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المشرف على مذكرة ماستر بعنوان:

The Psychological Effects of Reading Literature on University Students

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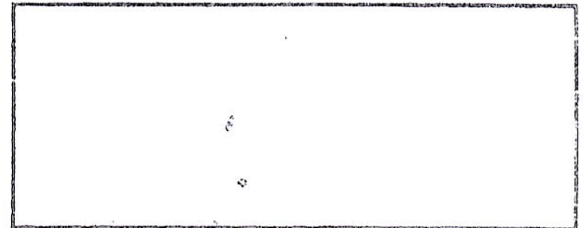
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للتأليف(ة): صلاح عزويدي

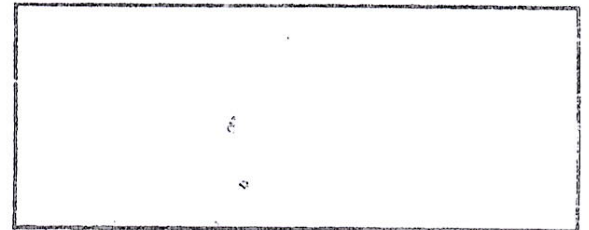
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People's Democratic Republic of Algeria

Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research

University of Sidi Bel Abbas

Faculty of Letters, Languages and Arts

Department of English



The Psychological Effects of Reading Literature On University Students

Dissertation submitted to the department of English in partial fulfillment of the requirement
for the degree of master in literature and civilization

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Dedication

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

“Allah will raise those who have believed among you and those who were given knowledge, by degrees.”

— Surat Al-Mujādilah 58:11

The Quran

“And your Lord is going to give you, and you will be satisfied.”

— Surat Ad-Duhā 93:5

The Quran

صَدَقَ اللَّهُ الْعَظِيمُ

I dedicate this work to myself — to the soul that struggled, stumbled, and endured difficult paths, yet rose again with faith in Allah, believing that every effort would one day bear fruit.

“To the ones about whom Allah said: ‘And your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him, and that you show kindness to your parents.’”

To my father, the man whose name I proudly carry, who supported me without limits and gave without expecting anything in return.

To my mother, the light of my life and the source of warmth and tenderness, whose prayers made every difficult step easier. May Allah protect them and bless them endlessly.

To my sisters, who stood by my side, believed in me, and gave me strength whenever I felt weak. Your support has always been my source of comfort and motivation.

To my partner in this long journey, the one with whom I shared pressure, fatigue, and unforgettable moments. Thank you for your support, patience, and encouragement through every challenge we faced together. This achievement would not have been the same without you by my side.

“To the friends who proved that sincerity is measured by support and presence, not by the number of years.”

Finally, I dedicate this humble work to everyone who believed in me and prayed for my success.

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Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to all my teachers from primary school until university. Their efforts and support helped me reach this level. May God bless them all.

Abstract

Abstract

This dissertation studies the psychological effects of reading literature. It looks at how reading stories can affect feelings, thoughts, and behavior. The study shows that literature can improve empathy, imagination, and emotional understanding. It can also reduce stress and help readers think about other people's experiences. To collect data, a student's questionnaire was used as research tool .it helped us to understand viewpoints of students on reading literature and how it affects them. It was able to get answer to confirm and test our hypothesis. Finally, the results were analyzed, and general recommendations were provided to facilitate the learning process through the psychological effects of reading literature on university students.

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General Introduction

General Introduction

Reading literature is an important part of many students' lives. Through novels, short stories, poetry, and drama, students can explore different ideas, emotions, and experiences. Literature is not only for learning language or passing exams, but it can also influence how students feel and think.

For many university students, engaging with literary texts can be a way to relax, escape stress, and connect with different characters and situations. It may help them understand their own feelings better and develop empathy toward others. At the same time, literature can shape their way of thinking and improve their imagination and creativity.

- **Statement of the Problem**

Although literature is an important part of university studies, many students read it mainly to pass exams and not for its personal or psychological benefits. Because of this, its role in improving mood, reducing stress, and shaping thinking is often overlooked.

At the same time, students face a lot of academic and emotional pressure, and simple ways to support their well-being are not always explored. For this reason, it is important to examine how reading literature can affect students' emotions, help them relax, and influence how they understand themselves and others.

- To understand more the study asks the following questions:

- **Research Questions**

1. How does reading literature affect students' emotions and mood?
2. Does reading literature help students reduce stress and feel more relaxed?
3. How does reading literature influence students' way of thinking and understanding of others?

- Based on the previous questions the study suggests the following hypothesis:

- **Hypotheses**

1. Reading literature has a positive effect on students' emotions and mood.
2. Students who read literature feel less stressed and more relaxed.
3. Reading literature helps students think more deeply and understand others better.

- **Aims of the Study**

The main aim of this study is to examine in depth the psychological impact that reading literature can have on university students. It seeks to understand how engaging with literary texts contributes to students' emotional well-being, including the ways in which literature can improve mood, provide comfort, and offer a sense of personal connection.

In addition, this study aims to investigate whether reading literature can serve as an effective strategy for reducing stress and anxiety among students, especially considering the academic pressures and challenges they face in their daily lives. It also attempts to explore how literature can function as a form of escape, allowing students to temporarily distance themselves from real-life concerns and immerse themselves in different fictional worlds.

Another important aim of this research is to analyze how reading literature influences students' thinking patterns and perspectives. The study focuses on whether exposure to different characters, cultures, and situations helps students develop deeper critical thinking skills and a broader understanding of human behavior. Furthermore, it aims to examine the role of literature in fostering empathy, by enabling students to relate to others' emotions and experiences, even if they are very different from their own.

Finally, this study aims to highlight the overall importance of literature in students' personal and psychological development. It attempts to show that reading is not only an academic activity, but also a meaningful experience that can shape students' identities, attitudes, and emotional intelligence in both academic and real-life contexts.

Chapter 01

Literature review

1.1. Introduction

This chapter reviews the main concepts related to literature, psychology. It also examines the psychological effects of reading literature including emotional and cognitive impact .it aims to provide clear explanation about how Reading literature influences human psychology

1.2. Definition of Literature

Literature is generally defined as written works—such as poetry, drama, fiction, and prose—that express ideas, emotions, and human experiences in an artistic and imaginative way. According to Terry Eagleton, “Literature is writing which is valued as highly imaginative, creative, or artistic” (Eagleton, 1983).

Nussbaum (1995) argues that literature has the power to engage our emotions and imaginations, allowing us to empathize with characters and situations that are different from our own. She defines it as a vehicle for human sympathy and understanding.

Northrop Frye (1957) describes literature as "the imagined displacement of the real world," creating coherent symbolic universes that expand human consciousness.

Roland Barthes (1967) declares "the death of the author," positioning literature as a text-reader interaction where meaning emerges from multiple interpretations rather than authorial intent.

M.H. Abrams (1953) outlines four orientations: mimetic (imitating reality), pragmatic (affecting readers), expressive (revealing author psychology), and objective (self-contained artifact).

1.3. Psychological Effects of Reading Literature:

1.3.1. Fosters Empathy

Literature exposes readers to varied perspectives, enhancing the ability to grasp others' emotions and intentions, as shown in Kidd and Castano's (2013) Science study on literary fiction improving Theory of Mind.

1.3.2. Critical Thinking

By analyzing themes, symbols, and biases in texts, readers develop skills to evaluate arguments and evidence, applicable beyond literature to real-world decision-making.

1.3.3. Learning About the World

Stories from different times and places challenge assumptions, deepen self-awareness, and promote cultural understanding, as literature illustrates evolving values and human conditions.

1.3.4. Cognitive Health

Regular reading strengthens brain connectivity, vocabulary, and memory while linking to longevity benefits, as shown by Bavishi et al. (2016), who found a 20% lower mortality risk for book readers.

1.4. Literary Genres:

Literary genres are categories of creative writing sorted by form, style, attitude, and purpose. Even though literature comes in many forms, it always relies on creativity and unique expression. Because of this, literature is often divided into three main genres: fiction, poetry, and drama. These three categories are the major styles of literature and will be our focus.

1.4.1. Poetry

According to M. H. Abrams, poetry is a literary form that uses rhythm, sound, imagery, and figurative language to express emotions, thoughts, and human experiences in a condensed and powerful way. Abrams explains that poetry differs from ordinary language because every word is carefully chosen to create aesthetic beauty and emotional impact. Poetry often relies on devices such as metaphor, symbolism, and rhyme to deepen meaning and engage the reader's imagination

1.4.2. Drama

As defined by Chris Baldick, drama is a genre of literature written primarily for performance before an audience. Baldick emphasizes that drama tells its story through dialogue, action, and stage direction rather than narration. Characters reveal their personalities, conflicts, and emotions through what they say and do on stage, making drama a powerful medium for exploring social issues, moral questions, and human relationships.

Aristotle defines drama in *Poetics* as "an imitation of an action that is serious, complete, and of a certain magnitude...through pity and fear effecting the proper purgation [catharsis] of these emotions."

Bertolt Brecht (*A Short Organum for the Theatre*, 1949) redefines drama via epic theatre, using the *Verfremdungseffekt* (alienation effect) to distance audiences, encouraging critical analysis over emotional empathy.

Konstantin Stanislavski (*An Actor Prepares*, 1936) conceptualizes drama as psychologically realistic enactment, where the "magic if" enables actors to authentically live characters' inner lives.

Hans-Thies Lehmann (*Postdramatic Theatre*, 2006) posits drama evolves beyond plot-driven mimesis into performative events emphasizing presence, sensation, and deconstruction.

1.4.3. Fiction

According to J. A. Cuddon, fiction refers to literary works created from imagination and not strictly based on real events.

Cuddon explains that fiction includes novels and short stories that use invented characters and situations to represent reality, human psychology, and social life. Although fictional, these works often reflect real human truths and experiences.

Dorrit Cohn (1999) calls it a "literary nonreferential narrative," unbound by real-world accuracy.

Gregory Currie (1990) defines a fictional work as one where the author intends audience to "make-believe" its propositions, recognizing this intent without expecting literal truth

1.4.4. Prose

In the view of M. H. Abrams and Geoffrey Harpham, prose is the most common form of written language, characterized by ordinary grammatical structure and natural flow of speech. Unlike poetry, prose does not follow metrical patterns. It is used in novels, short stories, essays, and academic writing, making it the main medium for storytelling and explanation in literature

Dorrit Cohn (1999) describes prose fiction as a "literary nonreferential narrative" unbound by factual accuracy, allowing imaginative freedom.

Wolfgang Iser (1993) views prose as blending reality and invention, fostering interaction between the given world and the imagined.

Gregory Currie (1990) ties prose fiction to authorial intent for "make-believe," distinguishing it from assertive non-fiction.

1.5. Definition of Reading

"Reading is a complex interaction between the text and the reader" (Hughes, 2007). It means that reading is an activity of understanding a written text

Gough (1972) views reading as a central process that unifies decoding (bottom-up) and comprehension (top-down) into a seamless act of deriving meaning.

Grellet (1981) defines reading as understanding a written text and grasping its main ideas and details.

Louise Rosenblatt defines literary reading as an "aesthetic transaction," where readers live through evoked images, emotions, and ideas from the text (Rosenblatt, 1978) [prior context]. Wolfgang Iser describes it as filling textual "gaps" or indeterminacies via anticipation and retrospection, realizing the work's potential (Iser, 1978).

1.6. Types of Reading:

1.6.1. Scanning

Scanning is reading to find exact information quickly without reading the whole text. According to Grellet (1981), it is a rapid reading procedure that enables readers to look for particular information by moving quickly through the text.

1.6.2. Skimming

Skimming involves looking over a text to get the general idea. Alderson (2000) defines it as reading quickly to get the gist of a passage. Grellet (1981) describes it as reading fast to understand the main idea, while Nuttall (1996) explains that it focuses on the general sense of a text through visual cues.

1.6.3. Extensive Reading

Day and Bamford (1988) define extensive reading as reading large quantities of material at or below one's level mainly for pleasure. Nation (2009) describes it as reading many appropriate texts fluently to develop vocabulary and comprehension.

1.6.4. Intensive Reading

Grellet (1981) defines intensive reading as careful reading involving detailed analysis of text structure, vocabulary, and meaning. Nuttall (2005) describes it as slow, deliberate reading focused on details, while Alderson (2000) views it as interaction between reader and text for deep understanding.

1.6.5. Pleasure Reading

Clark and Rumbold (2006) define pleasure reading as reading for enjoyment outside formal education, linking it to improved literacy and well-being. Anderson (1991) describes it as recreational reading that naturally enhances vocabulary and comprehension.

1.6.6. Reading Literature

Reading literature means reading stories, poems, or plays to enjoy their beauty, experience emotions, and reflect on deeper meanings. According to Rosenblatt's Transactional Theory, reading literature is an aesthetic interaction between reader and text, where meaning emerges from personal experience. Cultural studies perspectives also show that literary reading helps readers understand social ideologies, history, and power structures.

Louise Rosenblatt defines literary reading as an "aesthetic transaction," where readers live through evoked images, emotions, and ideas from the text (Rosenblatt, 1978) [prior context]. Wolfgang Iser describes it as filling textual "gaps" or indeterminacies via anticipation and retrospection, realizing the work's potential (Iser, 1978).

1.7. Definition of Psychology:

Psychology is the scientific study of human behavior and mental processes. It focuses on understanding how individuals think, feel, and act, both consciously and unconsciously. William James (1890) defined psychology as the science of mental life, including thoughts, feelings, and behavior. Gordon Allport (1968) described it as the study of behavior and mental processes explaining individual differences.

Zimbardo, Johnson, and McCann (2017) view psychology as a scientific discipline that uses systematic methods to understand, predict, and influence behavior. Freud, through psychoanalysis, defined psychology as the study of unconscious mental processes influencing behavior and emotions.

William James (1890) described psychology as "the science of mental life, both of its phenomena and their conditions," emphasizing introspection and conscious experience.

John B. Watson (1913), founder of behaviorism, redefined it as "the prediction and control of behavior," rejecting unobservable mental states in favor of objective experimentation.

The American Psychological Association (2025) formalizes it as the "scientific study of the behavior of individuals and their mental processes".

1.8. Emotional Effects of Reading Literature:

Reading literature strongly affects emotions. Through characters and situations, readers experience joy, sadness, fear, and compassion. Nussbaum (1995) states that literature develops emotional understanding by allowing readers to imagine others' inner lives. Kidd and Castano (2013) found that reading literary fiction improves Theory of Mind, enhancing empathy and emotional awareness.

1.9. Cognitive Effects of Reading Literature:

At the cognitive level, reading literature stimulates thinking, interpretation, and imagination. Literary texts require analysis of language, symbols, and themes, enhancing critical thinking. Wolf (2007) explains that deep reading activates complex processes such as attention, memory, and reflection. Bruner (1986) argues that narrative thinking helps individuals organize experience and understand abstract ideas. Regular literary reading strengthens analytical skills, vocabulary, and concentration.

1.10. The Psychological Impact of Literature on Identity, Self-Reflection, and Prosocial Behavior

perspective-taking, and prosocial behavior identity, self-reflection, and personal growth Beyond mental health and empathy, researchers have explored how literature affects identity formation and self-reflection. Shared-reading groups and bibliotherapeutic activities often encourage participants to connect textual material with their own life experiences, leading to greater self-awareness, reflection, and cognitive restructuring (Eschke & Sommer, 2024;

Borges & Melo, 2023). In clinical and psychiatric settings, bibliotherapy has been used to help patients reframe personal narratives, strengthen coping strategies, and reduce relapse and distress (Koay & Tan, 2021; Borges & Melo, 2023). These processes suggest that literature can function as a kind of “dialogue with the self,” in which readers test and sometimes revise their values, beliefs, and emotional responses.

However, it is important to note that the effectiveness of these processes may vary depending on individual differences such as reading habits, personal background, and the type of literary texts selected. Moreover, some researchers argue that the long-term impact of such changes remains difficult to measure empirically.

Theoretical and conceptual frameworks Conceptually, reading literature in psychology is often framed through several overlapping lenses:

Transportation theory (Gerrig, 1993), which emphasizes how readers become immersed in fictional worlds and simulate characters’ experiences; theory-of-mind / empathy models, which link narrative engagement to improved social cognition (Kidd & Castano, 2013; Denham, 2024); and bibliotherapeutic and psycho-educational models, which treat reading as a structured, reflective practice that can promote insight and change (Pérez-García et al., 2018; Koay & Tan, 2021).

1.11. Conclusion

This chapter explores key ideas about literature, reading, and psychology. It focuses on the psychological effects of reading, especially how it helps develop empathy, improves critical thinking, and supports cognitive growth. In addition, it looks at how literature encourages self-reflection and helps shape identity. The following chapter presents the research methodology used in this study.

Chapter 02

Research Methodology

2.1. Introduction:

This chapter presents the practical part of the study, focusing on an empirical investigation of the psychological effects of reading literature. Its primary objective is to investigate how literary texts influence students' emotions, behaviors, and ways of thinking through the use of a questionnaire revised for this study and administered to university students.

2.2. Methodology:

In addition, this chapter describes the research methodology used in the study, identifies the participants, and explains the data collection tool used. It also provides a general review of how the data were gathered and analyzed. The aim of this practical section is to connect the theoretical framework presented in previous chapters with the real experiences of learners, highlighting the role of literature in shaping their psychological development.

Research methodology is defined as "the specific procedures or techniques used to identify, select, process, and analyze information about a topic" (American Psychological Association [APA], 2020, p. 30).

In scholarly contexts, it represents the systematic framework detailing the research design, data collection methods (e.g., surveys, experiments), sampling techniques, and analytical strategies employed to ensure valid and replicable findings (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

2.3. Characteristics of methodology in research:**2.3.1. Systematic Nature**

Research methodology is systematic, following a structured, step-by-step process from problem identification to data analysis, ensuring logical progression and consistency (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

2.3.2. Justified and Rationale-Based

Every methodological choice, such as sampling or design, must be explicitly justified in alignment with research objectives and theoretical frameworks (Paperpal, 2026).

2.3.3. Validity and Reliability

It emphasizes validity (accuracy of measurements) and reliability (consistency of results), incorporating controls like randomization and statistical testing (American Psychological Association, 2020).

2.3.4. Transparency and Replicability

Methodology provides detailed, precise descriptions enabling other researchers to replicate the study exactly (Scribbr, 2023).

2.3.5. Ethical Compliance

It integrates ethical principles, including informed consent, confidentiality, and minimization of harm to participants (American Psychological Association, 2020).

2.3.6. Comprehensive Coverage

A strong methodology addresses all research stages: design, data collection, analysis, and limitations (Grad Coach, 2020).

2.3.7. Objectivity and Empirical Focus

It relies on empirical evidence and objective procedures, reducing researcher bias through standardized protocols (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

2.4. Data collection:

Data collection was carried out using a single research tool: a questionnaire distributed to first-, second-, and third-year EFL learners at Djilali Liabes University. This method was selected for its efficiency in gathering a considerable amount from a specific population within a limited period of time. Enabling the researcher to probe deeply into participants' reading habits, emotional responses, and behavioral changes related to their engagement within literary texts. By directly collecting opinions on how literary texts provoke feelings of empathy, inspiration, the questionnaire facilitates a comprehensive understanding of literature's role beyond academic learning. It highlights its power to transform emotional experiences and personal development.

Data collection is the systematic process of gathering and measuring information on targeted variables in an established, quantifiable system, enabling researchers to answer relevant questions, test hypotheses, and evaluate outcomes (Scribbr, 2023).

In research methodology, it involves collecting observations, measurements, or primary/secondary data through structured methods such as surveys, interviews, experiments, observations, or existing records, ensuring accuracy, relevance, and ethical compliance for subsequent analysis (National Network of Libraries of Medicine, 2022).

2.5. Types of data collection

2.6. Primary Quantitative Data Collection Methods

2.6.1. Surveys and Questionnaires

Surveys and Questionnaires: Standardized tools with closed-ended questions (e.g., Likert scales, yes/no, rating scales) administered via online platforms (e.g., Google Forms, Qualtrics), mail, phone, or in-person. Ideal for large samples to quantify attitudes, behaviors, or demographics; high response rates depend on brevity and incentives (Coursera, 2024).

2.6.2. Experiments and Controlled Trials

Experiments and Controlled Trials: Manipulation of independent variables in lab or field settings (e.g., randomized controlled trials, A/B testing) to establish causality. Includes pre/post-tests and control groups for internal validity (Scribbr, 2023).

2.6.3. Structured Observations

Structured Observations: Systematic recording of quantifiable events using checklists or frequency counts (e.g., time-sampling in behavioral studies). Often uses technology like video analysis for inter-rater reliability (TolaData, 2021).

2.6.4. Physiological / Sensor Data

Physiological/ Sensor Data: Automated collection via devices (e.g., wearables for heart rate, EEG for brain activity) for objective biometric metrics (SG Analytics, 2024).

2.7. Primary Qualitative Data Collection Methods**2.7.1. In-Depth Interviews**

In-Depth Interviews: One-on-one, semi-structured or unstructured dialogues (e.g., 30-60 minutes) probing personal experiences, motivations, or perceptions. Audio-recorded and transcribed for thematic analysis; builds rapport for depth (Scribbr, 2023).

2.7.2. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs): Moderated sessions with 6-12 homogeneous participants to elicit group interactions, consensus, or divergent views. Useful for product feedback or policy exploration; managed via skilled facilitators (TolaData, 2021).

2.7.3. Participant and Non-Participant Observations

Participant/Non-Participant Observations: Immersive fieldwork (e.g., ethnography in anthropology) or detached note-taking to document natural behaviors, contexts, and nonverbal cues. Field notes supplemented by photos/audio (Fullstory, 2024).

2.7.4. Case Studies

Case Studies: Detailed examination of single or multiple units (individuals, organizations) using triangulation of interviews, documents, and observations for holistic understanding (Scribbr, 2023).

2.8. Questionnaire and its Aims:

A questionnaire is a structured research tool consisting of a series of questions designed to collect standardized data from respondents on their knowledge, opinions, attitudes, behaviors, or other variables.

It is widely used in academic research because it is easy to distribute and analyze. Questionnaires also help the researcher gather information from many participants in a short time. In addition, they provide clear and organized data that can be compared and interpreted.

2.9. The population of the study:

The target population for this questionnaire encompassed EFL students at various levels from Djilali Liabes University. In total, it was distributed to 19 students, providing a focused yet diverse sample that captures variations in exposure to literature across academic progression.

These students come from different academic backgrounds, which helps in getting varied opinions and perspectives. The small number of participants allows the researcher to focus more on the quality of responses rather than quantity. Moreover, all participants are university students, which makes the data relevant to the study topic.

2.10. The description of the study:

The questionnaire includes 13 carefully prepared questions, divided into three different sections: General Information, Reading Habits, and Psychological Effects. This organization

ensures a clear order, starting with basic personal information, then moving to reading habits, and ending with deeper emotional and mental effects.

The main aim of this questionnaire is to study students' attitudes toward reading literary texts and the psychological effects that come with it, such as increased empathy, stress relief, and better self-awareness. To make the questionnaire more interesting and keep participants engaged, the 13 questions use different formats, including multiple-choice questions, rating scales (such as agree/disagree), and open-ended questions. This makes the process more interactive and helps participants give detailed and focused answers.

These questions include multiple choice and open-ended questions, giving students the chance to express their opinions freely. This variety helps in collecting richer and more detailed data.

Furthermore, the questionnaire aims to provide useful ideas about how literature affects emotions and thinking, while also identifying common reading habits and personal preferences. In addition, to strengthen the reliability and validity of the data, the researcher selected students who have good experience in reading books and even writing poems. This rule helps reduce unfair influence and improves the quality of the results, creating a strong base for analyzing the psychological impact of literature.

This division helps to organize the questions in a clear and logical way. It allows the participants to move step by step from simple personal information to deeper questions about their reading experiences. This structure also makes it easier for the researcher to analyze each section separately.

This choice ensures that participants understand literature well and can give meaningful answers. It also helps the researcher get more accurate results about the psychological impact of reading. Additionally, their experience allows them to reflect better on their feelings and thoughts when engaging with literary texts.

2.11. Conclusion

This chapter presented the practical part of the study through the use of a questionnaire. It helped the researcher collect real opinions from students about their reading habits and their feelings toward literary texts. The clear organization of the questionnaire made it easier to understand the answers and analyze them in a simple way.

Chapter 03

Data collection and Analysis

3.1. Introduction

This study looks at a survey given to 19 university students about their reading habits and how literature affects their minds and feelings. Most participants were females (17 out of 19), aged 21 to 24, from first, second, and third-year levels. Almost everyone reads literature at times, but short stories top the list because they save time, have one clear main idea, and are easier than novels, drama, or poetry with their complex plots. The results highlight how reading helps students escape daily stress, improve their mood, and grow personally.

3.2. Data Analysis:

The answers from the students' questionnaires are presented in tables. Then, these answers are analyzed step by step, following the order of the chapter and the research questions.

3.3. Students Questionnaire:

3.3.1. Analysis of Section one: General information:

The survey designed for this study was handed out and distributed to a grand total of 19 college students in all, and these individuals ended up forming the complete basis and makeup of the entire group of people who were studied and analyzed throughout.

3.3.2. Gender:

When we take a close look at the basic gender makeup and composition among all the participants who took part, the results from the data show without doubt that the overall group included examples of both males and females taking part. However, it is clear that the vast majority turned out to be females, a fact which really shaped and influenced the overall profile and look of the entire group as a whole.

3.3.3. Age:

Shifting our focus now to the age demographics and breakdowns, we see that every single one of the participants fit neatly within a pretty narrow and specific range, with everyone being aged somewhere between 21 and 24 years old at the time. This particular youthful grouping of ages reflects and matches up well with what you would normally expect to see in a standard population made up of typical college students.

3.3.4. Levels of study:

Moving on to the different levels of study represented, the group we studied included students drawn from a variety of different school years, specifically those in the first-year level, the second-year level, and the third-year level. This setup provides us with a good and useful mix or cross-section across different stages of academic progress and development.

3.4. Analysis of section two: Reading Habits

- **Question 1:** Do you read literature (novels, stories, poetry)?

Answer	Number	Percentage
Yes	17	89 %
No	2	11 %

Table 01: student's responses (yes/no) to the questionnaire

The table below shows that the vast majority of all the students actively take part in reading books and stories as part of their routine, whereas only a tiny little part or percentage of them straight-up said that they do not bother with this activity in any way at all. These kinds of facts from the data strongly show and point out that books really do play a key, basic, and very important part right in the everyday lives of college students, acting almost like a main and central thing they choose to do either on a daily basis or from time to time whenever they get the chance.

- **Question 2:** How often do you read?

Answer	Number	Percentage
Daily	2	11 %
Sometimes	11	58 %
Rarely	6	32 %

Table 02: student's answers by how often they occur

The result shows that most of the students in the group said flat-out that they read books and stories only sometimes and not all the time. A smaller number of them admitted they read only a little or very rarely. This overall mix and spread in their answers really shows that while books do hold some real appeal and interest for them as a group, they are not always set up or treated as a steady, every day, or consistent habit in their busy lives.

- **Question 3:** What type of literature do you prefer?

Answer	Number	Percentage
Novels	3	16 %
Poetry	1	5 %
Short	9	47 %
Drama	6	31 %

Table 03: Types of reading preferred by students

Looking into the facts gathered on this point, they clearly show that the majority or biggest share of students tend to pick and choose short stories as their top preference well over other common types like drama pieces, poems, or full-length novels. The main reasons they gave for this choice is that they find these short stories much easier to handle and enjoy compared to the others, mainly because such stories save a lot of time and also give across very

clear and direct messages without confusion. On top of that, short stories usually stick closely to just one single main idea or theme throughout, which makes them feel more simple and straightforward in the end. But when it comes to novels, participants noted that they often come loaded with hard-to-follow events along with twisty and complicated stories or plots that end up demanding way more time and mental effort to get through.

3.5. Analysis of section three: psychological effects

- **Question 1:** In your opinion, how does reading literature affect your mood and emotions?

Answer	Number	Percentage
Relaxation	8	40 %
Stress relief	7	35 %
Escaping daily pressure	5	25 %

Table 04: Main benefits of reading literature reported by students

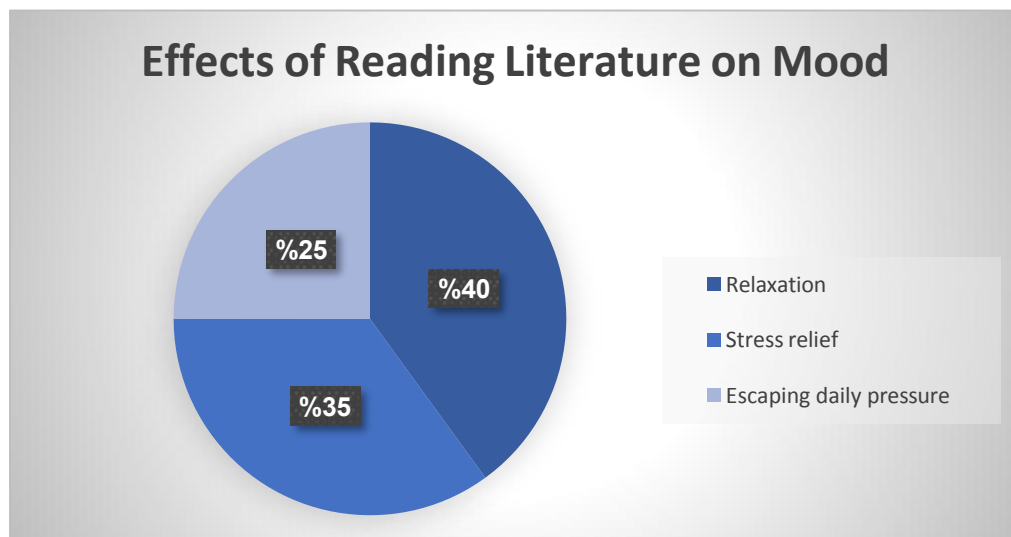


Figure 1: Effects of reading literature on mood

Drawing straight from the students' own answers and feedback provided, reading books turns out to have a solid and positive effect on their mood and feelings in a bunch of different practical ways.

Many of them specifically pointed out and mentioned that it works well to cut down or reduce their levels of stress quite effectively, and it also helps them get away or escape from all the daily stress and the tough parts of real everyday life that can weigh them down. Plus, on top of that benefit, it actively keeps them away and distracted from spending too much time on their phones, while at the same time giving them a real boost of good energy to carry on with their day.

Question 2: can you describe a situation where a literary texts changed the way you felt? How?

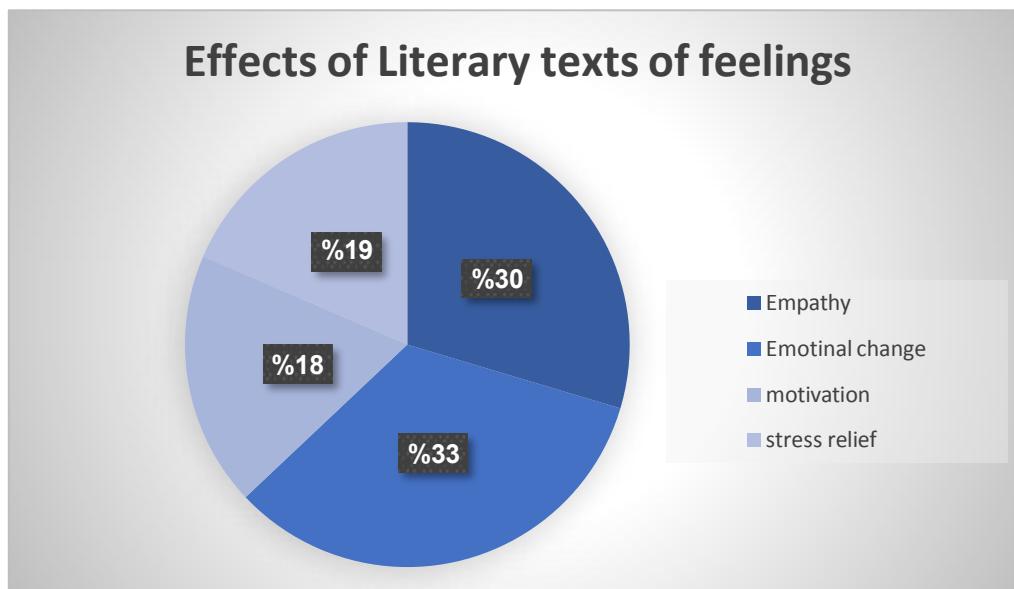


Figure 2: Effects of reading literary texts on feelings

Many students shared real stories from their lives about how reading literary texts changed their feelings -like making them happier or sadder in a good way. This was the biggest effect they noticed. also helped them think differently in big, lasting ways.

Some felt more understanding toward others (that's empathy). Others got more motivated or less stressed from reading.

- **Question 3:** How does literature affect your way of thinking or your perspectives on life?

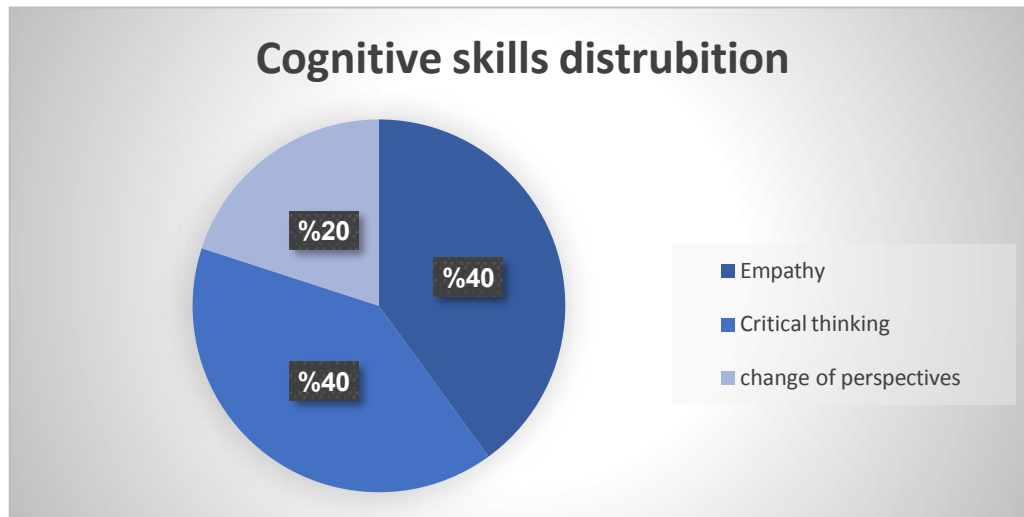


Figure 3: distribution of student's cognitive skills

Many of the students made it clear in their statements that reading literature help them to learn and pick up knowledge about all sorts of different people or characters, along with various languages, unique ways of life or cultures, and even different beliefs or religions, all through what feels like a deep and immersive kind of exposure. In Addition, it actively makes and encourages them to think hard and reflect deeply about a wide range of different situations as well as the people involved in them along the way.

- **Question 4:** in what ways does reading literature help you develop empathy toward others?

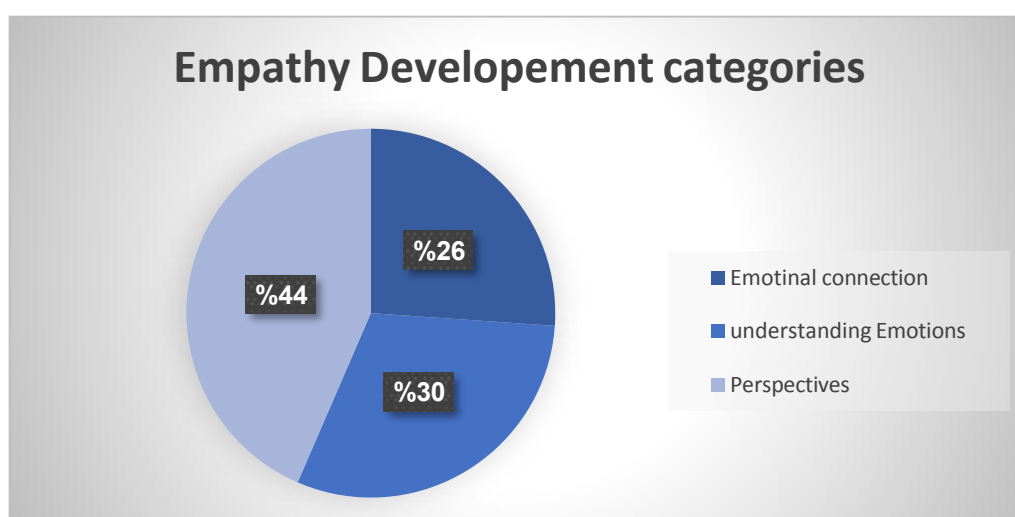


Figure 4: categories of empathy development

A big and significant number of the participants made the point in their responses that reading literature plays a truly key role when it comes to helping them understand and grasp others' thoughts and feelings in a much more effective and real way.

- **Question 5:** can literature impact your motivation or personal goals? How?

Answer	Number	Percentage
Yes	18	95 %
No	1	5 %

Table 5: student's responses about the impact of literature on motivation and personal goals

Across the board, the students mostly agreed and nodded along to the idea that engaging with literary texts spark interest and actively push or motivate them to go after and successfully hit their own personal goals in life, often by learning key lessons or drawing real strength from the way strong people or characters are shown and developed right within the stories themselves.

- **Question 6:** Do you feel more relaxed or mentally engaged when reading literature? Explain

Answer	Number	Percentage
Yes	19	100 %
No	0	0 %

Table 6: student's responses to the effects of reading literature

As the results show The majority of participants reported and shared that the simple act and process of reading itself helps them to feel noticeably better and to chill out or relax in a good way, especially once they get into and reach the good or positive parts of whatever tales or narratives they happen to be following.

- **Question 7:** From your experience, what psychological benefits or negative effects does reading literature have on you?

Answer	Number	Percentage
Positive effects	15	78 %
Negative effects	4	22 %

Table 7: student's opinions on the psychological effects of reading literature

For the most part, the students pointed out and highlighted a good range of positive effects they experienced, things like steadily building up their word skills and knowledge along with finding and picking up all sorts of new words in the process. In addition to those upsides, it also works to cut down on stress levels and boosts or improves their imagination in some pretty significant ways. That said, a small handful of them did go on to note a few bad or

downside effects as well, such as ending up feeling sad or down in the dumps specifically because of the sad stories they came across while reading.

3.6. The interpretation of the analysis of the questionnaire

The result of this study shows that reading literary texts has an important role in the lives of university students and has positive effects psychologically. The most of participants stated that they are involved in reading regularly.

In addition, students prefer short stories instead of drama, novels, and poetry . This is due to factors , short stories are easier, especially for beginners, and require less time .Also, they focus on one main idea or event without too many complicated details. This shows that time has an important role in students' choices of reading.

Furthermore, learners reported that reading affects them psychologically. It helps in relaxation, reducing stress, and escaping from daily pressures. Reading affects students' emotional side by improving mood (happier, motivated) and aids them to understand the other's opinions and feelings.

Along with this, literary texts introduce students' new ideas, cultures, languages, and religions. Students develop their Mind (critical thinking) and their personality.

The participants agreed that literature motivates and inspires them to achieve their goals depending on the struggles and the hard experiences the characters went to.

However, there are negative responses from a few number of participants. They stated that reading literature affect their emotions negatively, such as feeling sad or depressed based on the content or the emotions of readers. this is what we call the Reader-response process in which the reader creates the meaning of the text.

To sum up, the general results confirm that even if reading is not a regular habit but still plays an important role for university students, which also support their psychological side.

3.7. General Recommendations:

The result of this study shows that reading literature applies a largely positive influence on university students' psychological well-being, empathy, and personal growth. The benefits- such as reduced stress, increased emotional understanding, improved vocabulary, and deeper thinking are greater than occasional discomfort caused by emotionally intense stories

- Based on these results, the following recommendations are proposed:
 - Students should aim to read short stories or other literature for at least 20-30 minutes each day, maybe before bed to unwind and cut phone use
 - Universities could help by offering short workshops or clubs on easy reads, mixing fun discussions with stress-relief sessions.
 - Parents and teachers should also share simple book tips to make reading a fun habit.

This way, more students can enjoy the calm, motivation, and smarts that come from stories

- Choose books on topic you love to keep it more interesting and exciting.
- Listen to audio books while walking.

3.8. Conclusion

Generally, the findings prove that reading literature is a big positive force for these university students. It reduces stress, sparks empathy for others' feelings, teaches about new cultures and languages, and motivates them through inspiring characters. While a small number felt sad from emotional stories, the benefits like better vocabulary, deeper thinking, and relaxation far outweigh the downsides. Literature clearly supports mental health and personal growth in busy student lives.

General Conclusion

General Conclusion

The present research work aimed to investigate the psychological effects of reading literature on university students. It focused on how literary texts can influence students' emotions, thoughts, stress levels, imagination, and personal development. The study also attempted to show the importance of literature not only as an academic subject, but also as a useful way to support students' mental and emotional well-being.

It is widely recognized that university students often face different psychological pressures such as stress, anxiety, emotional fatigue, and academic difficulties. In this context, reading literature may play an important role in helping students feel more relaxed, understood, and emotionally connected. Literary texts allow readers to explore human experiences, feelings, and situations that may be similar to their own lives. As a result, literature can become a source of comfort, reflection, and emotional support for many students.

Throughout this research, it was found that reading literature can positively affect university students in different ways. First, literary reading helps students reduce stress and escape daily pressures for a short period of time. Second, it improves emotional awareness by helping readers understand different personalities, emotions, and social situations. In addition, literature develops imagination, critical thinking, empathy, and self-expression. Many students may also become more confident and motivated after engaging with meaningful literary works.

The first chapter of this dissertation was devoted to the theoretical part of the study. It discussed the main concepts related to literature, psychology, reading habits, and students' mental well-being. The second chapter focused on the practical part, including methodology, data collection, and analysis of the results obtained from students' questionnaires and participants' responses.

The findings of this study confirmed that literature can have a positive psychological influence on university students. Most participants agreed that reading literary texts helps them relax, think positively, and better understand themselves and others. Moreover, literature creates an emotional connection between the reader and the text, which may help students deal with loneliness, anxiety, or negative feelings in a healthier way.

General Conclusion

Based on the results of this research, it is recommended that university students read more literary works both inside and outside the classroom. Teachers are also encouraged to select meaningful and interesting texts that fit students' needs and interests. Universities may support reading activities, book discussions, and literary clubs in order to encourage students to develop regular reading habits and improve their psychological well-being.

Like any research work, this study faced some limitations. One of the main difficulties was the limited time available to complete the research. In addition, the sample size was relatively small, which may limit the generalization of the results. Furthermore, some participants may have had different reading habits and personal experiences, which could influence their answers.

Finally, this research highlights the importance of literature in students' lives beyond academic purposes. Reading literature is not only a way to gain knowledge and improve language skills, but also an effective means to support emotional balance, reduce stress, and encourage personal growth among university students. Further research may investigate the psychological effects of different literary genres on students from different academic levels and backgrounds.

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Appendix

Appendix 01

Students Questionnaire

- **The Psychological Effects of Reading Literature on University Students**

Dear student,

This questionnaire aims to investigate the psychological effects of reading literature on university students. Your responses are anonymous and will be used only for academic research.

Section 1: General Information

1. Gender:

☐ Male

☐ Female

2. Age:

☐ 18–21

☐ 21–24

☐ 24+

3. Level of study:

☐ L1

☐ L2

☐ L3

☐ Master

Field of study: _____

Section 2: Reading Habits

4. Do you read literature (novels, stories, poetry)?

☐ Yes

☐ No

5. How often do you read?

☐ Daily

☐ Sometimes

☐ Rarely

Appendixes

6. What type of literature do you prefer?

☐ Novels

☐ Poetry

☐ Short stories

☐ Drama

Section 3: Psychological Effects (Open-ended Questions)

7. In your opinion, how does reading literature affect your mood and emotions?

8. Can you describe a situation where a literary text changed the way you felt? How?

9. How does literature affect your way of thinking or your perspective on life?

10. In what ways does reading literature help you develop empathy toward others?

Appendixes

11. Can literature impact your motivation or personal goals? How?

12. Do you feel more relaxed or mentally engaged when reading literature? Explain your answer.

13. From your experience, what psychological benefits or negative effects does reading literature have on you?
