Subskills in the Revised Arabic Language Textbooks for Fourth Grade

| No. | Subskill                                                                                          | %      | Frequency | Rank |
|-----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|-----------|------|
| 1   | The content includes situations that show the impact of the learner's emotions on others.         | 28.8%  | 74        | 1    |
| 2   | The content provides situations that help the learner avoid rushing to judgment or conclusions.   | 8.2%   | 21        | 6    |
| 3   | The content trains the learner to take responsibility and be inspired by a compelling vision.     | 21.01% | 54        | 2    |
| 4   | The content trains the learner in the ability to use persuasive techniques in certain situations. | 11.3%  | 29        | 5    |
| 5   | The content enhances learners' abilities through feedback and guidance.                           | 17.5%  | 46        | 3    |

| No. Subskill                                                                 | %           | Frequency  | Rank |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|------------|------|
| 6 The content encourages the learner to share others' problems and emotions. | 12.8%       | 33         | 4    |
| <b>Total</b>                                                                 | <b>100%</b> | <b>257</b> |      |

It is clear from Table 3 that the total number of subskills for the Emotional Intelligence skill is 257. The subskill achieved the first rank, "The content includes situations that influence the learner's emotions on others," with a frequency of 74 and a percentage of 28.8%. The subskill achieved the second rank, "The content trains the learner to take responsibility and inspire with a compelling vision," with a frequency of 54 and a percentage of 21.01%. The subskill held the second-last rank, "The content trains the learner's ability to use persuasion in certain situations," with a frequency of 29 and a percentage of 11.3%. The subskill took the last rank, "The content provides situations that help the learner avoid rushing to make judgments and jumping to conclusions," with a frequency of 21 and a percentage of 8.2%.



It is evident from Figure 7 that the total frequency of soft skills included in the fourth-grade primary school books is 2186, with a percentage of 25.9%. The skill ranked first in the overall total of soft skills is "Communication and Interaction," with a frequency of 390 and a percentage of 17.8%. The second rank is held by "Digital Technology," with a frequency of 323 and a percentage of 14.7%. The second-to-last rank is for the skill "Problem Solving," with a frequency of 240 and a percentage of 10.9%, while the skill "Decision Making" occupies the last rank with a frequency of 178 and a percentage of 8.14%.

## 4. Discussion

### Discussion of the First Question Results:

The results of this question, which stated: "What soft skills are included in the developed Arabic language books for fourth-grade students in Jordan?" showed that all the soft skills listed in the content analysis card (study tool) were present in the developed Arabic language books for fourth-grade students.

This result can be attributed to the focus of the authors and developers of the developed Arabic language books for fourth-grade students on soft skills. These books no longer present the curriculum content as mere information for learners or lessons prepared for superficial reading, nor are they delivered traditionally. Instead, they are designed to prepare students in a way that helps them keep

up with rapid developments and changes, equipping them to interact with one another in the face of the challenges imposed by the modern information revolution. This also reflects the authors' and developers' recognition of the importance of including soft skills due to their impact and ability to enhance scientific thinking in learners, who are building their future as part of the requirements for obtaining a suitable income based on confidence in the importance of education. This is explained by the fact that the soft skills included in the developed Arabic language books for fourth-grade students align with the developmental characteristics of the learners. This requires proper guidance to provide them with the necessary knowledge, skills, and experiences for their comprehensive preparation for learning and life, in line with their physical, cognitive, and social characteristics. Fourth-grade learners are characterized by a strong desire to learn, a passion for research and exploration, and curiosity, which necessitates that those responsible for developing and authoring the books, as well as the teachers, invest in this strong desire to build their motivation to learn.

Arabic language teaching models that integrate soft skills have demonstrated effectiveness in improving students' speaking abilities and overall practical competencies, validated through expert judgment and significant post-test improvements (Sunarko et al., 2024). Foreign language curricula outside the Arabic context also prioritize soft skills (Hashim et al., 2025). Digital monitoring and interactive methods in foreign language courses further support the development of teamwork, leadership, time management, and analytical thinking, with positive trends observed in students' soft skills alongside language acquisition (Medvedeva et al., 2022). Integrating best practices from both can enhance holistic student development.

#### **Discussion of the Results Related to the Second Question:**

The results of this question, which stated: "What is the degree of inclusion of soft skills in the developed Arabic language books for fourth-grade students?" revealed that the degree of inclusion of soft skills in the developed Arabic language books for fourth-grade students ranged between 5.9% and 28.8%.

Regarding the soft skills included in the developed Arabic language books for fourth-grade students, the results revealed that Emotional Intelligence ranked first with a percentage range of 8.2%-28.8%. Decision Making followed in second place with a percentage range of 16.8%-24.2%, while Creative Thinking took third place with a percentage range of 8.5%-23.07%. Critical Thinking came in fourth, with a percentage range of 7.8%-22.2%. Educational Knowledge was ranked fifth, with a percentage range of 11.8%-22.1%. Problem Solving ranked sixth, with a percentage range of 10.4%-15.4%. Communication and Interaction were in seventh place, with a percentage range of 5.9%-14.6%. Finally, Digital Technology ranked eighth with a percentage range of 7.4%-13.6%.

The results of the current study indicate a deficiency in the inclusion of soft skills in the content of the developed Arabic language books for fourth-grade students. This can be attributed to the lack of a matrix for soft skills during the development of these books and the speed at which the books were produced, which inevitably led to a weak focus on such skills. This result contrasts with the Jordanian curriculum reference document, which calls for keeping up with the knowledge revolution and contemporary global developments in various fields, and emphasizes the need for Arabic language books to focus on cognitive objectives. When the focus is primarily on cognitive objectives and linguistic content, opportunities for students to practice and develop diverse soft skills are limited (Sofa et al., 2023). Recommendations include developing clear frameworks for soft skills, incorporating interactive and real-life activities, and ensuring that textbook content aligns with both cognitive and non-cognitive educational goals (Fayyumi et al., 2024; Majadly & Yahya, 2024). This approach would better prepare students for academic and social success in a rapidly changing world.

The books' focus on cognitive objectives that rely on memorization, interpretation, application, and analysis, and the connection between evaluation questions and superficial cognitive lesson

content, along with the lack of activities that encourage collaborative work and cultural exchange, have weakened the inclusion of soft skills in the content of these Arabic books. Furthermore, the few skills included were presented in a spontaneous and superficial manner and were the result of the efforts of the authors and developers of these books. This result is also attributed to the fact that despite the efforts of the Ministry of Education and the National Center for Curriculum Development to restructure and reframe school textbooks to include modern skills that can keep pace with rapid technological advancements and align with the demands of contemporary life, it has been observed that sufficient efforts have not been made to achieve this goal. The efforts remain limited, insufficient, and do not reach the desired level. If this indicates anything, it points to superficial changes and a lack of genuine commitment to preparing a balanced, comprehensive, and effective curriculum capable of preparing the modern generation to meet the requirements of the contemporary era. The curriculum has neglected its prominent role in providing students with exceptional scientific preparation and has failed to equip them with these necessary skills. Additionally, the activities aimed at achieving these skills are scarce.

This can be explained by the fact that the fourth grade represents the beginning of the basic education phase, and it is essential to place the learner in a suitable environment that focuses on the fundamental skills needed, such as reading, writing, arithmetic, and the preparation for soft skills. These soft skills should be introduced in a way that provides a solid foundation for them, through including content with educational activities, sub-skills, and learning styles that support the soft skills required by the learner. This should be done in a way that aligns with their capabilities and potential.

Regarding the soft skills included in the developed Arabic language books for fourth-grade students, the skill of communication ranked first with a percentage of 17.8%. The second rank was occupied by the skill of digital technology with a percentage of 14.7%. Critical thinking came in third place with a percentage of 14.04%, while emotional intelligence ranked fourth with a percentage of 11.8%. Creative thinking was ranked fifth with a percentage of 11.3%, and educational knowledge took the sixth rank with a percentage of 11.2%. Problem-solving skill ranked seventh with a percentage of 10.9%, and decision-making skill came last in eighth place with a percentage of 8.14%.

#### **4.1. Recommendations**

First: Direct the attention of authors and developers of Arabic language books to reconsider them in terms of including soft skills, especially those skills for which the study results showed a low degree of inclusion. It is necessary to enrich the books with reading and writing texts, activities, and exercises that help in developing these skills.

Second: Conduct various studies to assess the degree of inclusion of soft skills in Arabic language books for other grade levels and to assess the degree to which fourth-grade teachers and students possess these skills.

Third: It is essential to increase the inclusion of soft skills in all components of the developed Arabic language books for fourth-grade students, including objectives, content, various activities, and assessments, as the analysis results showed a low degree of inclusion in these areas.

#### **4.2. Conclusion**

While the inclusion of soft skills in the fourth-grade Arabic language books represents a positive step forward, it remains insufficient for fostering the comprehensive development of students. To better equip learners for the future, educational policymakers, curriculum developers, and teachers must collaboratively adopt a more deliberate, structured, and student-centered approach. Enhancing the integration of soft skills across learning objectives, content, activities, and assessments is essential for cultivating well-rounded individuals capable of thriving in an increasingly complex and dynamic world.

### 4.3. Limitation

One of the most significant limitations of this study lies in its exclusive reliance on descriptive content analysis. While this method provides valuable insights into the presence and distribution of soft skills within the textbooks, it does not allow for inferences beyond the materials analyzed. As such, the findings cannot be generalized to other grade levels, subjects, or educational contexts. Additionally, the study did not assess how these soft skills are implemented in classroom practice or whether students actually acquire and apply them, which could be explored in future research using observational or experimental methods.

### Declarations

**Author Contributions.** The first author was responsible for the conceptualization, literature review, development of the content analysis checklist, data collection, data analysis, interpretation of findings, and preparation of the original draft.

The second author served as the main supervisor and contributed to the supervision, methodological guidance, critical revision, and finalization of the manuscript. He also provided theoretical support and ensured the academic rigor of the study.

Both authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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**Ethical Approval.** Ethical approval was not required for this study as it involved the analysis of publicly available textbook content and did not involve human participants.

**Data Availability Statement.** The data supporting the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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