

**Reimagining Education through Cultural Narratives: Integrating Literature, Pedagogy,
and National Identity in Pakistan**

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Received: 10-09-2025	Revised: 03-10-2025	Accepted: 16-10-2025	Published: 01-11-2025
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ABSTRACT

This paper examines how culturally based educational practices have influenced the national identity of Pakistani students. Based on a quantitative cross-sectional research design, it examines the role of narrative-based pedagogy, exposure to Pakistani literature, and the role of culturally integrated curricula in affecting the perception of belonging, pride, and cultural knowledge among students. A sample size of 365 students of both the public and the private institutions in Pakistan was used. The correlation analysis, the multiple regression analysis demonstrated that all the three independent variables have significant and positive influence on the national identity, which explains the 64% variance of national identity. Among them, culturally integrated curriculum was the best predictor ($b = 0.35, p < 0.001$), then there is narrative-based pedagogy ($b = 0.32, p < 0.001$) and exposure to Pakistani literature ($b = 0.28, p < 0.001$). The results underline that classroom storytelling, indigenous literature, and culturally inclusive curricula contribute to the enhancement of the emotional and cognitive association with the national heritage, which is opposed to the homogenization of syllabi and the lack of engagement that is the result of rote learning. The research proposes the need to incorporate local histories, local writers in the formalized education to foster inclusiveness and cohesion. It also proposes training teachers in the culturally responsive pedagogy to maintain identity growth in varied learning setups.

Keywords: Narrative-Based Pedagogy; Pakistani Literature; Culturally Integrated Curriculum; National Identity; Culturally Responsive Teaching; Education Reform

INTRODUCTION

The education system of Pakistan is still affected by colonial heritage and a decades-long process of socio-political transition, yet it is still facing issues with the design of a curriculum that would reflect the cultural and linguistic diversity of the country in a way other than superficially (Ahmed, 2018). Policy reforms since independence in 1947 have seen a preponderance of expansionary reforms over redefining reforms to make education more inclusive and locally relevant (Akram, 2020). Western canons of literature and exam-based rote education are favored over native literature, folklore, and local histories

(Khan et al., 2021). The lack of alignment between the taught content and students in their real life is detrimental to their educational interest rate as well as the formation of a unified national identity (Zaidi, 2022). Simultaneously, the role that schooling plays in enhancing the sense of national identity among students has gained an even stronger sense of urgency in the face of a swift process of globalization and cultural homogenization. Educational institutions are crucial in developing the perception of self, nation, and belonging among learners using textbooks, language policies, and teaching methods (Hussain, Sandaran, and Saeed, 2023). Nonetheless, it has been studied that the education system in Pakistan is more inclined to portray a national narrative that is both narrow and religion-oriented, neglecting the idea of cultural pluralism (Ullah et al., 2025). The inclusion of cultural narratives, folk tales, localized poetry, and historical narrations in the pedagogy and development of curriculum is a bright solution. Literature as a reflection of the shared experience can become a revolutionary educational instrument in case it is critically utilized (Freire, 1970). Incorporation of indigenous literature and local narratives in the classroom can help teachers to motivate students to identify with their history on both the emotional and intellectual levels. Reimagining education with cultural narrative is not only an academic but also a moral necessity in a postcolonial society such as Pakistan, to decolonize the education process, recover the voices of the indigenous, and sense of belonging (Asad, 2017). Due to the continuous changes in the education system, there are still a few critical gaps that are preventing Pakistan to develop an inclusive and unified national identity through the education system. To begin with, the issue of cultural disconnection in the curriculum is still a significant problem. National curriculum does not usually reflect language, ethnic and cultural diversity of the country. Urdu literature is more prone to classical and religious literature and omits the regional voices and modern point of view (Akram, 2020). Consequently, students rarely come across the images of local cultures or dialects in the learning materials, thus alienating and disengaging (UNESCO, 2021). Second, the inflexibility of pedagogical practices contributes to the issue further. In Pakistan, the system of teaching remains predominantly teacher-centered and exam-oriented, and rote learning prevails in the classroom (Naqvi, 2021). A lot of educators are poorly trained in terms of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP) a practice that connects education with both cultural and social lives of students (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Such inflexibility is a killer of creativity and critical thinking, without which no meaningful learning and identity development can take place. Third, the national identity development in schools and education is usually simplistic and exclusionary. It is often framed in terms of a single religious or historical account, mostly focusing on Islam and the events that had happened during partition (Zaidi, et al., 2025). This narrow and shallow depiction overlooks the multicultural and multilingual nature of Pakistan thus marginalizing non-Muslim and regional minorities and compromising social unity. Fourth, the pedagogical prospects of literature have not been exploited. Literature is not used as a dynamic platform of dialogue, reflection, and moral imagination instead of being a read-only material aimed at comprehension and memorization (Barton and Levstik, 2004). This habit deprives the students of the chance to critically approach the themes of identity, culture, and nationhood. Considering these concerns, there is an urgent necessity to consider how narrative-based pedagogy, exposure to Pakistani literature, and a culturally based curriculum can be made to have a more inclusive, reflective, and long-term sense of national identity in students in Pakistan.

Rationale

The foundation of this work is since identity construction is not only the level of knowledge but also participation in cultural experiences and stories. It appreciates that learning in Pakistan should not be merely a conduit of information but should create a sense of belonging, pride and continuity of cultural and traditional values among the learners. Through this approach of incorporating cultural narratives into teaching methods; this means stories, folklore and native writings, the system can help fill the gap existing between the local realities and national unity. Despite the fact that some studies in the past have investigated the process of curriculum reform and challenges of national integration (Zaidi, 2022), the lack of empirical research that will investigate the connection between literature, pedagogy, and national

identity in a single educational context has been identified. The paper, thus, fills such a void by exploring how culturally based instruction and curriculum development can help to instill a sense of inclusive and sustainable national identity among the diverse Pakistani educational environment.

Significance

The importance of the research is spread at various levels of the Pakistani educational and social environment. To teachers, it offers practical ideas on how literature and storytelling may be integrated into classroom instructions to help students explore their identity and identity further. Through integrating cultural histories into the educational process, educators will be able to start to step out of rote learning and enter a more meaningful student experience of learning. To policy makers, the study provides evidence-based guidelines when formulating culturally inclusive and locally based curricula that guarantee that teaching and learning materials are culturally and linguistically diverse in Pakistan. Students get to learn deeper by participating in the study, which develops better critical thinking, understanding empathy, and cultural awareness, which helps them relate academic knowledge with their personal social realities (UNESCO, 2021). Lastly, to the society at large, the study helps the country to be united as this foster's cultural empathy and mutual respect among the various people of Pakistan and enhances the shared values which form the basis of cohesive and inclusive national identity (Hussain et al., 2019)

Contribution

The research provides high contributions to three key areas of scholarship. First, it contextualizes the work of the narratives as potent scripts of culture in preserving the collective memory and strengthening shared identity in society within Cultural Studies (carrtue at al.2023). Through literature and storytelling because they are used as a means of cultural transmission, the study brings out its usage in the creation of a self-perception and a national perception of the student. Second, it applies the idea of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP) in Pakistani multilingual and multiethnic classrooms, thus, proving the relevance and usefulness of the concept in a South Asian setting (Ladson-Billings, 1995). This localization offers some insight on how a teacher can make culturally relevant materials and instruction methods to meet the needs of more varied learners successfully. Third, in National Identity Research, the research closes the divide between educational and literature studies/research and identity politics through analysis of the classroom practices and cultural texts to create a perception of a national identity in students (Billig, 1995). The research empirically develops a theoretical framework that connects narrative-based pedagogy, exposure to Pakistani literature and a culturally based integrated curriculum to national identity, providing an all-encompassing theoretical framework to inform future educational reforms and policy formulation in Pakistan.

Study Objectives and Research Question

1. To analyze how cultural narratives are represented in Pakistan's school and college curricula.
2. To examine the impact of narrative-based teaching strategies on students' cultural understanding and identity formation.
3. To assess students' exposure to Pakistani literature and its influence on national identity.
4. To propose a framework for integrating cultural narratives into educational practice and policy.

Research Questions

1. How are cultural narratives represented in Pakistani literature curricula.

2. How does narrative-based pedagogy influence students' engagement and identity?
3. What is the relationship between exposure to Pakistani literature and students' sense of national identity
4. How can curriculum reform incorporate local narratives to promote an inclusive national identity

LITERATURE REVIEW

Framing National Identity in Education

National identity in education is the sense of belonging, the continuity of a culture and unity of consciousness that the educational systems are aimed to develop in learners. School is a key institution in formulating the national identity with the influence of their curriculum, pedagogy, and cultural content (Shah, et al., 2019). Linguistic diversity, religious symbolism, colonial legacies, and political narratives play a key role in this process in Pakistan (Zeeshan et al., (2023).). The curriculum particularly in the subject of Urdu, history and Islamic studies serve as one of the major tools of imparting national identity. Nonetheless, educational policies tend to prioritize a homogeneous concept of nationhood as opposed to an inclusive one, which can accommodate plural cultures and languages in Pakistan Sain, Z. H., Aziz, A. L., & Sain, S. H. (2025). Other recent reforms like the Single National Curriculum (SNC) have sparked discussions on balancing education in terms of unity and diversity. Awareness of the connections between pedagogical practices, cultural curriculum, and national identity, therefore, continues to be a key research concern in the study of education in Pakistan.

Narrative-Based Pedagogy and National Identity

Narrative based pedagogy focuses on narratives of life, narrative of life, and story telling as effective methods of learning and identity. This pedagogical approach is based on the narrative identity theory, according to which people make sense and understand themselves through narratives (Kinossalo, 2022). When the classroom instruction encompasses stories that represent cultural and national values of students, they get to learn not only cognitively but also emotionally they feel a sense of pride and belonging to their common identity (Ozer, 2025). Narratives in education serve as mirrors and windows, mirrors that reflect the lived experiences of students and windows that provide some understanding of the cultural fabric of the nation. The two-fold role enables students to place themselves in the current narrative of the country. Empirical studies point out that the use of stories can be a good channel through which civic and national values can be developed. It has been proven by international studies that students who are subjected to lessons focused on narratives are more apt to being empathetic, historically aware, and feeling a sense of belonging (King et al., 2013). Pakistan Classroom-based observations show that educators who employ narratives of national history, folklore, and local heritage encourage students to create a stronger connection with their identities (Qazi, 2023). As an example, one can incorporate local heroes, local struggles, and folk customs into the lessons, which, in turn, would enable students to perceive themselves as the components of the nation-building story instead of mere consumers of abstract knowledge. The effectiveness of narrative-based pedagogy, however, relies on the inclusiveness of the told narratives. When the narratives are dominated by certain religious or linguistic groups only, they are likely to strengthen exclusionary ideas about nationhood (Shah, 2023). According to scholars, narrative pedagogy must embrace the presence of various voices, such as regional, ethnic and linguistic, to achieve a balanced representation of national identity. The pluralistic narrative methodology is in line with the social constructivist views that consider identity because of dialogue and not because of rote learning (Kinossalo, 2022). Narrative-based pedagogy in Pakistan has structural issues despite its potential. The curriculum and exam-based instruction tend to be very standardized and leave minimal to no room in story-driven or discussion-based learning (Sain and Aziz, 2025). Numerous educators have not been

formally trained to use narrative methods, and the time available in classes does not support the application of these methods. Therefore, though the educational policy can be focused on the cultivation of civic and moral values, the pedagogical practices used in the educational process tend to produce little meaningful identity formation. There is still a wide discrepancy between policy intention and classroom practice. Future studies should hence identify ways in which teacher training, curriculum flexibility, and storytelling materials can help in promoting the role of storytelling in inclusive national identity in the various learning institutions in Pakistan.

H1: There is a positive and significant relationship between narrative-based pedagogy and national identity among students in Pakistan.

Exposure to Pakistani Literature and National Identity

Another pathway that is critical is exposure to national literature where students are exposed to the symbolic aspects of national identity. The book represents the past, culture, and ideals of a society and provides the learner with the cultural memory and collective imagination (Panoramic Study of Pakistani Literature, 2021). Students can acquire linguistic competence, as well as internalization of cultural norms and moral frameworks that define their perception of the nation, through novels, poetry, drama, and short stories. In Pakistan, where numerous linguistic and cultural traditions coexist, literature might either unite or segregate identities, based on the voices that are being represented (Shah, 2023). Exposure to literature theoretically works both at the cognitive and affective levels. Literature on the cognitive front pass's information on the history of the country, heroes, and social principles; on the affective one, the emotional connection to the country and sense of pride (Ozer, 2025). Literary exposure does not necessarily have an effect of national identity, though--it will depend on the choice of texts, and the pedagogical approach adopted. Studies have demonstrated that literature courses that do not pay attention to the local literatures, and instead concentrate only on the canonical Urdu texts, can lead to a negative perception of Pakistani identity through the prism of specific linguistic or religious views (Qazi, 2023). In contrast, when the curricula incorporate a variety of works, such as Sindhi folk stories, Pashto poetry and English-language Pakistani fiction literature students can have a more inclusive and comprehensive understanding of what being Pakistani means (Panoramic Study of Pakistani Literature, 2021). The necessity to represent plurality in literary syllabi is emphasized by empirical research. An analysis of textbooks on textbooks on 2023 found that official textbooks on the topics of the Urdu language and literature usually feature male Muslim heroes, and minority or regional voices are excluded (Shah, 2023). This discriminatory exposure upholds a unitary history of nationhood that excludes ethnic and linguistic diversity. Conversely, educational initiatives that bring in modern Pakistani authors such as Bapsi Sidhwa, Mohsin Hamid, or Kishwar Naheed have shown that students would be more receptive to various ways of perceiving national identity, gender, and social justice (Qazi, 2023). Modern literary expressions also stimulate critical thinking on the changing aspects of the country instead of glorification of the past without making any changes. It is also important that pedagogical style is considered. Literature becomes memorized and summarized when it is taught using exercises that do not allow its transformative value to be lost (Ozer, 2025). Creative responses, comparative reading and critical discussion help learners to perceive texts as active and apply them to their lived worlds. The readiness of teachers is needed thus: teachers should be prepared to engage in a literary discussion and not merely deliver information. In addition, inclusion of literature on the regional languages in the Urdu or English classes would enhance cultural empathies amongst students of other provinces. The incorporation of voices does not only add to the linguistic variation but also recreates the concept of national identity that is inclusive, pluralistic, and dynamic. Despite these advantages, the existence of a disconnect between curriculum policy and classroom reality is still present. The literature syllabus in most Pakistani public-schools continues to be centralized and exam-based, with little space allowed to local or contemporary literature (Sain & Aziz, 2025). Inaccessibility of regional literature in easily understandable formats and the prevalence of Urdu as the

literary instruction language also limit inclusivity. To solve these problems, the future research must focus on how the diversification of the curricula and teacher capacity-building can be used to empower literature to promote cultivation of a balanced national identity in the multilingual and multicultural areas in Pakistan.

H2: There is a positive and significant relationship between exposure to Pakistani literature and national identity among students in Pakistan.

Culturally Integrated Curriculum and National Identity

A culturally integrated curriculum is one that correlates learning content and learning strategies with student cultural experiences, language and community values. Based on culturally responsive pedagogy, the given approach suggests that students can learn optimally when their cultural backgrounds are considered and honored (Gay, 2018). Curriculum design, in the case of Pakistan, with the ethnic and linguistic diversity being enormous, will influence the way the national identity will be understood as either an inclusive and unifying notion or an oppressive and homogenizing influence (Sain & Aziz, 2025). The empirical studies in Pakistan are rather mixed. Other sources applaud such programs as the Single National Curriculum as trying to lessen the issue of educational inequality by harmonizing the content in the regions (Development of the Single National Curriculum in Pakistan, 2024). Nevertheless, the opponents believe that this standardization usually unnecessarily costs cultural representation (Qazi, 2023). SNC textbooks have been observed to underscore the minority cultures and regional histories to favor the core narratives that are associated with Urdu-speaking and Islamic identity (Shah, 2023). This partial inclusion has a risk of isolating students belonging to peripheral countries like Balochistan or Gilgit-Baltistan whose history and languages are never brought up. Conversely, pilot projects which have included local languages and village knowledge in the curriculum have run successful courses. Research has shown that children who perceive their culture in textbooks are more likely to be more active in the classroom, proud, and connected to the country (Migration Letters, 2025). Mother-tongue-based education promotes cognitive and national integration as any language diversity is confirmed in the context of a national structure (Ozer, 2025). The curriculum would be able to change the understanding of the Pakistani nationhood by absorbing the culture pluralism to be not a unique ideology but an active and non-separative identity. These positive cases, notwithstanding, there are still difficulties. There is little research preparation in making teachers adopt a culturally responsive teaching approach; many educators are associated with methods of rote and standard assessments that do not provide a significant opportunity to adapt to contexts (Sain & Aziz, 2025). The implementation is also hampered by the resource differences: in rural schools, there are frequently no culturally relevant textbooks and other resources in the appropriate languages. Besides, the issue of political sensitivity regarding the definition of national culture makes the reform of the curricula difficult. The policymakers tend to confuse the concept of national integration with the concept of cultural homogeneity, which negatively affects the initiatives of achieving true inclusivity (Developing the Single National Curriculum in Pakistan, 2024). Thus, though a culturally integrated curriculum can be used to enhance national identity through inclusion and tolerance towards diversity, it requires policy formulation, teacher education, and local content formulation to be effective. Further research is needed on how participatory curriculum design, in which teachers, communities and students work together to create curriculum that embodies the multicultural identity of Pakistan and at the same time brings the nation together. H3: National identity and culturally integrated curriculum have a positive and significant association among Pakistani students. Although much has been said on education and identity formation, there are several research gaps that have been left unaddressed on the Pakistani situation. To begin with, the literature on education and national identity in Pakistan is mostly qualitative and descriptive with an emphasis on textbook analysis or the perception of teachers. Empirical and mixed-method studies that quantify the impact of narrative-based pedagogy, exposure to Pakistani literature or culturally integrated curricula on any of the following aspects of national identity,

including civic pride, cultural tolerance, national belonging are lacking (Shah, 2023). Second, there is the gap between policy and practice. Although educational policies like the Single National Curriculum (SNC) foster a spirit of unity and inclusiveness, the level of their implementation in the classroom is still poor because of the teaching approach based on exams and the lack of teacher training (Sain & Aziz, 2025). Third, Pakistani literature as a concept is not well-researched regarding linguistic and regional diversity. Majority of the studies consider it an equal category without accounting to the fact that exposure to different regional literatures (e.g., Urdu, Punjabi, Sindhi, Pashto, Balochi) can have various impacts on national identity (Panoramic Study of Pakistani Literature, 2021). Fourth, the voices and agency of the students in the identity construction are seldom considered. The existing studies do not consider the process of negotiation or post-national identity message construction by learners in the classroom, which require participatory and narrative inquiry approaches (Kinossalo, 2022). Lastly, longitudinal and evaluative studies on the long-term consequences of recent curriculum reforms and, specifically, the SNC regarding identity development and cultural inclusion in Pakistani schools are lacking (Development of the Single National Curriculum in Pakistan, 2024).

H3: There is a positive and significant relationship between the Culturally Integrated Curriculum and national identity among students in Pakistan

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

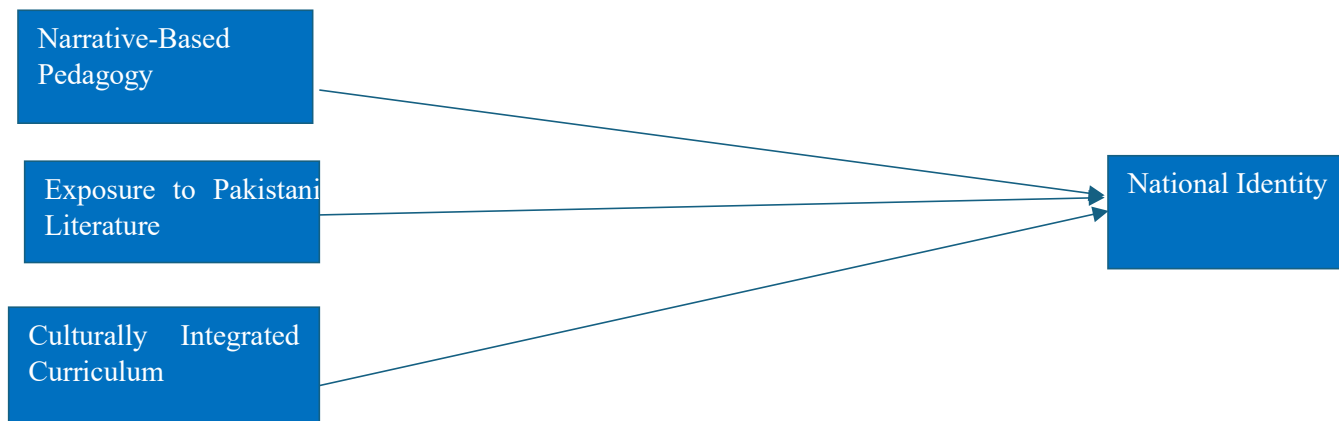
The research design in this study is a quantitative, cross-sectional study to investigate the factors between Narrative-Based Pedagogy, Exposure to Pakistani Literature, Culturally Integrated Curriculum, and National Identity among the Pakistani students. The quantitative design allows the measurement of the perception with the help of structured tools, which is objective and can be reliably measured statistically (Creswell and Creswell, 2023). The research will be used to give empirical data in support of the role of culturally based educational practices in enhancing national identity.

Variables Operationalization.

Operational definitions and measuring of the variables are grounded on the literature which is modified to the Pakistani educational setting. Each of the constructions will be measured with the help of a five-point Likert scale, with 1 = Strongly Disagree and 5 = Strongly Agree. National Identity Definition: National identity is defined as the sense of belonging, pride and commitment of a person to a country including respect for the cultural and linguistic diversity of a country (Rizvi, 2022). Items: "I feel proud to be a Pakistani. I appreciate the cultural and linguistic diversity of Pakistan. Narrative-Based Pedagogy. The application of tales, cultural stories, and real-life illustrations by educators to teach lessons that lead to moral reasoning, empathy and identity development. Measurement: Self-made scale based on narrative teaching models (Egan, 2021; Rahman, 2023). "My teachers tell cultural or historical stories to explain lessons. Classroom story telling makes me know more about the Pakistani heritage. Narrative teaching helps me to reflect on national values. Pakistani Literature Exposure. The level of the interaction of the students with literary works by Pakistani writers that reflect the national culture, traditions, and local diversity. Measurement: A modified version of works on cultural literacy and literature-based learning (Ali and Iqbal, 2022). Items: I have read short stories or novels that were written by Pakistani writers. Reading Pakistani literature makes me aware of national culture. Our curriculum consists of the poetry and writings that represent the Pakistani values. Culturally Integrated Curriculum. The incorporation of the local culture, indigenous knowledge and local examples in the curriculum to establish significant linkages between students lived experiences with the national culture. Measurement: According to the models of culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2018; Sain and Aziz, 2025). "Pakistan cultures are represented in our

school curriculum. The classroom topics are frequently related to the local traditions with the help of lessons. The curriculum represents language and cultural diversity of Pakistan.

Theoretical framework



Population and Sample Selection

The target population of the study includes secondary and higher secondary students enrolled in both public and private educational institutions across major provinces of Pakistan, including Punjab, Sindh, and Gilgit-Baltistan.

A multistage stratified random sampling technique will be employed to ensure representation from diverse geographic and cultural backgrounds. Initially, schools and colleges will be categorized by province and type (public/private), followed by random selection of institutions and classes.

Data Collection Procedures

The structured questionnaire that will be used to collect data will also be administered physically (with paper) and online (with a Google Form). School administrations will be contacted before data collection and the ethical approval will be requested at the institutional review board (IRB). The participants will be informed about the study aim, voluntary participation and confidentiality of the responses. The coding and analysis will be done by use of SPSS in order to test reliability, validity as well as hypothesized associations of different variables.

DATA ANALYSIS

The data obtained will be processed through descriptive and inferential statistics to compare the hypotheses of the study and prove the model introduced. A descriptive analysis consisting of (mean, standard deviation, and frequency distribution) will be used to summarize the demographic data of the respondents and will also provide a general picture of the responses of the respondents to each variable. To determine the reliability of the measurement instruments, Cronbach alpha will be determined on each construct with the following values being taken to be satisfactory internal consistency: greater than 0.70. Moreover, the correlation analysis will be conducted to investigate the direction and strength of the relationship between the variables of the study Narrative-Based Pedagogy, Exposure to Pakistani Literature, Culturally Integrated Curriculum, and National Identity. Lastly, the hypothesized relationships will be tested with the help of multiple regression analysis to establish the correlation of the independent variables and the dependent variable, National Identity. Such statistical methods will help find out both

direct and indirect effects, which will give empirical data on the contribution of the culturally-based educational practices to the formation of national identity among Pakistani students.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (n = 365)

Variable	Category	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	153	41.9
	Female	212	58.1
Age Group (Years)	16–18	104	28.5
	19–21	167	45.8
	22 and above	94	25.8
Institution Type	Public	220	60.3
	Private	145	39.7
Education Level	Secondary (Grade 9–10)	118	32.3
	Higher Secondary (Grade 11–12)	158	43.3
	Undergraduate	89	24.4
Region	Punjab	126	34.5
	Sindh	84	23.0
	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	65	17.8
	Balochistan	42	11.5
	Gilgit-Baltistan	48	13.2

Table 1 summarizes the demographic profile of the 365 respondents. The majority were female (58.1%) and aged 19–21 years (45.8%). Most respondents were enrolled in public institutions (60.3%), and nearly half (43.3%) were higher secondary students. Participants represented all major regions of Pakistan, ensuring cultural and geographical diversity across the sample.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)	Minimum	Maximum
Narrative-Based Pedagogy (NBP)	3.89	0.71	1	5.00
Exposure to Pakistani Literature (EPL)	3.76	0.74	1	5.00
Culturally Integrated Curriculum (CIC)	3.92	0.69	1	5.00
National Identity (NI)	4.05	0.67	1	5.00

the findings indicate that the students responded to all variables positively. The means of Narrative-Based Pedagogy (3.89), Exposure to Pakistani Literature (3.76) and Culturally Integrated Curriculum (3.92) are above 3.00, which implies that students believe that the practices are practiced in their learning environment. The mean score of 4.05 of National Identity indicates that majority of the students are proud of their national culture and identity. The standard deviations are low which implies that the majority of the students responded in the same manner.

Table 3: Reliability Analysis

Variable	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha (α)	Reliability Status
Narrative-Based Pedagogy (NBP)	6	0.86	Reliable
Exposure to Pakistani Literature (EPL)	5	0.84	Reliable
Culturally Integrated Curriculum (CIC)	6	0.88	Reliable
National Identity (NI)	7	0.90	Highly Reliable

All the variables have cronbach alpha values of above 0.80 indicating that the questionnaire is very reliable. This indicates that all the items applied in measuring the variables are consistent and reliable to perform further statistical analysis.

Table 3: Correlation Analysis

Variables	1	2	3	4
1. Narrative-Based Pedagogy	1			
2. Exposure to Pakistani Literature	.642**	1		
3. Culturally Integrated Curriculum	.611**	.655**	1	
4. National Identity	.689**	.712**	.676**	1

The findings indicate that National Identity has positive correlations with all the three teaching strategies Narrative-Based Pedagogy, Exposure to Pakistani Literature, and Culturally Integrated Curriculum. This implies that the higher the levels of these teaching practices, the higher the national identity of students. Exposure to Pakistani Literature is the most strongly connected with national identity, indicating that reading and studying of local literature makes the students feel more attached to their country.

Table 4: Hypothesis through Regression Analysis

Predictor Variable	β (Standardized Coefficient)	t-value	Sig. value)	(p- Decision
Narrative-Based Pedagogy → National Identity	0.32	6.45	0.000	Supported
Exposure to Pakistani Literature → National Identity	0.28	5.89	0.000	Supported
Culturally Integrated Curriculum → National Identity	0.35	7.12	0.000	Supported
R² = 0.64, F = 89.73, p < 0.001				

The regression research examined the impact of Narrative Based Pedagogy, Exposure to Pakistani Literature, and Culturally Integrated Curriculum on National Identity. The significance of the overall model was statistically significant ($F = 89.73$, $p < 0.001$) with an explanation of sixty four percent of the variance ($R^2 = 0.64$) in the development of national identity among students, showing that the aggregate effect of these educational factors is important to explain national identity development among students. The results showed that Narrative-Based Pedagogy positively and significantly affected the national identity ($b = 0.32$, $t = 6.45$, $p < 0.001$), which indicates that storytelling, cultural stories, and learning with experiences positively contributed to the development of a stronger emotional and cultural sense between

learners, thus enhancing their sense of belonging to a nation. Likewise, the Exposure to Pakistani Literature reflected also a strong positive correlation with the national identity ($b = 0.28$, $t = 5.89$, $p < 0.001$), and it means that the exposure of students to the works of local literature helps them to better grasp and understand the cultural diversity present in the country. Culturally Integrated Curriculum had the most significant influence on national identity ($b = 0.35$, $t = 7.12$, $p < 0.001$), which allowed concluding that the incorporation of cultural and regional views into the curriculum is a significant determinant of the formation of national pride and attachment among students. In general, the findings prove the idea that the cultural relevance-based and local-specific educational strategies play an essential role in fostering a unified and non-discriminatory sense of the national identity among students.

DISCUSSION

The results of this research give a solid empirical data that culturally based educational practices can be seen as major factors making the national identity of Pakistani students stronger. The regression equation indicated that Narrative-Based Pedagogy, Exposure to Pakistani Literature, and Culturally Integrated Curriculum are the three elements that jointly describe the national identity by 64 percent, proving that the content and the methods of classroom education play the central part in developing the cultural awareness and orientation of students and their perception of belongingness. The beneficial and significant effect of Narrative-Based Pedagogy ($b = 0.32$) can be compared to the theoretical approach of narrative identity (Kinossalo, 2022), which underlines that people can create meaning and self-understanding using stories. The finding corroborates previous studies by Qazi (2023) and Ozer (2025) that indicate that when teachers use storytelling and cultural storylines in teaching, students can participate emotionally and cognitively and develop pride in their traditions and empathy towards their national values. This implies that the combination of national history, folklore, and regional experience stories improves moral imagination and national consciousness of learners. Exposure to Pakistani Literature ($b = 0.28$) also turned out to be a significant effect, which indicated the strength of the indigenous literary works in fostering the national identity of the students. Literature is a mirror of the culture and an ethical guide; with the help of local novels, poetry, and short stories, students get to learn of the diversity of the nation, and common problems (Shah, 2023). The observation is echoed by Panoramic Study of Pakistani Literature (2021) and Naqvi (2021), who also note that making students listen to plural voices Sindhi, Punjabi, Pashto, Baluchi, and Urdu empower their understanding of what being Pakistani means. Nonetheless, the comparatively low coefficient in comparison to that of curriculum integration indicates that the exposure to literature may not be enough without pedagogical support and situational debate. The Culturally Integrated Curriculum ($b = 0.35$) was found to be the most potent predictor of national identity, which suggests that the imposition of cultural and regional material into the systems of education has the widest influence. This findings holds true to Gay (2018) and Sain and Aziz (2025), who indicate that culturally responsive curricula increase inclusion, classroom engagement and civic pride. Incorporating the traditions and language of the region, the curriculum not only authenticates the culture of students but also turns national identity, which was either a single ideology, to a dynamic and inclusive multi-dimensional one. This highlights that curriculum change, when placed in its contextually specific, participatory and form can serve to be a commonality among diverse societies such as that of Pakistan. Altogether, these findings confirm that synergistic collaboration between pedagogy, literature, and curriculum can be used to address the alienation created by rote study and centrist syllabus. The results fill the policy practice gap, in that the findings demonstrate that culture relevance in education is not only a symbolic aspect but the findings are also statistically significant in nurturing the national identity.

CONCLUSION

This paper concludes by stating that the re-invention of Pakistan education system based on cultural stories is critical in the development of a coherent and inclusive national identity. Culturally integrated curricula, exposure to Pakistani literature, and narrative-based teaching all make a significant and complementary contribution in this process. Among them, there is the most influential factor, which is curriculum integration that proves that systemic reform in educational design is the key to the sustainable identity formation. The study adds to the existing literature on culturally responsive pedagogy in South Asia because it offers quantitative data that culturally specific educational practices can lead to a better emotive and intellectual attachment to their country by the students. In practice, the findings promote teacher training on the use of narratives, the integration of regional literary voices, and an interactive curriculum development, which represents the plural cultural environment of Pakistan.

LIMITATIONS

Despite the useful information about the connection between the educational practices and national identity, a number of limitations must be admitted in the study. First, the cross sectional design restricts the chances of making inferences based on causality since it records data at given moment hence longitudinal research would be more appropriate in determining how national identity changes as a result of constant exposure to cultural stories and pedagogical mechanisms. Second, self-reported questionnaires may have created a social desirability bias because respondents could answer in a way that is consistent with the socially accepted perceptions of national identity instead of their actual perceptions. Third, the sample was limited to schools and colleges that were selected, and this could be a limitation to the extrapolation of the results to other educational institutions like madrassas, vocation and rural schools with different socio-cultural backgrounds. Fourth, the study has only used quantitative data and this does not give much information on the deeper meanings and interpretations students give to cultural stories; the addition of qualitative research strategies like interviews, focus groups, or classroom observations could add more information. Finally, the analysis lacked any moderating factors like gender, ethnicity, or region of origin that might affect the strength and direction of the association among the variables under study.

FUTURE RESEARCH

The findings should be extended to future studies that have more comprehensive and multidimensional ways to understand how education can affect the development of national identity. It is especially suggested that longitudinal studies should be conducted to investigate the effects of sustained exposure to both narrative-based instructional approaches and curricula based on cultural integration on identity development in the students in the long run. Also, using a mixed-method study which would entail quantitative survey with qualitative study methods like interviews, focus groups, and classroom observations would provide more comprehensive and detailed information about the experiences of both teachers and students living in their real lives. Moderating factors which include regional diversity, language background and socioeconomic status can be also included in future models to investigate how various social contexts might influence national identity internalization among learners. Besides, conducting an assessment of the teacher training programs on culturally responsive pedagogy would assist in ascertaining how effective they are in implementing the inclusive teaching principles into the classroom discipline. A comparative analysis of the public, private and religious institutions would help to note the influence of the institutional culture and teaching environment on the connection between educative practices and identity development. To conclude, the further-researchers are recommended to think about the notion of digital storytelling, social media usage, and multimedia narrations as the new forms of narrative pedagogy to involve younger generations in the more active and active discourses about culture, citizenship, and national identity.

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