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Cat Naming Practices in Saudi Arabia

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Abstract

The current paper explores cat naming practices in Saudi Arabia (SA), an Islamic Arabic-speaking country in the Middle East. Based on a corpus of 586 cat names, the study reveals that female cat owners assign non-Arabic foreign names to their cats, while their male counterparts prefer traditional Arabic ones. In general, however, Saudi cat owners of both genders choose Arabic or non-Arabic names on the basis of whether or not their cat is local or purchased. Locally adopted cats are given Arabic names, whereas non-locally purchased felines receive non-Arabic ones. The study also shows that most of the cat names given by the SA respondents in this investigation are personal names commonly given to people. This anthropomorphized tendency in name selection corroborates the results of earlier studies conducted in the USA and Australia (e.g., Abel & Kruger 2007), Germany (e.g., Bergien 2014) and Sweden (e.g., Leibring 2014), but contradicts research undertaken in Taiwan (Chen 2017) and Ghana (Yakub 2020). Aside from human names, the study reports other cat names related to food, colors, plants, places, royal titles, and body parts. As far as the linguistic characteristics of the cat names are concerned, Saudi cat names have reduplicated structures or onomatopoeic associations. They also end with vowels [e.g., -i, -a, -u] or other suffixes such as [-ah] or [-aan].

Keywords: pet naming, zoonymy, anthroponymy, personal names, Saudi Arabia

Introduction

The study of anthroponymy, toponymy, and zoonymy has grown in interest among many scholars across the world (Alford 1988; Herbert 1995; Léglise & Migge 2006; Fox 2011, Batoma 2019, inter alia). Proper names can provide insights into the interaction between language, society, religion, and politics (Léglise & Migge 2006); reinforce the identity of the name bearers (Aceto 2002); and regulate the heritage of the family members and the community as a whole (Helleland et al. 2012). In many households, cats, dogs, parrots, lizards, and other animals become beloved family members. Pet owners in these family units may even treat these non-human animals in a parental manner (Lambert 1990; Zaitzow et al. 1997; Abel 2007; Abel & Kruger 2007; Chen 2017; Yakub 2020). For this reason, many studies have investigated pet naming practices as an offshoot of child naming practices. These studies have explored the selection criteria for pet names (Harris 1983; Bergien 2014; Leibring 2014), their characteristics (Chen 2017), and morphosyntactic or phonological structures (Yakub 2020; Cassidy et al. 1999; Wright et al. 2005).

The current study examines cat naming practices in Saudi Arabia (SA), an Islamic Arabic-speaking country in the Middle East. Although Saudis often adopt local cats from the streets, purchasing cats has become trendy in SA, perhaps due to Saudis' exposure to Western culture in, for example, movies, series, drama, and TV shows, etc. (Kurzman 1998). Despite the popularity of cats in SA, this phenomenon has not been the subject of formal research. By investigating this under-researched area, the current study may identify how Islamic and Arab culture shape pet name selection in ways similar to or different from those presented in other studies conducted in the USA and Australia (Abel & Kruger 2007), Germany (Bergien 2014), Sweden (Leibring 2014), Taiwan (Chen 2017), and Ghana (Yakub 2020).

Cats were selected for this study because they are the most commonly domesticated pets in SA. Due to their small size, cats can be easily and economically fed, tamed, and maintained. Also, in the Islamic culture, cats, in comparison to dogs, are considered to be pure and immaculate (Campo 2016). As stated by the Prophet of Islam, Muhammad, "When a dog drinks from the water in a vessel belonging to any of you, you must wash it seven times, using earth the first time" (Abu Dawud 2008, 32). In contrast, the Prophet was seen to perform ablution from the water drunk by cats saying "Cats are not impure; they are among those who live among you" (Abu Dawud 2008, 32). As these passages demonstrate, cats have a very special place in SA society.

The current study explores how Saudi men and women select names for their cats, be they adopted or purchased. It also examines the factors related to whether the Saudi respondents picked traditional Arabic names for their felines or opted for modern English names. Therefore, this investigation reveals some of the criteria related to SA cat name selection in general, and how age, gender, and education play out in this practice. The study then compares these findings with those reported by previous scholars of pet names (e.g., Harris 1982; Thurber 1982; Safire 1985; Abel 2007; Abel & Kruger 2007; Chen 2017; Yakub 2020). These explorations are guided by the following research questions:

1. Is there a significant relationship between the gender, age, or education of the cat owners and whether their cats' names are Arabic or non-Arabic?
2. Is there a significant relationship between the gender, origin, or procurement of the respondents' cats and whether their reported names are Arabic or non-Arabic?
3. What are the criteria for cat name selection in SA?
4. What are other semantic categories and linguistic characteristics of cat names in SA?

Methodology

For the data collection, a 12-question e-questionnaire, written in Arabic, was distributed on social media websites such as Snapchat, Twitter, and Instagram. The e-questionnaire consisted of three segments with questions about (i) the participants' demographic background (nationality, age, gender, and education); (ii) the participants' cats: gender, origin (local or non-local), adopted or purchased, and reason(s) for adopting/purchasing; and (iii) the name selection: who named the cat, whether the name was Arabic or non-Arabic (e.g., English, European, Persian, Turkish), and the criteria that influenced the name choice (e.g., the cat's physical characteristics, personality). Most of the e-questionnaire questions were presented in a multiple-choice format. In two instances, however, the participants could choose more than one answer. Only one question asked the respondents to fill in the blank and record the name of their cat. Because one person may have multiple cats, the e-questionnaire clearly stated that, in such cases, each cat should be registered in a separate form.

In the first phase of data collection, 724 e-questionnaires were collected using snowball sampling in which participants were encouraged to share the e-questionnaire with their peers who own cats. Given that the study was concerned with cat naming in SA, the e-questionnaire included questions to exclude non-Saudi participants and cat owners whose pets were nameless. Participants who indicated that they had simply used the names others had already given their cats were also eliminated from the sample. After deleting the uncompleted e-questionnaires, the number of the participants fell to 586. These respondents reported a total of 586 cat names. This dataset was then examined to identify the salient properties of Saudi cats' names in terms of linguistic structures. Semantic comparisons were also made with the results reported in earlier pet name studies (e.g., Harris 1982; Thurber 1982; Safire 1985; Abel 2007; Abel & Kruger 2007; Chen 2017; Yakub 2020). For all of the analyses, Pearson Chi-square tests were run using IBM SPSS software (version 27).

Because some cat names can be simultaneously subsumed under different categories, there were cat names in this study that were included in the frequency counts for different semantic groupings. For instance, the name *Amir* 'Prince' is an Arabic personal name for humans as well as a royal title. It was therefore placed into two semantic categories: Arabic human names and royal titles.

Due to space limitations, the Arabic names are not written using Arabic orthography (e.g., سويد *Swaid* 'black'). Instead, the Romanized forms of Arabic words are presented with English glosses (e.g., *Swaid* 'black'). For English cat names with nearly identical Arabic pronunciations, only the English names are given. For example, the English name *Leo*, not *Lio*, is reported in this article.

Findings and Discussion

Background Information about the Study Participants and their Cats

Of the 586 Saudis who participated in the e-questionnaire, 273 (47.58%) were male and 313 (53.41%) were female. Most of the participants (i.e., 74.90%) were between 19 and 35 years old; 4.40% were 18 years of age or under; and those who were 36 years old or older represented 20.60% of the sample. With regard to their education level, the participants who were pupils constituted 18.10% of the sample, while university and postgraduate students comprised 73.50% and 8.40% of the participants, respectively.

Of the 586 cats registered in the e-questionnaire, 290 were male (49.48%) and 296 (50.51%) female. Out of these cats, 232 (39.59%) were “local”, meaning the cats in question were from the common species originating in SA. By comparison, 354 (60.40%) were “non-local”, meaning that their origins were from outside of SA (e.g., Persian, Turkish, or European). As far as buying or adoption was concerned, 164 (27.98%) cats in the sample had been purchased from pet stores or other owners, whereas 422 (72.01%) had been adopted. These adoptions took different forms. For example, some participants had taken in their cat as a stray directly from the street. Others received their cat as a gift.

Research Question 1: Is there a significant relationship between the gender, age, or education of the cat owners and whether their cats’ names are Arabic or non-Arabic?

The study showed that the participants’ gender was in fact related to whether their cats’ names were Arabic or non-Arabic ($\chi^2 = .000$; $df=1$; < 0.05). It was found that 205 (65.49%) female participants picked non-Arabic foreign names for their cats in comparison to 117 (42.85%) of the male respondents who had done so. By contrast, 156 (57.14%) male respondents opted for Arabic names, as opposed to 108 (34.50%) of the female participants. These findings support earlier studies where females were reported to prefer foreign language names (e.g., Oliveira 2010; Pawlak 2016; Ningsih 2018; Ardener 2020, among others). As far as the age and education level of the participants in this study were concerned, there was no relationship detected between these variables and whether the cat names the respondents selected were Arabic or non-Arabic: ($\chi^2 = 0.060$; $df = 4$; > 0.05) and ($\chi^2 = 0.112$; $df= 2$; > 0.05) respectively.

Research Question 2: Is there a significant relationship between the gender, origin, or procurement of the respondents’ cats and whether their reported names are Arabic or non-Arabic?

The chi-square test indicated that the cats’ gender was not related to whether the cats were given an Arabic or non-Arabic name ($\chi^2 = 0.470$; $df: 1$; > 0.05). However, the cats’ origin (i.e., whether they were local or non-local) did have a significant relationship with whether the name selected was Arabic or not ($\chi^2 = .000$; $df: 1$; < 0.05). A total of 236 (66.66%) of the “non-local” cats had been given non-Arabic names, whereas 118 (33.33%) of them had not. In contrast, 146 (62.93%) “local” cats had been given Arabic names and only 86 (37.06%) had not. These results seem to indicate that respondents in this investigation preferred to give “non-local” cats foreign names that mirrored their non-SA origins. The reverse seems to be true as well: in this study, owners of “local” cats seemed to prefer domestic names for their pets.

The chi-square test also showed that being purchased or adopted had a significant relationship with whether the cat name chosen was Arabic or non-Arabic ($\chi^2 = .002$; $df: 1$; < 0.05). A total of 107 (65.24%) of the purchased cats in this study had been given non-Arabic names, whereas 57 (34.75%) of them had received Arabic names. However, 215 (50.94%) of the adopted cats had been given non-Arabic names, and 207 (49.05%) of them had received Arabic names. This result was also not unexpected. It may be that SA respondents who decided to purchase their cats were more likely to select unique non-Arabic names.

Research Question 3: What are the criteria for cat name selection in SA?

Earlier studies have identified different categories under which pet names can be subsumed. Safire (1985), for example, reports that dog names in English-speaking countries can be either related to food (e.g., *Cookie, Candy, Taffy*), emotional disposition (e.g., *Crab, Pepper, Rascal*), coat color (e.g., *Amber, Midnight*), or the owners’ professions (e.g., *Psychic, Bones, Escrow*). In their articles on pet name selection, Harris (1982) and Thurber (1982) also demonstrate multiple categories. They find names commonly given to humans (e.g., *Mollie*), names that indicate personality (e.g., *Spunky*) or appearance (e.g., *Fluffy*), names of places (e.g., *Taos*), names of famous people or fictional characters (e.g., *Samson*), names of fictional animals (e.g., *Garfield*), names of other animal species (e.g., *Bear*), and military titles (e.g., *Colonel*), among others. In this study, some of the above-mentioned categories were also detected among SA cat names as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Participants' Responses to Question 12 in the E-questionnaire: Why Did You Choose Your Cat's Name? (More than One Answer was Possible)

#	Name type	Frequency	Percentage	Examples
1	appearance	213	36.34	<i>Bayyoodh</i> 'whitey', <i>Swaidah</i> 'black', <i>Samraa</i> 'light black'
2	personality	121	20.64	<i>Strong</i> , <i>Deekan</i> 'cocky', <i>Saydaan</i> 'hunter'
3	for calling	155	26.45	<i>Sasha</i> , <i>Adrian</i> , <i>Alexander</i>
4	celebrity's name	86	14.67	<i>Bagheera</i> , <i>Mowgli</i> , <i>Heidi</i>
5	popularity of the name among cats	43	7.33	<i>Leo</i> , <i>Lucy</i> , <i>Lura</i>
6	a family member or friend's name	33	5.63	<i>Maeed</i> , <i>Hasnaa</i> , <i>Zayanah</i>
7	a previous pet's name	31	5.29	<i>Rama</i> , <i>Biso</i> , <i>Manoos</i>
8	cat's origin/type	24	4.09	<i>Asia</i> , <i>Afro</i> , <i>Euro</i>
9	other reasons	49	8.36	after a location (e.g., <i>Sky</i>), a song's title (e.g., <i>Kiki</i> , <i>do you love me?</i>), or the owner's appearance (e.g., <i>Dubbah</i> 'bear')

As shown in Table 1, the most salient properties that govern cat name selection in SA are cats' appearance and personality. These results support previous studies which reported pets' appearances and personalities among the common factors in pet name selection (Harris 1982; Thurber 1982).

Research Question 4: What are other semantic categories and linguistic characteristics of cat names in SA?

Given that some people name their pets as if they were their children (Safire 1985; Brandes 2012), it has been argued that "trends in pet keeping can be understood as the extension of familial relations to non-humans" (Franklin 1999, 57). This assertion has been supported by many studies that reveal that names commonly given to children are often given to pets in several Western countries. In the USA and Australia, for instance, Abel & Kruger (2007) have demonstrated this pattern. Among the top cat and dog names in 2020 in the USA are *Bella*, *Charlie*, *Lucy*, *Max*, *Stella*, *Tucker*, *Harley*, *Jack*, *Murphy*, *Oscar*, and *George*, which are also commonly given to children (Baer 2020). In Germany and Sweden, similar findings were reported by Bergien (2014) and Leibring (2014) respectively. This pattern might be attributed to the fact that pet names may be carefully chosen to be similar to the names we reserve "for the children we never had" (Brandes 2012, 4). In contrast to the above studies in Western countries, Chen (2017) argues that Taiwanese people do not call their cats and dogs by Chinese names given to humans. Out of 321 pet names in Taiwan, only 5 (1.55%) were names that had been registered for Chinese children. Similarly in Ghana, Yakub (2020) found no human names in his 91-pet dataset.

In the current study of SA cat naming, human names (be they Arabic or non-Arabic) were well represented in the corpus. For example, 79 (13.48%) of the SA cats had Arabic personal names that are given to people (e.g., *Halimah*, *Duniya*, *Raad*, *Maher*, *Maryam*, *Misfer*, *Mashabab*, *Amwaj*, *Hassoon*, *Raamiz*, *Zaynah*, *Saeed*, *Swaid*). There were also 80 (13.65%) non-Arabic cat names in the corpus that were common human names (e.g., *Martin*, *Mike*, *Nancy*, *Heidi*, *Adrian*, *Alexander*, *Ashley*, *Obama*, *Peter*, *Tom*, *Silver*, *Gomez*, *Rose*, *Rock*). The most common non-Arabic name used for Saudi cats in the dataset was *Lucy* (repeated 24 times, 4.09%), whereas the most common Arabic name was *Sukkar* 'sugar' (mentioned 9 times, 1.53%). These results are in contrast to the above-mentioned findings about pet naming in Taiwan (Chen 2017) and Ghana (Yakub 2020). The Saudi respondents demonstrated anthropomorphized naming patterns similar to those found in the USA and Australia (Abel & Kruger 2007), Germany (Bergien 2014), and Sweden (Leibring 2014).

The remaining names in the dataset fell under many different semantic categories. For example, most of the remaining names make reference to food (72, 12.28%) (e.g., *Chocolate*, *Carmella*, *Mushroom*, *Marshmallow*, *Ginger*, *Kinder*, *Tortilla*, *Tufi*, *Basboosa* 'a Middle-Eastern dessert', *Lawz* 'almonds', *Mishmish* 'apricot', *Faraawlah* 'strawberry', *Zaytoonah* 'olive', among many others). This practice is not uncommon in pet naming corpora as reference to food was also recorded in other studies (i.e., in 20.56% of Chen's (2017)

corpus). Nineteen cats (3.24%) in SA are also named after other animal species such as *Tiger*, *Jaguar*, *Leo*, *Deekan* ‘rooster’, *Saqr* ‘falcon’, *Ghazalah* ‘gazelle’, *Gumriyah* ‘turtle-dove’, *Layth* ‘lion’, *Namir* ‘tiger’, *Yamamah* ‘dove’, *Jhaysh* ‘foal’, among others. The third category is colors where 17 cats (2.90%) in the sample are named with a color term such as *Silver*, *Blacky*, *Suaid* ‘black’, *Bayyoodah* ‘white’, *Samraa* ‘light black’, *Bunni* ‘brown’, among others. Other less common semantic categories in the dataset are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2: Less Common Semantic Categories Among Cat Names in SA

#	Category	Frequency	Percentage	Examples
1	plants/flowers	12	2.04	<i>Coral</i> , <i>Magnolia</i> , <i>Lavender</i>
2	places	6	1.02	<i>Berlin</i> , <i>Afro</i> , <i>Euro</i>
3	royal titles	6	1.02	<i>Prince</i> , <i>King</i> , <i>Amir</i> ‘Prince’
4	body parts	4	0.68	<i>Abu Shanab</i> ‘the father of a moustache’, <i>Abu Thanab</i> ‘the father of a tail’, <i>Zghaydah</i> ‘cheeky’
5	medical terms	2	0.34	<i>Covid</i> and <i>Pfizer</i>

The remaining names cannot be classified from a semantic perspective (e.g., *Cloudy*, *Turbo*, *Kahraba* ‘electricity’, *Barq* ‘lightening’, *Shakoosh* ‘hammer’, *Raad* ‘Thunder’, *Dabbaba* ‘tank’, *Rmah* ‘spears’). These names and many others can, however, be linguistically categorized from a phonological or morphological perspective. In the current study, half (52.73%) of the cat names in SA ended in a vowel. Although there are only three vowels in Arabic (e.g., -i, -a, -u), most of these names are non-Arabic. For instance, 164 (27.98%) cat names in this study ended with /i/ (e.g., *Ruby*, *Rocky*, *Sexy*, *Sufi*, *Lucy*, *Tummy*, *Lucky*, *Ashley*). As for the cats whose names end with /u/, they comprised 75 (12.79%) of the corpus as in *Afro*, *Kimu*, *Snow*, *Shushu*, *Haru*, *Bingo*, and *Carmelo*. Again, it is important to point out that, contrary to their pronunciation in English, in Arabic, all of these names are pronounced word-finally with /u/. Those names ending with /a/ constituted 70 (11.94%) of the sample (e.g., *Eva*, *Bella*, *Victoria*, *Lara*, *Luka*, *Mandela*, *Flora*).

Nonetheless, it is noteworthy that not all vowel-ending names in the dataset were non-Arabic names. Some of these names, especially those ending with [-i] or [-a], may still be of Arabic origin. Seven (1.19%) Arabic names ended with /i/ in the sample. Two of them are Arabic human names: *Absi* and *Amsi*. Given that the possessive first person pronoun is [-i] in Arabic (e.g., *kitab-i* ‘my book’, *qalam-i* ‘my pen’, *bayt-i* ‘my house’), one person called her cat *Omri* ‘my age’. Also, because the morphological ending /i/ is used as a belonging marker (e.g., *Amrik-i* ‘American’, *Hind-i* ‘Indian’, *Yapaan-i* ‘Japanese’), this ending was found in four cat names: *Immsini* ‘the Chinese’, *Imhadari* ‘the urban’ and *Immarwayi* and *Khaswani* (the last two are human names). As for the ending /a/, it sometimes functions in Arabic as a feminine marker for female names. Thus, it has been found in three names given to female cats: *Salwa* and *Wadha* (2 times) (i.e., 0.51% of the sample). Concerning Arabic names ending with /u/, no instance was found.

The most salient morphological property of Saudi cat names is that they end with [-ah] (12.62%) and [-aan] (5.11%). The suffix [-ah] functions in Arabic as the feminine marker (e.g., *kalb* ‘dog’ vs. *kalbah* ‘female dog’, *qitt* ‘cat’ vs. *qittah* ‘female cat’). In the current sample, 74 (12.62%) female cats were given names ending with [-ah], all of which were personal names given to female children (e.g., *Miznah*, *Halimah*, *Sa’diyyah*, *Ghaymah*, *Zahra*). These findings support Cassidy et al. (1999) and Wright et al. (2005) who argue that pet owners extend the same gender-related naming patterns they use for their children to their pets.

The second marker is [-aan] which was found in 30 (5.11%) of the cat names. The [-aan] ending is found in most male human names in SA; and in this investigation, it was extended to SA male cat names (e.g., *Adnaan*, *Farhaan*, *Qublaan*, *Aduwan*, *Suaidan*, etc). This final marker is also used in Arabic as an intensifier, meaning ‘very’ or ‘very good at’. In this study, it appeared in cat names to highlight and stress specific characteristics (e.g., *Saydaan* ‘very good at hunting’, *Kwayhaan* ‘very black’, *Shagraan* ‘very blonde’, *Kuhaylaan* ‘with very black eyelids’) or to express derogatory characteristics (e.g., *Tag’aan* ‘very farty’, *Zaggaan* ‘very shitty’, *Salhaan* ‘very shitty’, *Deekan* ‘very cowardly’).

Among the common morphological phenomena in cat names in SA is reduplication. Reduplication is a morphological operation where one syllable is repeated twice as in the English names *Lulu*, *Kiki*, etc. This phenomenon was attested 37 times (6.31%) in the sample (e.g., *Soso*, *Shosho*, *Koko*, *Lulu*, *Lala*, *Bobo*, *Jojo*, *Simsim* ‘sesame’, *Marmar* ‘alabaster’ and *Mishmish* ‘apricot’). These findings are similar to Yakub’s (2020) results where reduplication is found in 5 (5.49%) of his 91 pet names corpus. Chen (2017) also reported that reduplicated names were quite frequent in her investigation. A total of 109 (33.95%) of her 321 pet names followed this pattern.

Although Chen (2017) found 14 (4.36%) onomatopoeic associations in her corpus where cats and dogs were named after their natural sounds (e.g., *miao miao* ‘meow-meow’, *bai miao* ‘white-meow’ for cats or *ha ha* for dogs), no results of such kinds were found in this study. However, SA participants in this investigation did report having given their cats names that would get their cat’s attention. For example, in SA, people say “bsees bsees” or “to-to-to-to” to grab cats’ attention. There were 19 (3.24%) owners in this study who used the same strategy when naming their cat (e.g., *Bisbis*, *Bisbos*, *Bussoosi*, *Tota*, *Toto*, *Toti*, *Titi*).

The least used morphological phenomenon attested in this study was the use of phrasal nouns for cat names. Phrasal nouns refer to (i) nouns preceded by the definite article *al-* ‘the’ or its variant *im-* ‘the’, or (ii) compound nouns. There were 10 (1.70%) SA cat names in this study that started with the definite article (e.g., *Al-Isaywid* ‘the black’, *Al-Aod* ‘the elderly’, *Im-Makhrash* ‘the stripy’, *Al-Riqtah* ‘the spotty’, *Al-Zgirt* ‘the smoker’, etc). Among the compound nouns, there were only 2 (0.34%) identified in the dataset: *Nimir Bin Adwaan*, the name of a famous Arab poet (1745-1823); and *Shajarat Addurr*, the name of the female Egyptian ruler Shajarat Addurr (died 1257). These results are no different from Yakub’s (2020) study which records 4 phrasal names out of 91 pet names (4.39%). In other pet name studies, however, no instances of phrasal nouns were reported (e.g., Abel 2007; Abel and Kruger 2007; Chen 2017).

Summary and Conclusion

The current study provides some insight into cat naming in SA. Like previous research in non-Middle Eastern countries, this investigation shows that the characteristics of pet cats appear to play a significant role in the names selected for them. The more local a cat is, the more traditional a name it is given. Also, it was found that owners who purchase their cats are more likely to pick non-Arabic names. As far as the onomastic categories of the cat names are concerned, the findings in this study also mirror what has been found outside of the Middle East. The SA participants, like those in Western countries (e.g., Abel & Kruger 2007, Bergien 2014, Leibring 2014), also bestowed their pets with names common for human. This pattern would seem to reflect wider developments in animal-human relations. This use of human names for cats is, however, in marked contrast with the naming practices that have been found to be common in other non-Western countries such as Taiwan (Chen 2017) and Ghana (Yakub 2020). Aside from names for humans, the cat names found in this study were also related to food, colors, plants, places, royal titles, and body parts. Concerning the linguistic structure of cat names, it was found that the gendered morpho-phonological patterns common in selecting human SA names were also extended to cat names. Although other studies show that reduplication and onomatopoeic associations are attested in pet names (e.g., Chen 2017), the current study found these patterns to be in the minority.

Given the fact that this study only provides a snapshot of cat naming practices in SA, the same criteria and characteristics may not be generalizable to the names of other pets such as dogs, lizards, or parrots. Future studies exploring these pets are therefore encouraged. Another limitation of this work is that it only explored how individual cat owners select names for one of their cats. It is therefore recommended that future studies examine how individuals who own several cats select their pet names and how these chosen names may be related. Another possible avenue of exploration is to examine how the cat names selected by Saudi people living in cities differ from those selected by people who reside in rural areas. As it appears, this investigation is only the beginning, and many questions remain to be answered.

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