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An Exploration of Reading Culture Among Contemporary Students in Institutions of Higher Learning, South Africa

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Abstract

Ostensibly, South Africa has long been troubled by a perennial crisis that confounds the achievement of an adept reading culture among their students across all levels of education. This article, therefore, explores reading culture among contemporary students in institutions of higher learning in South Africa. Traditional literature review method was utilised as the study's methodology. Reviewed articles were accessed from recognised scientific databases such as EBSCOhost, ERIC, Scopus, Science Direct, the Web of Science, Wiley Online Libraries, and Google Scholar. The study established and thematised the following findings: The need for strong advocacy for reading, the enforcement of plagiarism policy, active or direct guidance on using artificial intelligence, and the perfidy of a poor reading culture. This study suggests the following strategies and recommendations as the way forward: National prioritisation of reading culture as a recreational activity, Offering hybrid reading and writing supervision services to students in Higher Education Institutions, Radical advocacy for a reading culture-friendly meta-universe and Initiating relations with countries possessing a globally rated reading culture.

Keywords

reading culture, SDGs, recreational activity, reading culture in South African institutions of higher learning, reading habits in South African universities

INTRODUCTION

South Africa has long been buffeted by a perennial crisis that confounds the achievement of an adept reading culture among their students across all levels of education (Mojapelo, 2023). Approximately 23 years ago, Pretorius (2002) established that pupils in Grade 12 shockingly possessed reading abilities similar to those of Grade 7s. The previous scholar further asserted that reading ardour is also alarmingly puny among university students. This is evinced by her discovery that first-year students at the University of Pretoria reflected the reading levels of Grade 7-8 pupils. For this reason, she idiomatically outcried that the country had, for the longest time, fiddled while Rome was burning with fire. For example, Pretorius (2002) further reported that in the Stanford Diagnostic Reading Test administered to undergraduates of the University of Transkei, now known as Walter Sisulu University, only about 13,8% were convinced to read their materials comprehensively. Worryingly, 26% proved themselves less proficient at reading independently without help.

Avowedly, various researchers believe that these statistics might be the country's perpetual situation, because, to date, they have been lamenting unresolved reading barriers and gaps among learners and students in South Africa (Andrianatos, 2019; Cronje, 2022; Mojapelo, 2024). These researchers, therefore, posit that parents, centres of education, communities, the government, pupils, and students must realise reading culture as a panacea for them to practice as a habit and a skill necessary for them to grasp or achieve their goals, more especially those related to the subject content.

Morse et al. (2024) claim that where reading culture is sustainable as a practice, it offers many personal benefits to students, such as entrenched reading skills, deep neural exercise that promotes intellectual intuition, critical thinking, analysis, and aligned reflection. Over and above that, Ramolula and Molebatsi (2023) contend that this phenomenon is an indispensable tool for knowledge generation and vocabulary augmentation. Most importantly, reading culture is, on the other hand, a steering tenet of education as the fourth sustainable development goal. As such, Olasehinde et al. (2015) hype it as a crucial factor of effective human capital development, which is impossible where literacy or knowledge is absent. These researchers, therefore, advise that the South African education sector foster a positive reading culture among their students as that would simultaneously encourage civic engagement, conduct, and citizenry among those who tend to settle their grievance scores through violence, protest, and chaos creation. The following aim and objective guide the paper:

- To explore reading culture among contemporary students in institutions of higher learning in South Africa.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Ostensibly, reading culture is a panacea in all institutions of higher learning globally, yet for South Africa, this phenomenon is increasingly paradoxical for them to achieve. The Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) in 2021 established that approximately 81% of South African learners enrolled for the fourth grade are unable to read for comprehension, and such unimpressive results at a foundational level are a reflection that even students in higher education institutions are troubled with reading as much, according to Ramolula and Molebatsi (2023). As a result, these researchers are in agony, wondering whether the institutions of higher education, especially those hailing from the historically disadvantaged backgrounds, are sufficiently inculcating the culture of reading to their students. To what extent are the students of these institutions exposed to reading culture seminars and discussions facilitated by ardent readers? Are these students well informed about the deleterious impact of plagiarism, and have they been proficiently guided on how to utilise AI ethically? Observably, most students of this current generation prefer to invest their time in content creation on social media, binge drinking, and participating in illicit rampaging against their institutional authorities, more than going to the libraries to seek, improve, and imbibe knowledge and erudite skills (Mzenzi & Kang'ethe, 2025; Tolan, 2023). These researchers do not expect such students to develop a sustainable reading culture. This unfavourably negates effective curriculum development or growth and compromises knowledge generation, a perfidy to our future professionalism. Due to a paucity of studies on reading culture in Afrocentric perspectives, this article contributes one from a South African context.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The role of higher education institutions in enticing the culture of reading

Although Biesman-Simons (2021) attributes the persistent reading crisis in South Africa solely to the government, the truth is that all stakeholders within the education system need to sedulously put their hands on deck to cultivate a way forward towards establishing a sustainable reading culture for students in institutions of higher learning. For instance, the potential of the higher education sector to collaborate with the government to solicit interventions for this challenge cannot be undermined (Cronje, 2022). Primarily, the tertiary education division must play a leading role in discovering scientific mechanisms to persuade students to adopt a well-versed culture of reading, produce and graduate teachers who are ardent readers enough to coach and coax their students to read proficiently (Rimensberger, 2014). Cronje (2022) advises that these mechanisms can be best administered and encultured to learners at their foundational levels of education so that they can be ardent readers in their later years in life.

Furthermore, higher education institutions should make it their *sine qua non* to entice reading among their students for personal, psychological, emotional, and mental benefits beyond academic reasons (Kamalova & Koletvinova, 2016). For example, such would involve establishing and organising reading seminars or competitions for students to participate, excel, and be awarded. Ascertaining this suggestion, Merga and Mason (2019) aver that institutions of higher learning still need to target and attain an environment that enables an instructive context in which there is accessibility, opportunity, encouragement, and support for a well-founded culture of reading among students in South Africa. According to Sabri and Weber (2021), South Africa can achieve an optimum reading benchmark among their students by soliciting and creating collaborations with countries such as India, the United States of America, and Italy. These authors recommend such an endeavour because it would allure and allow schools and institutions of higher learning to participate, rate, and compare their reading capacities with countries with the highest reading threshold worldwide.

The relationship between poor reading culture and plagiarism

These authors believe an inseparable relationship exists between the existing apathetic reading culture and the incessant plagiarism among students enrolled in South African higher education centres. Unequivocally, students have notably become more indolent to read during this digital age than in any previous era on this earth (Ahmad et al., 2023; De Jongh & Milton, 2022). Chandrasena and Ilankoon (2022) posit that the digital age has prompted students to immerse themselves more in social media and the internet than they do with their materials. Conspicuously, among the few who are still immersed in reading, Diallo (2023) asserts that the internet and its volatile digital transitions have infected, altered, and diminished their commitment to engage with their printed materials. To the greatest extent, this has opened a

can of worms with perfidious behaviours such as plagiarism, dilemmas related to exam dishonesty, theft of research work, and other intellectual property crimes by students in institutions of higher learning.

Even though artificial intelligence (AI) is currently a fast topical instrument for students to utilise for their submissions, these authors lamentingly propound that it is also a silent killing thorn in the neck of students who are inept at reading their study packs. These academics opine so because, Al-Zahrani and Alasmari (2024) allude that artificial intelligence is partly duplicitous to the extent that it permits students to commit dubious academic fraudulence that, among other things, involves a banner of unethical research conundrums such as consent-related problems or improper citation issues, personal data violations, and malicious use of participant information. On the other hand, the ability of AI to produce artificial and hallucinated written information dilutes and disempowers the pedagogical value or potential of education to train students to think and assiduously search for information (Holmes, 2023). These researchers believe that students who have achieved a competent reading culture are also critical thinkers who know best how to use AI as a guide. Doing so makes them less likely to plagiarise or steal other people's academic property.

Manifestation of poor reading culture among students in institutions of higher learning

The poor reading culture among students manifests in numerous variegated ways, depending on which factors influence it. According to Bharuthram (2017), one eminent way of those ways is the extent to which the readers embrace reading as a habitual practice. As far as this phenomenon is contextually concerned, students with a poor reading culture are the most vulnerable to fail in practically showcasing their knowledge and skills to their colleagues and supervisors when their institutions send them for their practicum courses to their designated agencies of profession (Twabu, 2024). Pietersen and Malatjie (2022) further surmise that students fall short in blending and applying their academic content not only in professional practices but also in their real-life contexts.

Such unethical acts indisputably demean professionalism and subject their image to a dreary situation, more especially now that professionals in their different streams of practice have been regularly found consulting the internet in front of their clients to assist or give them answers (Tranter et al., 2022). Lawrence et al. (2022) share that students with a weak culture of reading can be noted by struggling to comprehend and make sense of the content they are reading, while sometimes challenges with fluency for some can be empirical proof that they fail to engage in reading as frequently as they need to. Indolent students fail in their studies, while others escape to pass because they are allowed extra opportunities, such as make-up tests and supplementary examinations (Mahlobo & Lebelo, 2020). These grace chances contaminate them with the illusion to misthink that these are an obligation to be done for them as much as they demand. When the system or institutions refuse them these opportunities, they respond viciously by manifesting deliberate maladaptive behaviours such as instigating unrest, violence towards authorities, and disfigurement or defacement of property (Mzenzi & Kang'ethe, 2025; Senjaya, 2023).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The paper has employed the lenses of Self-Determination Theory (SDT) to predictively account, comprehend, and report in scholarly perspectives, while exploring the possible reasons behind the shrugged culture of reading in South Africa.
The Self-Determination Theory was established by the psychologists Deci and Ryan in 1985, with the focal assertion that the greater the extent of self-determination, the greater the motivation to put effort into a rewarding behaviour. Mbhele (2016) writes that, according to this theory, the decision to engage in an activity is affected by whether the activity is coerced or taken autonomously. There are fundamentally three tenets that underpin this theoretical phenomenon for a task to remain enticing to an individual, which are competence, autonomy, and relatedness. In the context of this theory, these terms are defined as follows:

- Competence defines the quality of excellence that comes with the experiences of accomplishing challenging tasks. For this factor to remain boosted, there needs to be timely positive feedback, assuring the individuals that they are progressing towards the right direction, and sometimes rewards that serve as proof of goal accomplishment to motivate them to stick to the behaviour. Although negative feedback usually demolishes competence, for positively biased people, they can convert it to seek techniques to enhance themselves for the better. To this study, when students feel more competent in reading, the more they may be encouraged to read frequently.

- Autonomy explains the sense of being in control of a behaviour. This means that the person pursuing the activity is democratically permitted to engage in an activity willingly and open to laissez-faire for other people's views to influence the outcome. It is crucial for people to feel autonomous about decisions that impact them so that they behave in a direction that promotes their interests and values. The case is also valid for this study, because when students are conditioned to realise the value of reading without being coerced, the more eager they get to engage in reading.

- Relatedness explains the extent of connection with others who pursue the common task or activity. This aspect depends upon how much the individual is associated with a class or group that performs the task they perform. For instance, associating with peers who promote reading rather than those who shame and defame reading can increase relatedness. Relatedness also takes the form of receiving inspiration or approval from a significant societal figure, such as a lecturer. Thus, those who may be found motivated to read more often because of that approval usually perform better in class. Therefore, in this study, relatedness contextually contends that a reader-

friendly environment fostered by parents, lecturers, and students is the one that stands a chance to normalise the culture of reading more than the opposite, which derogates reading among its student populace.

Since illiteracy and reading culture are a longstanding crisis in South Africa, the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) offers the three critically motivational instruments that foster and allure the foundation of reading habit among humans before they even attain classifications of being called learners or students, where it has become that they read or study solely for academic purposes or to pass standardised assessments. Therefore, these scholars believe that competence, autonomy, and relatedness are stimulative elements to vitalise a good reading habit, basically from homes, schools, institutions of higher learning, and beyond any environment that promotes reading as a culture. Hence, this study puts forth the theory to inform parents, teachers, lecturers, and reading coaches to possess these elements to entice reading culture among students and youth in South African communities.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study utilised a literature review as its methodology to explore the students' reading culture in institutions of higher education in South Africa succinctly. Exceptionally, as a research method, Snyder (2019) predicates literature review as the one which possesses the power to integrate and synthesise novel research findings and perspectives from the existing empirical science with an anomalous power to answer research questions in the most spectacular way that any other methodology possibly can. Moreover, and apart from answering research questions spectacularly, literature review is most crucial at meta-levels of research to explicitly highlight critical gaps where research is needed, as guided by statistical reflections of whether the topic under study appears saturated or still suffers paucity in terms of scientific representation (Crocetti, 2016; Mzenzi & Kang'ethe, 2025). Kajiita and Kang'ethe (2024) posit that there are primarily six steering principles of literature review as a research method and these are: formulation of clear research questions and objectives for the benefit of achieving scientific validity and reliable review; examination of relevant published literature; screening of literature for inclusion into analysis; evaluation of primary research quality; data processing, and lastly data interpretation and summary presentation. In the execution of these steps, the study sought academic sources and journals from various database engines such as EBSCOhost, ERIC, Scopus, Science Direct, the Web of Science, Wiley Online Libraries, and Google Scholar to collect and synthesise a relevant and credible literature review report. The main search terms and phrases to generate sources for analysis were: reading culture, reading culture in South African institutions of higher learning, and reading habits in South African universities were utilised to generate sources from these database engines. Due to the scarcity of journal articles covering reading culture in South African institutions of higher learning, a wide array of search engines had to be considered to be sure to exhaust as much, for reliability and validity of results and search strategy.

Although the phenomenon of inclusion and exclusion criteria is popular in systematic and scoping reviews, the paper as narrative as it is also considered some aspects of inclusion and exclusion for the benefit of synthesising a robustly relevant discourse of quality on the subject. For inclusion, the sources had to satisfy the custom range within 2014 and 2024; be in open access; texts had to be written in English, and if not, have translated versions for conducive analysis. Additionally, peer-reviewed journal articles were only considered for reasons concerned with quality assessments for inclusion (Kilfoil, 2013). Conversely, sources outside the aforementioned inclusion criteria were excluded.

THEMATIC DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

This section of the article thematically discusses the findings derived from a corpus of prominent findings and point out gaps, suggestions, and strategies to create an ecosystem that motivates a reading culture among university students in South Africa.

Strong advocacy for reading

The authors, Fleisch and Motilal (2020) quoted various researchers contending that the South African education sector is under siege when it comes to producing deft readers and highly learned citizens. According to Combrinck et al. (2014), this gap accounts for the substantial arrears of investment that need to be paid towards the education of learners and homely grooming at the earliest possible age. This can be possible through South African parents and communities actively taking the forefront position in establishing sound and constructive literacy initiatives for their ménages (Le Roux, 2020). Following the parents and communities, the government and its implicated departments must position themselves at the centre of these support programmes to ensure their stakeholders achieve a reputable competitive reading threshold with the rest of the globe (Biesman-Simons, 2021). To bring this target home, the involvement of parents, learners, students, institutions of education, and communities needs them to radically advocate for the South African government to fully recognise reading as a recreational activity (Snyman, 2016; Tlou & Snyman, 2020). The success of such a great initiative would respond to and solve the pervasive involvement of the youth in binge drinking, crime, and high student failure rates. Again, such a move would free pedagogical practitioners from the anticipation that they must solely teach their learners or students to read well.

Upon this discourse, Rule and Land (2017) further debate that reading and writing are a plug and a socket, and therefore should be inextricably taught to students. This proposition is a wake-up call for institutions of higher learning to vigorously take the frontline to revamp and advance their curriculum so that it can deliver the skills of reading and writing

to students in one injection. On the other flip side of the coin, the basic education sector and the higher education have a collective responsibility to pursue a mutual exchange of learners, students, and professionals who are well trained to read and write to ensure that South Africa consistently grades up on reading and writing assessments with other countries. Exceptionally, higher education institutions in this cooperation should, by prudence, realise their upper hand advantage to mobilise funds, make or influence policies, and create an ecosystem that champions reading as well as writing for their beneficiaries (Gredley & McMillan, 2024; Scott & Saaiman, 2016).

Enforcement of plagiarism policy

The recent era of this meta-universe has made artificial intelligence an inescapable learning instrument and a mechanical apparatus to generate quick knowledge, especially for institutions of higher learning. According to Tarisayi (2023), the emergence of AI and its influence on academia has evoked heated and paradoxical arguments among scholars, with some bemoaning its potential to threaten academic integrity. In contrast, others worry about its potential to debar the technically marginalised groups from efficiently benefiting from education at the same pace as their technically advanced adversary. Mahabeer and Pirtheepal (2019) disclose that the South African higher education division has one of the weakest plagiarism laws and policies compared to other countries. As a result, Ndebele (2020) argues that the burgeoning projects by the South African universities to introduce, recognise, and accept artificial intelligence as a learning technical tool have come at the most inopportune period, where they are realising the lack of laws to address plagiarism and academic integrity concerns. Therefore, institutions of higher education should legislate or enforce policies, penalties, and punishments that will guide them in warning and handling students who commit plagiarism, with the adverse consequences they may face should they perpetrate any act of plagiarism or academic fraudulence (Mphahlele & McKenna, 2018).

However, Manjeya (2021) suggests that before the higher scholarly institutions enact their plagiarism laws or policies upon students, they must first obtain and provide effective student-help interventions or mechanisms. As such, Castle and Keane (2016) and Moloi and Salawu (2022) highlight the necessity for the student writing and reading centres of mostly the rural higher education institutions to capacitate their student-helping personnel with the advanced knowledge of mechanical learning and the broad spectrum of dynamics related to artificial intelligence. Migrating to digital teaching and learning processes is critically important to ensure South Africa also blends well with the era. But it is also equally crucial that the reading and writing hubs of these tertiary education centres sanction for an environment that promotes academic originality through hybrid text reading and writing activities, with the highest target to train their beneficiaries to engage in higher cognitive processes such as text comprehension, analysis, and brainstorming for their submissions.

Active or direct guidance on the use of Artificial Intelligence

The depth of the previous thematic discussion coerced these scholars to offer a peculiar dialogue on the requirement for universities and colleges to dedicate services that offer direct guidance to students on using AI for academic purposes. Findings by Bosch and Uzuegbunam (2023) propound that the success of teaching students on the use of AI largely depends on destigmatisation that needs to be done to deconstruct the negative perceptions academics created towards this tool ever since it first surfaced. For this view, Patel and Ragolane (2024) commendably posit for higher education institutions to see artificial intelligence as a catalyst to brew up, enhance, and bring into reality the favourable South African educational aspirations stipulated in its National Development Plan 2030. Otherwise, in the absence of these academic negative connotations concerning AI ethical considerations, universities and colleges in South Africa have the potential to teach and actively offer the necessary AI guidance to students (Jansen, 2018). Such active guidance involves projects such as blending AI ethics with the teaching and learning curricula, initiating specific student-lecturer institutional table discussions on the well-mannered use of this instrument, and hiring AI institutional consultants for both students and staff members to deliver AI literacy programmes for their institutions (Pramjeeth & Ramgovind, 2024). Last but not least, Tarisayi (2023) postulates that apart from proactively coaxing students to use AI, higher education centres should also extend their role to devise artificial intelligence detector tools.

Against the above course, these researchers insist that AI must be inextricably taught to students with technical grammar revision tools, digital research fundamentals, methodology, and analysis. This idea is based on the fact that institutions are still obligated to maintain research as a reliable scientific body that produces realistic information amidst the inevitable digital advancements that somehow threaten this potential. As they do so, institutions of higher learning should also avoid devaluing the need to proportionally represent AI together with the manual culture of reading and writing to decrease student dependency on technical mechanisms that might be addictive and poisonous to human intelligence capacity. From an economic perspective, these scholars remark that maintaining and promoting a blended reading and writing culture will keep these practices affordable because AI-generated information comes at a cost.

The perfidy of a poor reading culture

The perfidy that comes with a poor reading culture cannot be sufficiently overemphasised. First and foremost, a non-reading nation is prone to a high student failure rate and illiteracy (Cekiso, 2024). According to Mojapelo (2023), these nations are notably the most stagnant in development, growth, and innovation compared to their developed economic rivalry. This view, as alluded to by Bharuthram (2017), is highly crucial in support of the fact that South Africa and the

beneficiaries of its education sector need to appreciate reading beyond and outside their customary learning environments. Moreover, Andrés (2020) assents that these students should cooperate with the reading practice to an extent that this skill equips them with the ability to relate to their texts, acquire and make a robust sense of their experiences, besides studying or reading materials for just being literate. Contextually, for this course, Andrianatos (2019) informs that other repugnances, such as indiscipline related to the substandard reading culture among students, are caused by factors influenced by the loss of moral campus. For instance, most students and professionals who reflect an enervated attitude towards the reading practice tend to get apprehended committing dubious activities such as sex for marks, cheating, fraud, corruption, or piracy and copyright infringement in pursuit of succeeding in the easiest way possible (Mutongoza & Hendricks, 2024; Ramabina & Nsibirwa, 2024).

Economically, universities and colleges in South Africa suffer a paucity of funding and subsidies from the Department of Higher Education & Training (DHET) and other private entities (Styger & Heymans, 2015; Temoso & Myeki, 2023). According to Adeyemo (2023), the Department of Science, Innovation & Technology also mewled to the plateauing contribution and deficits on digital innovation, high-impact research output, and the marketisation of other skills from this structure as the anticipated by-products of the South African tertiary education even after COVID-19. This perfidy does not solely sabotage pecuniary interests, but also negatively affects the initiatives to accumulate relations or partnerships with the first world countries, which already claim the global recognition of performance in these fraternities. Resultantly, when the afore-discussed perfidies remain insurmountable, South Africa will forever remain a developing country or even drop to a worse world grade of development.

CONCLUSION

The South African reading culture has, for the longest time, been notably plebeian and has plateaued ever since this niche was explored. The nature of such connotation puts the potential of its education system at the highest stake, and a negative brand image upon its beneficiaries. In South Africa and abroad, students from these institutions suffer unemployment because they have failed to read and write at school, and this shame extends to disadvantaging them in interviews that are meant to absorb them into work. Resultantly, they ache in poverty while the country aches for obvious development compared to other similarly resourceful countries. Therefore, informed by this study and its literature, there is still a huge milestone to the journey of encouraging these students to hearten reading. Families in cooperation with their stakeholders need to establish reading and writing programmes. At the same time, universities and the government should proactively accrue funds to graduate ardent teachers or lecturers who are holistically informed to coax learners and students on the phenomenon and its eclectic interdisciplinary phenomena.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND THE WAY FORWARD

This paper presents constructive ideas and strategies to remedy the unappetising reading culture in South African Higher Education Institutions and their correlative entities. These include the following:

National prioritisation of reading culture as a recreational activity

The South African government needs to fully recognise reading and writing as some form of craft that, when nurtured properly, becomes a skill and an occupation that puts food on the table. In this perspective, it can readily be acknowledged as a national recreational activity that is worthy to accrue funding and support from the government and the private entity.

Offering hybrid reading and writing supervision services to students in Higher Education Institutions

Higher Education Institutions should proportionally administer reading and writing to students. As much as the era dictates digital mechanisms or practices, the truth is that some vernacular approaches and practices are still relevant, especially for this phenomenon that requires diligent man-to-man training and mentorship. Therefore, institutions should consider a hybrid approach to acclimatise and blend students within the meta-infused era.

Strengthening policy on assessment measures of quality assurance and meta-learning apparatus

Institutions of higher learning must have stringent policies, more especially on measures of quality assurance to ensure genuine results on assessments that are meant to pass or graduate these students. Additionally, higher education institutions must own tools or apparatus to detect the overuse of meta learning materials. Furthermore, dictating a percentage benchmark of an accepted margin on the use of AI would mitigate students' overuse of these meta materials. Simultaneously, this would also ensure that, as students use digital applications for their submissions, they proportionally go to the library for books as much.

Radical advocacy for a reading culture-friendly meta-universe

Essentially, parents, students, communities, and the government need to utilise their collaborative efforts to pave the way forward in creating a reading culture-friendly meta-universe, such that the influence of technology in education does not demean and devalue the learning process through active information-seeking and enquiry. This means that South Africa must establish techniques to somehow retain the vernacular way of reading, writing, and learning thereof in consideration of the economically disadvantaged remnant margins who nevertheless appreciate accessing education. However, it is not up to par with the expected global standards.

Initiating relations with countries possessing a globally rated reading culture

In English, there is a proverb which says, *You are the average of the five people you associate with*. Therefore, if the South African higher education sector wishes to hit the jackpot to achieve a competitive and impressive reading culture for its students and the nation at large, it has to ponder initiating mutual relations or partnerships that are competently positioned at the top echelon with regard to reading culture. This endeavour would enable them to solicit strategies to hype their reading capabilities and sometimes challenge reading competitions with them to boost and rate their reading confidence with the highest globally performing countries.

DATA AVAILABILITY

This review is based entirely on publicly available data and information sourced from peer-reviewed articles, reports, and other academic publications cited in the manuscript. No new primary data were generated or analysed during this study. Readers may refer to the cited sources for detailed information.

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