

Virtual Book Clubs On Goodreads: Fostering A Love For Reading In Students With Dyslexia

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Abstract

Within the context of the Saudi Arabian educational system, this research aims to investigate the significant impacts of participating in an online book club on dyslexic students' reading engagement and reading pleasure. Reading comprehension and enthusiasm are two areas where people with dyslexia often struggle. A cross-sectional approach was used to look at 150 pupils who had been identified as having dyslexia. Half of the group was taking part in online literary conversations using the widely used website Goodreads to determine whether or not virtual book clubs are beneficial. Descriptive statistics, t-tests, and correlation analysis were used to determine how involved readers were and how much they enjoyed the text in this research. Research participants who participated in virtual book club activities reported higher levels of reading engagement and reading satisfaction compared to research participants who did not. One practical implication is the incorporation of online literary societies into existing educational programs, with the goal of creating welcoming environments for readers of all abilities.

Keywords: Dyslexia, virtual book clubs, reading engagement, reading enjoyment.

Introduction

In Saudi Arabia, the incidence of dyslexia, a neurodevelopmental disease that hinders a person's ability to

read and spell correctly, has taken on enormous importance. It has been shown that between 5 and 10 percent of the world's population is affected by this phenomena (Peterson & Pennington, 2015). Considering the circumstances of Saudi Arabia, this number is very telling. The Saudi Arabian Ministry of Education has made some admirable efforts to help kids who struggle with dyslexia, but it has been far more difficult to instill a lifelong love of reading. The ability to comprehend written text extends far beyond a mere academic skill, as it serves as a fundamental attribute that underpins learning, personal growth, and achievement across the lifespan (Guthrie & Parker 2012; Cunningham & Stanovich, 1998). Nevertheless, individuals afflicted with dyslexia frequently encounter formidable challenges that impede their ability to derive pleasure from and actively participate in the act of reading, thereby significantly affecting their academic achievements and sense of self-esteem (Fletcher & Lyon, 1998).

Conventional methodologies predominantly center around assisting individuals with dyslexia in surmounting particular challenges in reading, occasionally neglecting the overarching objective of instilling a profound and enduring passion for literature (Ritchey, 2008). The advent of virtual literary communities, exemplified by platforms such as Goodreads, presents an innovative and imaginative solution to this quandary. In contemporary times, there has been a notable surge in the prevalence of virtual "book clubs" within the online sphere. These digital communities bring together avid readers who convene remotely to engage in thoughtful discussions and lively debates surrounding the literary works they have individually had taken. A greater appreciation and knowledge of literature may be fostered via the use of this innovative platform, which provides users with a rare and one-of-a-kind chance to make connections with others and interact with the written word (Rogers & High, 2018). Goodreads is a leading literary community that helps people connect across geographic borders to share book recommendations, organize reading groups, and spark in-depth discussions about their favorite works of literature.

The purpose of this research is to investigate how online book clubs, namely those organized using the well-known Goodreads platform, might inspire Saudi students with dyslexia to develop

a lifelong love of reading. Our hypothesis is that the interactive and social nature of online book clubs might create an environment where students with dyslexia are more likely to get engaged in reading and have positive reading experiences. To test this hypothesis, we'll be using qualitative research techniques to learn more about the perspectives and experiences of dyslexic students who participate in online book clubs on the widely used website Goodreads.

While previous studies have focused on tried-and-true interventions for dyslexia like one-on-one tutoring and the implementation of assistive technologies (Stanovich & Siegel, 1994; Torgesen et al., 2001), the current investigation takes a bold step into uncharted territory by investigating the efficacy of online book clubs as an adjunctive strategy. These groups encourage students who struggle with literacy by tapping into the power of social interaction and the theoretical underpinnings of self-determination theory. This academic study contributes to the current body of literature by shining light on these underexplored aspects via a careful analysis of the experiences of dyslexic students who participated in virtual book clubs on the popular platform Goodreads.

Virtual book clubs provide benefits beyond only intervention and remediation. Dyslexic students who share a passion for the written word now have a dedicated social network thanks to the work of **Barden (2011)**. This cutting-edge medium not only promotes friendship but also builds a community where people may take consolation and inspiration from one another's stories. Socio-constructivist learning theory (Vygotsky, 1978) agrees with the importance of social interaction in the learning process, hence the social aspect of education is consistent with this view. Dyslexic kids may benefit from participating in online book clubs since it gives them the opportunity to cooperate with others to interpret texts and get new insights from the reading process.

However, online book clubs may be particularly difficult for kids with dyslexia. The aforementioned difficulties might include a wide range of issues, such as difficulties in reading comprehension, difficulties in learning from written materials, and problems in expressing oneself in writing (Snowling & Hulme, 2012). There is great value in investigating the ways in which online communities like Goodreads can help to resolve or

exacerbate these problems. Examining these challenges in depth, we want to provide helpful insights into how virtual book clubs might be improved to better meet the needs of people with dyslexia.

Objective of the Study

The primary goal of this study is to examine whether or not online book clubs hosted on the social media website are successful in increasing students' comprehension and enjoyment of reading who have been diagnosed with dyslexia in the Saudi Arabian context.

Literature Review and Previous Studies

It has been shown that people with average or above-average intelligence and access to a good education may nonetheless suffer from dyslexia, a neurological illness that presents as a barrier to reading and spelling (Snowling, 2020). Considering the large student population in Saudi Arabia, the problem at hand is of paramount relevance worldwide. A student's overall development and progress, even those who struggle with dyslexia, are greatly impacted by their ability to acquire reading abilities and foster a real affection for reading. This extensive literature review explores the current understanding of dyslexia, alternative reading therapies, the value of online book clubs, and previous academic research into the reading experiences of people with dyslexia.

Word recognition difficulties, spelling errors, and a slowed reading rate are all symptoms of dyslexia (Snowling, 2020). People with dyslexia may have trouble with phonological awareness and processing, which may create significant barriers to reading instruction (Pennington, 2006). Fletcher and Lyon (1998) found that a person's academic performance and sense of self-worth might be negatively impacted by their childhood experiences. Therefore, it is essential to study treatments that may mitigate the impact of these issues.

Traditional methods for assisting children with dyslexia in acquiring reading skills typically involve phonics-based instruction and individualized tutoring sessions (Shaywitz, 1996). In light of the indisputable influence exerted by these strategies, it is imperative to acknowledge that they may not entirely fulfill the criteria for cultivating a lasting admiration for literature (Ritchey, 2008). In the scholarly work of Cavendish et

al. (2020), it is posited that children who have been diagnosed with dyslexia may encounter a range of adverse emotional experiences when partaking in reading endeavors. These emotional responses have the potential to culminate in a diminution of their intrinsic motivation to engage in reading as a whole. Hence, it is imperative to undertake thorough investigation into innovative methodologies that not only address challenges in literacy but also foster constructive interactions with the written word.

The contemporary era has witnessed a notable surge in the populace engaging in virtual book societies, serving as a conduit for fostering an enduring ardor for literature. These virtual communities offer a platform for readers to connect with individuals who share similar interests, enabling them to actively participate in dialogues and deliberations pertaining to literature and writers, all from the comfort of their own homes. Goodreads, a highly esteemed online platform, serves as a hub for numerous virtual book communities, fostering an intricately designed digital realm where individuals with a fervor for literature can partake in collaborative pursuits. Maratea et al. (2015) posit that individuals who partake in virtual literary communities are inclined towards active participation and the cultivation of interpersonal connections, owing to the interactive and sociable nature intrinsic to these digital clubs. These esteemed institutions possess the capability to furnish dyslexic children with a nurturing and all-encompassing milieu conducive to reading.

The existing body of scholarly work pertaining to dyslexia and efficacious literacy interventions has thus far not thoroughly explored the potential advantages of online book clubs for individuals with dyslexia. The prevailing body of literature consists primarily of conventional treatment approaches (Shaywitz, 1996; Torgesen et al., 2001) and the incorporation of assistive technology (Facoetti et al., 2010). These established methods have been extensively explored in the existing scholarly discourse (Shaywitz, 1996; Torgesen et al., 2001). Existing data on the effects of online reading communities for children with dyslexia is few. More studies are needed.

In a ground-breaking study, Maratea et al. (2015) probed further into the complexities of teenage readers' experiences in online literary communities to tease out the reasons why they

read what they do. Students that struggle with reading were the primary focus of this research. This research provides convincing evidence that online literary communities may be a supportive environment for those with literacy challenges. The findings of this investigation revealed a noteworthy augmentation in the participants' level of reading interest and pleasure. Nevertheless, further investigation is imperative in order to attain a more profound understanding of the distinctive obstacles encountered by dyslexic children engaged in online literary communities.

In light of the growing prevalence of online book clubs, it is imperative to acknowledge the dearth of scholarly investigations exploring their potential efficacy in fostering a reading culture, particularly among students with dyslexia in Saudi Arabia and analogous settings. Individuals with dyslexia have more difficulty reading and comprehending written language, preserving information presented in written format, and communicating their thoughts through written expression (Snowling & Hulme, 2012). Uncertain is the extent to which online networks such as Goodreads effectively accommodate to the unique requirements of dyslexic pupils. This study's primary objective is to address the aforementioned knowledge deficit by investigating the experiences of dyslexic students who participate in online book societies facilitated by the Goodreads platform. This investigation will focus on the Saudi Arabian educational system in particular.

Methods

To provide a snapshot of the participants' overall impressions of their time spent in online book clubs, we used a cross-sectional research design. The current technique allowed for the exploration of several aspects related to students' interest in and enjoyment of reading who are dyslexic.

Participant recruiting was place at several Saudi Arabian educational facilities. Students and their parents or legal guardians gave informed consent before taking part, guaranteeing that they did so voluntarily. One hundred fifty people, all with dyslexia and all between the ages of 10 and 18, comprised the research population.

In order to obtain hard numbers on how often people read, what they like to read, and how often they participate in online

book clubs, a carefully crafted questionnaire was created. There were both Likert-scale and multiple-choice questions on the survey questionnaire. Standardized reading tests were administered to the subjects to determine how actively they were engaged in reading. Activities on the tests included reading comprehension and reading fluency, among others. The participants' use of the Goodreads platform for online book clubs was analyzed. This data covered participants' reading habits, participation in group discussions, and degree of social integration.

Within the safety of a classroom setting, questionnaires were distributed to the study's participants. Trained research assistants were ready to give guidance and clarification whenever needed. The reading exams were given one-on-one to each participant, creating an atmosphere conducive to focused work. Using defined procedures helped guarantee uniformity. Information on Goodreads members' online book discussions was gathered by seeing their profiles and interacting with them on the platform.

Quantitative information was gleaned from the questionnaires and reading ratings and analyzed using statistical software. Central trends, outliers, and frequency distributions were all calculated using descriptive statistics to provide a full picture of the data set. Similarities and differences across sets of data were investigated using inferential statistical techniques including t-tests and correlation studies.

Results

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Reading Engagement

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Reading Engagement Score	4.25	0.68

Students with dyslexia who participated in Goodreads book clubs had an average reading engagement score of 4.25, with a standard deviation of 0.68. This conclusion indicates that the participants, on average, had a low level of interest in reading. The scores are closely clustered around the mean, as shown by the low standard deviation. This demonstrates that everyone is keeping up with their reading at a steady pace.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for Reading Enjoyment

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Reading Enjoyment Score	3.90	0.72

Students who identified as dyslexic and participated in Goodreads book clubs had an average reading enjoyment score of 3.90 and a standard deviation of 0.72. The participants reported a rather high level of enjoyment from reading on average, as shown by this result. The occurrence of a standard deviation in the reported pleasure ratings indicates the presence of variability, showing that although most participants found reading enjoyable, the amount of enjoyment varied between individuals.

Table 3: Independent Samples T-Test for Reading Engagement

	Mean Reading Engagement	Std. Deviation	Sample Size
Virtual Book Club	4.25	0.68	75
No Virtual Book Club	3.85	0.75	75

Students in the online book club had an average reading engagement score of 4.25, with a standard deviation of 0.68. Students in the control group, who did not participate in a virtual book club, had a mean score of 3.85 and a standard deviation of 0.75. T-test results show that there is a statistically significant difference in the number of words read by each group ($t(148) = 2.32, p 0.05$).

A t-value of 2.32 suggests that the mean reading engagement ratings of dyslexic students who participated in Goodreads book clubs were significantly higher than those of students who did not. The former group, in particular, was shown to have much greater mean reading engagement levels than the latter. Based on the observed significance level ($p 0.05$), the difference between the two groups is statistically significant. Therefore, participation in online book clubs via the Goodreads website is probably associated with more reading activity among students who identify as having dyslexia.

Table 4: Correlation Analysis - Reading Engagement and Reading Enjoyment

	Reading Engagement	Reading Enjoyment
Pearson Correlation	1.000	0.815**
Sig. (2-tailed)	-	0.000

N	150	150
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A correlation value of 0.815** (p 0.001) was found between the two variables, demonstrating a strong and statistically significant positive association between reading engagement and reading pleasure. This result indicates that there is a positive relationship between the participants' levels of reading engagement and their levels of reading enjoyment.

Since the calculated p-value was less than 0.001, it is very improbable that the observed correlation between reading interest and reading satisfaction can be due to chance. According to the findings of this research, dyslexic students who reported a higher degree of reading engagement also reported more happiness from their participation in online book clubs hosted on the Goodreads website.

Discussion

Reading Engagement and Virtual Book Club Participation

There are many different aspects to consider when discussing the concept of reading engagement. Reading behaviors can be broken down into many different dimensions, including how often people read, how long they read for, how they feel about the texts they read, and how much they participate in discussions about the topics at hand (Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997). Dyslexic pupils have significant challenges in their quest of reading engagement, which arise mostly from their reading problems themselves (Moll et al., 2023). Based on the results of an independent samples t-test done as part of our study, we discover that students who struggle with reading comprehension benefit from participating in online book clubs. Online book clubs provide a structured and supportive environment that encourages students to actively engage with reading materials. According to the results, dyslexic students who joined online book clubs were more invested in their reading than their peers who didn't take part in any such activities. This indicates that online book clubs have great promise as a method for inspiring children with dyslexia to read and become actively involved in a wide range of reading activities.

Researchers have shown that increased participation in online book clubs is directly correlated with the presence of a supportive reading community (Maratea et al., 2015). Based on

their findings, Snowling and Hulme (2012) conclude that dyslexic people often feel alone and frustrated while attempting to read in a traditional setting. However, virtual book clubs offer a medium for students with shared reading interests and difficulties to connect with one another and discuss books online. Kim & Cho (2018) observed that people who actively participate in book clubs have a stronger feeling of community and friendship, which in turn increases their interest in the books they are reading. Students who are dyslexic may feel more confident after interacting with others who really understand the difficulties they face. These people may provide crucial assistance and create a positive learning atmosphere. To help dyslexic pupils overcome the tremendous challenges they face in the area of reading, it is crucial to foster a supportive environment.

Another important aspect of participating in online book clubs is the independence it may provide dyslexic children in making reading choices that suit their interests. Students in traditional classroom settings are often required to study works of literature that don't interest them or that don't take use of their individual strengths as readers (Gambrell, 2011). The emergence of online book clubs, particularly on well-known sites like Goodreads, has given students a unique opportunity to choose works of literature that are both genuine and fascinating. According to Gambrell (2011), giving students more freedom in choosing what they read may significantly increase their motivation and interest in the subject. Students who are dyslexic may be more motivated to read when they are given choices about which books to read based on their own interests and the needs of their own learning style.

Individuals with dyslexia often face the challenge of reading anxiety due to their struggles with comprehension and their fears of being judged negatively (Shaywitz, 2003). In contrast to the often-tense atmosphere of a traditional classroom, members of online book clubs may read and discuss books at their own pace, without fear of reprimand (Maratea et al., 2015). Anxiety reduction may be particularly helpful for kids with dyslexia since it allows them to engage in textual analysis and discussion without feeling inhibited. Kim & Cho (2018) discovered that online book clubs created an exceptionally

welcoming environment for reading because of the strong feeling of community they fostered among participants.

Reading Enjoyment and Virtual Book Club Participation

A key factor in getting and keeping dyslexic pupils engaged in reading is helping them develop a genuine appreciation for the activity (El Arbaoui, 2023). As a result of the difficulties they have while reading, those who are dyslexic may get frustrated and lose interest in reading altogether (Fletcher & Lyon, 1998). Our research shows, however, that dyslexic children who take part in online book clubs are more likely to show signs of reading pleasure the more actively they interact with the material they're reading. This finding is consistent with the research undertaken by Kim, & Cho (2018), which emphasizes the connection of interest and pleasure in reading. This study lends credence to the idea that dyslexic kids who join online book clubs are more likely to read for pleasure and to become avid readers. This result demonstrates how online book clubs have the ability to not only pique students' interest in reading but also enhance their overall reading experience.

The pleasure one derives from reading is strongly correlated with one's level of intrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000), which is the desire to participate in an activity for its own sake rather than in pursuit of an external reward. Guthrie & Parker (2014) found that dyslexic students who had an intrinsic motivation to read had a higher rate of reading pleasure. Online book clubs in the vein of Goodreads encourage students to pursue their own interests by letting them choose the reading material. Students in an environment where they are encouraged to take initiative are better able to retain information and participate in class discussions. Ryan & Deci (2000) theoretical approach is in line with this thinking. It was found by Guthrie & Parker (2014) that when readers get to choose what they read, they have a far greater sense of ownership over the process. Children who are dyslexic may benefit much from the autonomy that joining in online book clubs, both in terms of selecting topics and taking part in the conversations that follow, may provide.

Research by Cremin (2014) shows that having a good reading experience significantly increases one's pleasure of reading. As they go through school, students who are dyslexic may

encounter a broad range of difficulties with reading (Fletcher et al., 1998). To help students reevaluate and enhance their reading, modern spaces like online book clubs have emerged. Readers may feel comfortable discussing their ideas and opinions about a book, receiving constructive criticism, and applauding one another's reading accomplishments in the inviting setting of an online book club (Marateo et al., 2015). Feelings of competence and self-worth are increased when reading is accompanied by positive social interactions (Cremin, 2014).

Sullivan and Brown (2015) found that fostering a love of reading among dyslexic children has a significant effect on the students' continued reading engagement. According to research by Guthrie et al. (2014), dyslexic children who participate in online book clubs are more likely to acquire a lifetime love of reading. Building reading abilities and fostering a love of reading are essential for academic and personal development, and their significance cannot be overstated (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1998). Participation in online book clubs has the potential to modify the reading habits of students with dyslexia and improve their academic outcomes over the long term.

Practical Implications and Educational Significance

Our findings corroborate those of Doiron (2011) who highlight the promising potential of online book clubs for increasing the reading engagement of students with dyslexia. Educational professionals and educational institutions have a rare chance to capitalize on this priceless knowledge by integrating virtual book club activities into current reading curriculum. The use of this method allows teachers to create carefully planned routes for their dyslexic pupils to follow in order to actively connect with the text. This strategy promotes a supportive and all-encompassing setting that meets the needs of these pupils in a variety of ways. Individuals with dyslexia are known to have a lower level of reading engagement than their peers, but there is hope that including interactive involvement can help remedy this (Moll et al., 2020).

Isolation and a sense of inadequacy are common challenges for people with dyslexia in typical reading environments (Snowling & Hulme, 2012). Maratea et al. (2015) performed key study that beautifully demonstrates the significant impact that online

book clubs have on fostering strong feelings of belonging and friendship among its members. It's impossible to overstate the magnitude of these online literary groups' revolutionary potential. Teachers have a huge obligation to understand how crucial it is to foster diverse reading communities, which should not be limited to the confines of the conventional classroom but rather extend into the expanding online sphere. Students with dyslexia may benefit from increased engagement in reading activities and greater school satisfaction if their teachers use teaching methods that emphasize peer assistance and collaborative learning.

For kids who have trouble reading, virtual book clubs have become more popular on sites like Goodreads because they provide readers the freedom to carefully choose the books they want to read. Gambrell (2011) explains that the concept of autonomy emerges as a critical catalyst in promoting reading engagement. Teachers have the amazing capacity to adopt a malleable educational approach, allowing students to make decisions about what they read in class based on what they find engaging and challenging. Providing pupils with a variety of paths to choose improves their overall literary experience and encourages them to take responsibility for their own individual development as readers.

As Shaywitz (2003) so eloquently demonstrated, reading anxiety is a typical challenge for people with dyslexia. This fascinating psychological phenomena may operate as an impediment to people's ability to immerse themselves fully in the process of reading, preventing them from getting the most pleasure out of it. The study by Maratea et al. (2015) elucidates the inherent advantages of online book clubs, which provide a relaxing atmosphere perfect for reading. Educators should give serious thought to enacting educational practices that try to mitigate reading anxiety and its negative effects. One tactic is to create an atmosphere where people feel safe talking about their reactions to books without fear of being judged. The goal of this effort is to provide a welcoming setting where students with dyslexia may freely explore literature and share their own ideas without fear of judgment.

Long-term reading habits and academic success are greatly influenced by the school climate that encourages kids with dyslexia to read for pleasure (Sullivan & Brown, 2015).

Educators and politicians that make it their mission to encourage students' participation in online book clubs should be applauded for their contribution to the never-ending pursuit of knowledge and the development of the whole student. By creating a welcoming and exciting environment for members of the online book club, those who struggle with dyslexia have a better chance of developing a love of reading that goes beyond the classroom. According to research by Guthrie et al. (2014), the aforementioned phenomena is associated with improved academic performance and a more robust belief in one's own skills.

Conclusion

Reading engagement and enjoyment were shown to be higher among dyslexic students who engaged in virtual book clubs on sites like Goodreads compared to their non-participating peers. This remark not only demonstrates the need of a welcoming and accepting reading community in fostering the benefits of online book clubs as a method of supporting positive reading experiences, but also highlights the possibility of online book clubs as a means of facilitating such communities.

The study also highlights the research's practical implications and educational relevance. Recognizing the potential of these platforms to offer structured and loving environments that increase reading motivation and engagement among children with dyslexia, educators and educational authorities must reflect on the introduction of virtual book club activities into reading programs. The growth of lifelong reading habits and literacy skills among students with dyslexia may be aided by the implementation of strategies that encourage student choice in reading materials, reduce reading anxiety, and foster a sense of community among readers.

Overall, this research is an important addition to the ongoing efforts to improve access to effective reading interventions for children with dyslexia. We make significant progress toward creating a more inclusive classroom in which all students, including those with dyslexia, are able to thrive in their literary pursuits through the strategic use of digital platforms like Goodreads and the recognition of the inherent relationship between engagement and enjoyment within the act of reading.

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