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Significance of Literature in Information Era: an exploratory Study of Pakistani Society

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Abstract:

Purpose: This present research aims to figure out why today's society reads literature? What kind of values they though promoted through reading literature? The objective of the study was to highlight the major problems and to investigate the core advantages of literature in our lives.

Design/methodology/approach: Study is exploratory. Researchers used a survey-based questionnaire to achieve their objectives. Data collected from 109 B.A (HONS), M.A, M.Phil, and PhD students participated in the study.

Findings: According to the findings, the biggest adversary of literature nowadays is social media platforms. The 2nd most important factor is an insufficient time. This was also revealed that students within the realm of literature in their curricula read extra literature. Nevertheless, the resounding, unequivocal "yes" provided in response to a statement about whether people need literature in our life inspires optimism as well as invites the research of the future hooked on how we might be able to bring the people (as well as the literature) nearer collectively in an ever-demanding as well as ever-changing environment.

Originality/Significance: This research intends to explore the reader's perceptions regarding literature reading nowadays. Being the first study of its kind, it is anticipated that the results can be beneficial for stakeholders, Policymakers and practitioners in the field of teaching literature.

Keywords: Literature, Pakistan; scientists; social scientists arts and humanities Students; Pakistan

Literature seems to have a tremendous effect on the evolution of any civilization, since it represents values and culture and acts as a vehicle for imparting such values to others. Our heritage is a synthesis of old values and a contemporary attitude; heritage as well as technology coexist. In current society, the highest ideals of traditional customs are nevertheless important. The community cannot abandon its traditional ideals. It is widely held that a creative society can only thrive by reinforcing our traditions and accepting all stages of modernity.

Today's children understand the true complexities of human feeling and behaviors. They appreciate that an individual is more than their outward appearance. They understand the complexities of human condition, allowing people to provide an opened mind and soul. Children, on the other hand, can only achieve this level of understanding by pursuing information - by becoming well-read and cultured persons.

Literature also helps us to reflect on our lives and reconsider some from our most treasured ideas, giving them fresh meaning.

As a consequence, both within terms of the time as well as human cognition, the value of literature has been confirmed. Is todays modern generation, nevertheless, seeking that greater level of understanding, regardless their understanding of the value of literature? Unfortunately, in the advancement of information, it appears to be incredibly difficult to find time to actually read fiction literature. Do we, nonetheless, require literature in the sense of fiction? This research made an attempt to investigate the present culture of studying literature and its significance in community through the use of the perspectives of students. The study also seeks to uncover the central role of fiction in society.

Literature review

Literature as well as the society are inextricably associated. A corpus of literature is a component of a people's collective culture when examined overall social. The components that differentiate one group's literature from yet another group's literature are indeed the qualities that distinguish one group's literature from yet another group's literature. Its topics and issues come from collective activities and group settings, and its value depends in how well it represents and enhances culture as a whole. That's an inherent part of the culture, linked with just about every other component through the use of a network of linkages. Literature has a significant influence on modern culture. Literature serves as a means of communication for each author. Some novels mirror culture as well as help us better understand the world we are living in.

We can relate as well as appreciate people by studying narrative, as according "Judith Caesar" (an English professor), there at (American University of Sharjah, AUS). According to the professor, literature inspires thinking; it helps us to ask a question and gain a deeper understanding of topics and circumstances. Caesar recognized the significance of literature in assisting readers in comprehending the relevance of individual conflict. People are fooled into believing but in an age of modern entertainment, including such movies and television, any problematic situation has a quick answer or solution, she noted. The literature, on the other hand, reveals the actual depth of human experiences. Students also recognized the significance of literature in influencing human ideals. As per to "Sophie Chamas" (an international studies student at AUS), the literature provides us insights within the other people's mind, the author's mind, and the minds of the personalities he or she creates. It enables you to further your knowledge and learn something new while also being subjected to a variety spectrum of viewpoints. Literature is primarily concerned with the study of human behavior. As according Farooqi, we perceive human behavior such as through tragedy as well as joy, romance and epiphanies, grief and denial, periods of heroism and times of cowardice.

Modernity unleashed the force of industrial and scientific development in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, culminating in equality and fairness and emancipation for the downtrodden. Literature is a reflection of society. Literature is a powerful and important instrument for communicating social concerns and moral ideals. Professors feel that students are responding well.

The literary main has less as judge against to the other domains. These pupils are also interested in art and theatre; they like reading plays and investigating contemporary works. These youngsters are extremely clever and intellectual. Caesar was also surprised by how excited the children were about the subject. Students feel that in today's fast-paced culture, today's youth have a craving for instant gratification, maybe as a result of their favourite technology pleasure. According to Haney, we live in the age of videoacy, not literacy. It makes no difference how they transmit their messages; individuals need a variety of channels to express themselves. As a result, the picture may be seen as a different form of literature.

Bashir et al. (2016) found that during the 1950s, famous literature in English flourished at a rapid pace, inspiring Urdu writers. The goal of favorite literature writers was to delight the masses by transporting them to a realm of fantasy and romance. (p.57)

However, the impact of information technology on adolescents is obvious. These new means of engagement allow people to express themselves and seek knowledge in a rapid and easy manner. It's an incredibly quickly world, and many students attributed their lack of interest in literature on a lack of patience. Half of their friends, and per the majority, take up a book. M. Raj, a Middlesex University foundation student, commented, "It's a stressful world, and it's getting busier all the time." How do we find time to read when we hardly have time for ourselves? Students turn to numerous types of knowledge and communication to receive the information they require quickly due to a lack of time and impatience. One of the critical properties of literature, according to Caesar, is that it is susceptible to interpretation. "Today's media formats don't even begin to show you how complex other people are." On the other hand, Caesar does not believe that rapid technological advancements will result in the eradication of literature. People aren't planning to quit reading even though they're watching movies, she added. Both satisfy the requirement for a storey. There are indeed a number of similarities between the two. Reading a novel before seeing a film, for instance, can aid understanding. As a consequence, contrary to popular belief, today's youth reads.

Or, are indeed the billions of articles concerning a wide range of issues connected as well as unconnected to human existence that we encounter when we login to the world wide web, our mailbox, or our social network profiles enough yet to substitute a very well fiction book? Do yourself a favor as well as read a book! Announcements and urges abound on social networking websites. or images depicting the path to achievement in the shape of a book ladder Such representation receive a lot of Likes and Shares, and how many of us check off of our online social profiles and spend the remainder of the evening with a book in our hands? We know that literature has also always played an important role in humans' search for meaning. Literature has the following main functions: having to tell humans what's really essential in society [...] what really is deserving of our affection and respect or lack of respect, [...] what that is like being some who reside in separate situations, historical periods, as well as gender specific bodies [...] how much we should pay close attention to something and how much we can afford to neglect, [...] how life might

well be lived in the region rather than another way (Chambers and Gregory, 2006, p. 2).

Literature is viewed as representing standards as well as ideals, as exposing cultural ethos, class conflict processes, and specific sorts of social realities. Because societal cohesion and cultural standards are concerned, impact is not exactly the inverse of introspection. Nevertheless, in complicated, dynamic cultures, coercive power encapsulates strongly with one kind of introspection, albeit to a limited degree (Albrecht, 1954, p.425). In other terms, literature instructs us about the purpose of life, as well as virtues like tolerance, compassion, and aesthetic taste. Urdu is regarded as among the most important languages in nations where it would be spoken and understood (Bashir, 2016). This article offers the conclusions of a series of questions study designed to emphasize the explanations why we read/do not read literature today, as well as the definitive response to a query: Is literature still necessary in our society? Our premise is that the technology and telecommunications technology hinder people from examining the literature. In other terms, the time spent on social media as well as other tasks (for example, family obligations) frequently leaves little time for peaceful periods spent reading a good book.

Originality/ Significance of the Study

Literature has a significant influence on present culture. Literature is a mode of expression for everyone. Literature, from the other hand, stresses the significance of understanding modern issues related to human strife. People are misled, as per a Gulf News storey, towards thinking that in an era of contemporary media, including such movies as well as television, any problematic situation has a quick treatment or cure. The literature, on the other hand, demonstrates the actual complexities of human conflict. Literature is both a reflection of mankind and a tool of communication amongst people. Listening to another person's voice through their tales allows us to connect. We can start to get a sense of how that particular author or writer thinks. This present research aims to figure out the current status of literature in modern society. Why today's society read literature? What kind of values they though promoted through reading literature? This research intends to explore the reader's perceptions regarding literature reading nowadays. There is no previous study conducted on the topic. So, there is a need to explore the actual scenario of literature in modern society. Being the first study of its kind, it is anticipated that the results can be beneficial for stakeholders, Policymakers and practitioners in the field of teaching literature.

Objectives of the Study

The study aims to explore the current scenario of literature in our daily lives and culture. To get the desired results, the main objectives of this study are:

i. To underline the motives why we read/do not read lots of books today.
ii. To obtain a definitive response to an inquiry: Is literature still necessary in our society?
iii. To investigate the ideals promoted by literary reading works.
iv. To discover the elements that discourages society towards reading books?
v. To explore the reading behaviour of students while reading literature.

Research Design and instrument

The study was quantitative in nature, adopting a survey research method. The survey tool, a questionnaire was adopted from a study "Does literature still have a place in our lives?" Boghian, I., conducted a questionnaire-based study (2014). This already tested questionnaire used because it will help to know the readers perspective of reading literature and what is their opinion regarding the influence of literature on society. The questionnaire is comprised of two sections first is the demographic section such as "Age, gender, the domain of study program, work experience". The next part was related to the respondent's opinion and perceptions regarding literature. This section of the survey contained ten (10) critical questions about the number of hours worked reading literature each week, the motivations for reading, the principles encouraged by literature, the time being spent at work versus the time spent reading, as well as the necessity for literature in society.

Our study was conducted on three separate representative student groups from the "Government College University Lahore, Pakistan" just at end of the 2020 academic year. A number of 109 students (B.A (HONS), M.A, M.Phil, and PhD) participated in the research. To render our findings most relevant, we attempted to use a survey from each of the university's three primary disciplines: to a group of students Languages, Islamic & Oriental Learning, a group of students from the Chemistry and Life Sciences, as well as a group of students Arts as well as Social Sciences. The groups of students who had participate in this research to cover a different range of age, correspondingly, eighteen to forty years of age. We further attempted to address groups that differed in regards of curricular as well as specializations. The 3 separate groups of students that participated in the research by secretly filling the survey had the following characteristics: - The first group: 37 (Thirty-seven) B.A (HONS), M.A, M.Phil. and PhD students, aged 18-40, from Languages, Islamic & Oriental Learning profile, "Government College University Lahore", studying Urdu, English, Arabic, Persian, Punjabi and Islmaic studies. - Second group: 35B.A (HONS), M.A, M.Phil. Moreover, PhD students, aged 18-40, from the "Chemistry and Life Sciences" profile, "Government College University Lahore", studying Biotechnology, Botany, Chemistry, Microbiology, Psychology, Physical Education & Sports and Zoology. - Third group: 37B.A (HONS), M.A, M.Phil. and PhD students, aged 18-40, "B.Com, Economics, Education, Fine Arts, History, Law, Management Studies, Mass Communications, Philosophy & Interdisciplinary Studies, Political Science, Sociology from the Arts & Social Sciences" Discipline of "Government College University Lahore" There seem to be just few graduates (studying PhD) within those groups who have some experience in teaching (between 1 and 15 years of work experience).

Findings and Results

After collecting the data, demographic information was first analyzed through SPSS. Throughout this portion of our article, we will provide the survey questions as well as the responses of the student, underscoring the differences among the three sample groups engaged in the study. Demographic information about participants is included in Table 1 below, including gender, age, as well as year of study.

The Demographic Information (Table 1)

	Frequency	Percent

Gender		
Male	58	53.2
Female	51	46.8
Age		
18-22 HONS	31	28.4
20-22 M.A	44	40.4
22-24 M.Phil.	22	20.2
24-40	11	10.1
no reply	1	.9
Year of Study		
	First	16
	Second	10
	Third	29
	Fourth	27
	No reply	27

The questions on the survey, as well as the responses from the students, are listed in Table 2 below. Given the fact that some students' answers included numerous explanations put on the same places and divided by commas, we have presented the students' responses statistically rather than in percent for questions 4, 5, 6, as well as 9. Out of the 109 responses to every one of the questions 4, 5, 6, and 9, most of them had the following syntax, for instance, for Item 4, which was as follows: Even though they are part of the school curriculum, they provide: 1. pleasure as well as relaxation; 2. improvement in vocabulary; 3. confirmation of personal values; 4. personal growth. As a result, we have added to the original table at least two (2) instances of the explanations that have been underlined, and we have divided the responses into the categories listed above. As an instance, we have included pleasure as well as relaxation as explanations under the "pleasure and relaxation" category of reasons, and improving vocabulary (from the same response) as a reason under the "vocabulary and common understanding" category of reasons. For the remaining elements, which did not need the use of hierarchical views, we have given the findings as percentages.

Table 2: The students' answers to the questionnaire

RQ	(N=109)	1st Group (n=37)	2nd Group (n=35)	3rd Group (n=37)
1.	**Reading Literary Works Hrs/Week**	**% of Sts**	**% of Sts**	**% of Sts**
	5-6	35.1	54.3	43.2
	7-10	29.7	11.4	13.5
	10-15	18.9	31.4	16.2
	15-20	16.3	2.9	27.0
2.	**Accesing Information via information technologies Hrs/Week**			
	3-4	51.4	37.1	54.1
	20-30	37.8	34.3	27.0
	45	8.1	20.0	16.2
	84	2.7	8.6	2.7
3.	**Reading Preferences for Literature**			
	Full work	48.6	34.3	62.2
	About the work	27.0	42.9	18.9
	Both	24.3	17.1	18.9
	No Reply	0.0	5.7	0.0
4.	**Reasons to read literary works**	**No of answers**	**No of answers**	**No of answers**
	To think beyond the books	6	8	15
	For comfort as well as relaxation	23	21	20
	For improving grammar and vocabulary	12	18	17
	For increasing your knowledge and mental growth.	10	12	16
5.	**Reasons which hinder you from reading**	**No of answers**	**No of answers**	**No of answers**
	Shortage of time	5	18	21
	Other activities	22	16	20
	The usage of social media	11	17	16
	The availability of books	7	5	8
6.	**Values promoted by reading literature**	**No of answers**	**No of answers**	**No of answers**
	Moral, honesty, the strength of character, truth)	25	23	25
	Cultural	8	5	8
	Religious	4	7	4
7.	**Does work affect time for reading**			
	Yes	64.9 %	68.6%	70.3%
	No	16.2 %	11.4%	16.2%
	No Reply	18.9 %	20.0%	13.5%

8.	**Opinion about future of literature**			
	Positive	23%	54.3%	48.6%
	Negative	5%	22.9%	8.1%
	In-between	9%	17.1%	40.5%
	No reply	0.0	5.7%	2.7%
9.	**Factors that discourage people from reading literature in today's culture**	**#answers**		
	Promotion of non-values by the media	10	11	20
	Internet, communication Technology	18	21	19
	Lack of time	7	15	13
	Socio-economic factors(lack of education, poverty)	12	7	10
10.	**Does society need literature**			
	Yes	94.6%	85.7%	91.9%
	No	5.4%	14.3%	18.1%

The first finding of our study was the high proportion of students who had just a few time per week devoted to reading, which was true for all 3 student groups studied (Item 1: 35 percent , 54 percent and, respectively 43 percent). We could see that the pupils from the actual profile are the ones that don't put in the effort to read at all. Regarding Item 2, the replies show that not only is the a substantial amount of students from any and all three groups associated with a small number of hours (3-4) spent effective information system perhaps through new information and communication technologies, but also that the third group also indicated the greatest rate of hours spent. (54 percent) spent in this manner per week, more than double the rate of hours (51 percent) spent in this manner by the students in the first group (37 percent). According to these findings, science students spent the smallest amount of hours obtaining knowledge through new information technology than any other subject. It is noteworthy that students in social sciences tend to read out entire text (62 percent), while students in literature courses tend to read out full work (48.6 percent), which is the second largest ratio of the three categories. Science students tend to read concerning their job (42.9 percent), which is understandable given the fact that they all have fewer time to read literature. Item 4 has shown something fascinating: all 3 groups read books for the very same purpose, which is enjoyment as well as relaxation, according to the results. As a consequence, the findings revealed that literature is a great source of enjoyment and relaxation for people of all ages. Although students were asked to provide at least two or three (3) reasons for their responses to items 4, 5, and 9, the vast majority of students chose only one or 2 reasons, with no response to the remainder choices for things 4, 5, and 9. We have included four kinds of responses in the table as a result of the frequency with which they are given.

For item number 4, we have included within the table the explanations that were most often stated by the students in their responses. This is the most common reason for reading a novel, and it is also the first-ranked reason across all 3 categories of students who read a novel for enjoyment as well as comfort. According to all students, the second reason to read literary work is "to build vocabulary and general knowledge". Results showed that students have an understanding that literature is a source of knowledge and help to build vocabulary. The 3rd reasoning, "confirm personal values and personal growth," which is stated this justification on the third place in the way that contributes. It is also observed that although the literature is a significant part of the curriculum of 1st group just six (6)students considered this that they read literary works "because they are part of the curriculum". These results showed the general interest of students in literary works.

The responses to Item 5 have unequivocally supported our hypothesis: a limited time is the most significant issue preventing us from reading. Science as well as social science students have shown that a limited time is the most significant obstacle to their reading literature, but same students have also put other hobbies like Facebook posting on an equal footing with a lack of time. Nevertheless, while the students from the first group put the explanation "other activities, such as studying or working" in the top position, there were only five responses regarding a shortage of time out from students from the second. All 3 groups also expressed dissatisfaction with the fact that certain books they would want to read are either not accessible at their local library or, if they are, are prohibitively costly when purchased on the open market. While students from the actual profile do not identify any moral values supported by literature, students from the very first, 2nd, as well as 3rd groups do so, with the morals and ethics encouraged by literature occupying the first, equal, and second places, respectively (Item 6). It's noteworthy that all of these groups have stated values that are similar: humility, truth, and honesty. Those belonging to the first and third groups, on the other hand, have the same views on cultural values and norms.

The responses to Item 7 are indeed indicative of our hypothesis: the vast majority of students who took part in this study agreed that their jobs prevent them from spending time reading literature (Item 1: 65 percent , 69 percent and, respectively 70 percent). The responses to Item 8 are very encouraging. The majority of students who participated in this study had an enthusiastic and positive attitude to the future of literature; in fact, 109 out of the 109 students who participated in this study believed that the fate of literature is bright. By contrasting the viewpoints of the 3 groups, we can see that, while the first group had the greatest rate of positive, strong views upon that future of literature (59.5 percent), all those in the second group had a rate of (54.3 percent), and those in the third group had the minimum rate of positive, strong views on the future of literature (48.6 percent), indicating that they believed that the future of literature would be bleak and hopeless. The reason, as identified for Item 9: the Internet and communication technology drive society away from reading literature. For Item 10, all (95%, 86% and 92% of) the students answered by a definite "yes", there were just minor students who said no, during research results it is observed that these minor students were those who have lack of time for reading.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Next generation of learning will be the e-learning. In this changing environment what type or role literature can play in our daily life and society (Bashir, 2020). In the age of technology do we still need literature for our society; this was the major objective of the study. Despite the fact that our study was conducted on a limited scale, with just 109 students responding to the survey, we think that it allows for the formation of certain findings. It is possible that the findings themselves will serve as starting points for future investigation. Our theory has been validated: the usage of the internet and other forms of communication technology is the biggest adversary of literature today (Facebook blogging). A significant influence in discouraging people from reading fiction is played by the internet and other new information technologies. The second most important reason is a shortage of suitable time. Inadequate time is a consequence of the internet, the job schedule, other activities and obligations, as well as the exhaustion that occurs at the conclusion of each day.

It is also important to note that the studies we attend have an impact on what and how much we read: students who study disciplines that are associated to a domain of literary works in their education system tend to read more literature because they have an additional extrinsic motivation, which manifests itself because of the need to accomplish well in workshops as well as examinations, which encourages them to read more. For Item 5, all three groups expressed dissatisfaction with the notion that certain books they would really want to read are either not accessible at their local library or, if they are, are prohibitively costly when purchased on the open market. This feature may be associated well with social economic issues mentioned in the responses to Item 9 as being among the causes that are pushing society away from reading literature. The fact that, while only the first group mentioned Facebook and blogging as activities that kept them from reading, indicating that they were distracted through the use of new information and communication technologies, all 3 groups mentioned the internet as well as new communication technologies as variables that were driving community away from literature is also noteworthy. We are conscious that perhaps the internet and other digital communications technology are displacing us from reading literature, so why do we avoid expressing anything like that? We could say something like YES, I acknowledge that the internet as well as modern communication technologies have made it difficult for me to read literature. and perhaps instead choose to say: "Yes, the internet and new communication technologies are driving society away from reading literature?" This intriguing feature may become the subject of more investigation in the future. The fact that a large number of students cited an inability as the most significant issue having a negative effect on the amount of time they spent reading does not inspire much confidence. We are all aware that hours of work are now technically and practically between 8 and 9 a.m. every day. However, we are also aware that, in today's world, few individuals have the luxury of working just 8-9 hours a day, and that performance standards at work are constantly rising as well. Furthermore, for some workers (particularly those working in the private sector), working a specific amount of overtime is not a choice but rather an unwritten requirement of their job. However, the resounding, unanimous "yes" that was given in response to a statement of whether or not we need literature in our lives gives us reason to be hopeful and invites further investigation into how we can bring people (and implicitly society) and literature closer together in a constantly changing world as well as making demands.

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