

**IMPACT OF READING ON THE ENHANCEMENT OF
COGNITIVE SKILLS AND CREATIVITY IN CHILDREN**

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Abstract

Child development is closely tied to cognitive abilities, communication skills, inventiveness, and the capacity to conceive and share ideas. It has been noted that children who engage in reading from an early age tend to have enhanced cognitive functions and experience better mental well-being as they approach their teenage years. However, the interest in reading among children is waning due to the allure of digital gaming and the use of various electronic devices. This article delves into the effects of reading on children, arguing that it develops empathy, curiosity, knowledge, and social skills. It further explores how different genres and themes in children's literature play a role in enhancing imagination and cognitive skills.

Keywords: *Child Psychology, Cognitive abilities, Imagination, life- skills, Mental health*

Reading, speaking, writing, and listening are the four skills that are essential for developing effective communication. While the learners acquire speaking and listening through exposure to the environment in which a certain language is used, writing and reading are developed consciously by caregivers, parents, and teachers. "Reading maketh a full man; conference a ready man; and writing an exact man"(Bacon, 2014, p.159) is true for children and early learners as much as adults. Familiarization with reading begins in its earliest stages with picture books, which children are exposed to by their parents. Bedtime stories not only build a bond between the parent and the child but also create a world of imagination and fantasy for children inhabited by their favourite characters from fairy tales or mythology. They learn language skills, acquire the ability to empathize, feel the characters' pain and joy, and build their own little world. The significance of reading cannot be over-emphasized, but it is imperative to mention its long-lasting impact on the development of children into adolescence and young adulthood. However, with the onset of digital entertainment and parents' busy schedules, reading aloud to children has been replaced by audiobooks or animated shows on television. It is not uncommon to see young children playing with mobile phones and iPads and juggling with smart television sets; they are adept with these devices without being taught to do so. Such exposure of children to these devices is inevitable, but an alarming matter of concern is their lack of touch with the world of books and the richness of lifelong learning that reading can offer.

Reading is the process of constructing meaning from written texts. It is a complex skill requiring the coordination of a number of interrelated sources of information. Children learn to associate letter patterns with the respective phonetic sounds by active listening and through repeated

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narration of the same story; this leads to word recognition and the ability to comprehend the meaning of text. Research studies have identified how reading aloud by parents leads to reading habits in children that foster a love of books and storytelling. This is, however, not a standard practice, as it is determined by the culture and the environment to which the learner is exposed. Its development is influenced by the necessary exposure given by the parents at home, the education imparted in kindergarten and early grades, and opportunities and social support for developing effective skills during their growing years. Text comprehension depends upon a reader's prior knowledge, experience and attitudes; meaning is constructed by linking what he reads to what he knows.

The environment provided by the parents at home is crucial in children's development of reading as a skill and a hobby. Formal school teaching further enhances children's ability to read and comprehend. Gradually, their vocabulary builds, and they learn to formulate their thoughts in sentences and not merely through gestures or monosyllables. However, it is disheartening to see how, despite its life-long impact, the curriculum in most schools in India is not designed to develop reading as a skill which needs to be cultivated for a child's cognitive, imaginative, and overall development. It is a life skill that determines a child's success in school, life, and professional development. NEP 2020, in India, reiterates the importance of the following skills:

Reading, writing and numeracy are always believed to be the foundational skills; without being able to read, write well and do basic calculations a child cannot progress in the education system and eventually in life... A good foundation of literacy and numeracy skills has a positive impact on the learning of the child in senior classes and also develop a child's interest in learning. Lot of efforts have been taken at national and state levels to help children and teachers in developing a strong foundation of language and mathematical skills at early stage (*National Education Policy 2020*)

Education is an investment in the human resource. Investment in education is necessary for the development of a society, a country's self-reliance depends on the building of its citizens, for which education at the basic level and the vocational and advanced levels plays a crucial role. (*Investment in Education - an Overview*). Psacharopoulos (1982) also emphasizes the same idea:

Human capital is created and the quality of human input in production is significantly improved by spending on education. This is why countries, particularly those with low per capita incomes, invest such a large proportion of their budgets on education— and why, when the state does not, individuals do. It is highly rewarding, both to society and to the individual. It is difficult to measure all these rewards; many, such as the benefits to society of a better electorate or a more informed consumer body, though tangible, are quantitatively elusive. But the measurable

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evidence alone is sufficient to demonstrate sizable financial rates of return to investing in education (p.39)

Education is the cornerstone of a country's growth and prosperity. As the Government of India has outlined in NEP 2020, there is an urgent need to revamp the educational system right from the foundational years, which can be achieved by working at five levels: Curriculum Revamping; Pedagogical Innovation; Restructuring of the Teacher Education Program; Revisiting Assessments; Administrative Support

This paper argues that adequate attention needs to be given to developing reading skills in young children, apart from writing and numerical skills, so that they are geared to becoming lifelong learners who exhibit natural curiosity to learn more, ask more questions and learn to find answers through reading. As an English teacher, I have noticed that there is an alarming need to sensitise young students about the need to read more extensively and not rely solely on distilled information received through social media and hearsay so that they can have a worldview which would enable them to make more informed choices and decisions in life. And the need to develop reading as a habit and a hobby needs to be cultivated right at the beginning of a child's education from the formative stages.

Children's Literature

Children's Literature includes folklore, fantasy, culture-specific mythology, ballads, rhymes, and picture books that explain scientific concepts such as the animal kingdom, the universe, and the planets. Stories have travelled through time to enrich generations with values, beliefs, imagination, and creativity. "Children's literature still plays a crucial part in education as it provides knowledge and entertainment, representing a typical example of "edutainment"" (Pulimeno et al., 2020) "As an area of research and teaching, children's literature encompasses all genres, formats and media, all periods, movements and kinds of writing from any part of the world" (Reynolds, 2011, p.2). This form of literature has received significant academic thrust as it is the first form of discursive knowledge that children are introduced to. There has been an increased awareness among parents about picking and choosing appropriate literature for young readers.

Children's Literature is one of the earliest ways through which young readers hear and read stories. Stories help to build vocabulary and attitudes, reflect the structure of society, and mirror past and present cultures. Retellings of traditional tales expose and critique the original stories to interpret the world as per the evolution of ideas and identities. For example, a traditional fairy tale may represent a hapless princess who waits for the charming prince to rescue her from some magic spell or evil entanglement. However, a modern retelling of the story may give the female more agency and power; they may be more action-oriented and display decision making. Such a shift is deliberate and prompted by the changing ethos of a culture that values independent women.

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According to Reynolds (2011), Children's literature contributes to social change through a dialogue between the old and the new ways of thinking, leading to the ideas of equality and inclusion in young minds. It is a rich source of cultural transformation and can potentially raise generations that are well-informed, sensitive, and aware of the world around them. "A good story makes a connection with the reader. The characters become almost as real to children as people they know. Stories have tremendous power. They reach children's hearts and minds and help them understand themselves and the world in which they live" (Feeney & Moravcik, 2005, p.20). Pulimeno et al., 2020, explain the idea in detail:

It is known that stories by reproducing fictional situations that match with children's real problems allow them to feel comfortable and safe in difficult circumstances, ensuring emotional security and providing healthier ways to deal with internal struggles, life adversities and stressors. Story-tales compensate what young people may lack, by presenting them positive patterns of behaviours and constructive models through the characters they could identify with. (p.13-23)

The form and format of children's literature have undergone a massive shift with the emergence of new media, such as games and programs available on mobile phones and other digital devices. Stories have been adapted for film, television, and the radio; literary characters or superheroes inspire a whole array of toys, stationery, and clothes. The seemingly innocent toys and stories for children are culturally coded and academically constructed for children's consumption. Parents are responsible for giving their children the necessary exposure and encouragement to learn to read from a young age and not equate reading with a tedious task and the pressure of securing high marks at school. These days, children are made to join multiple hobby classes, including sports, abacus classes for numerical skills, music, and dance classes to keep them creatively engaged. Somehow, reading remains an underestimated skill, though it has been found in multiple studies that children who read for pleasure at a young age grow up as happier and more confident adolescents with the ability to articulate and express ideas and a natural tendency to enquire and be curious about the world.

Cognitive Abilities in Children

Cognitive ability refers to mental capability which involves reasoning, problem-solving, planning, abstract thinking, comprehension, and experiential learning (Gottfredson, 1997). Children are never too young to be read to. In fact, some mothers start reading to their children before birth (Marshall, 1988, p.19). Studies indicate that unborn babies hear their mothers and react to their voices (McElroy, 2013; Vogteline et al., 2013). Spending quality time reading with children develops warm parent-child bonding and improves children's chances of success in school. Regarding the value of reading to children, Marshall (1988) asserts:

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Unfortunately, not all parents read to their children on a regular basis. First, not all parents read. Also, some parents must work more than one job, leaving little time to read to their children. Others have the time and ability to read aloud yet do not see the advantages—both affective and cognitive—of reading to children (p.19).

Margaret Marshall (1988) lists the benefits of reading in children, some of which include escaping into a fantasy world, cognitive development, vocabulary building, familiarity with life situations through stories, improved attention, becoming aware of feelings and emotions and learning how to cope with these, growing awareness about their heritage and other cultures, increased ability to memorise by learning to recite rhymes (p.20).

Psychologists have defined the development of 'personhood' as a "continuous relational context in which infants and young children develop their earliest understandings of who they are, who others are, and how to relate to other people" (Damon et al., 2006 p.24). Personality development in a child takes place by participating in shared activities. A chapter by Ross A. Thompson (2006) encapsulates how the conceptual foundation of thinking and understanding occurs in childhood and develops as one grows. Thompson explains this further:

If early childhood establishes the foundations for the development of social cognition, moral judgment, and self-understanding of the years that follow, then relationships and other influences experienced in the early years set the context for the growth of an empathic, humanistic orientation toward others, balanced self-concept, capacities for relational intimacy, social sensitivity, and other capacities conventionally viewed as achievements of middle childhood and adolescence (p.25)

The foundational childhood years are crucial in developing cognitive abilities that gradually develop through observation, parent-child bonding, and socialization with adults and peers. Storybooks provide a very congenial avenue for developing the necessary warmth and cosiness that bring children closer to their parents.

Young children can process the stories they hear "because their inquiries about animals, people's beliefs, or God provoke the conversations that inform them, and as they attempt to juxtapose their current conceptions with what they learn" (ibid., p.40). Children's comments and queries lead to conversations and discussions through which they develop a deeper social and emotional understanding. Children like to imitate adults and are often seen impersonating caregivers as they play with their siblings or with toys and dolls. They narrate the same story during their playtime, and it is fascinating to see how their stories also adhere to the logical sequence of what they heard; they even imitate the tone, articulation, and expressions, hence displaying the power of 'learning by doing'. Children also acquire social skills, learn to regulate emotions and behaviour, gain self-

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confidence, build trust in others, and develop social and emotional understanding and well-being. Hearing a story in a group at school helps to build a sense of comradeship in children and gives them a common ground for sharing feelings, reactions, fears, and joys. Children's literature is very crucial for the development of the child as a social being, and it could be introduced in the form of books, animations, and films. Reading storybooks leads to developing a key life skill which has far-reaching benefits throughout their lives.

Creativity and Imagination

Frank Serafini and Lindsey Moses (2014) opine that reading allows children to develop their imagination and creativity, which an otherwise standardized method of teaching and evaluation dampens. Reading books helps children develop a sense of wonder and amazement that can last throughout their lives. The images of characters from fairy tales, like Cinderella and Rapunzel, remain deeply etched in children's minds, like the rhymes they learn at school or the roles they may enact of their favourite models from the books they read. Such experiences become a part of their memories of a happy childhood and help to kindle their creativity and imagination. Reading aloud triggers their curiosity and develops their ability to visualise the images they read about in the books. Reading for pleasure also allows them to lose themselves in the books, relate to the character's adventures, trials, and excitement, and enjoy the hilarious situations they find themselves in. It becomes sheer enjoyment when children discover books that support their creative abilities and amuse them with funny incidents.

Dere (2019) maintains that creativity is essential for the preschool curriculum. Creativity is the "procedure to create original things" (p.652), and teachers play a key role in sharpening this ability by engaging the learners to imagine and explain their ideas through various activities. Children's individual responses should be appreciated in an inclusive environment. This builds their creativity, power of imagination and confidence. "Activities such as play activities, drama activities, and early literacy activities also improve the creativity. In addition, it can be said that the rich stimulating environment that is created in the class and that supports creativity affects the creativity of the children positively." (Dere, 2019, p.653). Creativity can be encouraged in children in a supportive environment, using suitable educational processes, books, and study material.

Reading a variety of works available in the form of Children's literature, picture books, stories or watching films adapted for young children triggers curiosity in children and provokes them to ask questions, which should be encouraged, as it is a sign of a curious mind that wants to know more and more. "The individual must have the freedom to explore ideas, question, and construct meaning. If learning is to be a process of inquiry, then it must focus on questions, not just on answers. Learners must be

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free to follow new leads and to question public knowledge. They must have an opportunity to explore questions, as well as to construct and confirm resolutions collaboratively” (Suparmi, 2014, p.221).

Through their exposure to multiple situations in the storybooks that children read, they learn about problem-solving skills and the ability to persuade through reason and rational arguments. They also get inspired and motivated by following the examples of their favourite characters in the books they read. Parents are often found citing examples from myths and stories that children can relate to, it encourages them to do better and to emulate the values that the characters exhibit. A wonderful fantasy world is also created in the child's mind as fantastic descriptions of an imaginary world trigger their imagination. It inclines them naturally to imagine and express it through drawing or writing or by narrating their tales to their peers, parents, or siblings. Learning, therefore, takes place in a conducive environment, and it remains a fun activity and not a tedium that children would avoid. “Imagination is a cognitive process used to generate new ideas from old, not just in the service of creativity and fantasy, but also in our ordinary thoughts about alternatives to current reality...Imagination makes new things out of old parts. It is an act of generating, from bits of old knowledge, new ideas, and new possibilities” (Kushnir,2022).

Lev Vygotsky (1896-1934), the Russian Psychologist best known for his work on psychological development in children, defines imagination as:

Any human act that gives rise to something new is referred to as a creative act, regardless of whether what is created is a physical object or some mental or emotional construct that lives within the person who created it and is known only to him...The brain is not only the organ that stores and retrieves our previous experience, it is also the organ that combines and creatively reworks elements of this past experience and uses them to generate new propositions and new behaviour. (pp.7-9)

Vygotsky identifies two distinct types of activities through which human thoughts are manifested. One is reproductive, in which an individual uses traces of memory of previous experiences to create something, “our brain proves to be an organ that retains our previous experience and facilitates the reproduction of this experience” (ibid., p.8). and the other is combinatorial or creative activity, which includes “activity that results not in the reproduction of previously experienced impressions or actions but in the creation of new images or actions” (ibid., p.8). The brain not only retrieves previous experiences but reconfigures past experiences and uses them to generate new ideas. Vygotsky further defines imagination as: This creative activity, based on the ability of our brain to combine elements, is called imagination or fantasy in psychology...In everyday life, fantasy or imagination refers to what is not actually true, what does not correspond to reality, and what, thus, could not have any serious practical significance. But in actuality, imagination, as

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the basis of all creative activity, is an important component of absolutely all aspects of cultural life, enabling artistic, scientific, and technical creation alike (p.9).

Children can combine elements from their experience of life in through their reading to produce something new. They combine the old in new ways which, according to Vygotsky, is the basis of creativity and imagination.

There is an increased awareness of the impact of reading on the mental framework of children, and it is important that multicultural education should be imparted in schools. "Inclusion of characters and stories from other cultures in textbooks, and even school integration policies are attempts to make schools places where tolerance, patience, appreciation, and friendship among children of different backgrounds and cultures are fostered"(Razinski&Paddock, 1990,p.576).Literature has the potential to change minds and people's hearts. The authors further elaborate: Literature presents readers with new worlds, new ideas, new options - stuff to reflect upon and to use to better themselves as people, as well as readers. In the context of an environment that promotes interpersonal caring, the development of prosocial behaviors and attitudes, selflessness, and citizenship, teachers and children can use literature to explore and act upon their cultural values and beliefs (p.577).

Conclusion

Children's literature is most worthy of serious attention as a literary form. People read these books while their minds are still impressionable, and it has a long-lasting impact on future generations' attitudes and belief systems. It has become one of the key areas of academic research because "concurrent with the rise of women's studies and cultural studies, children's literature has been making its way back into the halls of academic respectability in the last thirty-five years" (Nel, 2008, p.23).

In recent times, Children's literature borrows from multiple disciplines, encompassing issues like ecology, gender, class, race, and colour. It informs the readers about facts pertaining to history, culture, geography, the universe, and the animal kingdom. Picture books also give children a sense of art and aesthetics. It helps them to understand themselves and others better, making them more empathetic and sensitive to people around them. They learn to appreciate human differences and, through group learning, adopt pro-social behaviour. Representation of children in stories also helps children develop an enhanced self-concept and pride in themselves. It can be concluded that exposure of suitable literature to children aids their growth as self-reliant, independent, responsible, and empathetic adults. It builds their imagination and creativity and enables them to live fuller lives as children and adults because reading as a skill and a hobby ensures lifelong dividends. As parents and teachers, it is essential to give children a suitable environment so that their innate

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abilities are sharpened, and education aims at the holistic development of children right from their formative years.

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**EMOTIONAL FACTORS AFFECTING TOWARDS
BRANDING IN THE DIGITAL AGE**

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Abstract

In the digital period, emotions play a vital role in shaping consumer behaviour and encouraging brand loyalty. This research paper explores the diverse impact of emotional factors on branding, highlighting the significance of emotional brand attachment, trust, love, and engagement. Extracting insights from a synthesis of existing research, the paper emphasizes the effectiveness of emotional branding strategies in boosting brand loyalty and consumer engagement, particularly in the context of digital marketing and social media interactions. Additionally, it highlights the importance of internal marketing techniques and the incorporation of emotional branding with digital marketing strategies in strengthening brand perception and representation. The results focus on the critical role of emotional factors influencing consumer buying behaviour, shaping brand attitudes, and cultivating long-term consumer constancy. By understanding and employing emotional connections, marketers can enhance overall brand equity in the competitive digital marketplace.

Keywords: Brand emotionalization, consumer psychology, digital advertising, brand connection, trust, brand fidelity

In today's digital phase, brands face the challenge of maintaining consumer dedication encircled by abundance of choices and information. Emotional factors have emerged as pivotal elements in influencing consumer decisions and fostering brand loyalty. Emotional brand attachment is critical in modern marketing, significantly impacting brand loyalty and consumer behaviour (Malar et al., 2011). Research shows that digital marketing positively affects brand emotional attachment and brand attitude, which subsequently influence brand loyalty (Lee, 2023). Younger consumers, in particular, are significantly influenced by emotional aspects, with emotional attachment playing a strong role in their brand loyalty (Hwang & Kandampully, 2012). Internal marketing strategies that focus on fostering employees' emotional connections within the organization can notably influence brand perception and representation (Baca, 2023). Emotional brand attachment, brand love, and brand passion are key

factors in establishing robust brand-consumer relationships and nurturing brand loyalty in the digital era.

Brand trust and brand loyalty are closely associated with emotional attachment, with factors such as perceived quality, value, satisfaction, and differentiation playing pivotal roles in shaping brand loyalty (Atulkar, 2020). Additionally, brand experiences and perceived quality have been shown to impact brand loyalty, highlighting the role of both emotional and rational factors in consumer-brand relationships (Akoğlu & Özbek, 2021). Furthermore, brand love has been recognized as a mediator between brand experience, emotional factors, brand loyalty, and repurchase intentions (Ding et al., 2022). Brands that offer experiential interactions have been found to cultivate enduring brand loyalty by establishing strong emotional bonds with customers (Mostafa & Kasamani, 2020). The role of emotional branding extends beyond consumer relationships to encompass organizational dynamics. Effective internal marketing strategies that foster emotional connections within the workforce can amplify brand perception externally, as employees become passionate advocates for the brand (Baca, 2023). Ensuring internal alignment is vital for maintaining consistent brand messaging and bolstering overall brand strength. Additionally, emotional branding strategies are especially effective in the digital context, where brands have possibility to engage with consumers across multiple point of contact. Social media platforms, mainly offer a unique space for brands to create and encourage emotional connections through personalized interactions, storytelling, and public engagement. Emotional intelligence and external emotional connections have been identified as significant source of emotional brand attachment, further emphasizing the importance of understanding and maximizing emotional factors in branding (Vredevelde, 2018).

In the realm of online branding, customization and community strategies have proven effective in enhancing customer engagement and experiences, reinforcing the importance of emotional branding in creating meaningful customer connections (2017 et al., 2017). This aligns with findings on brand love and positive word-of-mouth, emphasizing the significance of deep emotional attachments in driving strong brand relationships and customer advocacy (Karjaluoto et al., 2016). Small brands, as discussed by Shen (2022), face challenges in navigating the digital landscape and maintaining brand reputation, underscoring the need for effective emotional branding strategies to weather brand crises and build resilience. Additionally, studies on children's participation with brands through virtual media highlight the advancing landscape of brand-consumer interactions, with social media consumption substantially impacting brand preferences and trustworthiness (Núñez-Gómez et al., 2020). Emotional branding has also been surveyed in various contexts, such as during the Covid-19 pandemic, where emotional connections played a crucial role in

promoting strong consumer-brand relationships (Handayani et al., 2021). The concept of brand satisfaction has been introduced as a unique emotional-relational construct that significantly impact brand behaviour, manifesting the power of emotions in constructing consumer perceptions and behaviours (Schnebelen & Bruhn, 2018).

Therefore, this research intention is to address emotional factors such as brand affinity, brand love, and brand passion are crucial in establishing powerful brand-consumer relationships and developing brand loyalty in the digital generation. Understanding and making use of these emotional connections can extremely influence brand perception, loyalty, and finally, purchase behaviour.

Objectives

Establish emotional factors directing consumer behaviour and brand constancy in the digital age; Interpret the purpose of digital marketing and social media in moulding consumer passions towards brands; Explore the outcome of emotional brand attachment on consumer purchase ambitions and brand perception; Furnish clarity and suggestion for marketers on harnessing emotional factors to enhance brand loyalty and engagement.

Review of literature

The papers reviewed that provide a panoramic examination of various marketing strategies and consumer behaviors in the digital period. The study by With (2020) inquires into the shift in customer service strategies due to digital advancements, that focusing on the emergence of contactless services and their widespread implementation in areas such as food ordering, banking, and retail services. It highlights the implications of these services in terms of opportunities and challenges for businesses. Another research by With (2020) investigates the impact of gamification on consumer engagement and brand attitude, highlighting that perceived usefulness and enjoyment significantly influence consumer behavior, while perceived ease of use and social influence are less impactful.

Koo (2020) explores the loyalty of Gen Y customers in online shopping, underscoring the importance of trust, brand equity, and positive online experiences in fostering e-loyalty among this demographic. Koo's (2020) study on trust in automation through meta-analysis provides insights into the factors influencing human trust in automated systems, revealing medium effects of human-related and automation-related factors on trust development. Nguyen (2020) examines the role of emotional brand attachment in customer-bank relationships, finding that emotional attachment significantly impacts bank loyalty, both directly and indirectly through customer satisfaction.

Liu (2020) investigates the power of social media in influencing consumer behavior through brand-related user-generated content on Facebook, demonstrating that such content triggers emotional and cognitive

responses that lead to positive behavioral outcomes like eWOM and brand engagement. Additionally, the study by Nguyen (2020) on the impact of virtual reality experiences on destination marketing reveals that the perceived visual appeal and emotional involvement of VR experiences positively affect visitors' intentions to visit featured sites.

Further, Lin's (2020) study on teaching with technology in a digital age documents various digital instructional strategies used by educators to enhance student learning, highlighting the significant role technology plays in education. Lee (2020) examines the effects of perceived quality and emotional value on Malaysian consumers' purchase intentions towards American and local products, finding moderate significant relationships between these factors and purchase intention.

In reflections on customer-based brand equity, Liu (2020) revisits foundational concepts and explores future research priorities in branding, emphasizing the importance of online and digital developments. Wong (2020) examines the influence of social media on emotions, brand relationship quality, and word of mouth among music festival attendees, showing that social media interactions significantly enhance emotional attachments and positive word of mouth.

Liu's (2020) study on moral emotions and individual differences in consumer responses to corporate actions reveals that empathy and social justice values moderate emotional responses to corporate green and non-green actions, influencing consumer behaviors like word of mouth and boycotting. Further, Wong (2020) provides a conceptual framework for digital content marketing (DCM), outlining its role in fostering consumer engagement, trust, and value through relevant, valuable brand-related content.

Nguyen's (2020) research on Marketing 4.0 explores its impact on customer satisfaction and purchase intention, particularly among Gen-Z/Millennial first-time homebuyers, highlighting the significance of brand identity and brand image. Lastly, Wong's (2020) study on emotional intelligence and brand attachment underscores the importance of external emotional brand connections and emotional intelligence in enhancing brand attachment, which in turn influences purchase intentions and brand attitudes.

These studies collectively offer valuable insights into the evolving landscape of marketing, consumer behavior, and technology's role in shaping these dynamics, providing theoretical and practical implications for businesses and researchers alike.

The Influence of Emotional Initiates Consumer Behaviour in Marketing

Emotional initiates are psychological signals that bring to mind emotional responses, significantly influencing consumer behaviour. Research done by Desmet and Hekkert in 2007, it indicates that emotions are essential in forming product experiences and consumer satisfaction. Plutchik (1980) diagnoses core emotions such as fear, pleasure, and sadness, which marketers are targeting to prompt specific consumer responses.

Cognitively, emotional initiates activate brain regions linked to emotion and motivation. For example, dopamine release in response to positive stimuli to consolidate behaviour, making consumers more likely to repeat it (Berridge, 2007).

progressively, emotional initiates developed as survival mechanisms that influences decision-making (Cosmides & Tooby, 2000). Social, cultural and environmental factors form, how emotional initiates affect us (Markus & Kitayama, 1991).

Zaltman (2003) found that numerous of consumer decision-making occurs automatically, that is heavily influenced by emotions. Positive initiates boost brand perception and trustworthiness, whereas negative initiates create urgency and quick action. Marketers uses various emotional initiates, including fear, which generates urgency (LaTour & Rotfeld, 1997); happiness, which cultivate positive associations (Isen, 2001); and regret, which inspires to take corrective actions (Hibbert et al., 2007). Social proof harness collective behaviour, At the same time, scarcity enhances perceived value (Cialdini, 1993). Although their effectiveness, using emotional initiates raises moral concerns, as deceptive practices can weaken consumer trust and damage brand perception (Williams & Aaker, 2002). Overusing emotional initiates can lead to consumer debility and unresponsiveness, diminishing their impact and provoking irritation and mistrust if consumers feel manipulated (Fredrickson & Losada, 2005).

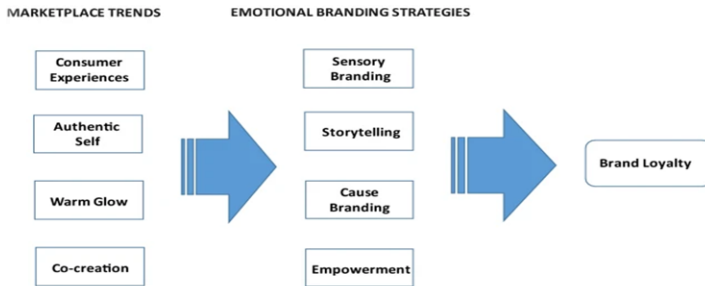


Fig. 1. Illustrates the framework of emotional branding

The fig.1 visually represents the framework of emotional branding discussed in the paper, providing a diagrammatic depiction of how emotional factors influence consumer behaviour and brand-consumer relationships. It outlines the key components of emotional branding, like brand connection, trust, and engagement, and illustrates their interconnectedness in driving brand trustworthiness and campaigning.

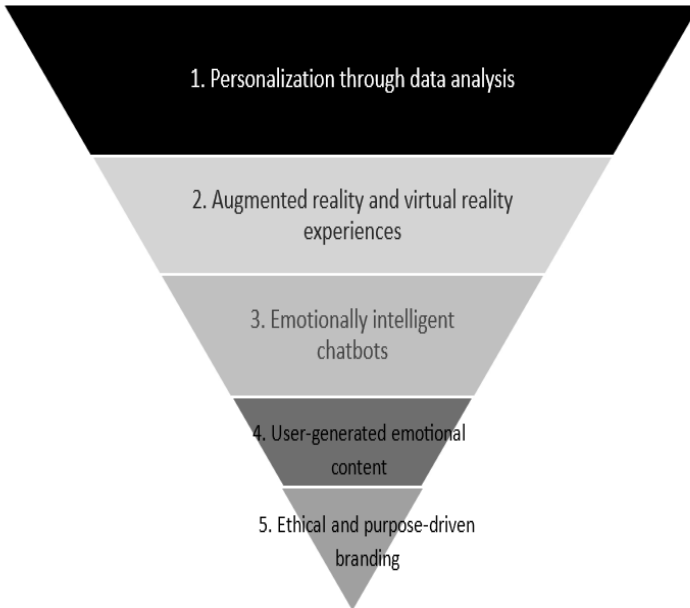


Fig. 2. The future of emotional branding in a digital age

The fig.2 predicting the future trends and significance of emotional branding in the digital era. It considers developing technologies, shifts in consumer behaviour, and advancing marketing strategies, anticipating how emotional branding will continue to form brand-consumer interactions and influence purchasing decisions in the digital landscape.

Moral Considerations in Using Emotional Initiates: This section probes into the moral implications of utilizing emotional initiates in marketing campaigns. It explores the potential risks of exploitation and consumer trust erosion, highlighting the importance of responsible use of emotional petitions and faithfulness to moral guidelines in marketing practices.

Case Studies or Examples: Merging realworld case studies or examples highlighting successful implementation of emotional branding strategies across different industries can provide practical understanding for marketers. These case studies demonstrate how brands effectively maximize emotional connections to enhance consumer dedication, brand perception, and market competitiveness.

Cross-Cultural Approaches: Exploring cross-cultural alteration in consumer responses to emotional branding enhances the paper's discussion. By examining how cultural norms, values, and preferences impact on emotional responses to marketing stimulation, this section offers a more comprehensive understanding of emotional branding effectiveness across mixed global markets. It highlights the importance of

cultural sensitivity and modification in crafting emotionally eloquent brand messages and experiences.

Conclusion

In the digital era, emotions are dominant in shaping consumer behaviour and nurturing brand loyalty. This paper has surveyed the multi-dimensional impact of emotional branding, focusing on its significance in driving brand connection, belief, and engagement. Since, digital marketing strategies to internal branding initiatives, emotional attachment developed as pivotal in enhancing brand equality and consumer faithfulness. Marketers must prioritize strategies that trigger positive emotions and create meaningful brand experiences to cultivate eternal consumer relationships in today's competitive digital marketing.

Emotional aspects are fundamental in shaping consumer behaviour and brand faithfulness in the digital age.

Productive emotional branding strategies, for example -creating meaningful consumer experiences and utilizing emotional intelligence, build strong consumer-brand bonds.

Emotional brand connection is a significant factor of brand loyalty, influenced by digital marketing and social media interactions.

Positive emotional connections enhance purchase intentions and shape favourable brand attitudes.

Understanding and utilizing emotional connections can enhance overall brand equality in the competitive digital marketing.

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**MODEL BASED ON VIRTUAL PRIVATE NETWORK:
ENHANCING CYBERSECURITY IN THE RWANDAN
UNIVERSITY SECTOR**

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Abstract

The rapid growth of technology and digitalization has revolutionized the way universities operate and conduct their academic activities. However, this progress has also exposed the Rwandan university sector to an ever-increasing range of cyber threats and vulnerabilities. The main objective of this research is to design and implement a robust model based on Virtual Private Network (VPN) technology to enhance cyber security in the Rwandan universities. The problem statement revolves around not only escalating cyber security challenges and loopholes at the Universities, but also issue of using a single security measure of currently using only firewall as a security measures which has some drawbacks, and all these may lead to data breaches, unauthorized access, and potential loss of sensitive information. To achieve the research objectives, a mixed-methods approach has been adopted, qualitative data have been gathered through interviews and focus groups with IT related personnel to gain insights into the existing security vulnerabilities and concerns. Additionally, quantitative data have been collected to assess the frequency and nature of cyber-attacks experienced by the Universities. The study used different tools including Eve-ng, AnyConnect, VMware workstation and Wireshark for network traffic analysis. In this project, a novel and practical model based on Virtual Private Network technology has been designed to reinforce the cyber security infrastructure of the University of Kigali. Secondly, the research findings shed light on the current cyber security landscape in the Rwandan university sector and provide valuable recommendations to other universities in the country to bolster their own security measures.

Keywords: *Virtual Private Network, cybersecurity, Network Access Control, Intrusion Detection System*

Nowadays, the world is rapidly evolving technologically where our society is getting more connected than have never been in the past. The education system is also improved so much as the results of technology.

Worldwide, because of the availability of general connection such as internet, majority of the higher learning institutions are wishing to give their students and staff members an opportunity to access centrally installed servers and database remotely. In specific way, educators or instructors wants to deliver and guide lab activities in distance. But, the utilization of internet augmented network security threats and challenges due to the big amount of data circulating on internet (Roy, Nag, Maitra & Bandyopadhyay, 2013).

The easiest way and quite decision of most organization is to put into practice Virtual Private Network for distant communication. However, there are many challenges that needs to be mitigated before its deployment. It is very necessary to know on how many strategies which

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can be adopted so that VPNs should be implemented and which one should be taken depending on the requirements. An IPSEC provide everlasting and permanent-on VPN access requirements (Chawla, Gupta & Sawhney, 2014).

Universities and educational institutions have become the main target for cyber-attacks and have already become affected by such problems. Educational institutions keep large quantity of important research, and valuable individual data, which make them an attractive target for cyber-attacks or incident, espionage and hacktivist (Ulven, Wangen 2021). Apart from that is the constant change of internet velocity which negatively impact communication and resources sharing. Often broadband fluctuate as the results of more users on wide home networks. Velocity decline may be caused by factors internal and external to the household. Internal factors consist of bandwidth severe applications choking a connection, old computing materials affecting stalls or majority people utilizing the internet concurrently making bottlenecks. External factors include the access ICT itself (e.g: cable) (chetty et al, 2011).

The Rwandan university sector, faces a growing challenge in effectively safeguarding its digital assets and sensitive information from the increasing cyber threats prevalent in today's interconnected world. Despite the existence of some security measures, the current cyber security infrastructure may not be sufficient to thwart sophisticated attacks, leaving the university's network vulnerable to data breaches, unauthorized access, and potential disruptions to academic and administrative operations.

As our case, currently University of Kigali is using Physical firewall which has many drawbacks such as Hardware firewalls handle egress traffic from the local network as safe, which is sometimes a threat if malware, such as a worm, penetrates your network and attempts to connect to the Internet and also hardware firewalls are more difficult to configure, especially for novices (Scheeres, 2006) and these misconfigurations can cause crucial network failures such as security violations which can lead to data loss or theft.

The lack of a comprehensive and tailored cyber security solution based on Virtual Private Network (VPN) technology further exacerbates the problem, making it imperative to address the inadequacies in cyber security measures to protect the university's digital ecosystem effectively. Therefore, the problem at hand revolves around the need to design and implement a robust model based on VPN technology to bolster cyber security in the Rwandan university sector, focusing on the specific case of the University of Kigali, and provide valuable insights and recommendations for other institutions facing similar threats.

The primary objective of this paper is to apply the Model based on Virtual Private Network as a way of enhancing Cyber Security in the Rwandan University sector; Case of University of Kigali. By implementation of such

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project there will be an enjoyable environment for Administrative staffs (non-academic staffs) because they will have some secured directories through which they receive order and they report their work with improved paperless system.

Literature review

Cybersecurity refers to the practice of protecting computer systems, networks, and digital information from unauthorized access, attacks, and damage. It involves implementing measures and protocols to ensure the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of data and resources in the digital domain (Jang-Jaccard & Nepal, 2014).

A Virtual Private Network (VPN) utilizes the internet, to enable secure communication where it adds a layer of security by encrypting the data flowing between companies and authenticating users to ensure that only authorized users can access that VPN connection (“MBA Knowledge base,” 2018b).

A tunnel could be created by peering two VPN routers together. Alternatively, telecommuters would typically have a VPN client on their PC, and would be dialing into, like, a VPN pool in their business environment VPN router at home. Because household VPN routers are now available, you may dial into your home and utilize the internet to connect to your home network via a secure channel. Then you have access, not only to any machines you have at home, but to the Internet, just as you would at home, out from that router (Ezra et al, 2022).

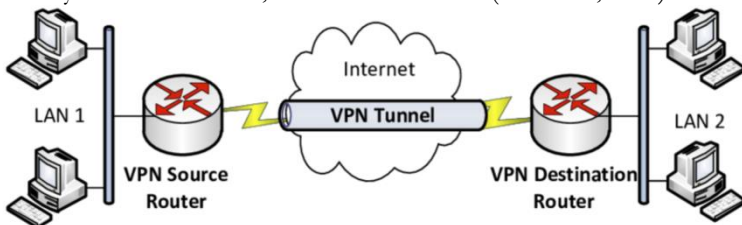


Figure 1 : VPN Tunneling structure (Salman, 2017)

IPSEC is the structure of open standard for a set of internet protocol (IP) in charge of protecting communication. It basically depends on existing algorithms to put into practice the encryption, authentication and main exchange (Singh, Chaba & Rani, 2007). Cisco was the main author in raising an idea of putting into practice IPSEC as a standard (or set of standards and technology) for remote access VPNs (Narayan et al 2016). According to Huang, Smith and Sun (2015) indicated AH is also known as IP protocol 51 and is put into practice when privacy is not asked or accepted. It gives authentication for as many of the IP header as possible, as well as for high level protocol data. However, some IP header field can deviate in the transit and the value of these field cannot be expected by

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the sender. Those values of the fields might be AH. Thus, the defense brought by AH is not partial in many situations.

Unlike AH, ESP not only ensures integrity of the data but also protects against malicious users from examining the contents by encrypting the IP datagrams with a key to cipher it in a way only peers can decipher (“MBA Knowledge base,” 2018b).

Internet security association and main management protocol (ISAKMP), protocol refers the process for authenticating a communicating group, starting and control of security association (SAs), main production techniques, and threats mitigation. It demonstrates the process and packets format to start, deal. Change and erase security association. It also explains payloads for exchanging main generation and authentication data. These formats give a consistent framework for changing main and authentication mechanism. ISAKMP typically uses internet main exchange for exchanging.

Focusing on the nowadays, situation at worldwide, regional and in our country context about Virtual Private Network as a way of enhancing Cyber Security in the Rwandan University sector; as It has clarified and debated by many researchers depending on statistics and statement. There is a gap on how it can affect learning outcome in higher institutions of learning. Because inadequate writing and researchers on this learning outcomes is facing many challenges which should be mitigated. In University of Kigali particularly, referring to the discussions the researcher had with the lab attendants, IT managers, Network administrators and other expert in virtual network. There is a gap on how prevent data attacks in institutions. According to these, since 2015-2020 Cyber Security in the Rwandan University sector can plays impact. After analyzing the literature review of other writers, scholars, authors and researchers from various part of the world, regional and at local level there is limited researches about Virtual Private Network and Cyber Security in the Rwandan University sector. Basing on above highlighted indicators few research were conducted about that. This is discovered as gap since information on the relevance on this. That is the reason why researcher was interested in investigating further this in higher institutions of learning.

Methodology

Descriptive research design was used to study significance effect of Model based on Virtual Private Network as a way of enhancing Cyber Security in the Rwandan University sector.

This research targeted 9 Lab attendants, 1 network administrator, 1 IT manager (Kigali campus), 5 HoDs, 3 from HR Department and 10 from Finance, means total study population was 29 respondents in this research.

Data has been collected using questionnaire and documentary review.

After gathering data from the field, the answer from questionnaire has been coded, edited, tabulated then after those data was entered in

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computer for analysis. Data was summarized, arranged according to the research objectives and questions. The data was processed and analyzed in frequencies, percentages, averages and standards deviations. The data was edited to prove the reliability. The numerical codes assigned to questionnaire responses allowed for a quantitative exploration of connections between different factors. Additionally, the study investigated the correlation between simulated network configurations and identified security vulnerabilities, providing valuable insights into the effectiveness of the implemented Virtual Private Network (VPN) model at the University of Kigali.

Results and Discussions

Table 1 : Techniques and technology used for Cyber Security at University of Kigali

Question	Frequency	Percentage
Have you experienced a cyber-attack or data leakage?		
a) Yes	10	34.48%
b) No	19	65.52%
What are the techniques used for Cyber Security at University of Kigali?		
a) Virtual Private Network	0	0.00%
b) Antivirus	25	86.21%
c) Access Control List	12	41.38%
d) Intrusion detection system	15	51.72%
e) Intrusion prevention system	11	37.93%
f) Firewall	23	79.31%
Do you have Virtual Private Network configured in your network environment?		
a) Yes	0	0.00%
b) No	29	100.00%

Source: Primary data, 2023

The findings reveal that 34.48% of respondents have experienced a cyber-attack or data leakage, while the majority (65.52%) have not encountered such incidents. This indicates that a significant portion of the respondents have had first-hand experience with cybersecurity threats.

The survey indicates that a substantial proportion of respondents are utilizing various cybersecurity techniques at the University of Kigali. Antivirus software is the most widely used technique (86.21%), followed by firewalls (79.31%). None of the respondents highlighted the use of virtual private networks as a security measure adopted at UoK. The relatively lower adoption rates of intrusion prevention systems (37.93%) and access control lists (41.38%) suggest potential areas for improvement in these specific security measures.

Interestingly, none of the respondents indicated having a Virtual Private Network (VPN) configured on their routers. This could potentially reflect a gap in awareness or understanding of VPN technology among the respondents, highlighting an area that may require further attention and education.

Interpretation and discussion

The analysis of the responses regarding the techniques and technology used for cyber security at the University of Kigali provides valuable insights into the current state of the university's cybersecurity practices.

Usage of Various Techniques: The findings indicate that the University of Kigali employs a diverse range of techniques to safeguard its digital infrastructure. Notably, antivirus software (86.21%) and firewalls (79.31%) are the most widely adopted measures. This suggests that traditional security tools are prevalent and form the foundation of the university's defense against cyber threats.

Opportunities for Improvement: While techniques such as antivirus and firewalls are widely embraced, the adoption rates for other measures such as intrusion prevention systems (37.93%) and access control lists (41.38%) are comparatively lower. This highlights potential areas for improvement and indicates that there might be untapped potential in enhancing these specific cybersecurity aspects.

Potential Impact of VPN: The presence of virtual private networks (VPNs) within the university's cybersecurity strategy (58.62%) suggests an understanding of the need to secure communication and data transmission. However, it's worth noting that none of the respondents had VPNs configured on their routers. This signals an opportunity for education and implementation, as VPNs can significantly contribute to data encryption and secure remote access.

Description of the proposed system

The increasing reliance on digital infrastructure in educational institutions, coupled with the growing threat landscape of cyberattacks, has underscored the need for robust cybersecurity measures. Recognizing these challenges, our research aims to develop a holistic VPN-based model that addresses the specific needs of the University of Kigali's network infrastructure. By implementing secure site-to-site communication and controlled remote access, we intend to fortify the university's network against potential breaches, while ensuring authorized personnel can access resources efficiently.

System Requirements Analysis: In this section, the researcher conducted a thorough analysis of the requirements for the proposed VPN-based cybersecurity model within the University of Kigali context. The successful implementation of secure site-to-site communication and controlled remote access hinges on a comprehensive understanding of the technical, functional, and non-functional requirements.

Technical Requirements: The technical requirements outline the specifications and technical aspects necessary to ensure the successful deployment and functioning of the VPN framework.

Network Infrastructure: The existing network infrastructure of the University of Kigali must be assessed to determine its compatibility with

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the VPN solutions. This includes evaluating the networking equipment/devices, bandwidth availability, and network topology.

VPN Protocols: Selection of appropriate VPN protocols, such as WebVPN, IPsec, or SSL/TLS, must be based on factors like security, compatibility, and performance.

Encryption and Authentication: The encryption algorithms and authentication mechanisms employed must adhere to industry standards for ensuring data confidentiality and user access control.

Functional Requirements: The functional requirements define the specific functionalities that the VPN solutions must offer to meet the objectives of the research.

Site-to-Site Communication: The site-to-site VPN should enable seamless and secure communication between different campuses of the University of Kigali. It must ensure data integrity, encryption, and minimal latency.

Remote Access: The remote access VPN should provide authorized personnel with the ability to connect to the university's network from remote locations. This requires user authentication, role-based access control, and secure connectivity.

Non-Functional Requirements: The non-functional requirements encompass the qualities and characteristics that define the performance and usability of the VPN solutions.

Security: The VPN solutions must offer a high level of security, safeguarding data against unauthorized access, eavesdropping, and other cyber threats.

Scalability: The architecture should be designed to accommodate potential growth in the number of users, devices, and campuses over time.

Performance: The VPN framework should minimize latency and provide satisfactory network performance, even during peak usage periods.

Usability: The solutions should be user-friendly, allowing authorized users to establish connections with ease and efficiency.

Compatibility: The VPN solutions should be compatible with a variety of devices, operating systems, and networking technologies.

This analysis of the technical, functional, and non-functional requirements forms the foundation for the subsequent phases of system design and implementation. A clear understanding of these requirements ensures that the developed VPN solutions align closely with the intended goals of enhancing cybersecurity and network accessibility within the University of Kigali's context.

System Design

In this section, the researcher presents the detailed designs of the site-to-site and remote access VPN solutions. Visual aids, including diagrams and flowcharts, are incorporated to enhance the understanding of the architectural concepts and processes involved.

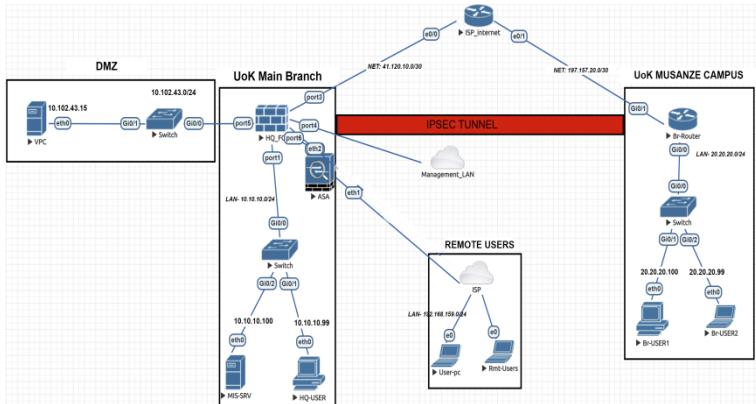


Figure 2: VPN-Based model Network Architecture Diagram

Site-to-Site VPN Design: The site-to-site VPN design focuses on establishing secure communication tunnel between University of Kigali campuses, ensuring confidentiality and data integrity throughout the exchange. The following components are integral to this design:

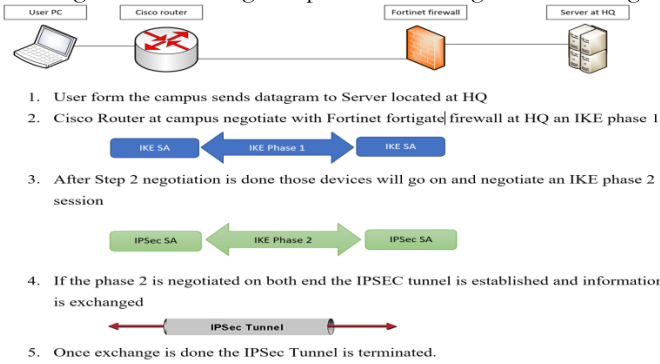


Figure 3: UoK's Site to Site VPN architecture (Source: Own drawing)

Remote Access VPN Design: The remote access VPN design focuses on providing authorized personnel with secure remote connectivity to peripheral network devices. Key design elements are as follows:

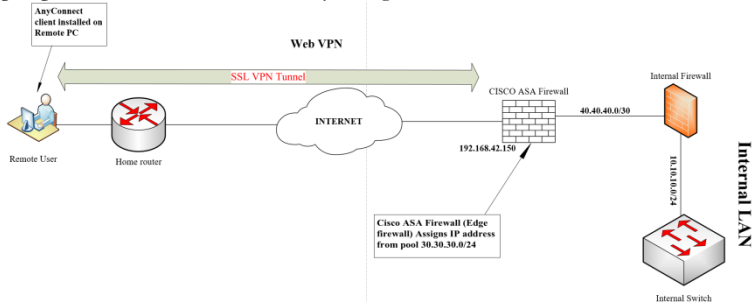


Figure 4: UoK's Remote access VPN architecture (Source: Own drawing)

System Implementation

In this section, the researcher delves into the practical implementation of the designed VPN solutions: the site-to-site VPN for secure inter-campus communication and the remote access VPN for authorized personnel. The researcher provides step-by-step details of the implementation process, tools used, and challenges encountered.

1 Site-to-Site VPN Implementation: The implementation of the site-to-site VPN involves several technical steps to ensure secure communication between University of Kigali campuses. The process can be broken down as follows:

Step 1: Hardware and Software Setup: For the hardware and software setup of the site-to-site VPN, we utilized VMWare workstation pro and EVE-NG to allow us to install network devices and other peripherals. Fortinet fortigate firewall used as VPN gateways for each campus. was chosen for its compatibility with IPsec protocol and robust security features. The following steps were taken: Provisioned fortigate firewall at Main campus and cisco router at Musanze campus, each with sufficient resources, on-campus networks, and Internet connectivity; Configured network interfaces and firewall rules to allow incoming and outgoing VPN traffic.

Step 2: VPN Configuration and Authentication Setup: The configuration of the site-to-site VPN involved setting up the IPsec tunnel between the two campuses. The configuration files for CISCO AnyConnect were edited to define the tunnel parameters: Created IPsec configuration files on both VPN gateways, specifying encryption algorithms, authentication methods, and phase 1 and phase 2 settings.

Step 3: Testing and Verification: Testing was essential to ensure the site-to-site VPN was functional and secure: Initiated the VPN connection from both campuses and monitored the logs for successful establishment. Sent test traffic between campuses and verified its encryption using Wireshark tool; Addressed any connectivity issues or misconfigurations to ensure seamless communication.

Remote Access VPN Implementation

Implementing the remote access VPN solution requires careful configuration to allow authorized personnel secure access to network devices. The implementation process can be outlined as follows:

Step 1: VPN Setup: Setting up the remote access VPN server required configuring a WebVPN on edge firewall: Installed Cisco ASA firewall at the edge of main campus as the gateway for remote VPN users; Configured WebVPN on ASA Firewall and allow Anyconnect to enable remote users to connect to the VPN using their AnyConnect; Configure an IPSec tunnel and a pool of IPs that will be assigned to the remote users once they are connect to our network

Step 2: User Authentication Configuration: Configuring user authentication involved creating user accounts and configuring Firewall to

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authenticate them: Created user accounts for authorized personnel in the CISCO ASA firewall as authentication database; Configured Web VPN to use username and password authentication for remote access.

Step 3: Access Control Policies: Defining access control policies ensured that users had appropriate access to network resources: Defined access control policies based on user roles, allowing different levels of access to network segments and devices; Configured Anyconnect to push routes and DNS settings to connected clients based on their access rights.

Step 4: Client Configuration: Configuring the VPN client software for authorized users was critical for successful remote access: Provided authorized users with AnyConnect client software and configuration files and their credentials; Instructed users on how to initiate the VPN connection.

Step 5: Testing and Validation: Thorough testing was conducted to ensure the remote access VPN solution met the desired security and accessibility goals: Authenticated users tested the remote access connection from various external networks; Verified that they are Connected to remote VPN and being assigned with new IP address.

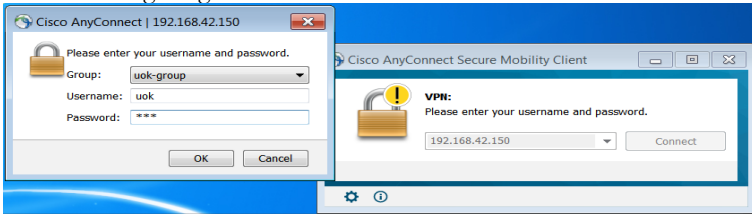


Figure 5: Authorized User logging in with his credentials

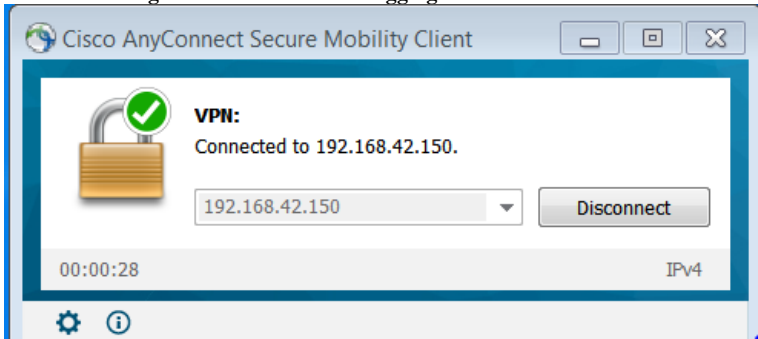


Figure 6: User connected to University's VPN

```
ciscoasa# sh vpn-sessiondb anyconnect

Session Type: AnyConnect

Username      : uok                      Index      : 1
Assigned IP   : 10.30.30.1             Public IP   : 192.168.42.153
Protocol      : AnyConnect-Parent SSL-Tunnel
License       : AnyConnect Essentials
Encryption    : AES128                 Hashing     : none SHA1
Bytes Tx      : 10504                  Bytes Rx    : 33649
Group Policy  : uok-policy             Tunnel Group : uok-group
Login Time    : 18:09:09 UTC Mon Sep 18 2023
Duration      : 0h:07m:31s
Inactivity    : 0h:00m:00s
NAC Result    : Unknown
VLAN Mapping  : N/A                    VLAN        : none
```

Figure 7:New IP address is assigned to the connected user

Testing: With both the site-to-site and remote access VPN solutions successfully implemented, the next crucial step involved their seamless integration into the existing network architecture of the University of Kigali. This integration ensured that the VPN solutions functioned harmoniously with the pre-existing infrastructure, promoting efficient data flow and maintaining network security.

The integration process encompassed the following key aspects: Network Segmentation: We designed the network architecture to create distinct segments for campus-to-campus communication, remote access connections, and the DMZ. This ensured that traffic destined for specific purposes was efficiently routed.

Access Control Policies: Access control policies were extended to encompass the newly implemented VPN solutions. These policies defined which users had access to different network segments and resources, ensuring that security measures remained consistent across the entire network.

Traffic Routing: Routing tables were updated to include routes to the remote campuses through the site-to-site VPN tunnel. This allowed seamless and encrypted communication between different campus networks.

Network Configuration: Adjusted the routing tables and firewall settings to accommodate the VPN tunnels while maintaining the overall network security posture.

DMZ Setup: Resources that are needed by the users from outside was placed in DMZ apart from internal LAN as an extra layer of security for mitigating potential security risks.

Segmentation and Zones: Segregated network segments based on security zones, with clear demarcation between internal campus networks and the external-facing DMZ. This aided in enforcing access control policies.

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Comprehensive Testing: Comprehensive testing was a crucial phase to ascertain the effectiveness, security, and reliability of the integrated VPN solutions. Rigorous testing scenarios were designed and executed to evaluate various aspects of the VPN framework:

Security Testing: Rigorous penetration testing was conducted to identify vulnerabilities and potential attack vectors. The results were analyzed, and necessary security enhancements were implemented to fortify the network against potential threats.

Results of packet captured by Wireshark showed that information being sent and the protocol that is being used is ESP (Encapsulation security Payload) which means that in case of Man in the middle attack, the attacker can have a clue of what is being done.

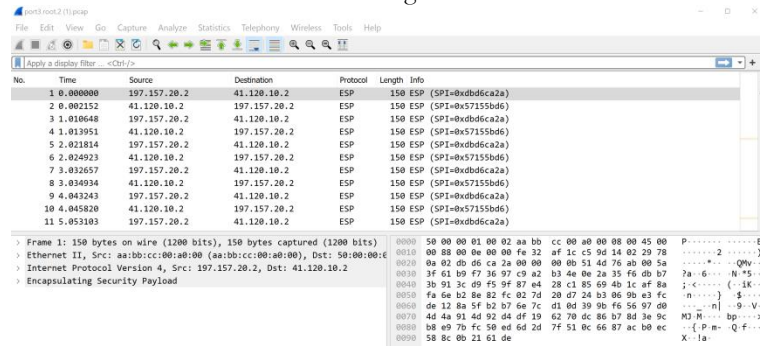


Figure 8: Ping sent to Devices that are internal at HQ

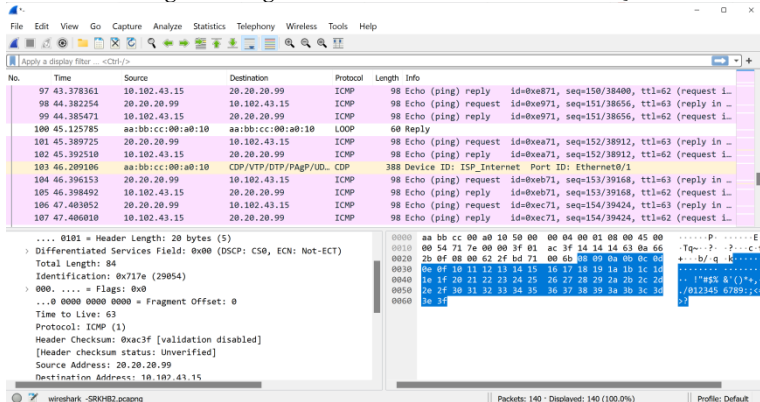


Figure 9: Ping sent to Devices that are in DMZ which is less secured

Performance Benchmarking: Network performance metrics, such as latency, throughput, and packet loss, were measured under varying loads and usage patterns. The VPN solutions were evaluated against predefined performance benchmarks to ensure that they met the desired standards.

User Acceptance Testing: A subset of authorized users participated in user acceptance testing to validate the ease of use and functionality of the

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remote access VPN. Feedback was gathered to fine-tune the user experience.

Failover and Redundancy Testing: Failover scenarios were simulated to evaluate the resiliency of the VPN solutions. This included testing the automatic re-establishment of VPN tunnels in case of connectivity disruptions.

Compatibility Testing: Compatibility with various devices and operating systems was tested to ensure that users could connect using different devices.

System Analysis and Evaluation

In this section, the researcher analyzes and evaluates the implemented VPN solutions in terms of their effectiveness, impact on cybersecurity, and alignment with the research objectives. The findings from this analysis shed light on the relevance and significance of the VPN framework in bolstering cybersecurity within the University of Kigali.

Security Analysis

Site-to-Site VPN Security: The site-to-site VPN implementation showcased a high level of security through the use of strong encryption and authentication mechanisms. The SHA certificate and PSK ensured mutual authentication between campuses, preventing unauthorized access to the VPN tunnels. Comprehensive security testing confirmed the resistance of the solution to common cyber threats, making it an effective shield against data breaches.

Remote Access VPN Security: The remote access VPN demonstrated a robust security posture by enforcing user authentication and role-based access control. User credentials were transmitted securely, and the VPN client maintained a high level of security while establishing connections from external networks. Vulnerability assessments and penetration tests confirmed the solution's resilience against potential attacks.

Accessibility and Usability Evaluation

Seamless Site-to-Site Communication: The site-to-site VPN facilitated seamless and encrypted communication between University of Kigali campuses. Users experienced minimal latency when accessing resources hosted on different campuses, enhancing collaboration and resource sharing.

Efficient Remote Access: Authorized personnel reported efficient and secure remote access to network devices within the university's perimeter. The user-friendly Anyconnect client interface streamlined the connection process, enabling users to establish connections with ease.

Performance Assessment

Site-to-Site VPN Performance: Performance benchmarks revealed that the site-to-site VPN maintained consistent throughput and low latency, even during peak usage hours. This indicated that the encrypted communication between campuses did not significantly impact network performance.

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Remote Access VPN Performance: The remote access VPN exhibited excellent performance, providing rapid connectivity to authorized users. Load testing validated the solution's ability to handle multiple simultaneous connections without compromising performance.

Relevance and Significance

The VPN framework's relevance and significance were evaluated based on its alignment with the research objectives and its potential to enhance cybersecurity within the University of Kigali.

Addressing Research Objectives: The site-to-site VPN successfully established secured inter-campus communication, fostering collaboration and resource sharing. The remote access VPN granted authorized personnel controlled access to network devices, strengthening access control measures.

Contribution to Cybersecurity: The implemented VPN solutions significantly fortified the university's cybersecurity posture. Secure data transmission, user authentication, and access control collectively reduced the risk of unauthorized access and data breaches.

Alignment with University Needs: The VPN framework's alignment with the specific needs of the University of Kigali was evident through its seamless integration into the existing network infrastructure. The solutions catered to the university's objectives of enhancing network security and accessibility.

The analysis and evaluation of the implemented VPN solutions affirm their effectiveness in enhancing cybersecurity within the University of Kigali. The robust security measures, efficient communication channels, and successful integration validate the model's relevance and potential for broader implementation within the Rwandan university sector.

Conclusion

The journey undertaken in this research project has illuminated the paramount importance of cybersecurity within the Rwandan university sector, with a particular focus on the University of Kigali. As the digital landscape continues to evolve, educational institutions must remain vigilant in safeguarding their sensitive data and network resources against an increasingly sophisticated array of cyber threats. Through the lens of a VPN-based model, this study has ventured into the heart of this challenge, weaving together a tapestry of analysis, design, implementation, and evaluation.

The implementation of site-to-site and remote access VPN solutions has yielded tangible achievements. The establishment of secure communication channels between campuses has fostered collaboration, resource sharing, and efficient data exchange. Simultaneously, the controlled remote access framework has empowered authorized personnel with the ability to connect to critical network devices without compromising security. These accomplishments transcend the confines of

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technology; they lay the foundation for an environment where innovation and education can thrive, unencumbered by the specter of cyber threats. This research has stood steadfastly aligned with its objectives. The development of a VPN framework has not only addressed the needs of the University of Kigali but has also laid the groundwork for a model that can be extrapolated to other Rwandan higher education institutions. Through meticulous analysis, it is evident that the VPN model has addressed security concerns, enhanced network accessibility, and exhibited a symbiotic relationship with the existing infrastructure.

Recommendations

In light of the comprehensive research undertaken in this study, certain recommendations emerge to guide future endeavors and enhance the cybersecurity landscape within the Rwandan university sector:

Continuous Monitoring and Security Updates: As technology and cyber threats evolve, it is imperative for the University of Kigali and other educational institutions to adopt a proactive stance in cybersecurity. Regular monitoring of network traffic, vulnerability assessments, and timely security updates should become integral to the operational processes. This practice will ensure that security measures remain current and effective in mitigating emerging threats.

Employee Training and Awareness: A strong cybersecurity posture is fortified not only by technological solutions but also by a well-informed human element. Investing in cybersecurity training and awareness programs for faculty, staff, and students is paramount. Educating users about best practices, recognizing phishing attempts, and fostering a culture of cybersecurity consciousness can significantly reduce the risk of social engineering attacks.

Adoption of Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA): To enhance user authentication mechanisms and reduce the risk of unauthorized access, the adoption of multi-factor authentication (MFA) is recommended. Implementing MFA for remote access and critical systems adds an extra layer of security by requiring users to provide multiple forms of verification before gaining access. This approach considerably strengthens access control and prevents unauthorized entry even if credentials are compromised.

Future Directions for Research and Practice: Moving forward, there are several future directions for research and practice in evidence-based teacher management: To further advance the field, future research could explore the integration of advanced intrusion detection systems with the VPN framework to enhance threat detection and incident response capabilities. Additionally, investigating the impact of VPN solutions on network performance under varying load conditions could yield valuable insights.

While the current research focused on the University of Kigali, there are opportunities for broader implementation and exploration. Future studies

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could delve into scaling the VPN framework to accommodate larger university networks and evaluating its performance in diverse academic environments.

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WRITING AS A METAPHOR FOR SURVIVAL: LOOKING AT
PAKISTANI WOMEN WRITERS' SHORT STORIES
THROUGH THE PERSPECTIVE OF ECRITURE FEMININE

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Abstract

This research paper explores the representation of "Ecriture Feminine" in Rakhsbanda Jalil's "Neither Night nor Day". Ecriture feminine is a French feminist theorist movement which means "Feminist writing". This concept attempts to challenge the patriarchal language and structures that are prevalent in society. This paper also delves into the origin, historical context, and literary background of Ecriture feminine. While also throwing light upon the famous philosophers who are also considered the "mothers of post-structuralist feminist theory", namely, Helene Cixous, Luce Irigaray, and Julia Kristeva. Through the detailed analysis of the thirteen stories provided in this book and by exploring its major female characters, one can acquire a nuanced understanding of how Jalil employs ecriture feminine to articulate women's identity, experiences, and resistances within a postcolonial context.

Keywords: *karo -kari tradition, rape, abduction, ecriture feminine, female oppression, partition.*

Ecriture Feminine is a term originally coined by Helene Cixous in her famous essay "The Laugh of Medusa" written in 1975. This term is associated with feminism. Helene Cixous is a philosopher, French writer, and playwright born in 1937. Earlier, the women writers considered language as male-oriented and they wished to have a form of language that was free from biases or in some way oriented towards females. Therefore, Cixous propounded the existence of ecriture feminine. This is a form of writing that allowed women to express themselves freely. In psychoanalysis, ecriture feminine throws light upon the ways or methods through which humans can comprehend their social roles. It explains how women may be positioned as 'other' in a masculine symbolic order. It emphasises how women reaffirm their understanding of the world by engaging with their own otherness, both within and outside their own minds, or consciousness. Commenting upon the source of ecriture feminine, Helene Cixous says that it has its source in the mother, in the stage of the mother-child relation before the child acquires the male-centered verbal language. Helene Cixous says, "Ecriture Feminine places experience before language, and privileges non-linear, cyclical writing that evades "the discourse that regulates the phallogocentric system".

This concept refers to a unique way of feminine writing that is characterized by breaks, pauses, or gaps in the text and also the use of strange images.

Emily Dickinson's poetry is a perfect example that beautifully displays the use of *écriture féminine*. Other French writers have also commented on the concept of *écriture féminine*, for example, Luce Irigaray is a Belgian-born French feminist, philosopher, linguist, psychoanalyst, and cultural theorist. She examined the uses and misuses of the language about women. According to Irigaray, women's writing draws upon the diversity, fluidity, and multiple possibilities inherent in the structure and the functions of female sexual experiences. The second example is of Julia Kristeva, who is a Bulgarian-French philosopher, literary critic, semiotician, psychoanalyst, and feminist writer. According to her, *écriture féminine* behaves like the semiotic, disrupts the symbolic, and threatens to unleash chaos where there is order. While masculine language represents the symbolic. i.e. it is linear, authoritative, and realistic. There are some other works of contemporary writers such as Helene Cixous herself, and others like Marguerite Duras and Monique Wittig, that provide rich exemplification of how feminine writing can challenge and subvert traditional literary forms. These authors often use fragmented narratives, poetic language and an emphasis on the sensational and emotional experiences of their characters, creating texts that resonate with the rules and regulations of *écriture féminine*.

The writers in this anthology are mostly females and they belong to Pakistan. For example, Bina Shah is a significant Pakistani writer, journalist, and also a feminist. Her works often attempt to explore the issues faced by women and it also provides a nuanced understanding of the South Asian culture. Soniah Kamal is a Pakistani–American writer whose full name is Soniah Naheed Kamal. Kamal's career peaked after her thesis "On Prince Charmings", "Frogs", and "Love Marriages and Arranged Ones" was awarded the 1996 Susan Irene Roberts Prize. After this, she gained a lot of popularity and her works were published in Pakistan, Canada, India, and the US. Nikhat Hasan is also one of the prominent Pakistani writers who was born in Buland Shehr, U.P. The beginning of her career was marked at the start of the year 1960. She lives in Karachi. Hasan translated the story, "The Tongue" from Urdu by Baidar Bakht and Kathleen Grant Jaeger. Nayyara Rahman is a Pakistani poet, writer, and business student in Karachi. "Clay Fissures" is one of the famous work of Nayyara Rahman which was among one of the five winning entries in a national competition organized by the British Council, Pakistan.

Sorayya Khan is also a well-known Pakistani writer. She is also the author of "Noor" (2003) and the forthcoming "Five Queen's Road". Sorayya Khan has also won prestigious awards like the Fulbright Award and the Malahat Review Novella Prize. Muneza Shamsie holds an important position in the field and Pakistani literature and she is also regarded in the list of the prominent writers in Pakistan. She was born in Lahore and she got her education from England. She is also writing a book on Pakistani Literature. Maniza Naqvi is a writer from Pakistan who was born in the year 1960. She

is the author of three novels, “Mass Transit”, “On Air”, and “Stay with Me”. She is working on her fourth novel. Khaleda Hussain is also one of the important writers of Pakistan. She began writing fiction in 1963 under her maiden name. Sehba Sarwar grew up in Karachi, Pakistan, and has published essays, short stories, and poems in magazines in Pakistan, India, the US, and Canada. She has also received a graduation degree in public affairs.

Rakhshanda Jalil is an Indian writer, critic, multi-award-winning translator and also a literary historian. She was born on 20th July 1963. In 1986, she graduated from Miranda House, Delhi University. Jalil’s doctoral thesis on the Progressive Writers’ Movement, as reflected in Urdu literature, was published by Oxford University Press under the title “Liking Progress, Loving Change” in 2014. This publication is considered useful in providing critical insights into the methods by which the Progressive Writers’ Movement shaped the Urdu literature and its socio-political discourse. She was born into a family with profound appreciation of literature and arts, which greatly influenced her academic trajectory. Due to the literary environment in which she was raised, she was constantly exposed to the works of classical and contemporary Urdu writers, instilling in her a lifelong passion for the language and its literary traditions. Jalil runs an organization named Hindustani Awaaz, which is dedicated to the popularization of Hindi-Urdu literature and culture. She began her career as a lecturer in the Khalsa College. Later in her life, she taught English at the universities of Delhi and Aligarh. Beyond her academic accomplishments, Jalil has made significant contributions as a writer and translator, she has published over 25 books and written over 50 academic papers and essays. She has also translated a collection of Premchand’s short stories titled as “The Temple and the Mosque”. She translated a collection of satirical writings in Hindi by Asghar Wajahat. One of her famous works include, “Invisible City: The hidden monuments of Delhi”, which attempts to throw light into the lesser-known historical and cultural landmarks of Delhi. Jalil’s work in the realm of Feminist Literature is also marked by her commitment to exploring the intersections of culture, gender, and power. One of her significant contributions to feminist literature is her anthology, “Neither Night nor Day”, which presents 13 stories by different Pakistani women writers and was also shortlisted for the Commonwealth Writers’ Prize in 2008. In many interviews and articles, Jalil describes that in this book her main concern or goal was to present a complete picture of the everydayness of life as it is lived and experienced by Pakistani women. Almost all the writers chosen here by Jalil live in Pakistan and others who live or work abroad have maintained close links with their country. By making use of this approach, Jalil is not only successful in showcasing the talents of Pakistani writers but also contributes to a nuanced understanding of their social and cultural milieu. A book such as this, will eventually meet and requirements and interests of a wide variety of readers, for example, individuals engaged in

women's studies in South Asia literature, as well as people from the South Asian diaspora who look upon the literature from this part of the world as a part of their cultural heritage but use English as their effective first language. Violence in the Name of Tradition and its Impact on Women Bina Shah's 'The Wedding of Sundri': 'The Wedding of Sundri' is a work by Bina Shah that successfully captures the social and cultural elements of a traditional South Asian society. This is an enthralling short story that explores the theme of gender, autonomy, tradition and the representation of female bodies as a symbol of tradition through the lens of *Écriture féminine*. The protagonist or the major female character in the story is Sundri, a young Pakistani girl of 12 years who is married to Ghulam Farid, who was a 23-year-old man working as a sharecropper in the nearby Zamindar's fields. This story presents a picture before the readers of how a woman is miserably caught between the expectations of her conservative society and her wishes and desires. The perfect example of female solidarity and complicity is the character of Sebhagi, the mother of Sundri because the interactions between Sundri and Sebhagi reflect the dual nature of her mother. Her mother on the one hand, is acting as the enforcer of tradition and on the other hand she is also sympathetic towards her daughter. "Allah have mercy, Allah have mercy, Sebhagi said under her breath." (Neither Night Nor Day, 2007:141). Here, the readers can sense that Sebhagi is scared for her daughter Sundri and seeks mercy from the Almighty.

Unfortunately, Sundri is killed on the very next day of her marriage and she is declared a Kari. There is a tradition in Pakistan which is locally known as the 'karo-kari tradition', which refers to honor killings of females which are believed to bring dishonor to the family's reputation, and the death of the victim is viewed as a method to restore the reputation and honor of the family. According to research, around 1000 women are murdered every year in the name of honor killing. The protagonist was believed to bring dishonour to family because she used to play with the boys in the village and she laughed freely. "It was one of the women in your village. She was here for the wedding. She spoke to my uncle. She said that the girl used to play with the boys in the village. The girl was shameless, the woman said. She would laugh in front of them and walk in front of them and make them go mad with lust for her". (Neither Night Nor Day, 2007: 151).

These lines from the book highlight the female oppression and patriarchy in society and how a female is only depicted as a symbol of tradition and nothing beyond it. The restrictions imposed on Sundri by society and her arranged marriage are also symbolic of the broader societal expectations placed on females to restrict themselves to their predetermined roles.

Soniah Kamal's 'The Breast': While examining the major themes of this story through the lens of *Écriture féminine*, this story attempts to explore the complicated emotions revolving around womanhood, motherhood, and the female body. One of the major themes of this story is embodiment and

physicality, highlighting one of the major principles of *Ecriture Feminine* which includes the importance of body in women's writing. "The breast is a gigantic wad of fat. Getting rid of one, seven. Seven pounds of shapeless fat sliced off painlessly, while I lie on a table surrounded by people who care for me, who have been paid to care for me". (Neither Night Nor Day, 2007:69). These lines highlight the protagonist's deep relationship with her body and also reflect the physical experience of the protagonist which also focuses on the breast as a symbol of femininity and sexuality. This story by Kamal perfectly aligns with Cixous's call for women to write through their bodies, challenging the silence imposed on them by this patriarchal society. At the end of the story, one of the breasts of the protagonist is butchered in the name of punishment. The main theme of this story is female infanticide, a practice that is deeply rooted in our country. This highlights how the people in society prefer a male child over a female child. This theme highlights the deep-rooted system which devalues the female sex since birth or even before that. "I have seen the pleasure when a boy is announced, and I have seen the disappointment and pain, although they try to hide it when a mother hands over the baby girl and says, as the custom goes- Take her, bury her". (Neither Night nor Day, 2007:70). Kamal uses simple language in her works, though the issue that she tackles are very complex. This story is an act of resistance and a medium of awareness about gender-based violence and challenges. This story also emphasizes the role of literature and arts in advocating for social change.

Sehba Sarwar's 'A Sandstone Past': This story by Sarwar has a gothic element in it. The story revolves around three female young characters i.e. Huma, her sister, and her sister's best friend Rovina. They went to a birthday party in Safia Leghari's house who is in Huma's class. And there they came to know about the ghost and about the past of that house.

While taking permission from their mother, the readers become aware of the rules that are imposed on females by the society itself. "No one should be out that late, especially not young girls like you. She clicked her tongue again." (Neither Night Nor Day, 2007: 125). Here, one can say that in the conditioning of the female gender, the guardians are very careful and the females are made aware that they are not safe. Later, in the story, readers came to know about the love story of Uncle Farid and Sarita. It was an inter-religious marriage, as Uncle Farid was Muslim and Sarita was a Hindu woman. Some people say that the older brother of Uncle Farid had planned the murder of Sarita because he knew about this marriage and he was against it. "It's said that the spirit of Sarita still roams in this house searching for her uncle. He's old, you know, and lives in London. I've seen him only once." (Neither Night Nor Day, 2007:131).

Here, the readers can easily differentiate between the treatment given to two different genders i.e. male and female. Both Uncle Farid and Sarita wanted to get married but the repercussions of this marriage were only faced by the

female character i.e. Sarita. The patriarchal structures always try to dominate the women in these situations because they consider them weak. In this narrative, there is this unique technique that a character present in this story narrates another story. This technique is called frame narrative or sandwich narrative. So here, storytelling becomes a crucial tool for empowerment in *écriture féminine*. This narrative becomes a means of healing, self-discovery, and challenging the past that has shaped the past of the female character Sarita.

Targeted Suffering: The Plight of Women During the Partition of 1947 and Ghadar of 1857 Sorayya Khan's "Five queen's Street": This story revolves around the horrors of partition in the year 1947. It highlights the incident of abducting a Hindu women named Janoo, the wife of Dina Lal. This highlights the suffering of the females during difficult times. "Like you? Javaid inquired. Muslims. They've come to take Hindu girls away, idiot!" (*Neither Night Nor Day*, 2007:82). In this narrative, both the struggles of the character Janoo and the resilient spirit of Rubina are highlighted. The wishes, actions, and interactions of Rubina with other characters reflect her resistance against the limitations imposed on the females by the society which perfectly resonates with the concept of *Ecriture féminine*, as it celebrates such acts of defiance and the expression of female subjectivity. On the contrary, the actions of Javaid in the story reflect the patriarchal norms that *Ecriture féminine* critiques. His words often reflected the expectations of the society that saw women as a vessel for tradition, but his eyes betrayed a longing for change. While examining the narrative style, one can see that Sorayya Khan has employed a lyrical and evocative prose style which helps to convey the emotional depths and complexity of the character's experience. This story is structured in a method that intertwines personal anecdotes with historical events. This multi-layered technique provides a rich, textured understanding of how society makes women their target even in such crucial times.

Muneeza Shamsie's "That Heathen Air": This story highlights the cruelties of British rule on the people of India and particularly on women. It tells how women are targeted in times of war. It highlights the greatest war of the 19th century, i.e. the Ghadar of 1857. As the historians say that this war covered more than 20 cities, which were considered the major centres of production in the colonial India. Muneeza Shamsie wants the readers to pay attention to the atrocities of British. As this story unfolds, the protagonist, namely, Princess Gohar Taj tells that the Britishers had murdered the men of her family brutally and also raped the women. "They had raped the women too, or given them to their Indian allies as slaves or booty". (*Neither Night Nor Day*, 2007: 177). This story also highlights the treatment which is given to Princess Gohar Taj by her husband and how he does not validate her emotions and feelings. He rather looks down upon her when she cries due the separation of her young children who are being sent to England for

studies at a very young age. “No Englishwomen, he believed, would disgrace herself with such a vulgar display of emotion.” (Neither Night Nor Day, 2007:183). Here, he fails to understand the motherly affection of a woman which is the most beautiful part of being a female and he even thinks that it is a disgrace to behave like this. He even compares his wife to the Englishwomen whom he considers to be superior. Though the emotions of the protagonist are ignored highlighting the themes of power and gender dynamics. This narrative reflects the struggle and strengths of females within their social and cultural context, while also uncovering the layers of meaning related to women’s struggle, resistance, and identities. The title of this story is itself symbolic of the protagonist’s perceived otherness and exoticization of her identity. The term “heathen” as used by Shamsie underscores the religious and cultural tensions that evade the story, throwing light on the protagonist’s struggle for acceptance. Shamsie’s prose is also evocative and rich in imagery, showcasing the nuances of the protagonist’s internal world and the external environment.

‘Marriage’ and ‘Home’: Barriers and transformations in Women’s life
Nayyara Rahman’s ‘The Job Application’: This story revolves around the protagonist of the story, Farzana Ansari, and her struggle to get a job at Z.L. and Company. It reflects the imbalance between her personal and professional identity, exploring how societal norms impact the female identity. “She is a widow, Safdar Sahab. You know how difficult things are for such women. Especially in our society.” (Neither Night Nor Day, 2007:116). Shermain Khan, the manager of the company, speaks these lines. These lines tell us that Shermain herself being a woman is not able to understand how much this job had in Farzana Ansari’s life. She has a stereotypical mindset due to which she imposes prejudices that seek to limit her potential. “When you’re a widow living alone with your five-year-old, there are lots of arrangements to make.” (Neither Night Nor Day, 2007:103). The protagonist of the story is herself aware of her duties of motherhood and she is bold enough to fulfil them and also have a balanced professional life. Here, she embodies the themes of power, identity, and resistance. She also sets an example that a female also has the intellectual capabilities to enter in the corporate world if she wants to and she is not inferior in any way. Overall, this story by Rahman is a beautiful exploration of power dynamics, female identity, and resistance within a patriarchal structure. The journey of Farzana Ansari highlights the broader feminist themes, celebrating women’s resilience and agency in the face of systematic challenges.

Khaleda Hussain’s ‘Leaves’: This story by Hussain is translated from the Urdu by Baran Rehman. The prominent female character in this story is Rahela and as the story unfolds the readers are made aware of the encounters of Rahela with her school friends, namely, Malik and Syed Ameer Ali. Beside this, the title of this story resonates with the themes of it. The natural setting and its descriptions can be symbolic of the internal

thoughts of the female protagonist. This perfectly aligns with the principle of *écriture féminine* that often uses nature as a metaphor for women's experiences. There is a sense of insecurity in Rahela and also she is not confident enough about herself while having a conversation with Malik. Here, the writer has used a slightly different technique by highlighting the lines in italic to divert the attention of the readers into the psychic of this character.

“Unaccomplished, you never did accomplish anything.” (Neither Night Nor Day, 2007: 42). This narrative portrays a nuanced understanding of the themes such as female identity, isolation, and complexities a women faces while navigating through a patriarchal world.

Revolutionary Narratives: Women's Voices Driving Major Changes Nikhat Hasan's 'The Tongue': This story by Hasan is a powerful narrative delivering the journey of the female character, Sarah, the daughter of the guard. It reflects her progressing relationship with voice and self-expression. Though, Sarah resides in a land of dumb people she is very much expressive. Her facial features were full of expressions beyond belief defying the traditional belief that a female should always remain silent. “This girl, fourteen or fifteen years old, was talking non-stop despite not having a tongue. She came to the mound carrying lunch for her father, and after dumping the box on the ground, started babbling.” (Neither Night Nor Day, 2007:18). “Even without a tongue, she was chattering non-stop. Her eyes, nose, and ears were expressive beyond belief. Safian was both surprised and angry”. (Neither Night Nor Day, 2007:20). This story tells about the physical and metaphorical importance of the tongue, as an organ that helps to speak, a tool for communication and also as a symbol of autonomy and identity. If this narrative is seen through the lens of *Écriture féminine*, it is visible that it highlights the complex interplay between silence and voice. The protagonist's struggle to convey her feelings, thoughts, and ideas aligns with the broader experience of women whose voices have been historically marginalized or suppressed. Here, the body of Sarah, particularly her tongue, is a symbol of empowerment, vulnerability, and change. This story is a poignant commentary on the difficulties of women seeking to reclaim their narratives and assert their presence in a world that often seeks to silence them. This story by Nikhat Hasan reflects a deep engagement with the themes of power, identity, language, and the body. This narrative can be seen as an impeccable example which beautifully aligns with the principles of *Écriture féminine* and it also celebrates the complexities of women experiences and challenging the patriarchal structures. The use of tongue is a central motif in the story which allows for a rich exploration of how body and language intersect in the articulation of female identify and resistance.

Maniza Naqvi's 'A Brief Acquaintance': This narrative revolves around the life of Ron, who was in the army, and his interaction with the women he

meets in a café. The concept of femininity lays emphasis on the fluid as well as fragmented nature of identity, moving away from rigid patriarchal norms and structures prevalent in society. In this story, the fleeting and transient nature of Ron's encounters with other characters portrays this fluidity, while suggesting a continuous negotiation of identity and the ever-changing trait of human nature. It also portrays the tendency of human being to crave for love, connections, and sense of belongingness. "Endearing stories that were intended to seduce any listener-male or female wanting to protect him, wrap their arms around him, take him home, or at the very least smile to themselves and say Awwwww!" (Neither Night Nor Day, 2007: 90-91). By analyzing the female characters of the story, one can see the subversion of the male gaze because the women portrayed in this story are not merely objects of Ron's desire but are fully fleshed-out characters who have their own opinions and desires. This narrative can be seen as a revolutionary one which challenges the traditional literary conventions about women. The open-mindedness and ambiguity prevalent in the story reflect the cyclical and non-linear approach favored in *écriture féminine*.

Conclusion

This research paper provides a detailed analysis of the major characters and themes of the nine stories present in the anthology, "Neither Night nor Day" by Rakhshanda Jalil through the perspective of *Écriture féminine*. This anthology provides a poignant exploration of the multifaceted lives of the women in Pakistan and the Pakistani diaspora. The stories discussed in this research paper delve into the themes of identity, self-expression, and the socio-political realities that shape women's experiences. Each narrative discussed here, is unique in itself with different contexts and characters and also collectively weaves a tapestry of struggle, resilience, and hope. The main objective of the author, namely, Rakhshanda Jalil, was to present the conditions of the women during the time of partition in the year 1947. The information about their lives is provided by the women who are living in Pakistan. "My concern in this book has been to present as complete a picture of the everydayness of life as it is lived and experienced by Pakistani women. The majority of writers chosen live in Pakistan; others who live or work abroad have maintained close links with their country." (Neither Night Nor Day, 2007:xi) (From the introduction by Rakhshanda Jalil). In conclusion, these stories are a testament to the enduring spirit of women, who despite the myriad challenges they face, continue to forge their paths with courage and resilience. By applying the concept of *Écriture féminine*, the readers not only get an understanding of the lives of the Pakistani women but also about the broader themes like gender and identity. These stories also reflect the importance of storytelling in today's world and how it can serve as a significant tool of empowerment. These narratives often give voice to silenced experiences and this anthology as a whole provides a greater platform for the women to write, share their opinions, and earn

appreciation in the field of literature. Thereby, also serving as a great example of the concept of feminine.

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