

Lifelong Learning And Social Media: Impact Of Facebook On Literary Reading In Pakistan

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Abstract

Literary readings enhance socio-cultural sensibility and transform our thoughts for a more valuable life. The paper investigates the role of Facebook in providing easy access to and enhancing literary readings of Pakistani university teachers and students in informal contexts. For this purpose, a qualitative study was conducted. The data were collected from three universities in Lahore via an online semi-structured survey. Sixty-one (N=61) university students participated in the survey. Five university teachers were interviewed to triangulate the results. The interview results were coded and divided into five themes. The study revealed that Facebook is very popular amongst university teachers and students for informal lifelong learning in personal environments and it helps to enhance their exposure to literary pieces, adds to their knowledge, and cultivates literary taste. However, the respondents were concerned about the authenticity of the texts available on the pages. The researchers emphasize the usefulness of Facebook as an informal educational resource for lifelong learning providing an effective personal learning environment (PLE) for literary readings and discussions. The study concludes that multimodal literary texts facilitate access to literary pieces and inspire them to read more.

Keywords: Facebook, literary readings, informal education, lifelong learning, social media, social construction.

Introduction

In the last decade, the use of social media has expanded rapidly making it ubiquitous (Turkle, 2012, van Dijk, 2013). Most social media environments facilitate user-generated content to encourage and maximize user engagement (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). One of the most popular

forms of interactivity on the Internet is the use of social media. Social media can be defined as a set of online media that not only facilitates its users with manage personal information, discussions, and sharing of files but also provides access to multimodal texts e.g., books and extracts for reading, music for listening, and art for visual pleasure, etc., (Grosbeck & Holotescu, 2012). As a result, social media not only supports formal learning environments but also adds to one's knowledge even in informal/personal learning environments (PLEs) because users have the independence to generate or create informative and artistic content (Gauntlett, 2011). Therefore, social media enhances innovation and creativity, helps learners construct their own learning processes, supports lifelong mobile learning, and facilitates varied pace of learning and cognition (Redecker et al, 2010). Learning is an active cognitive and social constructive process and new knowledge is created by social interaction leading to cognitive development based on previous knowledge (Kozma, 1994). Distance learning has also revolutionized the concept of pedagogy by moving ahead from behaviorist to cognitive and constructivist to personal learning environments supporting both formal and informal learning as well as lifelong learning. Social media has illuminated the role of a rich responsive socially engaged culture by providing tools for lifelong learning moving beyond formal learning environments (Dron & Anderson, 2014).

Facebook like other social media fosters a culture of socially engaged learning experiences for all age groups. It fosters the capacity of debate and disagreement (Frieson & Lowe, 2012) and supports interaction and communication in multiple forms (Idris & Wang, 2009). Its unique features integrate social, pedagogical, and technological aspects even for the masses (Wang et al, 2012). Although much research has been conducted about using social media in general and Facebook in particular for formal and informal learning, and even for learning the English language, little research is available on Facebook's contribution towards enhancing literary reading, promoting literary discussions, and cultivating literary taste. There are other platforms like Copia, Goodreads, LibraryThing, Read-Ups, and Open margin that declare their environments to be literary discussion friendly (Vlieghe, Muls & Rutten, 2015). However what sort of literary culture Facebook develops by enhancing literary reading in online social environments still needs more research. This study aims to investigate the following research questions:

Q1. How does Facebook increase exposure to literary texts?

Q2. How does social exposure to literary texts/excerpts result in enhanced lifelong literary readings?

Literature Review

Facebook is one of the most popular social networking sites (SNSs) (Vlieghe, Muls, & Rutten, 2015) for the general public as well as amongst teachers and students. Although Facebook is more popular as a means of informal communication, it has great potential for sharing information as there is a wealth of information available on various pages (Pilgrim & Beldose, 2011). However, the educational value of Facebook still needs to be determined because whereas some researchers

may emphasize its potential for lifelong learning through its mixing of information and learning resources, many criticize its educational use because of the obstacles they find in adopting it as a learning environment (Manca & Raneiri, 2013). For example, Kirschner (2015) considers Facebook more of a broadcast tool than a discussion tool. According to him, Facebook is fraught with flat-structured discussions because the users generally like the posts and do not discuss or argue, and therefore, it is not suitable for knowledge construction through discussion or arguments. On the contrary, Asterhan and Hever (2015) conclude that learning takes place through reading and not by participating in discussions. Facebook provides an opportunity for informal lifelong learning through discussions on a variety of topics including controversial ones. The discussion can be generated by uploading a status or a post that invites responses on the walls of users. Facebook also facilitates uploading links that redirect to external links and makes reading a very interesting activity as readers surf, get caught by something attractive while the act of reading remains unintentional (Asterhan & Hever, 2015). This is how reading adds to their knowledge without being a burdensome academic type of learning. So Facebook remains not only an informal learning space (Clark & Martinez-Gaza, 2015) but also a comfortable space as it facilitates many users with passive learning. They passively read/view others' status and uploads (Tosun, 2012) and learn without compelling themselves into discussions.

Literary readings cultivate people towards leading a meaningful life by increasing knowledge of social and cultural values (Bloom, 1994). On social platforms like Facebook, this knowledge moves beyond a single culture and one develops empathy for other cultures as well (Nussbaum, 1995). Facebook takes people beyond printed literature that remains restrictive (Schmidt, 2010) and makes literary readings a social practice. Literary readings as social practice are important and social media provide access to everyone for selecting reading material according to their choice (Long, 1992). Cultural studies explore readers' behaviors and their discourse about reading in a social world (Allington & Swan, 2009). Reading practices have also experienced a change in the constantly evolving digital world (Vlieghe et al., 2015). Some researchers find this change positive as reading practices have enhanced (Iyengar & Ball, 2007) through digital resources catching reader's attention (Jenkins et al, 2013) while others see it in a negative light as they find digital reading practices more superficial, and less attention-grabbing than hard copy material (Baron, 2013; Jabr, 2013) as Striphas (2011) argues that printed books would never lose their value.

Good (2013) compares Facebook with scrapbooks as both not only shape taste but also formulate cultural capital. A scrapbook is a collection of myriad literary pieces be they text or pictures. It was a literary time pass in the mid-nineteenth century for the middle and upper classes (Good, 2013). Facebook is a multimodal text that has not only made aesthetics a public property bringing them out of the custody of high classes but also made them more attractive by appealing to the synesthesia of the readers by blending visual, auditory, and cognitive aspects. Cultural capital is one's accumulated knowledge about society (Bourdieu, 1984). Expression of taste is a reflection of one's cultural capital. Facebook is a multimodal montage that expresses the taste of

an individual or group as well as can lead to refined taste through stimulating senses and the exchange of information by like-minded people.

Sharing news articles can be considered an exchange of tokens and something far beyond mere information sharing. It works two ways, increases awareness and cultivates taste (Good, 2013). Facebook consolidates cultural capital through the expression and assessment of taste as well as provides access to cultural groups which was not possible for non-digital natives as the taste was considered to be a possession of aristocracy. Thus Facebook can be emotionally gratifying (Rosen, Carrier, & Cheever, 2013) through a feeling of social equality.

Digitization has impacted humanities and literary studies have also evolved because of technological developments (Schreihman et al., 2004). According to Ganascia (2015), humanities are experiencing a post-theory transition in these digital times. This is because the tools, archives, and other emerging digital methods are gaining more importance than the traditional emphasis on interpretations only. Technology facilitates the digitization of literary texts along with sharing particular facets of authors' intellectual landscape. Thus the internet has led to the mass digitization of cultural capital. Ganescia (2015) concludes the research by emphasizing the creation of more tools leading to the generation of new theories in the domain of Digital Literary Studies for epistemological reflections.

Many researchers have talked about the potential of social media for literary studies and related areas. For example, Fife (2010) explored Facebook's potential for teaching rhetorical analysis. In his research, the students were supposed to identify representations through exaggerated profiles and critically reflect upon daily practices on Facebook for rhetorical analysis. Like Day Good's (2013) comparison with a scrapbook, Fife (2010) finds Facebook a visually rich collage. Similarly, Hughes and Morrison (2013) found Facebook a very motivating tool for literary practices by engaging students with content leading to better performance of their identities.

Facebook also has the potential as a research tool and rich source of data useful both for reading and writing (Baker, 2012). It can also provide opportunities for literacy practices through text making (Davies, 2012). Social Media tools can be a good addition to traditional forms of scholarly content as a way to promote academic growth. It does not replace traditional content but presents it in an enhanced form (Tenopir, Volentine, & King, 2013). Facebook's facilities of sharing content and commenting on posts turn out to be a primary source of information literacy in any domain. The social media age requires 'meta literacy': critical awareness about the 'what' and 'how' of information (Witek & Grettano, 2013), and Facebook has the potential for that.

Methods

To explore the impact of Facebook on the literary exposure of Pakistani universities and teachers, a qualitative research design was used. The data was collected in two layers. Firstly, a survey was administered to collect students' opinions. The semi-structured questionnaire consisted of both open and closed questions. The sample size was 61 students from Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan. Later

on, 05 university teachers were interviewed based on the same structured questions to reinforce the questionnaire results. The transcribed interviews were coded, divided into categories, and themes were extracted which have been discussed in the discussion section.

Results

Sample Characteristics

The first part of the questionnaire collected demographic details. Sixty-one participants from the Punjab province of Pakistan participated in the survey. The participants were enrolled in MPhil English classes at various universities in Lahore.

Question 1 probed their interest in literary readings (see Figure 1).

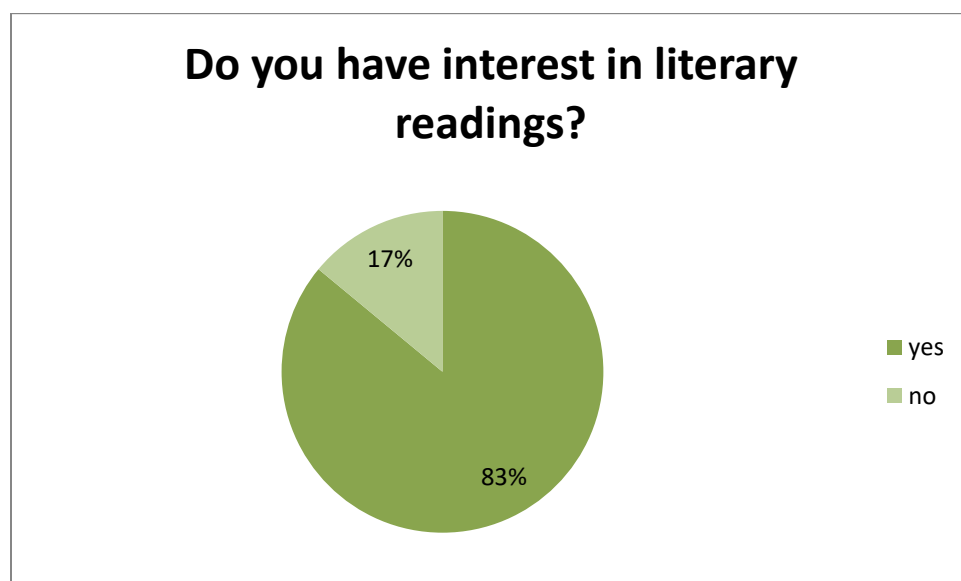


Figure 1: Interest in literary readings

Eighty-three percent were affirmative about their fondness of literary readings and seventeen percent did not have much interest.

Question 2 probed their favorite genre. The options included drama, poetry, novel, prose/criticism, literary theory, and any other (see Figure 2).

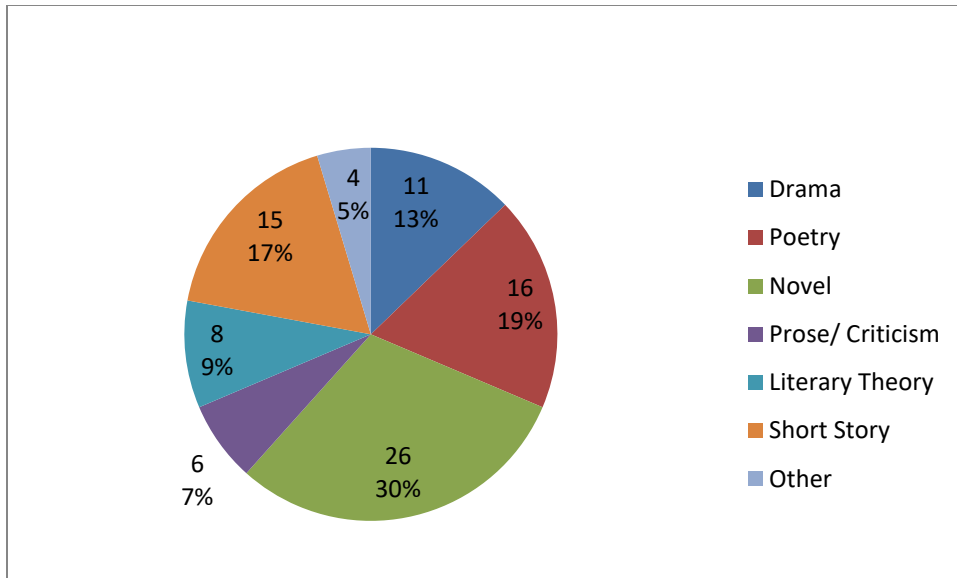


Figure 2. Favorite genre

Twenty-two percent favored drama, 32 percent poetry, 52 percent novel, 12 percent prose/criticism, and 8 percent literary theory. The novel was the most liked genre.

Question 3 probed their frequency of reading literary texts. The options included seldom (visit two days for at least half an hour), occasionally (visit 4 days a week for at least half an hour), frequently (visit at least 4 days a week for at least 2 hours) and every day (for at least 2- 3 hours) (see Figure 3).

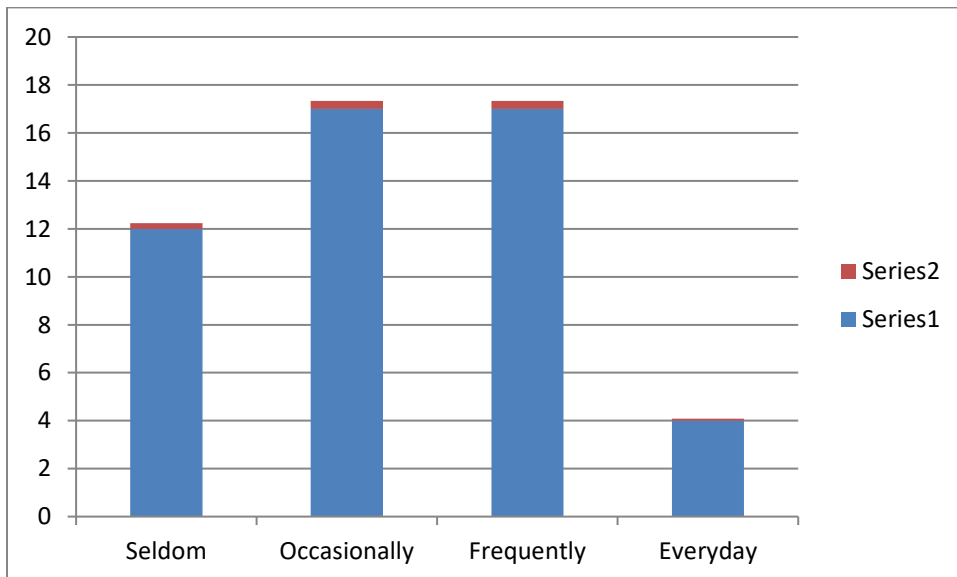


Fig 3. Frequency of readings

Twenty-four percent of respondents seldom read literary books, 34% occasionally, 34% frequently, and 8% every day.

Question 4 probed whether Facebook has increased its access to literary texts. Sixty-three percent were affirmative that Facebook increased access and 17 % did not think so (see Figure 4).

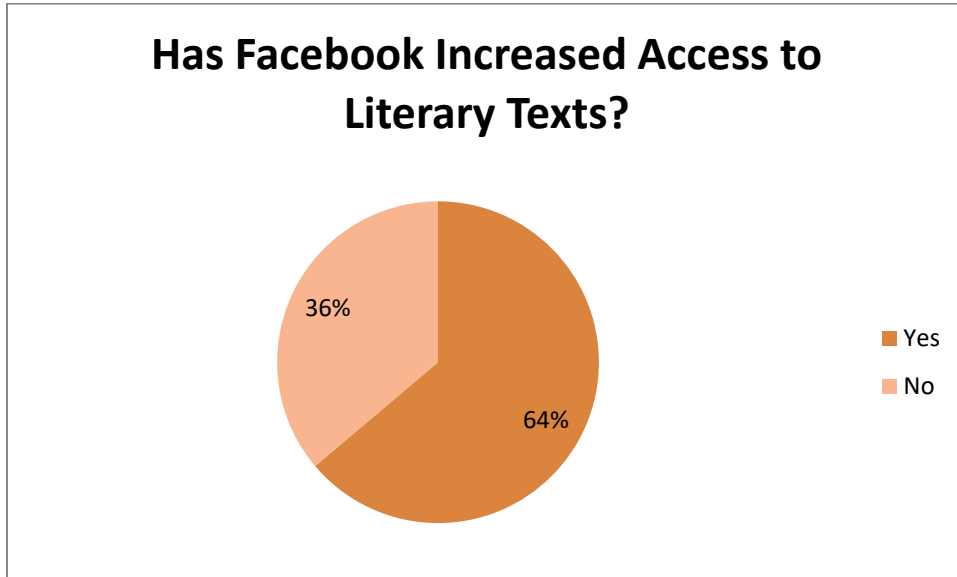


Figure 4. Has Facebook increased access to literary texts?

Question 5 asked whether Facebook stimulates them to read more literary pieces than hard copy and the majority agreed to it (see Figure 5).

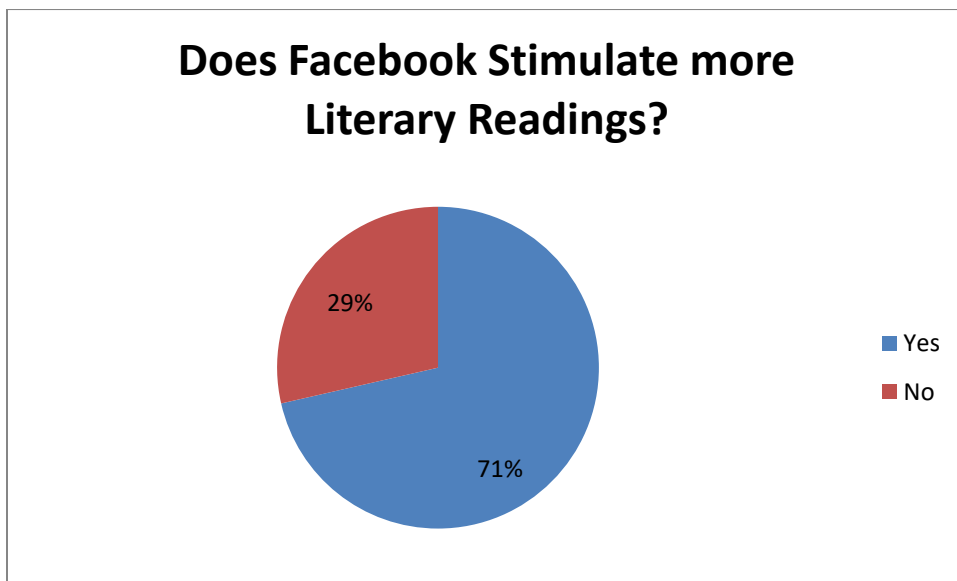


Figure 5. Does Facebook stimulate more literary readings?

Seventy-one percent of the respondents were affirmative whereas 29 percent did not think so. Question 6 probed whether Facebook triggers their interest in literary readings (see Figure 6).

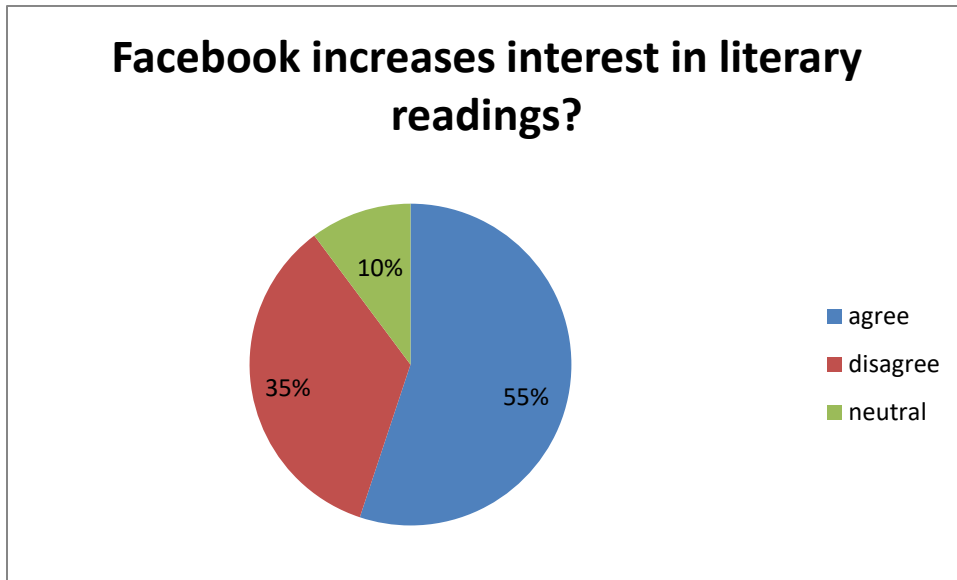


Figure 6. Facebook’s role in enhancing literary interest

Question 7 probed whether poetry is the most popular genre on Facebook or not (see Figure 7)?

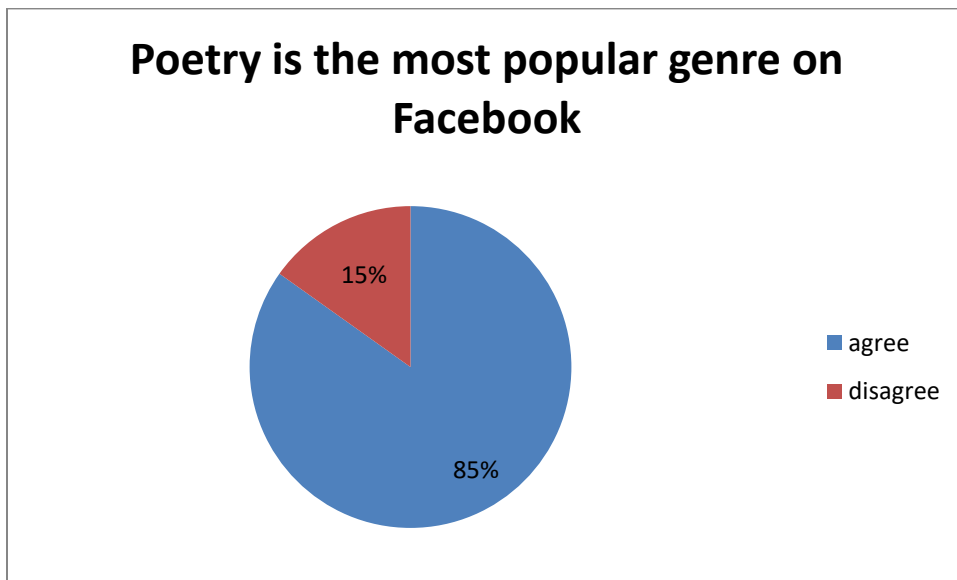


Figure 7. Poetry is the most popular genre

Eighty-five percent of the respondents found poetry the most popular genre on Facebook whereas 15 percent did not think so.

Question 8 probed whether Facebook encourages to read complete texts or just extracts(see Figure 8)?

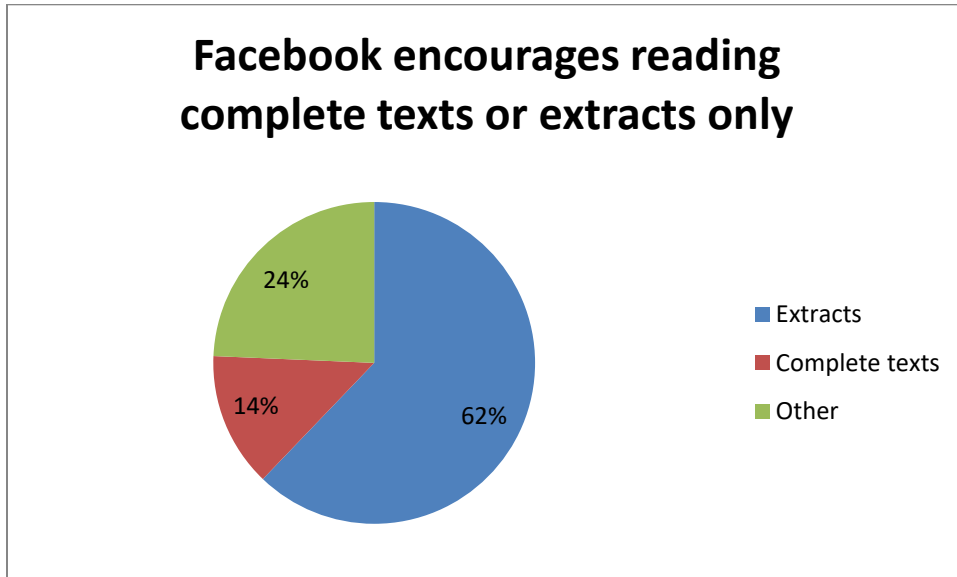


Figure 8. Extracts or complete texts

Sixty-two percent of respondents favored extracts, fourteen percent full texts, and twenty-four percent other.

Question 9 sought their opinion about the authenticity of literary texts uploaded or shared by Facebook. Fifty-five percent considered them authentic whereas 45 percent did not think so (see Figure 9).

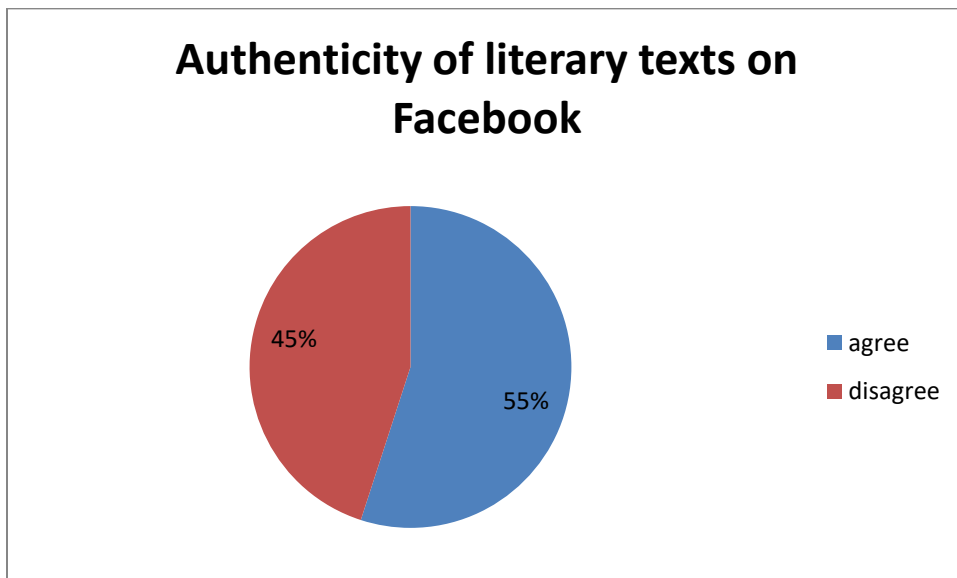


Figure 9. The authenticity of literary texts

Fifty-five percent of respondents found literary texts authentic whereas fourteen percent did not.

Question 10 inquired about the language they like to read literature in (see Figure 10)?

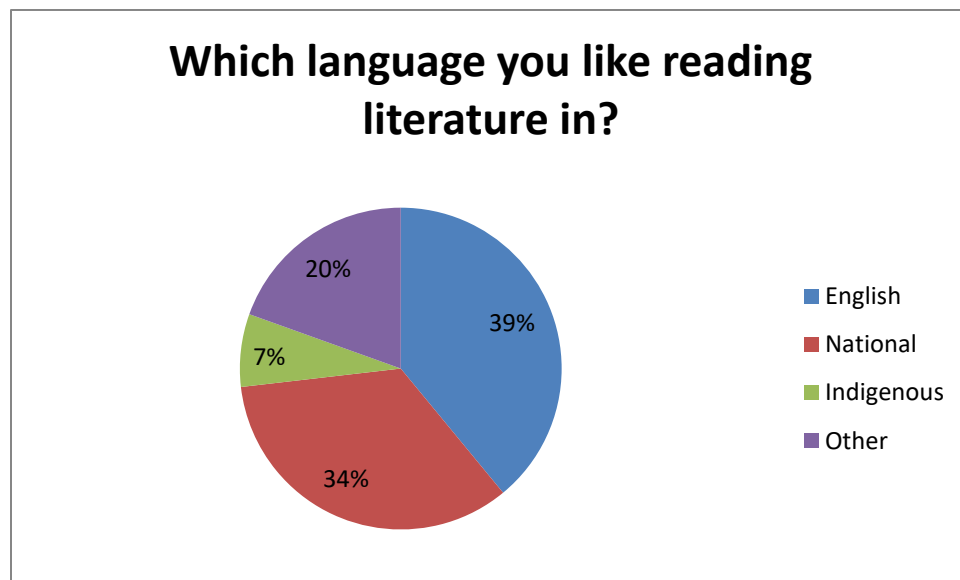


Figure 10. Favorite language for reading literature in

Thirty-nine percent favored English, 34 % Urdu and 7 % indigenous, and 14 % other.

The third part of the questionnaire was based on open-ended questions so that the detailed views of the respondents could be gauged.

Question 11 asked the names of the authors whose pages the respondents liked. Some of the respondents stated that they were not particular about any author and would read any good posts. Majority named the authors the summary of which is displayed in the following table (see Table 2):

Table 2: Author Pages Liked on Facebook

Genre	Urdu	English
Poetry	Ghalib	Rumi
	Iqbal	Khalil Gibran
	Faraz	
	John Elia	Keats
	Wasi Shah	Shelley
Prose	Qudrutullah Shahab, Javed Chaudary,	Foucault,

	Mushtaq Ahmad Yousafi	Chomsky,
Novel	Umera Ahmed Mumtaz Mufti	
Drama		Shakespeare

Question 12 asked about the names of the writers whose works the respondents read on or because of Facebook and the following were the answers (see Table 3):

Table 3: Authors Read Because of Facebook

Genre	Urdu	English
Poetry	Mir Taqi Mir	Rumi
	Ghalib	Khalil Gibran
	Iqbal	
	Faiz	Keats
	N M Rashid	
	Faraz	Shelley
	John Elia	Robert Frost
	Perveen Shakir	
	Mohsin Naqvi	
	Wasi Shah	
Prose	Qudrutullah	Foucault,
	Shahab, Javed	Derrida
	Chaudary, Ahmed	Terry Eagleton
	Nadeem Qasmi	Dan Brown
	Wasif Ali Wasif,	Bill Watterson
	Mushtaq Ahmad	Churchill
	Yousafi,	Freud
Novel	Ashfaq Ahmed,	Gabriel Garcia
	Bano Qudsia	Marquez,
	Umera Ahmed	Haruki Murakami
	Mumtaz Mufti	

Short Story	Krishan Chandar, Saadat Hassan Manto, Amarita Pritem,	Edgar Allan Poe
Drama		Shakespeare

Only one writer from one of the indigenous languages Punjabi was mentioned and that was the famous Sufi poet Baba Bhulley Shah.

Question 13 asked about the importance of images as background to the literary texts and the respondents found the following merits:

- Images attract readers
- Provide a lot of Information
- Images displayed in the literary pieces are quite significant in conveying the message of the writer properly.
- Help understand the concept easily
- Provide abundant visual information
- Enhance interest
- Positive impact
- Increase aesthetic taste
- Make literary pieces more attractive
- Eye-catching impact on the reader
- Add to the effect of poetry or any text
- Where words fail, images work as in satire, humor, etc
- Convey the main theme
- Cultivate imagination

The respondents found the following demerits in images:

- Sometimes they are not relevant to the idea or inappropriate
- They don't play a very important role in developing interest in literary pieces

The last question (13) asked about their opinion about the limitations of Facebook in this regard. Following were their responses:

- Sometimes, shared links on Facebook are broken.
- Sometimes, they are not able to find out the relevant material.
- Less content, less storage space for file sharing.

- Facebook is good at introducing good writers or literary events but often the videos cannot be easily downloaded. Sometimes, the presence of too many posts/articles in one's newsfeed distracts one from focused reading. Going back to the post one enjoyed a lot is also very difficult to dig up.
- It has many other attractions that divert the attention and people mostly share photos and other stuff rather than literary pieces of writings. However, it can be a more effective medium if given proper attention.
- Users of Facebook post literary texts reflecting their literary taste which might not be helpful in cultivating the literary taste of refined quality.
- Most of the time, the information given is without proper referencing and authenticity.
- Some suggested books are not available in Pakistan
- Time taking procedures to follow or download
- Readability issues (blurred text, incomplete upload, etc.)
- Authenticity is missing as work by someone is being quoted with the name of someone else.
- Controversial views
- Cheap poetry
- It offers a lot of junk material which adversely affects the literary taste.
- Casual Language and Manners

Interviews Results

Five university teachers were interviewed for a more elaborate discussion about Facebook's impact on their literary readings. They were working as assistant professors at different universities of Lahore in Management Science and English Departments. Other than reading in first or second languages, the interview questions probed them about the frequency of using Facebook, reading time for literary texts, the role of designed literary posts in grabbing their attention, and inspiration for more readings.

Based on the thematic analysis of the interview transcripts, five main themes were sorted out which are discussed below:

Literary readings in First or Second language

The first theme covers the interviewees' preference of reading in the first or second language. The first language refers to their regional languages or national language i.e., Urdu. The second language refers to English.

Most of the interviewees were comfortable with both languages. However, the first interviewee was more fond of Urdu literature and named Pak Tea House as his favorite page. He was of the view that the page shares a historical overview which adds to his knowledge. The third

interviewee's tilt was also towards Urdu literature as he followed Mushtaq Ahmed Yousafi, Ata ul Haq Qasmi, and Ayesha Siddiqua. His interest was diverse ranging from religious pages like Ghamidi, Taloo-e-Islam, and research-oriented pages like Harvard Business Review. The fourth interviewee liked pages like Ghalib, Faiz, Edgar Allan Poe, and Gabriel Garcia Marquez. The fifth was a staunch lover of Rumi and any literary page she came across:

“It's a feast to have all literary reading available at one place, with the best of quotes presented aesthetically enriching imagination. Language is not a barrier when the thought is so strong, only the ideas should be presented beautifully. But yes the knowledge of the language is necessary.

Overall, the participants had a very positive opinion about the availability of literary reading on Facebook.

Role of Facebook in Enhancing Literary Readings

The second theme covered the responses about Facebook's role in enhancing literary readings.

The first interviewee found Facebook rendering good service in enhancing literary taste and readings as “future would be electronic”. “Facebook”, according to him, “has increased access but to extracts only not to books.” The second interviewee found Facebook as a book reading replacement with much improvement in reading by providing access to the latest articles. According to her, Facebook helps in enhancing readings and literary taste in all genres. It also familiarizes one with people's writing potentials through their status and status also is literary and informative leading to quite literary debates sometimes. The for-against views against a status generate critical thinking skills according to her. Friends' statuses sometimes help towards new perspectives but mostly about human psychology and behavior.

The third interviewee was more interested in Sufism and Iqbal. He followed pages like Darul Faqr, Islamic pages like Quran-o-Sunnah as well as groups like Philosophy, Knowledge, and Thought. According to him,

Facebook introduces too many new extracts of books that are informative and evocative. It also helps in research activities by introducing the latest researches. Group posts really help as there are people of the same inclinations so the sharing is pertinent.

The fourth interviewee agreed that Facebook enhanced knowledge and literary taste as one comes across good pieces of literature or “at least their introduction.” He found Facebook resources mostly authentic. Facebook status also helps in adding new information to one's

knowledge and sums up to huge works. Comments on status also throw new insights into literary interpretations.

The fifth interviewee found Facebook a great source of information in all regards. Literary excerpts, according to her, could be found catchy due to images unless they are cheap poetry.

Poetry is mostly shared by common masses both authentic and inauthentic but learned classes share valuable articles along with tasteful poetry written as their status. There are also many book-sharing groups but generally, one is not triggered to read the book if Facebook is being used on mobile. This may be more inspirational for students and computer users of Facebook. Facebook not only adds to literary knowledge of international, national, and indigenous languages but also the latest researches on literature as well as paintings and sculpture sometimes. It all depends on how cultivated a person's taste already is but Facebook is open-source which adds to it even unconsciously.

Facebook was appreciated for being a reservoir of all sorts of knowledge including literary ones.

Role of Images

There were multiple views about the background images. The second interviewee found images very communicative especially the cartoons for satiric purposes. Pictures according to the fourth interviewee were equal to thousand words and convey much more than words. The fifth interviewee found images helpful in understanding the context as well assigning new meanings to the impressions one already has in mind about a piece of literature. However, the rest of the interviewees were not very positive about the images. The third interviewee thought that:

Images mostly are not in sync with texts and are, therefore, irritating. However, if they match the theme they are very good.

While images were appreciated for making poetic pieces more attractive, they were also found to be distracting the readers.

Authenticity of Texts

The interviewees were asked whether they find Facebook literary post authentic or not and this them further elaborates their concerns about the authenticity of Facebook literary material.

The authenticity of the texts was a major concern for all of them. Whereas a few found most of the extracts authentic, some disagreed. The third interviewee said "books pages and extracts are generally authentic but one should be on guard"

The fourth interviewee opined that a learned person should be able to differentiate:

A learned man could always differentiate between authentic and inauthentic pieces so authenticity should not be the major problem. News can be inauthentic but literature is mostly authentic.

Authenticity remains a problem but university teachers do not find it difficult to differentiate an authentic text from an inauthentic one in most cases.

Future of Printed Texts

This theme was extracted from the interviewees' comfort with hard copy literary text or with their easy access to Facebook literary content for pleasure reading.

All interviewees were more comfortable with hard copy books. The third interviewee found hard copy books better than Facebook but pointed out the limitations of buying too many books:

If one is too fond of reading, buying too many books could be expensive; in that case, soft copies are a savior and a good alternative. However, there is no match to hard copy. Therefore there is no threat to the future of hard copy books. In fact, electronic versions are good for record-keeping.

A closing paragraph is needed here to summarize the above findings

Discussion

Facebook has brought out the literary readings from public libraries and the cozy personal libraries of the sophisticated learned classes of the past to a public forum. Access is no longer denied or made difficult for the public rather made too easy for all classes. All that is required is the awareness of how to use Facebook. The number of friends or groups joined by an individual may also lead to more awareness and trigger to follow pages loaded with literary multimodal texts. So Facebook has changed the black and white books into multimodal texts which comprise of words and images as well as audio clips and music. Even in an informal context, one learns better through synaesthesia as those who may not be attracted by words, get a glimpse of pictures in the background or get caught by the melody added. Learning never was available in such a rich form open to all and easily accessible in the past so the great divide of cultivated learned class and middle class i.e., high culture vs popular culture has also been abolished. The results of this research are explicit in this regard as Facebook motivates in engaging oneself in a dialogue with literary pieces (Hughes & Morrison, 2013).

Literature appeals to the innermost recesses of human feelings and consciousness. It can appeal to anyone but a more refined taste is found in learned classes. The results of the survey reinforce that 83 percent of the respondents had a flair for literary readings even though their basic areas of study ranged from sciences to social sciences to humanities. Although all genres seem popular the fictive world of novels takes lead as most of the respondents (30%) like reading novels. The novel is closely followed by poetry (19%) and short story (17%). Only 7 percent were

interested in non-fiction prose/criticism and i.e., 9 percent in literary theory as both are meta literacy or critical awareness about the ‘what’ and ‘how’ of literary readings (Witek & Grettano, 2012) and only literary scholars are generally interested in that. The results reflect a love for stories and poetry and also that literature on Facebook only encourages reading for pleasure purposes. This is also reinforced by the frequency of their readings as only 8 percent read literary texts every day according to results. The rest were reading for pleasure as 34 percent were reading frequently and occasionally.

Whether the respondents were serious readers or read for pleasure, the majority, i.e., 64 percent agreed that Facebook increased access to literary texts. Now the books are not buried in aristocratic personal or public libraries and are available to all social classes. This provides an equal opportunity to develop literary taste and is no more interlinked with learning and class. Similarly, Facebook leads to increased interest in reading as 55 percent agreed that Facebook consciously or unconsciously encourages reading literary texts be they extracts or longer pieces. Digital resources catch readers’ interest (Jenkins et al, 2013) but Facebook uploads as multimodal texts are more attractive as they catch the glimpse of the reader and make them stay on the page and even open full-length articles and read them. Facebook promotes reading engagement (Park, 2013) as it is an information-gathering platform (Mihailidias, Fincham & Cohen, 2014) and increased reading may encourage more readings. However, 35 % of the participants disagreed whereas 10 percent remained neutral.

One of the most important features is poetry multimodal texts found roaming on Facebook which may or may not be authentic but appeals to teenagers or the general masses. The majority of respondents agreed that mostly poetry extracts were found on Facebook. Most of the respondents agreed that Facebook encourages readings of extracts/ short pieces of text-only some of them got encouraged in reading longer pieces too. The most important question was about the authenticity of these texts and 55 percent found them authentic whereas 45 percent did not. One of the interviewees’ points was very valid that those who have literary taste must have some readings too and can differentiate between an authentic and inauthentic piece. Some respondents apprehended that such posts can demean the taste instead of cultivating it as it can be a two-way process.

Images play a great role as apart from access it is the multimodal texts that allure the surfers to read on. However, the respondents were concerned about the personal opinions in discussions which can be controversial or even biased sometimes, although people’s status generally leads to thoughtful musing. However discussion can improve reading strategies but a lack of critical attitude can undermine the benefits of new information (Klomsri, Greback & Tedre, 2013). Despite its multimodality, the respondents were still fond of hard copy texts for longer bedroom reading as traditional forms of readings have not lost their appeal; Facebook has just added to it

(Tenopir et al, 2013). Readers are very comfortable with hard copy material even in the digital age (Baron, 2013; Jabr, 2013).

The respondents were comfortable with literature written in English, Urdu, and indigenous language but English and Urdu were more popular amongst the sample. In Pakistan English is the second and only popular foreign language so the literary pieces as well other information pieces shared in the English language did not create a linguistic barrier. Writers both from English and Urdu literature were popular amongst the respondents. This also shows the influences of English as an international language on the academia of Pakistan. English has become a part of their routine communication, and therefore, that of culture. Only one regional language Punjabi poet Baba Bhullhey Shah, who is a mystic poet, was mentioned. Those who were fond of reading literature in English agreed that their knowledge of Urdu literature got enhanced through Facebook and vice versa. Even those who were not good at English literature found an increase in their knowledge about Urdu literary traditions by adding pages like 'Pak Tea House'. Facebook can also cultivate one's research skills by linking to groups and pages.

Conclusion

The study is the first of its type about the interest of Pakistani digital natives in reading literature. Social media can be very much useful for serious purposes and the study manifests that the sample was very much interested in literary readings. Facebook provides an interactive atmosphere for cultivating literary taste through readings and this is generally achieved through collaborative construction of knowledge either through inspiration or wilful perusal of multimodal texts. Facebook has the potential to develop literary taste through multimodal texts that may consciously or unconsciously sharpen all senses to music, paintings, sculpture, and all forms of art. The study calls for more research on the artistic exposure and taste of any nation. The study can be replicated to explore the same in other countries of the world and for reading interests in other domains like philosophy, religion, etc.

Limitations of the Study

The study caters to students and teachers; therefore, wider data from the general masses may lead to different results. Although the results cannot be generalized, the study conveys the increasing trend of accessing literary text online. The issue of high or low taste/ popular or serious literature has not been dealt with because the opinion of qualified people has been given weightage for the general conception of taste and literature.

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