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**Research report title: Gender Disparities: Comparing Reading Practices of Grade 10 isiZulu Readers**

### **ABSTRACT**

Recent studies maintain that the concept of a gender gap in literacy remains a large concern, as the gap between boys' and girls' reading literacy is reflected in studies conducted globally in which females consistently outperformed males. Therefore, this study discusses how perceptions about gender and reading practice are fabricated from a societal point of view. It presents the social cognitive theory of gender disparities in reading practices of grade 10 isiZulu First Additional language readers. Additionally, my study discusses how the readers with different language background and proficiency in isiZulu operate and respond when reading texts that are influenced by their own reading preferences. As a result, it identifies a variety of influences to be considered in gendered reading practices such as; the readers, the type of text, the activity, the language context, and the social and the cognitive aspects of reading practices.

This qualitative research project investigated how six learners of isiZulu First Additional grade 10 level, from various language backgrounds made meaning of informal texts over the course of four weeks. . Hence, I used a range of text types as a research tool in order to attend to this issue. To collect data, I therefore designed a series of questions through questionnaires, and observation schedule as means of authenticating the learners' responses to institute the findings. Subsequently, by examining Barrett's Taxonomy of reading comprehension, which focusses on cognitive and affective domains of reading, I conclude that reading is not only important for academic success, but also for negotiating our way through all aspects of life in an increasing bureaucratic society. Additionally, having background of reading literacy practices may grant chances of participation in the that society, as a result, those societal perceptions are likely to change if and when reading practices also grant chances to accommodate interests of the readers. Findings endorse that learners should be granted a chance of choosing texts that interest them so they can respond positively and accordingly, as, boys' scores disagreed with previous research in a particular, comprehension component where they outscored the girls.