

# Academic Research Poster

## Institutional and sport management educators' implementation of reading list diversity: A congruence analysis

Dr Stacie Gray  
University of Northampton  
stacie.gray@northampton.ac.uk



### Introduction

Amid rising calls to decolonise and diversify the curricula, institutions have developed top down, senior manager led curriculum reform initiatives (Shain et al., 2021). However, little knowledge exists regarding the extent of implementation by educators.

#### Aim:

To explore the implementation of reading list diversity initiatives at English, HE institutions.

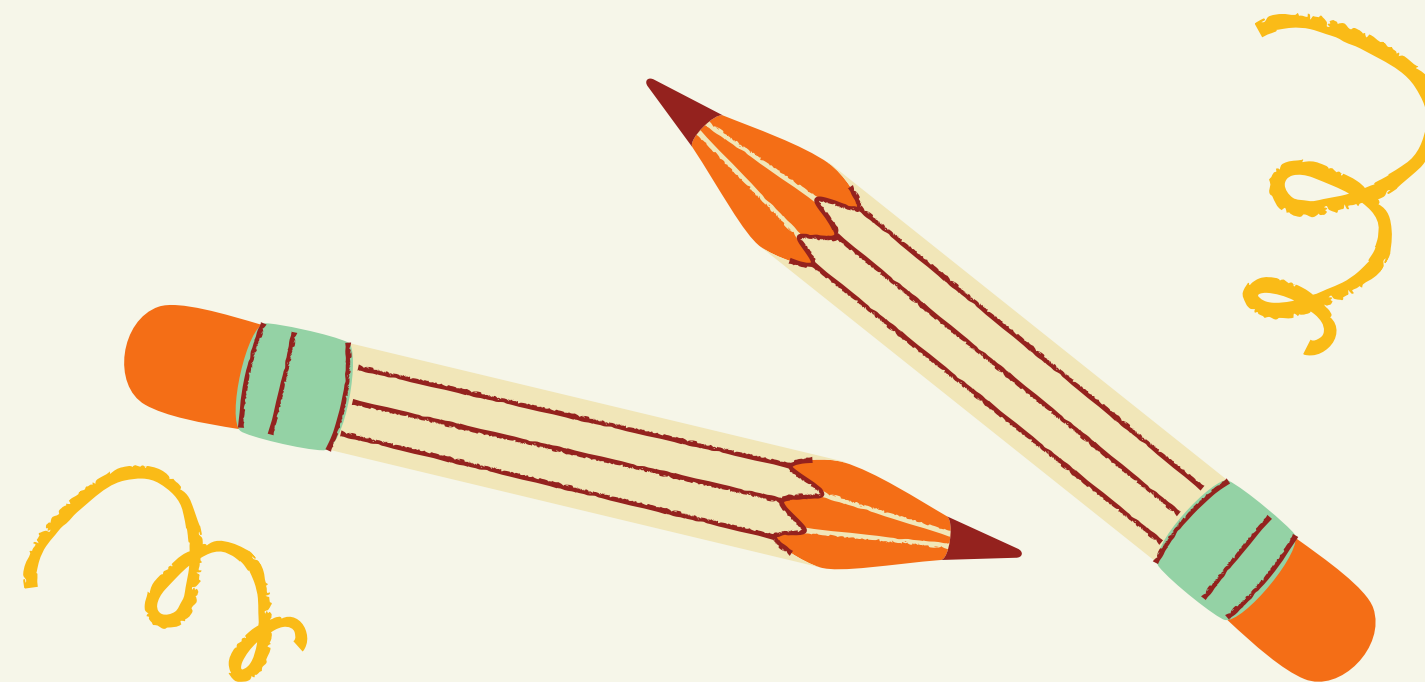
#### Objectives:

1. To explore the extent to which reading list diversity / decolonisation guidance is provided at the institutional level.
2. Use congruence theory to explore sport management educators' perceptions towards, and implementation of, diverse reading lists.

### Theory

The extent of reading list diversity implementation by educators is impacted by:

1. **Dyadic goal importance congruence.** This refers to a shared understanding regarding the importance of goals and contributes towards activity alignment (Colbert et al., 2008).
2. **Value congruence.** In the teaching context, this considers the extent to which educators feel that they share prevailing norms and values of their institution (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015).



### Methodology

#### Phase 1:

- List of English HE institutes generated through the Guardian's league table.
- Official websites searched for reading list diversity and / or decolonisation guidance.
- Focus on 'strategic advancement' through publicisation of the policy or guidance
- Inductive content analysis.
- 26 institutions had publically available data.

#### Phase 2:

- Semi-structured online interviews with sport management lecturers and academic subject librarians / academic liaison librarians.
- Thematic analysis using NVivo.

#### Final Interview Sample:

- 14 sport management educators.
- 10 librarians.

### Findings and Discussion

- 26/99 institutes had public information available = **heightened transparency around reading list diversity / decolonisation approaches is needed.**
- A multiplicity of interpretations existed and diversity / decolonisation was used interchangeably = **informed discussions are needed to develop a sector wide understanding of diversity vs decolonisation.**

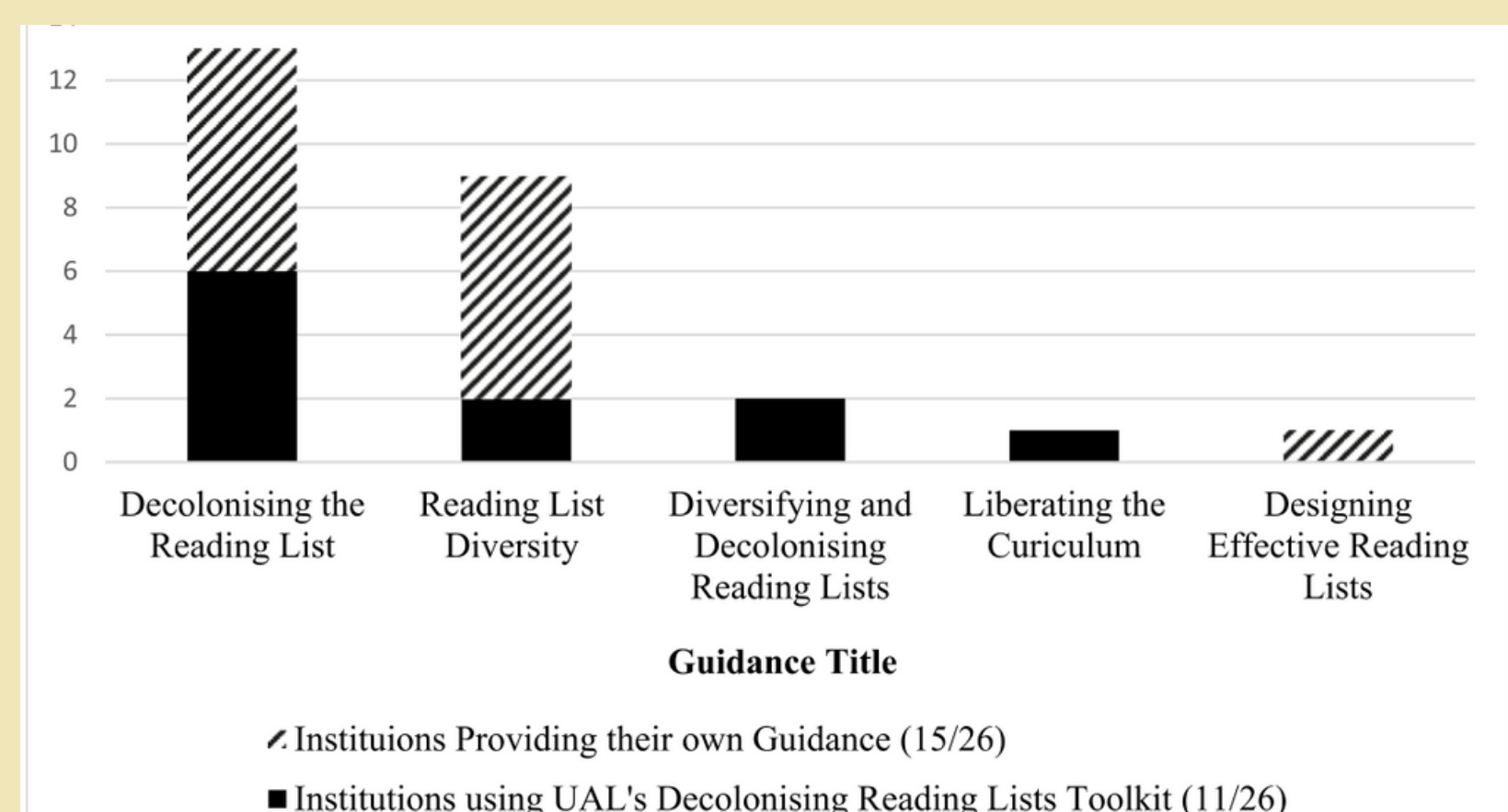


Fig. 1. Library Service's reading list decolonisation/diversity guidance titles.

**Institutional guidance** identified four primary, student-centred outcomes that explained the importance of diversifying / decolonising reading lists: increasing student attainment, increasing students' engagement, creating a more inclusive student learning experience, and creating a sense of belonging.

#### Value congruence

- Pedagogical value of reading list diversity was not embedded amongst educators.
  - Issues pertaining to Western centrism in the sport management curricular (McSweeney et al., 2022) and the over-representation of white male authors (Arshad et al., 2021; Schucan Bird & Pitman, 2020), will not be resolved without a conscious commitment by academics.
- The extent of educators' (non) implementation was largely perceived to be congruent with the diversity values expressed by their institution and department.
- Library services guidance often failed to signify the institutional, strategic value of reading list diversity.

#### Dyadic goal importance congruence

- No educators perceived diverse reading lists as an answer to the white-BAME awarding gap.
- Educators were sceptical that reading list diversity would increase engagement.
- Educators agreed that diverse reading lists may create a more inclusive learning experience / sense of belonging.

### Conclusion

#### Recommendations: Library Services

- Guidance should signify the institutional value of reading list diversity through alignment with, and reference to, institutional strategy (e.g., values / EDI strategies etc.) and macro level policy.
- Increase liaison with subject leaders to instil departmental value.
- Transcending the student outcomes focus, there is potential to explore the embedment of moral justifications into institutional guidance.
- Recognising that subjects possess unique histories, collaborative, subject specific training sessions delivered by library services and subject leads may provide a useful forum to enhance reading list diversity knowledge.

#### Recommendations: Sport Departments

- Senior management must signal the importance of diversity and raise awareness of institutional policy.
- Academics should critically assess the body of sport management knowledge (McSweeney et al., 2022).
- Academics must recognise their contribution to the (re)production of knowledge (Phull et al., 2019; Singer et al., 2022), interrogate their own positionality and engage in critical self-reflection.

#### Related literature

- McSweeney, M., Teare, G., & Liu, H. (2022). Examining the use of postcolonial management theory in sport management education: Strategies to enhance student learning of colonial histories and challenge dominant ideologies. *Sport Management Education Journal*, 16(2), 142–153.
- Phull, K., Ciflikli, G., & Meibauer, G. (2019). Gender and bias in the international relations curriculum: Insights from reading lists. *European Journal of International Relations*, 25(2), 383–407. <https://doi.org/10.1177/135406611879169>
- Schucan Bird, K. (2022). How diverse is your reading list? Tools, tips and challenges in diversity inclusion and decolonisation. In A. Day (Ed.), *Diversity, inclusion and decolonization* (97–109). Bristol: Bristol University Press.
- Schucan Bird, K., & Pitman, L. (2020). How diverse is your reading list? Exploring issues of representation and decolonisation in the UK. *Higher Education*, 79(5), 903–920. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-019-00446-9>
- Shain, F., Yildiz, Ü. K., Poku, V., & Gokay, B. (2021). From silence to 'strategic advancement': Institutional responses to 'decolonising' in higher education in England. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 26(7–8), 920–936.

