

An Investigation of the Reading Habits among Pakistani University Students

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Abstract *Reading is an essential skill, which further paves the way for excellence in life both academically and non-academically. Reading habit does not necessarily include the reading of academic texts, but it also includes reading for pleasure, reading for information, reading for knowledge etc. It can also be a valuable essence to constructively progress the academic achievements of the students. The present study investigated the reading habits of Pakistani university students. The sample of the study was 600 university pupils from various disciplines of 6 universities. The quantitative survey showed that students were not inclined towards reading habits other than their course books.*

Key Words:
Reading Skills, Reading Habits, Academic Reading, Non-Academic Reading

Introduction and Literature Review

Reading isn't always the handiest one of the four language competencies, and it is a completely vital element inside the components of vocabulary enrichment, character constructing, and better educational performance (Chokron, 2000). It is the bottom of making and growing a well-organized person. People study for pleasure, expertise, necessity, records, research and many others. Reading may be defined as the process of looking at and understanding the meaning of a bit of writing via decoding the characters or symbols of which it is composed (Hooper, 2005). Reading is an incredibly interactive phenomenon. This interaction takes place through the hobby of analyzing, which is itself a complicated interaction between nearby stage bottom-up strategies worried with the identity of that means from the level of phrase upwards and more and more worldwide tiers of top-down, higher-order intellectual tactics and background know-how (Applegate, 2004). There are numerous talents to reading which might be critical to people involved within the process of reading to be able to apprehend a selected text or piece of writing.

Reading and its Importance

Reading is a person's bulwark against loneliness- his window on existence, his never-ending pleasure. It brings the day past and the following day into now (Karim & Hassan, 2007). Reading offers to revel in through which the individual may additionally enlarge his horizons of understanding, pick out, enlarge and accentuate his hobby and gains deeper information of himself, of different humans and of the world (Nurmi, 2005). Reading has come to preserve the giant place in education as a method of communication in a highly literate society. Book is still very much a part of human's lives in our modern-day society, and regardless of the invention of the brand-new audio-visual materials, the book in its regular traditional form continues to be the maximum vital approach of communication ever invented (Galik, 1999). Thus, the achievement of first-rate basic schooling requires the development of good analyzing habits of both young and grown-up newcomers. Reading is a key to a wealth of experience that hyperlinks human beings in a way a long way beyond distance or time.

Reading is vital for college students in preferred with a purpose to deal with new know-how in a converting world – that of the technological age. The potential to study is at the heart of self-training and lifetime studying. Reading is a completely important issue which isn't simplest about amusement however, a need; the simple device of education (Hooper, 2005). Reading makes manner for better information of one's personal stories, and it can be an interesting voyage to self-discovery.

It is the artwork of decoding published and written phrases, the simplest procedure of aware learning which influences the quantity and accuracy of statistics, in addition to the attitudes, morals, ideals, judgement and motion of readers.

Reading Habits

The hobby of reading seems like an addiction whilst it's miles repeatedly performed. In measurable terms reading habits are often taken into consideration in terms of the number of materials being read, the frequency of reading as well as the average time spent on studying and this addiction may be cultivated (McGeon, 2015). Reading, which is an extended-time period habit starting with the very early, is the prominent gateway to the understanding room. It can be assumed as an exercise that assists individuals to gain creativeness and develops their essential questioning capacities. In this sense, analyzing habits is an essential tool for the development of personalities and mental capacities of people (Palani, 2012). In addition to personal and intellectual tendencies, reading is a get right of entry to social, economic and civic existence. Moreover, all analyzing patterns in terms of emotional reaction enhance the emotional satisfaction of people. Reading pastimes regularly talk over with the selection of subject depends or desires for a genre of literature being read (McGeon, 2015). It is consequently often equated that an individual has advanced an analyzing habit and pursuits whilst such interest is repeatedly carried out voluntarily for entertainment.

Krashen (1996) believed that this dependency and interest could be nurtured at an early age. There could clearly be variations in pastimes between people of various ages, gender and significantly motivated through internal elements inclusive of the home, motivation and mindset in addition to external factors inclusive of peers, faculties, instructors, and the library facilities available to the people. Reading habit refers to the behavior which expresses the likeness of analyzing of character varieties of reading and tastes of reading. Similarly, Shen (2014), identifies reading conduct, as to how often, how a whole lot, and what college students read. Researchers in the beyond decade have committed efforts to examining rookies" studying behavior. With their endeavors, those researchers have located that reading behavior is associated with college students" gender, age, instructional history, instructional performance and professional increase. There have been attempts to classify readers.

Beers (1996) categorized seventh-grade students into three organizations. The "dormant readers" have been people who liked to examine and taken into consideration themselves readers but did not take the time to examine frequently or update their understanding. They were not poor in analyzing, however gave priority to other sports together with sports activities, social existence and college paintings. They would examine for the duration of handy times, including in the course of faculty breaks or after finishing touch of predominant initiatives. The second and third businesses had been the non-devoted and unmotivated readers. Those in these two agencies have a negative mindset in the direction of analyzing and did not want to read. The non-dedicated readers were open to the concept of reading within the destiny and feature tremendous attitudes toward different readers. The unmotivated readers have been now not open to the proposal of future reading and have been poor closer to folks who do read.

Reading changed into as soon as valued simply as a means of receiving an essential message but, today studying research has defined the act of analyzing in itself as a multilevel mental system which contributes substantially to the development of the mind. Great needs are made on the brain by means of the manner of remodelling image symbols into highbrow standards; a countless range of brain cells are activated for the duration of the garage process of studying (Clark & Foster, 2005). Psychological studies have proven that development in the capacity to read additionally results in a development in learning capacity as an entire, going far beyond mere reception (Shen, 2014). Good reading is crucial disagreement with the cloth and the ideas of the author. At a higher stage and with longer texts, the comprehension of relationships, production or structure, and interpretation of the context, becomes a greater giant. If the brand-new cloth is added into courting with already current conceptions, important studying is apt to grow to be innovative reading, a synthesis main to completely new results.

Reading Habits as an Integral Part of the Academics

Reading is one of the integral parts of every child's educational life, so, it should be given great value. It is the initial step to be taken at the start of a learner's educational career that highlights the importance it requires even from the beginning level. Practical steps should be taken for the development of this skill from the start of one's scholastic career because, attainment of reading skills is the basic requirement for a learner to lead a successful academic life (Wybrow, 2014).

Environmental factors are one of the noteworthy things in this regard, as different researches have indicated that it is the people around a childlike parent, friends and family that are more influential in this field as compared to teachers and institutions where one formally goes for learning purpose. This is because one's surroundings and the people nearby can mould or manipulate his thoughts and can give him the way they want him to walk on. In

other words, the people with whom a child spends maximum time can lead him to develop a great reading habit. So, they should adopt such strategies that can make their child a good reader because only a good reader can be a good writer too and both of these are compulsory for a successful educational life of a child. Where adopting reading habit leads towards one's mental development at the same time, lack of it hinders him at different stages of educational career.

Reading for pleasure and reading for academic success are two different things, and both of these can impact distinctly to a child. Different researches by several experts have shown implications in this regard. Such as Reyhene (1998) indicated that learning for pleasure leads towards the unconscious improvement of language skills. While another work by Bignold (2003) described that learning, habit enhances reading skills. It emphasizes only reading skills and remains quiet about the rests. Since whatever the case is its scope really widened one's experiences (Green, 2000). According to Cunningham and Stanovich (1998) both academic and non-academic readings enhance, storage of terminologies, promote oral skills, develop general knowledge and lead towards to be a proficient speaker and successful learner.

To be a good reader contributes to one's life in many ways. For example, one of the significant things that are developed by reading is intellectual expansion. It is not the only thing that is achieved by reading; instead, it also helps in practical operations of life. For learning enhances one's experience and knowledge, as indicated by Green (2000). And this experience and knowledge really help in taking decisions in life. In a way, reading helps in practical efficacy. But all this depends on the level of interest one has; as to how much and with how much depth one reads. Not only this reading also enhances the power of judgment, as reading means to understand the experience of the writer, his thought process and his perception of life. And when one empathizes himself with the characters; he takes many ideas and decisions taken by them as right or wrong that makes him a critical thinker. Apart from this, reading also provides honor to one's personality. As one can understand multiple perspectives and avoid rigorous judgments by seeing one side of the reality instead views multiple aspects of reality (Bignold, 2003).

Reading books also helps to clarify the suspicions one has. Learners having the pleasure of reading always contain material to read. Either purchase or borrow from somewhere they always have some reading sources with them. This very habit of thorough reading on a regular basis is useful in many respects. Enrichment of vocabulary words is one of these benefits. And this storage of enlarging terminologies enhances their power of comprehension. How much enlarge one's vocabulary storage is that much it becomes easy for him to grasp the idea. Academic vocabulary is really significant in this regard, for it is really helpful for adult or university pupils to comprehend their academic material (Nation, 2001).

Apart from the enlargement of vocabulary, reading develops experienced schemata in one's mind that really enhances the background knowledge. Whenever a new reading material comes to his schemata or mental script enables him to combine his previous and current knowledge; hence, contributes to the comprehension of the main idea. And the percentage of grasping the theme enhances with the association of large vocabulary (Nation, 2004).

Reading habit enables the students to understand different types of texts and topics that make reading easier for them. This comprehensibility develops a positive attitude of learners towards different kinds of reading material that enhances their interest, and they become better at acquiring reading skills (Abraham, 2008). While on the one hand, lack of reading skills develop a negative attitude towards reading, and they tend to neglect it for the failure one faces because of the lack of reading experiences. And the reader who has command on this skill becomes successful in academic life that let them get rid of the unethical issues like cheating.

Reading Habits of Students in Various Contexts

A number of studies have been conducted on the reading habits of the students in various contexts. A study was conducted on the reading habits of the college students in the US by Huang & Garza (2014). The data was collected from male and female students, which showed that most of the students were spending much time on academic reading throughout the year and only a few of them were taking out some time for pleasure reading or for reading any extra material. Another study was conducted in 2017 by Skenderi & Ejupi in Macedonia. The aim of the study was to identify and explore the reading habits of university students. The survey resulted that university students in Macedonia were embracing reading as an academic reading only, and they were not much into reading any other genre. They also blamed the stress of education, exams and pressure of academics as the main reasons for it.

Research on Malaysian Chinese students in 2011 by Abidin & Lean indicated that students were more into social media reading and were taking it as pleasure reading while print media reading, they were using only for the academic purpose. It further elaborated that they were taking online social reading as an informative reading where they were not typically involved in online books reading. Another study (Mlay & Langmia, 2015), examined how Information and Communication Technology (ICT) can improve reading propensities among college students. It was found that most members started reading by utilization of the power at home. A study at the Ankara University

Department of Primary Education indicated by the information acquired in the investigation, and it has been resolved that students at Ankara University and Erciyes University read books, papers and magazines in their extra time, they appreciate perusing scholarly works, noteworthy, sentimental, engaging clever, and mental sorts the most. (Erdem, 2015).

Context of Pakistan

A study was conducted to find out the gender differences in the reading habits of university students in Pakistan. The information was gathered through a questionnaire from 1050 of both genders of 3 universities present in Punjab province. The outcomes showed that the reading tendencies of male and female students were somewhat completely diverse, relying upon their purpose, taste, study time, and other factors. Female students showed a comparatively, more positive attitude toward reading than their male counterparts. It's suggested that academics at universities should play a vigorous role in motivating, guiding and management students for escalating positive reading habits, particularly among male students. Libraries of higher education institutions were establishments ought to be equipped with multiply of written and electronic reading materials, and should offer students with contributive reading surroundings. (Dilshad & Akram, 2013). Another study examines the English language and mother tongue (L1) reading habits of learners at the University of Sindh, Pakistan. It finds out the difference and similarities between Urdu and Sindhi learners reading habits. The findings affect the understanding and improvement of reading habits of college students in Pakistan specifically and commonly in second language (L2) context. (Ansari & Umrani, 2016).

A study examines the reading tendency of millennials living in Pakistan by assessing their reading attitudes in a digital paradigm. The study found that in spite of their first choice for print, millennials were more likely to use electronic reading materials. On the other hand, research has shown that the choice of reading mode manipulated by the reading intentions. Additionally, the availability of open access e-content and open access content may be a reason for the increased use of e-content, as free websites have been the preferred method for millennials to get reading material. Social networking websites and intelligent search engines like Google were also used and played a role in finding relevant information and reading electronic content. The study shows that the digital environment has an important impact on people's reading behavior, and this fact needs to be considered by the teachers, practitioners and people themselves (Soroya, 2020)

Another research aimed at exploring the actual factors that are powerful in promoting the reading habits of students. This study highlights the fact that reading habits are nurtured by families in which parents play an important role. Teachers, along with their parents, develop this reading habit through constant guidance and support (Adnan & Akram, 2016). The art of reading helps us to express our knowledge about the world. In other words, the messages are decrypted from a written text by this art. This study relies on underneath graduates' students' expertise in reading first choice relating to print or paperback books. The results showed that paperback books still are of significant importance and major thrust once it involves reading for pleasure and/or educational functions among university students (Ghaffar, 2018).

Statement of the Problem

Reading is one of the language skills, without which academic progress is not possible or it can be said that its importance in academic achievements cannot be denied. Unfortunately, the young generation is less likely inclined towards reading habits. The biggest impact of technologies and other facilities have damaged the reading habits of the students. The present research has investigated the extent to which Pakistani university students are inclined towards reading and what are their reading habits.

Research Questions

1. What are the reading habits of university students in Pakistan?
2. How much Pakistani university students are inclined towards reading?

Population of the Study

The population of the study is university-level students in the context of Punjab, Pakistan.

Sample of the Study

The study sample was composed of 600 university students from Punjab, and random sampling technique was

used. The sample was collected from 6 universities of Lahore. The age range of students was between 20 to 26, whereas the data was collected from multiple disciplines.

Research Methodology

The quantitative research method was used for the present study, and the data was collected through a survey. The students of various universities were requested to fill the questionnaire using a provided link online.

Instrument of the Study

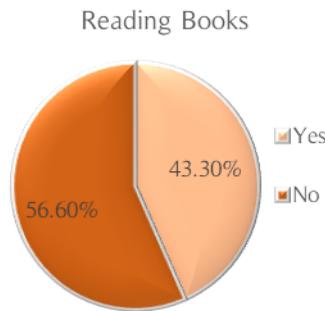
A survey questionnaire was used as the tool for data collection. The questionnaire was composed of close-ended questions with multiple options given. The questionnaire was adapted from a study conducted on reading habits of students by Skenderi (2017).

Data Analysis

The data was analyzed in the form of pie charts. The charts showed the percentage of the students towards a particular interest. Each part of the questionnaire was analyzed individually.

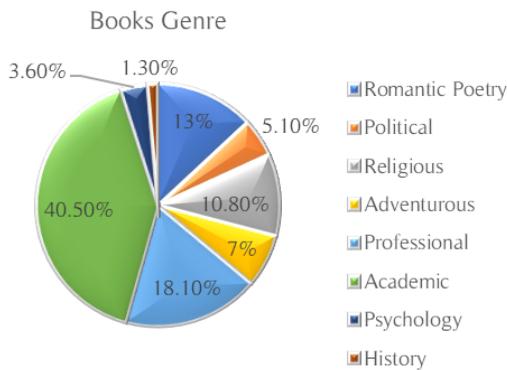
Findings and Interpretations

Q 1: Do you like Reading Books?



The above pie chart shows the likeness of students towards reading books. The percentage extracted shows that the participants of the study had less bent towards reading books. It shows that 56.6% participants do not like reading books, while 43.3% of the participants like reading books.

Q2: What Sort of Books You Like to Read (Genre)?

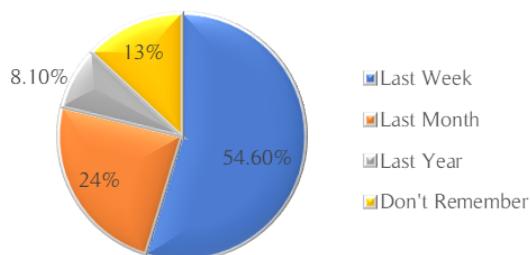


The above depiction shows that most of the students were reading academic books. Other categories were less focused. The second most opted genre was professional books, which indicated that the participants were somehow relating professional books with their

academic readings. This also shows that their only focus was academics, and the rest of the categories were likely to be less focused.

Q3: When Was the Last Time you Read a Book?

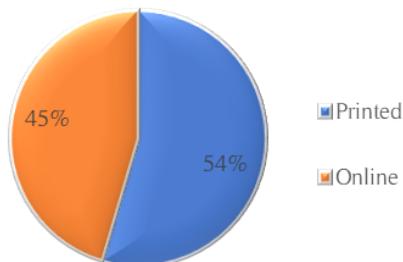
Last time you read a book



The present pie chart explains the time period of the participants given to reading. Most of the students elaborated that they read books in last week while in second place they mentioned the time period of a month before. So, the time span explains the quite recent reading activities of the students.

Q4: How do you Prefer to Read?

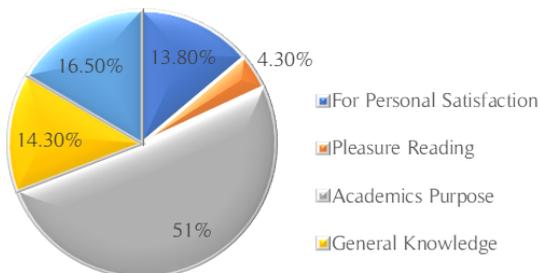
Prefer to Read



The above results indicate that more of the students were using print media to read books while online reading was little less. The difference between online and print reading is though not that bigger.

Q5: Why do you Read Books? Reasons.

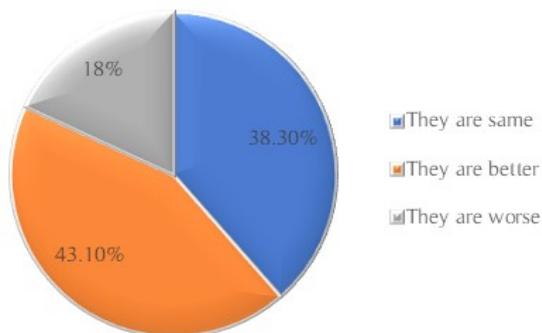
Why do you Read Books? Reason



The reasons for reading books are mentioned through the results here. The maximum number of participants choose the academic reason in comparison to other categories provided. It shows that the main purpose of reading of the participants was purely academic.

Q6: Have your Reading Habits Changed After Starting Studies at University?

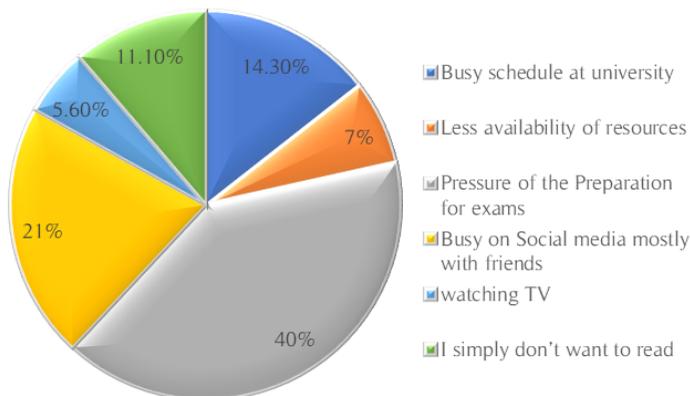
Reading Habits Changed After Starting Studies at University



The above results explain the change in the reading habits of the students over the period of time and because of the change in the context. Most of the students agreed on that their reading habits are better after they have started studying at the universities, though there is not much difference where they explained that the reading habits are almost the same as they had before entering to the universities.

Q7: Choose the Reasons that Negatively Affect in your Reading Habits.

Reason that Negatively Affect in Your Reading Habits



The multiple reasons that could affect the reading habits were given to the students where they choose mostly the negative effects of the pressure of the preparation of exams. It shows that the anxiety related to exams fixes their minds towards academic reading only, and they were not finding enough space to read something else. Whereas the negative effect of spending much time on social media is also given much emphasis by many of the participants.

Discussion

The present study was conducted to investigate the reading habits of Pakistani university students, their involvement in different categories of reading and their attitudes towards reading habits. The investigation revealed that the university students were not having much of the interest in reading as a genre but were much interested in reading as a part of academics. The analysis also showed that their basic understanding associated

with the word reading is not reading for fun, reading for pleasure, reading for satisfaction and reading for general knowledge. They link the term reading with academic readings only, and most of the participants were precisely focused on reading the books of their course. They were reading printed material more, which is available to them in the form of their prescribed course books where online reading was not much of their focus. Neither they felt much difference in their reading habits after being the university students, nor they felt the much need to work on their reading habits as their prime focus is their exams and courses. A crucial point was also highlighted through the results that the fear and anxiety of exams in semester systems were not letting them read anything beyond their course books and due to busy university schedules, they were not able to give any time to extra reading.

Conclusion

In relation to the research questions, the study revealed that the students of the Pakistani universities do not consider reading as an essential element, and they are more inclined towards academic reading. They made various claims about reading various books in the period of last one month, and some of them also showed interest into reading other genres, though the end result was still showing that they lacked towards non-academic reading habits. Various factors involved in effecting the reading habits of students were also identified as factors of anxiety, bad time management, less availability of resources and less motivation from teachers and parents.

Reading habits cannot be developed in a very short time period as it is a habit which is developed over a period of time with motivation, by engaging students in various reading activities or by giving them extra reading materials other than course materials. The role of parents and teachers cannot be denied in that. The present research also showed that students were even not very enthusiastic about reading informative books or books of any other genre. These basic understandings about reading habits must be developed at early stages and at university levels teachers should also play their roles by motivating students and by making them aware of the facts that if they read today, it would reflect in their lives throughout, not just as an academic success but as a lifelong success in every field of life.

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