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Investigating the influence of digital peer recommendations and social interaction on reading attitudes in primary schools with a custom-built tool.

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## **Abstract**

To function fully in contemporary society an individual must have an appropriate reading level for their age. Though learning to read is a difficult process for many individuals, their learning must progress as expected by the educational system or there can be dire consequences for the individual and society as a whole as a result. Difficulties in learning to read can be connected to poor attitude towards reading. A learner may overcome their difficulties through hard work with a good attitude and become an expert, with a bad attitude towards reading the task is much more difficult. The reading attitude of the learner is shaped by a myriad of factors, amongst the most important being their early experiences around reading and the influences and recommendations of educators, parents and peers. Positive early experiences and influences are vital for the young learner and provide the learner with the foundations to build up their reading to the appropriate levels.

The aim of this research is to investigate the influence that digital peer recommendations and social interaction has on the reading attitudes of primary school learners. A tool was designed and built for this research to facilitate the learners in finding and recommending books to their peers in a safe environment. After careful consideration a mixed methods approach was adopted to enable the researcher to create a rich picture of the impact of the intervention on reader attitudes.

The data gathered and analysed in the course of this research suggests that the intervention had a positive impact on reader attitudes of the learners involved, particularly on learners who had the lowest reader attitudes in the class. The research recommends that additional studies and research be carried out in this area to investigate this phenomenon further as there is significant potential in the findings made.