



Decline in Reading Culture Among University Students: A Case Study of Bahria University

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Abstract:

This study investigates the precipitous decline in the reading culture of university students, with a particular emphasis on Bahria University. The study examines the current reading patterns, the impact of digital technologies, and the broader socio-cultural, economic, and educational factors that contribute to low reading engagement by utilizing qualitative data from 17 purposively selected students. Key patterns were identified through thematic analysis, such as academic fatigue, digital distraction, a lack of institutional support for leisure reading, and a transition to surface-level content consumption. The research also identifies practical interventions to revitalize the reading culture, including the incorporation of reading-focused programs, university-supported book clubs, and awareness campaigns on mindful media usage. The results underscore the pressing necessity for an urgent effort to reestablish reading as a fundamental intellectual and personal development aid for young people through collective academic and cultural endeavors.

Keywords: Student Behaviors, Digital Media, Reading Culture, University Students

Introduction

Reading is one of the most powerful tools in the development of an individual and a society. It lays the groundwork for a lifetime of study, develops thoughts and character, and inspires creativity. Throughout history, civilizations that valued reading have given rise to influential figures who have changed the world by their scholarship, research, and reform efforts (Wiegand & Manguel, 1998). But reading habits, particularly among young people, have been alarmingly declining in Pakistan in the last several decades. Traditional reading habits, especially leisure

reading, are quickly fading in this age of technology and digital consumption (Sridhar, 2021). In order to delve deeper into this worrying tendency, this research will use Bahria University in Islamabad as a case study to analyze reading culture in Pakistan as a whole. Reading is more than simply a pastime; it's a skill that helps with understanding, critical thinking, language acquisition, and emotional intelligence. A society that values education and personal development will have a reading culture that supports these goals. The sad truth is that there is mounting evidence in Pakistan that today's youth read less and are less interested in books than prior generations (Soroya & Ameen, 2020). Only 9% of Pakistanis are regular readers, and 75% say they have never purchased a book in the last year, according to a Gallup Pakistan survey. These numbers show that the way young Pakistanis consume news, stories, and information has changed dramatically.

Reading is not going away on its own. To this change, a number of intricate elements are adding weight. The proliferation of digital technologies is one of the most consequential. Students no longer often sit down with a book because of the growing amount of time spent on cellphones, social media, streaming services, and instant messaging (Mushtaq et al., 2021). Enjoy a quick fix of pleasure with little cognitive load with short-form material like TikTok videos, Instagram reels, memes, and tweets. The ability to focus and stay engaged for long periods of time when reading has been progressively diminished as a result of this change (Liu, 2005). These days, a lot of young people would rather have quick, visual, and interactive material than read anything lengthy. Still, technological advancements are not to blame. The problem has its origins in Pakistan's educational system and society at large. Beyond what is necessary for tests, reading is not often encouraged or prioritized in many households or educational institutions. Many people view reading more as a necessary evil than an opportunity for pleasure or growth. There aren't many well-kept public libraries. The exorbitant price of books and the scarcity of bookstores, particularly outside of big cities, make it difficult for many students to afford books. The promotion of curiosity and a love of learning is frequently overshadowed by the focus on rote memorization and grades in classrooms (DiCarlo, 2009). Therefore, pupils read just what is required of them and hardly look outside of their textbooks. Islamabad, the capital and a hub of academic and professional prospects, is home to Bahria University, providing an excellent setting in which to investigate this matter. Bahria is a microcosm of Pakistan's youth because it is a federally chartered institution with students hailing from all walks of life. The reading culture seems to be dwindling even in this city, which is home to many libraries, publishing houses, book fairs, and educational institutions.

Understanding the reading habits, perspectives, and experiences of college students is crucial in light of this paradox of accessibility and disinterest (Gorzycki et al., 2020).

There are a number of reasons why it is critical to comprehend this trend. To begin, there is a strong correlation between reading and academic success. Reading more helps students acquire stronger analytical skills, a larger vocabulary, and greater understanding, all of which contribute to higher academic performance. Second, by letting readers put themselves in the shoes of others, reading fosters empathy and social understanding. Thirdly, people in a reading culture are better able to make educated decisions, show tolerance, and be active members of their community. Therefore, reading is on the decline, which has consequences for both personal growth and national advancement. Finally, this study argues that economy, culture, education, and technology are all contributing factors to Pakistan's dwindling reading culture. As a representative institution, Bahria University provides a valuable lens for investigating these dynamics. This research aims to shed light on the severity of the issue and provide the basis for effective and sustainable remedies by concentrating on the behaviors and attitudes of university students. Reading is more than just a talent; it's a fundamental human need. Reviving reading programs is crucial for Pakistan's social and intellectual progress.

Literature Review

In recent decades, the reading culture worldwide has undergone a substantial transformation, primarily because of the evolution of digital technology, altering educational priorities, and evolving societal values. Although reading has been a fundamental component of intellectual and emotional growth for centuries, there has been a concerning decline in reading habits, particularly among young people. This review synthesizes scholarly findings, national statistics, and global trends to investigate the nature, causes, and implications of a declining reading culture, with a particular emphasis on university students and the Pakistani context.

Global Perspectives on the Decline of Reading

International research indicates that Pakistan is not the only country experiencing a decline in literacy. Students in developed nations, including the United States, the United Kingdom, and Japan, are also exhibiting a decrease in their interest in perusing books, particularly for leisure, (Van Der Weel & Mangen, 2022). The expansion of digital entertainment options and screen time

is a significant contributing factor. *The Shallows: What the Internet Is Doing to Our Brains* (2010), a seminal work by Nicholas Carr, posits that the internet encourages short attention spans and scattered thinking, thereby diminishing the brain's capacity to engage in profound reading. In the same vein, Twenge et al. (2018) conducted a study that associates the proliferation of digital media and smartphones with a decline in book reading, particularly among Generation Z. It is observed that traditional book reading has decreased, particularly among teenagers and young adults, while e-book reading has marginally increased (Soroya & Ameen, 2020). This global pattern of digital distraction disrupting reading habits establishes the groundwork for the examination of comparable phenomena in developing countries such as Pakistan.

The Reading Culture of South Asia and Pakistan

Reading habits are not only influenced by digital transformation but also by systemic educational challenges in South Asia, where literacy rates and access to quality education differ significantly. Concerns regarding students' reading patterns, particularly in relation to pleasure reading, have been emphasized in recent research. The decline of reading culture in Pakistan has been documented by a variety of educational foundations, journalists, and researchers. According to a national survey conducted by Gallup Pakistan and Gilani Research Foundation in 2021, only 9% of Pakistanis identify as active readers, and 75% had not purchased a single book in the previous year. This alarming statistic indicates that there are both economic constraints and a cultural transition away from reading. A research on university students in Lahore and discovered that more than 70% of respondents preferred social media over books for leisure use (Tariq et al., 2015). The research determined that technological distractions, inadequate familial encouragement, and a lack of library engagement were significant factors contributing to the decline in reading behavior. They also observed a generational shift: the current generation is surrounded by visual media from an early age, whereas many older individuals recalled growing up surrounded by books and storytelling.

Socio-Cultural Factors Influencing Reading in Pakistan

In numerous regions of Pakistan, reading is not generally considered a necessary daily activity. Rather, it is frequently regarded to an end, which is typically the success of an examination. Most students in Pakistani colleges and universities develop reading habits solely as a response to academic pressure (Amin & Bakhsh, 2021). This is due to the fact that educational institutions and

families do not actively encourage reading for leisure. Reading behavior is significantly influenced by one's family heritage. Sustained reading habits are more likely to develop in children who are raised in households that are book-filled and where reading is modeled and encouraged by their parents (Mullan, 2010). Nevertheless, books are considered a luxury in numerous Pakistani households, particularly in lower-middle and working-class communities. Students frequently identify economic constraints and inadequate access to reading materials as obstacles to habit formation, even in urban areas such as Islamabad. Additionally, the absence of public libraries and reading rooms is another critical concern. Pakistan faces significant challenges in developing an effective library system, particularly for public and school libraries (Haider, 1996). Libraries that do exist are frequently antiquated, underfunded, and lack engagement programs that appeal to young people.

The Function of Technology

Although the decline in reading is frequently attributed to digital technology, some academicians contend that it can be a component of the solution if employed constructively. A Study explored the integration of "digital reading" into university learning environments. They emphasize that e-books, reading applications, online libraries, and literary podcasts can reignite the interest of tech-savvy youth in reading (Hargreaves et al., 2022). Nevertheless, they warn that the abundance of entertainment content will continue to detract students' attention from reading unless they are instructed on how to use these tools effectively. According to an internal survey conducted by Baha University's students in 2024, 80% of students spend 4 to 6 hours per day on their smartphones, with the majority of that time spent on social media platforms (Alkhunzain, 2019). Most respondents associated reading with tension or boredom when queried about it, while social media was described as "quick fun" or "relaxing." This is indicative of the psychological conditioning that digital media induces, which promotes a preference for instantaneous content over sustained mental engagement.

The Reading Crisis and Educational Systems

The educational system in Pakistan prioritizes rote memorization, which serves to undermine independent reading and analytical reasoning. The curriculum fails to cultivate critical reading, and textbooks continue to dominate classroom instruction. In the majority of non-literature disciplines, students are seldom encouraged to investigate broader intellectual or creative

literature, and reading is restricted to course-related materials (Zabihi & Pordel, 2011). The reasons cited were inflexible operating hours, outmoded collections, poor maintenance, and a lack of promotion of reading culture.

Literature Gaps

Although numerous studies address the decline of reading in Pakistan, only a small number of them offer institution-specific, case-based evidence that is rooted in qualitative insights. There is a dearth of concentrated research on the ways in which university students in Islamabad, particularly those attending institutions such as Bahria University, perceive reading and the social, technological, and academic factors that influence their behaviors. The majority of current research is based on generalized surveys or anecdotal evidence, which results in a lack of targeted interventions or policy recommendations for higher education institutions.

Theoretical Framework

This research is informed by the Uses and Gratification Theory (UGT), which investigates the reasons why individuals select specific media to meet their psychological or social requirements. By employing this theory, it is possible to comprehend the reasons why students may opt for digital entertainment over reading, whether it be for the purpose of relaxation, social connection, or retreat (Sichach, 2024).

Conclusion of the Literature Review

The literature unambiguously illustrates that the decline in reading culture is a multifaceted issue that is influenced by digital transformation, socio-economic barriers, cultural apathy, and a lack of institutional support. Although the issue is global in scope, its manifestation in Pakistan is particularly concerning due to the fragile educational structures and limited national reading infrastructure. A focused analysis of student populations within individual universities, such as Bahria University, is what is currently lacking in the current literature. This analysis may be the key to developing localized, actionable interventions. This study endeavors to address this deficit by offering context-specific solutions and data-driven insights to revitalize the reading culture among university students in Islamabad.

Methodology

This chapter delineates the qualitative research design that was implemented to examine the declining reading culture among university students at Bahria University, Islamabad. An in-depth examination of the socio-cultural contexts, motivations, personal reflections, and actual experiences of students that influence their reading habits is facilitated by use of a qualitative methodology. It facilitates an in-depth, interpretive comprehension of the mechanisms and the reasons behind the evolution of reading culture among college students.

Design of the Research

This investigation adheres to a phenomenological research design, which endeavors to comprehend and interpret the significance that individuals attribute to their experiences. In the context of academic life, social expectations, digital engagement, and personal identity, phenomenology is a suitable approach for investigating the experiences of students at Bahria University with reading, or the absence thereof. This study offers students the opportunity to express their distinctive viewpoints without being constrained by formal survey formats through the use of semi-structured, open-ended interviews. The objective is to produce profound, contextual insights rather than generalized statistics.

Context and Research Setting

Bahria University Islamabad was chosen as the case study site due to its status as a prominent, federally chartered institution that draws a diverse student body from a variety of socio-economic, linguistic, and regional backgrounds. The university offers an exceptional environment for the examination of the dynamics of reading in a contemporary educational environment, which includes access to digital technologies, formal education, and campus libraries.

Sampling Strategy and Participants

In order to identify participants who could offer valuable perspectives on the subject matter, purposive sampling was implemented. The following criteria were used to select participants: Presently enrolled as undergraduate or postgraduate students at Bahria University Islamabad. Demonstrate either a visible interest in reading or a complete disengagement from reading. Be willing to participate in reflective conversations on reading, technology, education, and culture.

Number of Samples

A total of 17 students from a variety of departments, including Business Administration, Social Sciences, Computer Sciences, and Humanities, were interviewed. Thematic saturation was achieved with this sample, as recurring ideas and patterns began to manifest.

Methods of Data Acquisition

In-depth semi-structured interviews were the primary method of data collection, as they facilitated the more thorough exploration of emergent themes and allowed for flexibility in questioning.

Interview Structure:

Each interview lasts between 25 and 35 minutes.

Language: English and Urdu, contingent upon the participant's level of familiarity.

Mode: Conducted in person or via Zoom and one to one.

Principal Topics of the Interview:

Early Reading Experiences – The role of parents and teachers, childhood exposure to literature.

Present Attitudes Toward Reading: Motivations; Enjoyment vs. Burden.

The Influence of Digital Media: The Impact of Smartphones, YouTube, Instagram, and Other Platforms on Daily Routines.

Academic Environment: The degree to which reading is promoted or discouraged during university life.

Obstacles to Reading - Inadequate time, interest, access, or relevance.

Solutions recommended by students for revitalizing the reading culture.

Ethical Considerations

Throughout the research procedure, ethical integrity was rigorously upheld. The subsequent protocols were implemented:

Informed Consent: Each participant was provided with a verbal and written explanation of the study's purpose, and they were given the option to withdraw at any time without penalty.

Privacy: The final write-up and transcripts were anonymized to protect the confidentiality of names and identifying details.

Voluntary Participation: All students participated voluntarily and were not incentivized or influenced in any manner.

The research was conducted in accordance with the ethical research practices established by academic institutions and adhered to the guidelines for the protection of human subjects.

Data Analysis

Objective 1: To Assess the Current Reading Habits of Bahria University Students

The Silence of Unturned Pages

The initial goal of this investigation was to ascertain the current reading patterns of students attending Bahria University in Islamabad. The absence of a habit was not the only thing that emerged from the voices of students; rather, it was the echo of something that had been almost forgotten. Reading had been once associated with imagination, comfort, and reflection; however, it had since become a mere background noise, scarcely audible amidst the relentless hum of contemporary academic life. The majority of students interviewed acknowledged that they had not read a single non-academic book in months, and some had not read a book in years. They stated that reading was once a pastime they enjoyed during their infancy or early school years, but it is now only a distant memory. Reading had lost its significance in the rapidly changing environment of semester work, quizzes, deadlines, part-time employment, and social media scrolling, not due to its diminished value, but rather due to its diminished visibility. The responses that were collected were permeated with emotional fatigue, nostalgia, and remorse. One student disclosed that she had previously enjoyed reading fiction during her academic years; however, she was unable to recall the last time she had completed a book since enrolling in university. Another individual described how, upon commencing a novel, he would experience a sense of restlessness within minutes and ultimately reach for his phone. These narratives were not uncommon anomalies; they were the rule. The language they employed to characterize reading today was passive, bordering on resignation. The reason they ceased reading was not their own decision; rather, the practice was gradually removed by the urgency of life. The emotional tone of these discussions was particularly noteworthy. There was no rejection of the reading as being futile. In reality, the majority of students continue to associate books with intellect, calm, and depth. They aspired to be the type of individuals who read, but the habit no longer aligned with their lifestyle. One participant

whispered, "I miss it, but I am unsure of how to return." This understated assertion revealed a more profound reality: reading had not merely been disregarded by distractions; it had been structurally eradicated from the routines, expectations, and incentives of university life. The majority of students disclosed that they seldom read entire chapters or texts when inquired about their academic reading. Rather, they reviewed summaries, perused slides, or searched for exam-specific materials online. Reading had become utilitarian, even when it was mandatory; it was no longer an exploration of meaning, but rather a means to an end. They were not interacting with the texts; rather, they were extracting symbols. The experience of reading as discovery, reflection, and connection was absent. Urgency, shortcuts, and outcomes had supplanted it. The disconnect between students and reading spaces was another critical observation. Libraries, which were previously perceived as havens of learning, were now characterized as antiquated, neglected, or intimidating. A small number of students had ever borrowed a book from the university library. Even fewer had visited it more than once. According to one pupil, the environment is devoid of life, as if no one is meant to be there. It appeared that the institution was a reflection of the neglect, as reading was not being modeled, celebrated, or incorporated into student life. Not apathy, but rather a silent displacement, is the overarching impression that is conveyed. Bahria University students do not harbor any aversion to reading. They vaguely recall it. They long for it, and they even experience an aching. However, in the current reality, reading has been marginalized in the pursuit of their identities. It is no longer a component of their intellectual rituals or daily language. This initial objective reveals a generation that is not averse to reading, but rather unprepared, unsupported, and, most importantly, unseen in their silent disconnection from literature.

Objective 2: To Examine the Role of Technology in the Decline of Traditional Reading

Screens That Swallowed Stories

One must gaze directly into the shimmering blue light of the devices that students carry in their hands in order to comprehend the collapse of reading habits in the lives of students today. This research's second objective was to investigate the impact of digital media and technology, specifically smartphones and social media, on the traditional culture of reading. Technology had not merely diverted students from reading; it had displaced, reprogrammed, and, in many ways, consumed it. The interviews revealed a potent, undeniable intrusion, rather than a mild correlation. The students did not vacillate when asked about their leisure activities. They detailed the hours

they spent browsing through content on websites such as Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, and YouTube, not out of curiosity but out of compulsion. There were numerous individuals who admitted to spending four to six hours on their phones each day, and occasionally more. They were cognizant of it, and the admission caused some to chuckle nervously. However, beneath the laughing was a sense of exhaustion, which encompassed not only physical fatigue but also mental and emotional disorganization. "My brain is still buzzing, even when I am not using my phone," confessed one student. I make an effort to read, but I am unable to concentrate. My psyche is perpetually on the move

Perhaps this phenomenon, the fragmentation of attention, was the most frequently occurring theme. Students indicated that they were unable to maintain their attention on a text for more than a few minutes on numerous occasions. After attempting to read a page, they would check their phone, return to the book, and ultimately lose interest. It was not the book's fault, they maintained. It originated in their minds. No longer were they designed for in-depth perusing. Their purpose was to facilitate rapid intake, immediate feedback, and concise visuals. Patience was required when reading books. The use of phones provided people with delight. One participant, in a moment of unadulterated candor, stated, "Reading now feels like a punishment." No, it is not because I despised it. But I am no longer accustomed to slowed down. The crisis was encapsulated in this sentence; literature, which had previously provided a sense of tranquility and escape, now appeared to be a burden. It was an unreasonable request for a generation that was inclined to react, scan, and swipe. The emotional investment associated with reading, such as the time, silence, and solitude, had been supplanted by the dopamine bursts of online content. The most undesirable aspect? The students were aware of this. No, they did not commemorate their behaviors. Their passing was cause for sorrow. Another aspect of the technology dilemma was the illusion of replacement. In many cases, students believed that they were still engaging in the act of reading because they were reading captions, tweets, parodies, and posts. Nevertheless, upon further considering the matter, a significant number of individuals acknowledged that the content they ingested online did not remain with them. They were not challenged or altered by it. Like noise, it simply passed through them. "I spend hours scrolling," stated one student, "and at the conclusion of the day, I cannot recall a single thing I have seen." Conversely, the books they had previously read held a place in their memory for an extended period. The characters, stories, and paragraphs were all vividly remembered by them. Their lack of awareness of the distinction was not the issue. It was because

they no longer had the sufficient space for it. Technology, of course, is not inherently destructive. The potential to facilitate reading was recognized by numerous students, who utilized digital libraries, eBooks, and audiobooks. However, not many individuals employed it in this manner. Rather than fostering deeper thought, the majority of applications were designed to fragment it. There was no place for reading in this design, particularly genuine, sustained, meaningful reading. Conclusively, this objective underscores an uncomfortable truth: the relationship between students and technology is not impartial. The way they think, feel, rest, and relate to themselves is profoundly influenced by it. A space of distraction, addiction, and solace has emerged on the screen. and the book has discreetly receded into the shadows in its growing glow. Students do not abhor literature. Nevertheless, they are overwhelmed by the quantity of commotion. And until we instruct them to reclaim silence, they will never hear the page again.

Objective 3: To Explore Socio-Cultural, Economic, and Educational Factors Contributing to Low Reading Levels

Raised Without Books, Schooled Without Stories

The third objective of this inquiry leads us to the foundations, the unseen soil in which the seed of reading should have been planted. As the interviews progressed, it became increasingly evident that the decrease in reading among students at Bahria University was not an abrupt erosion, but rather a gradual depletion. The majority of students were not raised in environments where books were regarded as valuable, necessary, or even visible. The absence of reading in their current lives was solely a reflection of its absence in their upbringing. The responses of students were immediate and heartbreakingly consistent when they were asked about their childhoods, specifically whether reading was a part of their daily existence. Their residences were devoid of books. They were not present on the shelves, in the possession of their parents, or in the discussions during dinner. One pupil stated unequivocally, "No one reads in my household." There were textbooks and possibly a Quran, but no other materials were present. This was not said with wrath or shame; rather, it was stated as a matter of fact. Reading had never been introduced as a source of joy or self-worth in a society that was characterized by financial pressures, social expectations, and survival-driven routines. It was merely nonexistent. Students' comparisons of their childhoods to their idealized reading experiences exacerbated this generational divide. Some individuals remembered rare occasions when a teacher or friend introduced them to a novel, and how that moment ignited a

passion that they were unable to completely pursue. Others described the libraries in their institutions as either completely absent, dusty, or locked. Reading was not provided to them as a leisure activity; rather, it was mandated when it was deemed necessary, such as for grades, testing, or punishment. A pupil described how his teacher once required the class to read aloud, line by line, without emotion or comprehension. "It was not about enjoying the narrative," he stated. "The objective was to conclude the chapter prior to the bell ringing." According to them, reading had never been fostered by the educational system. It had prepared them for examinations, not for awe. Their reading experiences in school were disengaged, pressurized, and mechanical. Dissection was the method employed; literature was not investigated. Textbooks were not perused; rather, they were memorized. There was no opportunity to develop an attachment to language. Another participant recounted that, despite attending a distinguished institution, they had never been encouraged to borrow a book, discuss an author, or write a review. She stated, "Personality was never associated with reading." "It was merely another subject that we were required to complete." An additional dimension to the loss was introduced by economics. In their homes, the majority of students acknowledged that books were costly and that investing in literature was not considered practicable. One individual stated, "We were unable to purchase novels." "We were compelled to prioritize the most important items." Additionally, texts were not indispensable. Even today, pupils expressed that they were unable to purchase the books they desired. Libraries were inadequately maintained, bookstores were scarce, and digital books frequently appeared impersonal or challenging to access without distraction. The combination of these cultural, educational, and economic obstacles resulted in a perfect storm. A generation was raised without literature, educated without imagination, and anticipated to enter higher education as critical thinkers without ever being instructed to appreciate a single sentence. They were not opposed to literacy; they were never provided with a foundation. The concept of reading a book in solitude was unfamiliar and almost luxurious. Their lives were not designed for such tranquility. This objective demonstrates that the crisis of reading is significantly more profound than mere distraction or sloth. It is the result of decades of academic pressure, systemic dereliction, and cultural disinterest. Students did not lose their connection to literature; they were never granted it. And now, as they are in the middle of their degrees, they are being compelled to write, ponder, speak, and succeed all without the one skill that could have made it easier: the ability to read, not as a duty, but as a desire.

Objective 4: To Identify Interventions That Can Revive and Support Reading Culture Among Youth

Whispers of Revival: How Students Imagine the Return of Reading

The fourth objective was replaced by something more delicate and potentially more potent after pages of silence, apathy, and gradual decay. Although the majority of students admitted that they no longer read and described the demise of reading with unsettling honesty, not a single student declared it beyond resurrection. When they were inquired about what could be done to revive reading in their lives, their demeanor changed. The eyes were illuminated. Straightened postures. They spoke not as victims of a lost habit, but as architects of a potential future. In this objective, the words that had previously lamented the absence of reading began to anticipate its return. Students were explicitly inquired as to what would motivate them to resume reading. The answers were remarkably specific, full of texture and imagination, and neither vague nor general. They flowed effortlessly. Numerous individuals recommended that the university establish tangible reading areas that were both informal and inviting. One student described her ideal reading room as a space with bean bags, fairy lighting, a soft playlist playing in the background, and shelves stocked with books that could be taken home without any paperwork or pressure. She stated, "Atmosphere is essential for reading." "More than just silence and tables." It must have a sense of vitality. Her words underscored a critical point: reading must be reintroduced in a social and emotive manner, rather than through academic reinforcement. This sentiment was also echoed by others, who proposed the establishment of book cafés on campus, which are hybrid spaces that combine leisure and literature. These would not be conventional libraries with regulations and silence; rather, they would be spaces where discussions about literature were as informal and common as those about memes or movies. Several students expressed that they would read more if there was a culture of reading, which would include peer discussions, faculty recommendations, and social media posts featuring the books. One participant stated, "It is about visibility." "At present, no one in my vicinity is reading." "Perhaps I would as well if they did." A number of students also proposed the use of social media to reframe literature as contemporary and pertinent. They suggested that students establish Instagram profiles that showcase quotes, book memes, mini-reviews, and student spotlights. They desired book recommendations that were concise, impassioned, and visually appealing, as per the idioms of their generation. One student even suggested that reading should be made more appealing by collaborating with digital creators or

influencers. He stated, "I am more inclined to read a book if someone I follow online discusses it."
"However, that is not being done in this location."

It is crucial to note that students were not requesting that reading be compelled into their lives. They were requesting that reading be embraced, that it be delicately encouraged rather than imposed. They were concerned with the distinction. They suggested reading challenges, which are informal, voluntary competitions in which students monitor the number of books they have read over the course of a semester and receive recognition or prizes. The integration of non-syllabus reading into coursework was even suggested by some, but not for the purpose of obtaining grades, but rather to facilitate discussion. A few individuals proposed the organization of literature festivals, poetry slams, story evenings, or the invitation of authors to campus. These were not passive aspirations; they were blueprints that were awaiting to be heard. This objective was profoundly moving in that the students maintained the notion of its importance, despite their disconnection from literature. They were aware that literature enhanced their cognitive abilities, writing skills, and overall well-being. They simply required assistance in retracing their steps. The suggestions they made were not radical; rather, they were straightforward, compassionate, and human. They declined to request institutional reform. They requested a sense of belonging. The goal was to restore the sense of inclusion of books in their lives, ensuring that they were visible, accessible, and shared. This objective demonstrates that the literacy crisis is not irreversible. Students are not indifferent to books; they are merely anticipating that someone will reinstate books in the emotional and social environments in which they reside. They require public reading, not solitary reading. Not in silence, but rather celebrated. Shared, not isolated. The culture of reading can be revitalized if institutions genuinely heed to the voices of their students. By community, rather than by force. By impulse, rather than by syllabus. And above all, by demonstrating the sensation of rekindling a passion for words, rather than by instructing students to read.

Conclusion

The inquiry that initiated this investigation was not related to literacy, but rather to intimacy. The question was not whether pupils could read, but rather whether they continued to do so. The portrait that emerged during the course of this investigation was significantly more profound than a behavioral trend. It was a cultural unraveling, a silent disconnection between the books that once

nourished the essence of learning and the youth. The decline of reading was not a singular phenomenon, but rather a multifaceted, generational crisis, as evidenced by the perspectives of students at Bahria University. This crisis was influenced by noise, neglect, pressure, and speed. The initial objective exposed a generation that recalls literature but no longer resides with them. Students discussed novels that they had read in the past, stories that were unresolved, and book lists that were never initiated. What was once a source of pleasure is now a mere after thought. In their words, reading had evolved from a source of enjoyment to a source of resistance, as they battled against distractions, deadlines, and fatigue. Numerous individuals acknowledged that they had neglected to read, but they were uncertain as to how to resume their pursuit. Their confession was not casual; it was a silent expression of sorrow. They were not combative. Their whereabouts were unknown. The second objective exposed the pervasiveness of digital technology, which had not only disrupted reading but had also altered the brain's capacity to even desire it. Students acknowledged that their attention spans had diminished. That they spent hours scrolling, only to experience a sense of emptiness. That their hands twitched for their phones even when they took up a book. The reason why reading felt like a burden was not due to the books' lack of attractiveness, but rather because their minds had been conditioned to expect immediate gratification because of the screens. Contrasting the immediate gratification of reels and parodies, the gradual unfolding of a paragraph felt foreign. The book had become excessively quiet for a generation that had been accustomed to an abundance of commotion. The third objective revealed the more profound causes of this crisis. It is not that students were born without a love for literature; rather, they were never taught how to develop it. Their emotional distance from reading was influenced by a variety of factors, including schools that lacked a reading culture, homes that were devoid of books, and classrooms that reduced stories to marks. Books were unaffordable from an economic standpoint. They were devoid of awe in an educational context. They were perceived as optional from a cultural perspective. These students were not dismissing literature; they had been raised without it.

However, the fourth objective revealed something magnificent, despite the weight of all that has been lost. Hope. Imagination was present in the same voices that lamented the decline of reading. Students expressed their aspirations for reading areas that were illuminated, lively, and conducive to discourse. They imagined book clubs, casual cafes, and social media profiles that were adorned with literary beauty. They did not wish for reading to be reinstated as a standard practice. They

desired for it to resurface as a cadence. It is not mandatory. A resurgence. This investigation does not conclude in obscurity. It concludes with a potential outcome. The students who were interviewed do not harbor any aversion to literature. They have not forgotten its allure. They are merely anticipating a reminder. Waiting for an individual, anyone, to reintroduce books into their world in a manner that is gentle, pertinent, and alive. The issue is not solely the absence of books from their luggage. It is that they are absent from their emotional vocabulary, their environments, and their conversations. This investigation does not constitute a critique; rather, it serves as an appeal. Establish a space for parents, educators, and institutions. Restore the visibility of reading. Allow it to exist on shelves, in syllabi, and in stories that are shared orally. Allow students to observe adults who read, peers who read, and locations where reading occurs in a communal setting rather than in solitude. Because of the fact that every pupil who declares, "I do not read," there is an individual who has previously read and may do so again, provided that the book is presented with consideration rather than urgency.

Reading is not a lost art. It is merely awaiting. We should reconvene.

Suggestions

The students of Bahria University have spoken with vulnerability, rather than defiance. Lectures regarding the significance of literature are unnecessary. They are already aware. A world that restores the possibility of reading emotionally, socially, and structurally is what they require. Their recommendations, which are derived from genuine frustrations and modest optimism, warrant not only consideration but also action. Universities must initially reimagine their physical reading locations. Students are no longer attracted to the traditional library, which is solitary and rigid. Inviting spaces reading lounges with soft illumination, warm seating, open shelves, and a serene ambiance are what student's desire. Permit reading to be enjoyable, rather than a burdensome task. Not only would this area contain books, but it would also serve as a host for them, including book displays, student choices of the month, and even "leave-a-book, take-a-book" corner. The second requirement is for institutions to establish reading as a norm within the peer culture. This can occur through semester-wide "reading challenges," casual literature circles, and student-led book clubs. Create Instagram profiles managed by students, showcase student reviews on noticeboards, and offer modest incentives. The objective is to restore the visibility of books, not as objects concealed beneath syllabi, but as integral components of ordinary discourse. Third, curriculum reform should

incorporate non-graded, voluntary reading paths. Allow students to select one book per semester for informal discussion and reading. Submit an invitation to authors. Organize events that emphasize spoken word. Interconnect reading with dialogue, rather than relying solely on documentation. Ultimately, it is imperative that we acknowledge the significance of access. Books are costly. Institutions are required to subsidize, digitize, and diversify their reading materials. Incorporate modern fiction, poetry, translations, and Urdu literature. Allow students to peruse what resonates with their souls, rather than solely the material that appears on their exams. The revival of literacy will not be achieved through command. It will be achieved through consistent cultural presence, creativity, and compassion. Students are prepared. They are not resisting. They are prepared to await.

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