Time to belong: Exploring factors affecting BAME young people's sense of belonging in relation to their school experiences.

U. K. Tabassum

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Educational and Child Psychology

The University of Sheffield
Faculty of Social Sciences
School of Psychology

June 2022

Acknowledgements

First and foremost I would like to thank the participants who shared their experiences, and without whom this research would not have been possible.

I would like to thank my thesis supervisor Dr. Antony Williams for his valuable support, advice, excellent thought-provoking supervision, and encouragement throughout this research project.

I would also like to extend my heartfelt thanks to my placement Supervisor of two years, Dr. Kathryn Robinson, for her unequivocal support, enthusiasm for my research and for our invaluable psychological discussions.

To Gabby, my colleague and friend, thank you for being my mentor and always having time to support me.

To my dear friend Dr. Sarwat, who has always encouraged me to apply for the DEdCPsy Course. Thank you for your support on my TEP journey and for all our years of friendship.

Aimee, you are the best! Thank you for your friendship, for being my rock, and for always supporting me. To my other best friends, thank you for just always being there.

Finally, last but by no means least, thank you to my wonderful family for your love and support in everything I do. I could not have done this without you all.

This thesis is dedicated to my much-loved parents. I remain forever grateful for the love of learning and the value of education you instilled in me from childhood. I miss you every day. You are my inspiration - I hope I have made you proud.

Abstract

Objective: Belongingness is a fundamental human need. This research explores factors affecting BAME[1] young people's (YP) sense of belonging (SoB) in relation to their school experiences, mainly with school staff and fellow students. It provides a platform for YP with minority voices to speak about their experiences.

Methodology: A qualitative methodology used semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis as advocated by Braun and Clarke (2006). The interview questions, whilst semi-structured, were open-ended and did not seek to orient any response, i.e., if a SoB is positively or negatively experienced. The study included eight participants, aged 15-16 years, from BAME backgrounds.

Findings: The findings indicate a SoB is experienced more positively by some participants than others. Positive and negative experiences co-existed for many participants. Prominent themes derived from the data include '*fairness, equality, and 'race'-based differentials*,' experiencing '*racist transgressions as normalised behaviours*,' the need for '*safe spaces and places,*' and '*culturally sensitive educational experiences*.'

Conclusion: The findings of this research indicate experiencing a positive SoB was important to participants. The research has implications for policy and practice in schools, local authorities, Educational Psychology Services, Educational Psychologists, and for individuals or organisations interested in providing high quality, positive experiences of belongingness for all students, including BAME YP.

---

[1] *Black, Asian minority ethnic.*

Table of Contents[2]

---

[2] *NB: To access chapters and appendices from the Contents page, please click on the title to access directly.*
To access appendices within the text, please click on the appendix title (feature only available in Word version).

List of Tables

List of Figures

Abbreviations

A8	Attainment 8 (at GCSE)
ACE	adverse childhood experience
A-Level	Advanced Level (qualification)
BAME	Black, Asian minority ethnic
EST	ecological systems' theory
BEST	bio-ecological systems' theory
BLM	Black lives matter
BPS	British Psychological Society
CRT	Critical race theory
EDL	English Defence League
EHCP	Education and Health Care Plan
EPS	Educational Psychology Service
EP	Educational Psychologist
EST	Ecological systems' theory
FSM	free school meals
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
LA	local authority
MH	mental health
MP	member of Parliament
ONS	Office for National Statistics
PACE	Police and Criminal Evidence Act
P8	Progress 8 (at GCSE)
PE	permanent exclusion
PTSD	post-traumatic stress disorder
SaS	stop and search
SB	school belongingness
SoB	sense of belonging
TA	thematic analysis
UK	United Kingdom
UKIP	United Kingdom Independence Party
YP	young people

Declaration

I, Unsah K. Tabassum, the author, confirm that the thesis is my own work. I am aware of the university's guidance on the use of unfair means (www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/unfair-means). This work has not previously been presented for an award at this, or any other, university.

Copywrite statement

Language disclaimer

Language is important and can affect and influence perceptions or interpretations of a given reality or situation. The author acknowledges, and respects, there are differing opinions and perspectives on the use of terms referring to different ethnic or racial groups. This thesis uses the acronym 'BAME' (Black, Asian minority ethnic) and terms relating to ethnicities such as 'White ethnicities,' which have some limitations, including collective categorisation. The lived experiences of different racial and ethnic communities, both here in the UK and globally, may be varied and sometimes unique to a particular community. However, whilst society's dialogue around preferred terminologies, particularly linked to race or ethnicity, remains ongoing, research on how race and ethnicity affect BAME communities experientially needs to continue. To this end, the author's use of terms such as BAME does not intend to further racialise any group, rather this research seeks to provide a platform for YP's minority voices to be heard, and hopefully understood.

1 Introduction and Rationale

"The sense of belonging is fundamental to the way humankind organizes itself. If it was unimportant, we would live solitary lives…"

- Theisen, 2021.

Belongingness is a fundamental need. Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs' theory stems from the need to belong theory which suggests that human beings aspire to establish interpersonal relationships which show concern for our well-being (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). This research aims to explore factors affecting Black, Asian minority ethnic (BAME) young people's (YP's) sense of belonging (SoB) in relation to their school experiences, in particular, adolescents aged approximately 15-16 years.

I understand, and acknowledge, the term 'BAME,' is subject to much discussion. Some may argue it is a label, or does not acknowledge or describe specific heritage or ancestry (Bunglawala, 2019). The National Library of Medicine suggests the alternative term "racially minoritised" (Milner & Jumbe, 2020, p. 419). Personally, I think using the term 'racially minoritised' (Milner & Jumbe, 2020) in this thesis could be misconstrued; suggesting a pre-determined minoritisation of participants could potentially negate this research's purpose. Rather, I hoped to find some participants experienced belongingness positively at school, and was aware, for some participants, more challenging experiences may occur. Therefore, this research uses the term BAME with the best of intentions.

Prior to embarking on the Doctor of Educational and Child Psychology (DEdCPsy) course, I had significant experience, and the privilege, of working with YP in secondary schools, as a teacher of English, in a career spanning nearly two decades. I have held posts including Head of English, Assistant Head teacher and Assistant Principal. I believe my considerable

knowledge and experience of the secondary school environment enhances my understanding of participants' experiences, and the contexts in which they function, along with the advantage of being a BAME researcher.

Early during my teaching career, the Macpherson (1999) report was published in response to the racist murder of teenager Stephen Lawrence, in 1993. This defined institutional racism as a "collective failure to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture, or ethnic origin…" (Macpherson,1999, Para. 6.34). Despite being published over two decades ago, the definition remains relevant in that racism remains a contemporary issue in Britain, including in socio-political contexts (such as Brexit and around immigration) and institutional contexts (such as education), and could potentially affect participants' experiences in this study. I feel organisations serving the public, in particular YP, should reflect upon, and continue to apply this definition to examine the standards of their own service delivery. George Floyd's murder in 2020 in America, had global effects such as protests, including in Britain (Okri, 2021), and along with the Black Lives Matter movement, highlighted racial disparities, including within law enforcement, and linked consequences. The British police, legal, social and educational systems are no exception to such disparities, as discussed later in the literature review.

Successive British governments have promised change in White Papers, often with limited success. For example, stating "Schools will be taking practical steps to raise ethnic minority pupils' achievements and promote racial harmony" (Gillard, 1997). "Race inequality is sustained" and "Government… needs to take seriously the problem of the under-representation of minority ethnic groups in the gifted and talented programme,"[3] (House of

---

[3]*Under-representation of minority ethnic groups in the gifted and talented (G&T) programme - "white pupils were twice as likely to be identified as gifted and talented as pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds in general*

Commons, 2006). In 2022, the Government aims to create "a unified" system in school… for all children" enabling schools to retain their "own identity" and "accountability to the local community" (GOV.UK, 2022).

During my teaching career, when some BAME YP experienced difficulties in school, especially behavioural, within-child factors such as aggression or reticence were often cited as causal factors. Socio-economic and socio-political factors, or the inextricability of the home: school interface, often lacked credible exploration. Well-meaning comments from some school staff such as "I don't see colour," may serve to deny its very existence. However, psychodynamics linked to racism suggest structural or institutional biases may not be as unintended or 'unconscious,' (Beckles-Raymond, 2020, p. 184) as frequently portrayed. Such biases may be deeply rooted in nationalistic concepts of whiteness connected to identity and selfhood, generating personal, structural, or institutional racism (Beckles-Raymond, 2020).

Instead, I suggest we acknowledge our differences as celebratory elements, challenge our own beliefs, assumptions, biases, and begin to embark on change processes both internal (within ourselves) and external (within the environment). Those interested in this research will likely share the following aims: achieving the best possible life outcomes for all YP we are responsible for, regardless of 'race,' ethnicity, or background.

As a trainee educational psychologist, in my final months of training, I reflect on, and continue to consider, how school belongingness can be increased for all YP, including those

_____

(10% of white pupils; 6% of pupils of Indian origin; 5% of pupils of Pakistani origin; 4% of pupils of Black Caribbean origin; and 2% of pupils of Black African origin (House of Commons, 2006, p. 15).

from minority groups, whose voices may be less heard. In order to conduct this research without prejudice, my research questions were designed to afford BAME YP the opportunity to share both positive and, if applicable, challenging experiences about belongingness in their schools or educational environments. The research sought to provide a space for their voices to be heard.

In brief, this thesis begins with a Literature review, acknowledgement of Research gaps, and the rationale. Next, are the Methodology, Findings and Discussion sections. These are followed by the sections on Limitations, Recommendations, Dissemination of Research, and Future research. The thesis ends with a Reflections and Conclusion section.

2 Critical Literature Review

"You are a child of the universe, no less than the trees and the stars, you have a right to be here…"

- *Ehrmann, 'Desiderata,' 1927*

2.1 Chapter Overview

A sense of belonging (SoB) and hope in young people (YP) has positive correlations with their academic performance (Wurster et al., 2020). For YP of BAME heritage this has challenges. This critical literature review begins by defining belongingness, followed by selected theoretical perspectives and an exploration of factors affecting belongingness for BAME YP, through a bio-ecological systems' perspective (Bronfenbrenner 1986; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2007). It ends with a brief conclusion and the research questions (RQs).

2.2 Defining Belongingness

The concept of '*belonging*' in itself is not new. From featuring in history books regarding connectivity to a nation or country (Daugbjerg, 2014), to stories handed down from families about religion (Remen, 2001) or war (Aliyev, 2020). Through to storytelling in literature with protagonists such as Oliver Twist craving acceptance (Persulessy, 2018); and more critical thinking around having unconditional positive regard (Wilkins, 2000) for and from others (Rogers, 1951). From personhood and struggles against inhumane conditions (Shotter, 1993), to Freudian concepts of familial belonging, especially, mother: child dyads (Fenichel, 2018), and building secure attachments (Bowlby, 1969; Bowlby, 1982) in Psychology.

Belongingness can be defined as one's experience of being personally involved in an environment (*organisation or relationship*) or system (*cultural or natural*) that one feels a fundamental part of (Hagerty et al., 1992). In Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs' theory, belongingness originates from the need to belong theory which suggests human beings are motivated and driven to maintain some minimal relationships which are interpersonal, pleasant and indicate a concern for one's well-being, (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Establishing this type of driven, goal-related, interpersonal connectivity supports relationship-cultivation, often through easily established social bonds, (Leary et al., 2013). This helps develop a positive SoB. One's perception of belongingness is derived from feeling needed, valued, accepted, and feeling that you complement the environment or system (Yıldız, 2016) pertinent to you, resulting in feeling that you '*fit in.*'

Belongingness retains contemporary relevance as a psychological construct, especially in connection to how it is operationalised (Calhoun, 2003). In a modern context, our belongingness environment includes both the communities we interact with, in person (Twenge et al., 2019), and online (Gao et al., 2017), and within which one feels a sense of congruence, including work, school, and wider society.

Social belongingness and participation are a human necessity (Roberson & Zumbo, 2019) enhancing the societies in which we live. This may constitute inclusivity in our workplaces (Shore et al., 2018) and educational institutions (Juvonen et al., 2019); forging connectedness in our families (Seymour & Walsh, 2013); mattering and belonging in friendships (Baskerville, 2020), and inner self-determination and identity-formation (Mahar et al., 2013). Consequently, belongingness is viewed as a key psychological human need (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Olcoń et al., 2017). A SoB optimises the levels at which we function

(Baumeister & Leary, 1995); helping us establish interconnectedness to others, and lack of it can negatively affect us (Van Orden et al., 2010).

It has also been argued that one's belongingness to social groups, and culture, is not always governed by self-determination and that our inevitable actions mean affiliation with particular networks is not always entirely voluntary (Calhoun, 2003). Therefore, consideration of social-cognition and social-motivation can further our understanding of YP's social behaviours (Chevallier et al., 2012; Tomasello et al., 2005). Learning from these could help YP foster a positive SoB. Furthermore, belongingness acts as psychological mediator between school belongingness, behavioural outcomes, and protective social systems (Lardier, et al., 2019).

School belongingness (SB) can be defined as the extent to which YP *"feel personally accepted, respected, included, and supported in the school social environment"(*Goodenow & Grady, 1993, p. 2). SB can affect YP's motivation (Nichols, 2006); when experienced positively it has several school-related benefits. These include a positive impact on YP's participation in, and connectivity to, school life and engagement in academic learning (Craggs & Kelly, 2018). SB positively impacts adolescents' academic achievement (Anderman, 2002).

In YP, a SoB and connectedness has significantly positive links with social, emotional competencies (Blum and Libbey, 2004, as cited in Durlak et al., 2007). Discontent arising from a lack of SB negatively affects YP's mental health (MH) and well-being, (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Subsequently, a positive sense of SB in YP acts as a predictor of both academic

and psycho-social accomplishment (Allen, 2016). Good academic attainment also leads to positively experienced belongingness for YP (Cheung et al., 2017).

Adolescents report their friendships are sources of emotional support, and these can be considered a critical developmental need for YP's sense of relatedness to others (Hamm & Faircloth, 2005). However, even in schools where students report high levels of belongingness, psychological outcomes for those who feel unsupported can be problematic, with negative effects such as depression (Anderman, 2002).

Friendships in school promote psychological belonging, acceptance, and security in adolescents and SB is a factor which safeguards YP from non-scholastic risk behaviours including violence and ideations which are suicidal (Hamm & Faircloth, 2005). A perceived lack of "social connectedness" (Van Orden et al., 2010, p. 9) contributes to thwarted belongingness which can lead to maladaptive and harmful behaviours (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). In adolescents, later research confirms that these can not only manifest as suicide ideation (Barzilay et al., 2015) but also as non-suicidal self-injury (Chu et al., 2016) damaging YP's social, emotional and MH. Research also found a notable relationship between SB, academic achievement, MH outcomes, and the presentation of maladaptive behaviours (Slaten et al., 2016) in YP.

It has been argued that friendships protect adolescents from bullying and victimisation (Barcaccia et al., 2018), strengthening their SoB. When belongingness needs are unmet, and personal relationships are lacking in one's life, the resulting isolation from society may give rise to feelings of loneliness (Mellor et al., 2008). Research indicates loneliness appears to peak during the years of adolescence (Qualter et al., 2015). The *quantity* of friendships

appears to be more important in earlier childhood, and the *quality* more significant later in childhood and adolescence (Spithoven et al., 2018).

2.3   Theoretical Perspectives Linked to Belongingness

Maslow's hierarchy of needs' theory (Maslow, 1943; Maslow 1958) links to belongingness and originally had five hierarchical stages of need (physiological at the pyramid's peak, followed by safety, love and belonging, self-esteem, and self-actualization). Further development of the theory categorised these needs into two sections within a pyramid: *Deficiency needs* (physiological, safety, love and belonging, and esteem), arising out of deprivation at the lower end, and *Growth or 'being' needs* (Cognitive, aesthetic, self-actualization, and transcendence) arising out of growth and development at the higher end (Maslow, 1943; Maslow, 1958; McLeod, 2007).

Attachment theory (Bowlby, 1982) also links to belongingness. Bowlby (1982) suggests successful attachments are produced in a child when a sense of proximity to a primary caregiver who is able to assuage them in moments of fear, fatigue and sickness is maintained, resulting in them being able to better cope with worldly challenges. Bowlby (1982) states that young children, when in distress, tend to be drawn to one particular person, often being their mother. If a young person's positive attachment needs remain unmet, their later SoB may suffer detrimental effects such as lowered resilience (Hindley, 2019). Chaffin et al., (2006) criticise the identification of attachment disorders as ambiguous and lacking consensus. Critics of Bowlby suggest his arguments that a mother's love is a biological need are emotive and controversially moralise debates around whether mothers should go out to work (Vicedo, 2011).

Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems' theory (EST) proposes there are a set of nested systems within our ecological environment that an individual experiences throughout their lifespan (Bronfenbrenner, 1977; Bronfenbrenner, 1979) which impact a SoB. The outer layer is the *macrosystem* containing the social, political, legal, economic, and educational systems and nestles into the *exosystem* which holds other formal and informal social systems, which do not contain the person themselves, but impinge upon the environments in which the person functions (Bronfenbrenner, 1978; Bronfenbrenner, 1986). The next layer, the *mesosystem,* contains the interrelations between the key settings within which a developing person finds themselves, which for adolescents is family at home, school, and peers, and for some, a religious place such as a church or mosque, and ethnicity, and is effectively a system comprised of *microsystems* (Bronfenbrenner, 1978; Bronfenbrenner, 1986). The *microsystem* makes up the inner circle hosting the individual and represents the complex relationships a person's immediate environments have including home: school (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Bronfenbrenner, 1986).

Later, a further outer layer of the environmental system, the *chronosystem,* was added which considered the inter-relationality between the passage of time and changes in the environment, including life-transitions (such as childhood into adolescence), and an individual's physical and psychological growth (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Bronfenbrenner, 1986). Bronfenbrenner expanded the EST, based on ecology (Bronfenbrenner 1977; Bronfenbrenner, 1979) into a *bio-ecological systems'* theory (BEST), (Bronfenbrenner, 1986) extending the concepts of within-child developmental processes and external environments impacting a YP's development into an emerging and transactional process which is subject to the interactions taking place between YP and their environments (Patel, 2011).

Unsurprisingly, Bronfenbrenner's concept of 'nested' systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1977; Bronfenbrenner, 1979) continues to be debated. Later research argues this nested conceptualisation obscures the relationship between the systems and that we should move to seeing these systems as a 'networked' conceptualisation, where different systems overlap, at different levels, in a "non-nested" manner (Neal & Neal, 2013, p. 723).

2.4 Bio-ecological Systems Affecting Belongingness for YP of BAME Heritage

This section of the Literature review considers the different, non-hierarchical, networked systems, using a BEST (Bronfenbrenner, 1986; Bronfenbrenner, 2005; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2007) perspective. The level of influence these systems have on an individual's life may vary, determined by their unique experiences and interactions. These include: the history of migration; political, legal, social, and educational institutions; familial and cultural environments; identity-formation and cultural belongingness in YP of BAME heritage, and balancing belongingness.

2.4.1 History of Migration

History of migration: The influences of change and stability over time can affect the belongingness experiences of YP of BAME heritage. Belongingness includes the ongoing effects of historical treatment of the 'race' and culture with which they and their families identify, and which can affect their sense of place and personhood.

The two key ethnic minority groups in the North-West of England, are Asian (10.4%), and Black (5.2%), (GOV.UK, 2020a). This research also focuses on these two communities.

In the 1930s, for over two decades, mass South-Asian immigration, mainly from Pakistan and Kashmir occurred into the United Kingdom (UK), when such communities were invited over to provide support for, and work in, declining British industries, such as manufacturing (Kalra, 2019). Also, a now conveniently obscured accolade for Britain was that it shipped more African people than any other nation during the peak of the African slave trade (Walvin, 2016). Britain had benefitted from transatlantic trade in slavery and the subsequent African diaspora (Walvin, 2016). European writers and travellers depicted inverted myths of 'civilizing' these native groups as White saviours; whilst Africans associated oppression, terror, and cruelty with Whiteness (Magubane, 2004).

The obsequious nature of colonialism and slavery left indelible marks upon Black and Asian communities, such as the Jallianwala Bagh massacre of unarmed peasants and workers in Amritsar, in India, in 1919 (Sivanandan, 1981), which killed 379 people and injured 1000 more (Lloyd, 2010). In 1940, Sir Michael O'Dwyer, the Lieutenant Governor of the Punjab at the time, who had approved the attack carried out by Brigadier-General Reginald Dyer, was shot dead in London by a trade unionist, Udham Singh, who was later hanged (Lloyd, 2010; Sivanandan, 1981). People of BAME heritage found, and still find, themselves living in a land where overt racism and "colour prejudice" preside (Chessum, 2017, p. 2) sometimes resulting in curbing fulfilment of their full potential.

2.4.2   Political, legal, social, and educational institutions

The context of the macro-system differs fundamentally from other ecological systems in that it is based around the key institutions that form society: political, legal, social, and educational (Bronfenbrenner, 1978). It has been argued that it is of critical importance to

comprehend YP's need to belong in order to understand their social behaviours (Over, 2016).

Critical race theory (CRT) has origins in the United States of America (Martinez, 2014). CRT evolved from the scholarship of legal professionals such as Bell (1995) in response to the stalling of civil rights' litigation in producing any meaningful race-related reform, ranging from affirmative action to minority ethnic communities being awarded disproportionate sentences within the criminal justice system, (Taylor, 1998). The theory has implications for other "post-colonial" nations, in the West, in relation to race-based inequalities and disparate treatment in political, legal and social institutions (Ledesma & Calderón, 2015, p. 214). Advocates of CRT argue a "veneer of normality" conceals a preponderance of racism and only more conspicuous forms of racism are viewed as problematic (Gillborn, 2015, p. 278) in society.

'Race'-The Equality Act (2010) refers to the protected characteristic of race as including "colour; nationality; and ethnic or national origins" (Equality Act, 2010, p. 5-6) and 'race' can also refer to those who share common ancestry, culture or culture-related markers (Stamper, 2019). Ethnicity refers to the "cultural identity" a person has which includes "language, customs and religion" (Flanagin et al., 2021, p. 622). Both "race and ethnicity" are "social constructs" and these terms provide a useful lens through which to study racism and linked disparities in education (Flanagin et al., 2021, p. 621).

Critics have argued that racism does not exist (Taylor, 1998), and is a social-constructionist viewpoint (Heyer & Reynaud-Paligot, 2020) which needs to be disposed of. Consequently, if the existence of racism is denied, it becomes difficult to ameliorate it. Others argue that racism is indomitable (Bell, 2018). These viewpoints may be attributed to the fact that as and

when racial equality and equity take root, it must be in tandem with the reduction and inevitable loss of normative White-privileges and associated power, and which result in denying appropriate efforts to address racial exploitation and injustices (Aouragh, 2019). As yet, progress for realising racial emancipation is slow and CRT posits that the advancement of anti-racist agendas has only been truly accepted by a handful of Whites (Taylor, 1998). Western society has been permeated by racism on "all levels" (Valls, 1997; Weed, 2017, p. XXI). Those with Black and minority ethic racial identities are positioned as "outsiders" where whiteness and associated white privileges are valued in contemporary society (Bhopal, 2018, p. 1-4). In the UK, policies such as Prevent (against terrorism), the teaching of "British Values," along with racist accounts of immigration during Brexit campaigns by politicians including Nigel Farage using slogans such as "we want our country back" (Bhopal, 2018, p. 4-11) served to diminish the perceived value of BAME people and immigrants in British society. White hegemony, therefore, remains deeply rooted in societies such as the USA (Taylor, 1998; Valls, 1998; Weed, 2017) and U.K. (Bhopal, 2018).

2.4.3   Political and legal institutions

For years, BAME communities have lived against a backdrop of increasingly politicised racial tensions led by Far-Right parties such as the National Front (Storli, 2019). They endured the threatening popularity and violence of the British National Party (BNP) in the 1980s (John et al., 2006) against Islam, who claimed they wanted to save the UK, especially women, from a patriarchal (Mulholland, 2018) and misogynistic religion, albeit unfairly. The formation of parties such as the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP), (Klein, 2018) and the English Defence League (EDL), which have been fuelled by Islamophobia (Cleland et al., 2018; Morrow & Meadowcroft, 2019) and Xenophobia, have been disconcerting for

many BAME communities.

When Boris Johnson, the Prime Minister of one's country of domicile, compares Muslim burka-wearing women to letter boxes, albeit in what he claims was a satirical article (Forest, 2019), these unhelpful comparisons add to pre-existing denigrating attitudes such as colourism and racial othering (Shah, 2020). Such micro-aggressions may result in BAME YP's SoB of being deeply negated, leaving them questioning their place in both politics and society.

Discriminatory policies have been inflammatory, such as the Windrush scandal where several generations of Black families are required to submit documentary evidence of their right to reside in the UK (McKee, 2018). Missing paperwork has resulted in threatened or enforced deportation, splitting up families and causing great upset to affected BAME YP. The 1984 Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE), in response to unwarranted police incursions against BAME communities in the 1970's, has had little effect upon reducing disproportionate stop and search (SaS), (Flacks, 2018).

Controversially, in the foreword of the Shiner et al., (2018) aptly named publication, *'The Colour of Injustice: 'Race', drugs and law enforcement in England and Wales,'* David Lammy, member of Parliament (MP) lambasted SaS as a "*profound racial injustice"* stating the likelihood of experiencing SaS as an Asian person is eight times greater than White peers, and nine times greater for Black people, in 2017; even though drugs were less likely to be found. Black and Asian people are far more likely to go to court than be given fixed penalty notices (Shiner et al., 2018, p. iv). The arrest of young Black males is three times more likely

than young White men (Uhrig, 2016). Consequently, BAME YP become early entrants into the criminal justice system, constituting 40% of all YP in custody (Fekete, 2018).

In addition, incompetency, stereotyping, institutional racism, and lack of leadership in the Metropolitan police has inhibited justice, exemplified in the Macpherson Report on teenager Stephen Lawrence's death (Macpherson, 1999). Two decades later, the distrust victims of hate crimes have of police manifests in a reluctance to report them (Wong, 2009; Wong et al., 2022). Justice should not be skin colour dependent. Dialogue with BAME YP is important so they feel their voices are listened to, heard, and appropriately acted upon by law enforcement and Government.

Furthermore, the above-mentioned issues are further exacerbated by the under-representation of BAME communities in positions of power within political and legal systems. According to 2019 data, the percentage ethnicity of police officers (with ethnicity per population from the 2011 Census in parentheses) was as follows: 93.1% (86%) were of White ethnicities, 2.9% (6.8) Asian, and 1.2% (3.3) Black, meaning approximately 4% of officers were BAME (GOV.UK, 2019a). After the 2019 general election, 65 (10%) MPs were from a minority ethnic group; if this was to proportionally represent ethnic minorities in the UK, 93 MPs would need to be elected from minority ethnic groups (Uberoi & Lees, 2020).

2.4.3.1   Social and health inequalities

The 2010 Marmot Review found clear links between inequality, poverty, and poor MH (Pickett & Wilkinson, 2010), and this offers some explanation for why BAME communities are over-represented within MH services (Cummins, 2018). Research also found that increases in health risks in minority ethnic communities in the UK were linked to inequalities

in employment, income, and housing, and some medical experts attribute biological or genetic causes to these (Meer et al., 2020). However, it may be that minority ethnic communities are underserved by health providers because their engagement with providers is limited, potentially due to inadvertent exclusion of marginalised communities from health policies under organisational structures (Hui et al., 2020).

Inequalities in employment, published in a House of Commons' report in September 2019, stated unemployment statistics for BAME people as 8% for Black communities, Asian-Pakistanis, and Asian-Bangladeshis, compared with 4% for White and Indian communities (Francis-Devine & Foley 2020, p. 2). For YP, aged 16 to 24 years, unemployment rates were the highest at 23% in the Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities, 20% in Black communities, and 10% for those from White backgrounds (Francis-Devine & Foley 2020, p. 2). People from BAME communities, with the exception of Indian ethnicities, are therefore at least twice as likely to be unemployed than their White counterparts.

More recently, inequalities and health disparities for BAME people have been profoundly noticeable during the COVID-19 crisis, with the mortality rate for people of Black African heritage being 3.5 times higher than their White counterparts (Otu et al., 2020, p.1). Whilst BAME people make up 4.5% of the UK population; they make up 21% of National Health Service workers and are more likely to be employed in frontline jobs, which goes some way to accounting for why the first 11 doctors to die of Covid-19 in the UK were from BAME communities (Otu et al., 2020, p. 1).

2.4.3.2 *Education*

Free school meals' (FSMs) data is reliably indicative of child-poverty (Office for National Statistics (ONS), 2020). In September 2018 to August 2019, 14% of all pupils had FSMs' eligibility, with pupils aged 11 to 16 years with eligibility for FSMs' also attaining lower Progress 8 (P8) scores of -0.53 in General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) examinations, compared with -0.06 for pupils not eligible for FSMs (ONS, 2020).

Whilst Bangladeshi and Pakistani pupils were most likely, out of all ethnic groups to live in poverty, their attainment gap was narrower at 0.24 and 0.27 respectively (ONS, 2020). Pupils of White ethnicity had the largest attainment gap at -0.51 compared with a score of 0.23 for non-FSM pupils (ONS, 2020), (see Appendix A).

Educational achievement and attainment data highlights disparities between different ethnic groups. At Key Stage Four, multi-academy trust GCSE data for 2019, stated average Attainment 8 (A8) scores for all pupils as 46.7 out of a total of 90 and average A8 scores were 51.2, 46.1 and 44.9 for students of Asian, White, and Black ethnicities respectively (Department for Education, 2022), with White pupils achieving less well than Asian pupils but better than Black pupils.

Similarly, in GCSE English and Mathematics, 43.2% of pupils attained a grade 5 or above, with attainment by ethnicity, in rank order being 51.9% (Asian), 42.4% (White) and 37.8% (Black), (GOV.UK, 2019b). Girls had higher attainment than boys in every ethnic group (GOV.UK, 2019b).

For all pupils taking Level 3, or Advanced Level (A-Level) qualifications in 2019, the average points' score was 33.42 (GOV.UK, 2020b). The score in ranked order was 32.65,

31.29 and 28.74 for pupils of White, Asian, and Black ethnicities respectively (GOV.UK, 2020b).

Attainment disparities appear to shift more in favour of students of White ethnicity at university degree level. Of 342,215 people who graduated in 2019, 31.5% of graduates of White ethnicity attained a first-class degree, compared with 23% of Asians and 14.5% of Black YP (the lowest achievers by ethnicity), (GOV.UK, 2020e).

School exclusion rates can negatively affect physical and MH (Power & Taylor, 2020) and disproportionately so for BAME YP. Exclusions could result in missed quality-first learning and teaching opportunities and potentially be a factor in lower university performance, along with deprivation, lack of cultural and social capital (Bourdieu, 1986), and institutional racism in UK universities (Ahmet, 2020). Exclusion statistics by ethnicity, for the academic year 2017-18, for all pupils, in all schools, showed fixed term exclusions, lasting up to 45 days, occurred at 5.5% for both White and Black pupils in all schools and 1.76% for Asians, with the percentages virtually doubling for all groups in state-funded secondary schools (GOV.UK., 2020c).

Permanent exclusions (PEs) in 2018, for all schools, occurred at a rate of 0.1% for White pupils, 0.13% for Black pupils and 0.07% for Asian pupils, showing a small, overall decline of 2% from 2006, (GOV.UK, 2020c), which some may attribute to better protections afforded by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice (Department for Education, 2015), which may have reduced exclusions for BAME YP with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). However, some reduction in PEs could be attributed to hidden exclusions such as illegal off-rolling where students are on-roll but do not attend school

(Power & Taylor, 2020), (see [Appendix B](#)). More concerningly, Weale and Duncan (2017, as cited in Power & Taylor, 2020) reported that in the last three years, overall exclusions in England rose by 40%, the highest in the UK, with 35 YP being excluded daily. "Disproportionate" rates of exclusion exist for groups with certain characteristics such as Black Caribbean boys, FSMs, and SEND, (Graham et al., 2019). Government exclusion data (GOV.UK, 2020c) tends to mask potentially uncomfortable truths using statistics such as '*per 100 pupils,'* rather than whole or ethnic student population percentages.

Furthermore, it has been argued that the expectations people have may be implicitly aligned to one's skin colour (Williams, 2020). Lack of self-reported differential behaviour by teachers towards BAME YP is also at odds with their reported expectations for different ethnic groups (Flanagan et al., 2020). Teachers above the age of 35 years had higher expectations, with teachers having six-plus years of experience being twice as likely to select higher level responses on a given expectations' scale (Flanagan et al., 2020).

People from BAME communities remain under-represented in positions of senior leadership within education (Johnson, 2017). In 2018, out of 22,400 Headteachers, 92.9% were of White-British ethnicity, as were 89.7% of Deputy or Assistant Headteachers, and 82.6% of teachers (GOV.UK., 2018). This under-representation is significant because a lack of appropriate advocacy for, and a legacy of racial discrimination against, BAME students has led to ethnically disproportionate exclusion rates (Joseph, 2020).

Government policies have particularly affected BAME students by disproportionately focusing scrutiny on them, further diminishing their SoB. In particular, controversial Prevent policies in the UK began in 2003 aiming to prevent terror-based radicalisation (Qurashi,

2018). By 2008, the Prevent Strategy focused wholly on Muslims (Lowe, 2017), predominantly framing the terror threat as "*Islamic*," allowing heavy surveillance of Muslim communities, curbing not only their agency in political terms (Qurashi, 2018, p. 1), but potentially in educational terms.

Prevent referrals made by schools in England include: an eight-year-old boy, 'Adam,' questioned by police during lunchtime about what his father teaches him, when he said "the Quran," he was made to recite it, and an 11-year-old boy 'Amir,' who wanted to move schools because he was unhappy in his current one was heard making a "frustrated comment" *during a fire drill saying he wanted to burn the school down* (Aitlhadj & Holmwood, 2022, p. 66-68). Both children were interviewed without the knowledge and presence of their parents (Aitlhadj & Holmwood, 2022).

Another criticism of the Prevent Strategy was its potential to stifle debate challenging extremist viewpoints, if expressed (Taylor & Soni, 2017). Some University faculties challenged this approach as a threat to their apolitical status on critical thinking (Taylor & Soni, 2017), a story also carried by national newspapers (Tickle, 2015).

2.4.4   Familial and cultural environments

As discussed earlier, diachronous events, along with political, social, and educational contexts, all of which interact as part of Bronfenbrenner's (1986) BEST, have heightened inequalities for BAME YP and their families, potentially diminishing their SoB. In addition to these, other demands arising out of cultural affiliations can produce push: pull factors (Owusu-Kwarteng, 2020); some positive, some more challenging.

There are several positive effects of culture on BAME YP. For example, Asians in Britain may rely on support from networks arising out of kinship known as *biraderi* for social support (Ali & Sayyid, 2006). BAME families often benefit from support via extended family networks (Ahmed, 2020). Identities are important to people and can be multi-faceted (Appiah, 2018). Cultural traditions and customs, often coupled with religious beliefs, provide a sense of identity and support belongingness in BAME YP, and in a sense, may ameliorate some of the negative effects of racism and linked White-privilege.

2.4.5 Identity-formation and cultural belongingness in YP of BAME Heritage

As identity-formation develops, BAME YP may feel torn between respect for cultural demands (Lövheim, 2019), such as spending time observing religious practices at mosque or church and fitting in with their indigenous non-minority group peers, some of whom may fear foreigners as invaders (Robins, 2020). Some YP of BAME heritage feel questioning by White peers based on *biological racism* (by skin-colour) and *cultural racism* (by the way people dress) can present as ignorance, be inflected with rudeness, and can negate their SoB (Bowler & Razak, 2020).

Additionally, 'youths or adolescents,' aged 10-18 years, (American Psychological Association, (APA), 2002) experience physical changes, mental transitions into adulthood (WHO, 2017) whilst working through storm and stress behaviour responses (Hall, 1904), and impulsivity (Marcia, 1966), which may give rise to normative uncertainty, doubt, and identity-crises. Research states that brain maturation in the pre-frontal cortex (which affects reactive control mechanisms), occurs between the age of 10-25 years (Vijayakumar et al., 2014), well into adulthood, and can heighten conflict and risk-taking behaviours (Arnett,

1999). Adding to the aforementioned, continually developing environmental interactions (Koller et al., 2020), such as 'race' and ethnicity-based challenges, (factors which are beyond one's control), can prove challenging and further diminish YP's well-being (Matters, 2020, as cited in the American Academy of Pediatrics 2020).

Racism has been recognised as an "expanded" adverse childhood experience (ACE), (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2020, p. 308), although its effects on a human level have always been discernible to victims. The effects of colourism, which Alice Walker, Pulitzer prize-winner, defined in 1982, as the preferential and prejudicial treatment of people of the same-race, based only on skin-colour (as cited in Norwood & Foreman, 2014) can culminate in a pressure-cooker-like effect, fuelled by mounting inequalities, resulting in responses such as large protests in which youths participate, as in the 2010 Toxteth riots in response to 29-year-old Mark Duggan being killed by police (Kawalerowicz & Biggs, 2015).

Deci's self-determination theory emphasises an important relationship between belongingness and autonomous, motivational behaviours, such as self-direction and choice in learning, which also promotes student engagement and academic success (Deci & Ryan, 2000). This human motivation theory suggests human beings have an inherent curiosity about their environment and an interest in knowledge expansion, which schools may be stifling by attempting to control the climate for learning (Niemiec & Ryan, 2009). Self-determination theory recognises people's capacity for "inherent growth" and their "innate psychological" needs and suggests when the needs for "relatedness," "autonomy" and "competence" (effective behaviour) are met, YP experience positive secondary school outcomes (Korpershoek et al., 2020, p. 645). The latter supports Niemiec & Ryan's (2009) view that intrinsic motivation is maintained when YP's basic psychological needs of both autonomy

(exercising their own volition over their behaviours) and competence are met, Although Deci & Ryan (2000) posit 'relatedness' is a non-essential, but nevertheless 'helpful,' factor in promoting YP's intrinsic motivation.

Many YP engage in social media as a means of expressing themselves, but it can be addictive and have negative effects such as cyber-bullying and anxiety (O'Reilly et al., 2018). Digital policing of social media behaviours has also been subject to implicit, stereotypical, racialised interpretations, where harmless groups of BAME YP are defined as 'gangs' and social media evidence has supported criminal cases against them (Patton, 2017).

Furthermore, growing movements such as Black Lives Matter (BLM), (Jones et al., 2022) seeking racial equity have featured in British news and affected BAME communities. The BLM movement has become somewhat contentious, and viewed by some critics as increasingly political (Khalid, 2017, Miah, 2020). Consequently, some commercial brands have positioned themselves in varying ways on public statements and private actions (Mogaji, 2020), diminishing YP's SoB, as can be seen in the Brand Goodness Quadrant (see Appendix C).

2.4.6   Balancing belongingness

The multiplicative nature of belongingness is shaped by the interplay between the simultaneous identities (such as daughter, learner, employee, BAME), we adopt during our lifetime, rather than being a singular or binary construct (Gaither, 2018). These identities may conflict with one another (Gocłowska & Crisp, 2014). As time passes, proximal processes embodying persons and contexts can affectively push YP towards "Vygotsky's zone of proximal development," or learning, helping them to develop problem-solving skills with

adult-guidance and collaboratively with able peers, but not yet independently, (Jaeger, 2016, p. 8).

Supportive educational experiences can promote school belongingness (Craggs & Kelly, 2018) and build positive school, learning and socialisation schemas, encouraging students to acquire newer learning experiences (Ansari, 2019). Having high expectations of BAME YP is increasingly important, if they are to buck the trends of underachievement, associated with ethnicity, as discussed earlier (from p. 27).

Experiencing racism can affect belongingness in BAME YP. Understanding racism as a trauma (Truong & Museus, 2012), potentially with long-lasting effects, may help them acquire appropriate support for their MH and well-being. Trauma arising from racism has been recognised in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*' framework for PTSD (Post-traumatic stress disorder) as having the capacity to cause PTSD (Williams et al., 2018), resulting in depriving some BAME YP of their right to self-actualisation and self-determination (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

Encouraging BAME YP to have cultural and racial pride in who they are (Baldwin-White et al., 2017) may help them balance their SoB with other challenges within their networked bio-ecological systems. A positive SoB buffers against loneliness (Mellor et al., 2008), and protects well-being and MH. YP's development can be further understood by taking into account their 'mental representations,' which are the mechanisms by which they conglomerate their experiences and transport these forward (Dweck & London, 2004) into their futures.

2.4.7 Summary

To conclude this chapter selected principal premises in support of this research on belongingness are presented below.

Firstly, developing a SoB can be challenging for BAME YP who may be affected by their experiences when interacting within their key networked systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1977; Bronfenbrenner, 1979) e.g. school. This research provides a platform for BAME YP to share their experiences.

Secondly, a BAME YP's sense of place and personhood can be impacted negatively by the continued effects of historical treatments and attitudes to 'race' e.g. suggestions immigrants are 'invaders'(Robins, 2020). There is little place in the curriculum for the discussion of how South Asian and Black communities originally came to the UK e.g. to support manufacturing industries (Kalra, 2019) or their subsequent contributions to British society. This research seeks to open more conversations in schools and amongst education professionals about how to develop a positive SoB for BAME YP.

Thirdly, political and legal challenges exist for BAME YP, which may affect their SoB in school e.g. institutional racism in policing Macpherson, 1999) or racialised politics (Klein, 2018, Storli, 2019) which may affect their daily lives. This research seeks to give BAME YP a voice and a platform to share their experiences of belongingness. Subsequently educational professionals can learn more about how BAME YP's SoB is developed or negatively impacted.

A SoB has positive correlations with YP's academic performance (Wurster et al., 2020) as well as psycho-social accomplishment (Allen, 2016). Therefore exploring how school staff support BAME YP and how peers support a BAME YP's SoB at school could prove beneficial and is part of this research.

Inequalities in employment (Francis-Devine & Foley, 2020) can disadvantage BAME communities and can affect the opportunities and life chances of BAME YP. As positive educational outcomes can support employment opportunities, learning more about how BAME YP experience belongingness at school, may support school staff to develop ways of enhancing their students' SoB.

This research seeks to raise awareness of challenges BAME YP may experience which impact their SoB as well as gain a current, up-to-date insight into BAME YPs' experiences of belongingness at school in post-Brexit Britain.

2.4.8   Conclusion

Research demonstrates belongingness is complex (Calhoun, 2003) and not singularly definable. For introvert individuals, the *quality* of interpersonal relationships and connectivity with others is more important than the *quantity* (Spithoven et al., 2018). Positive school belongingness contexts may be exemplified as feeling connected to one's environment or surrounding systems (Yıldız, 2016), building positive interpersonal connections (Leary et al., 2013), leading to increases in academic achievement (Anderman, 2002) and student motivation (Nichols, 2006).

Furthermore, self-determination within our bio-ecological networks is an innate physiological need (Deci & Ryan, 2000), essential to belongingness in YP of BAME heritage, who already juggle their cultural and racial characteristics, and who are constrained by racism and colourism, consequently experiencing more pressures than their non-minority group peers. Balancing identity-formation with racism makes establishing a SoB challenging for BAME YP (Bowler & Razak, 2020). Socio-political narratives around 'race' and White privilege are also testing. The intersectionality (Sewell, 2018) of the aforementioned factors can be confusing for many BAME YP already struggling, or striving to belong, in school and society.

We all have a part to play in establishing a diverse but equitable, meritocratic society. In the words of the late Jo Cox, in her speech as a newly elected MP, "we… have more in common than that which divides us," (Hansard, 2015). For YP of BAME heritage, it is indeed '*Time to belong*.'

3 Research gap, contribution, and research questions (RQs)

3.1 Gaps in the literature

The proposed research seeks to add understanding to the available literature and contribute towards addressing the following gaps. In brief, firstly, there is less available research on how a SoB is fostered (Allen et al., 2016). Secondly, research on school belongingness in YP in the UK school and college sectors is sparse (Slaten et al., 2018) and rarer still for YP of BAME heritage.

3.2 Research Questions (RQs)

The RQs and some examples of linked literature from the Literature review are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1 *Development of Research Questions and examples of linked literature*

Research Question (RQ)	Research Literature
RQ1. How do BAME students experience 'belonging' or 'fitting in' in relation to their school?	*Slaten et al., (2016) in their research paper, ' School Belonging: A Review of the History, Current Trends, and Future Directions…' confirm that school belonging acts as a predictor for "academic and psychosocial success," and that its absence can contribute to "psychological distress." Slaten et al., (2016, p. 9) state that their review of the literature found there is limited understanding in belongingness research of students from "under-represented" minority groups and therefore this remains an area which needs further research in order to develop a greater understanding. Subsequently, I wanted to explore BAME YP's school experiences through the lens of psychology/ educational psychology with the aim of developing insights into their lived experiences of school belongingness (SB).*

	Allen et al., (2016) in their paper' Fostering school belonging in secondary schools using a socio-ecological framework…' report that whilst the benefits of belongingness have been well documented, how belongingness is actually fostered is a less understood area. Allen et al., (2016) used Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems' model upon which to base a conceptual framework for SB and report that SB has not been given the same level of attention as students' academic success has. Allen et al., (2016) also state that questions remain about how different populations experience SB. This made me curious to learn more about what BAME YP think belongingness is and how they experience it at school.
RQ2. How do BAME students feel staff affect their sense of belonging?	*Slaten et al., (2016) in their review of the literature in their article 'School Belonging: A Review of the History, Current Trends, and Future Directions…' highlight a notable relationship between school belonging and achievement academically, outcomes in mental health, and behaviours which are maladaptive. This made me think more deeply about the impact of positive SB, including as a less understood phenomena for minority groups (Slaten et al., 2016) and different populations (Allen et al., 2016) and subsequently the importance of research needed in these areas. I wondered how positive and/or negative experiences of SB may affect BAME YP at school and wanted to learn more about this.* *Flanagan et al., (2020) in their paper 'Achievement may be rooted in teacher expectation: examining the different influences of ethnicity,' collected data from 140 teachers and found teacher expectations differed for different ethnic groups. Flanagan et al., (2020) also found teachers did not report their differential behaviours towards BAME YP which did not align with the reported expectations teachers had for different ethnic groups. Similarly, Williams'(2020) editorial in 'The Whiteness of Educational Psychology…' stated that people's expectations implicitly become aligned to skin colour. This made me think about how BAME YP experienced relationships with school staff e.g. did BAME YP feel supported? If so how and if not why? This would then also go on to influence RQ4 as to what changes BAME YP would like to see in the future.* *Statistics released by the Office for National Statistics (ONS), (2020) indicate that there were disparities in the educational attainment of different ethnic groups e.g. in 2019, at GCSE, attainment scores were the highest for students of Asian ethnicity, White ethnicity and Black ethnicity respectively (ONS, 2020). However, at both A-level and university degree level this changes to the highest achievers being of White ethnicity, followed by Asian ethnicity and Black ethnicity (GOV.UK, 2020b; GOV.UK, 2020e). When linked with literature cited above such as expectations being implicitly aligned to one's skin colour (Williams, 2020), and differential teacher expectations (Flanagan et al., 2020) this made me curious about BAME YP's experiences of how they felt supported by school staff/teachers.*

RQ3. How do BAME YP feel fellow students affect their sense of belonging?	*Calhoun (2003, p. 536) in 'Belonging' in the cosmopolitan imaginary. Ethnicities…' reported that affiliation to networks, social groups or culture is not always entirely voluntary and that it not possible for people "not to belong" to a given social group or culture. This made me think about how, for example, BAME YP in schools may not be able to choose the school or the peer groups they are then linked with in school. Arguably a school is 'chosen' by parents/carers or YP but it is restricted by catchment area and availability of places. I wanted to know more about how BAME YP experienced belonging or fitting in with their peers and if this was different with friends and other peers.*
	Hamm and Faircloth (2005) in 'The role of friendship in adolescents' sense of school belonging…' found that SB is critical for adolescents' adjustment and their need for relatedness to others although "most researchers" did not focus on developing an understanding actual experiences that helped to develop SB. Hamm and Faircloth (2005, p. 62) also noted the different roles of friends and peers e.g. friends provided a sense of security and "emotional closeness" whilst experiences with peers affected how YP saw their membership of, or inclusion within, a group. I was therefore keen to learn more about BAME YP's experiences of SB and how both positive and, if applicable, negative experiences, with friends and peers impacted their SoB and their motivation to engage in school life.
	Gillborn's (2015) article, 'Intersectionality, critical race theory, and the primacy of racism…' looked at the intersecting roles of "race, class and gender" in education, using research based on middle class parents of Black ethnicity. The research concluded that "intersectionality" is vital to understanding "race equity" but also that racism remains a priority for scholars of critical race theory (CRT) which can manifest as "oppression" in the everyday realities of school (Gillborn 2015, p. 277). Gillborn (2015, p. 286) adds that if the "racial (or racist) status quo" is to be changed, then the growing assertions in the mainstream of racism being irrelevant or does not exist must be refuted. Therefore, I was interested in ascertaining the views of BAME YP on how peer relationships at school, including friendships, were experienced with peers (not always chosen) and with friends (who were more likely to be chosen) and if and how their experiences of belongingness with these groups enhanced or diminished their SoB at school.

RQ4. What changes would BAME YP like to see to improve their sense of belonging in the future?	*Successive governments have promised positive changes for ethnic minorities such as:*
	   o *Gillard (1997) in Excellence in schools' white paper set goals to be reached by 2002 such as raising achievement for ethnic minority pupils and promoting racial harmony.*
	   o *The House of Commons (2006, p.15) white paper refers to concerns voiced by Professor Gilborn from the Institute of Education at the University of London that DfE statistics reported that pupils of white ethnicity were twice as likely than*

	pupils from minority ethnic groups to be identified as gifted and talented and that "race inequality is sustained" in education. *However, statistics quoted in the literature review section 2.4.2.3 'Education' (from pages 28-29) e.g. by the Department for Education, (2022) indicate there is still work to be done on the achievements and attainment of pupils from ethnic minorities. For example, that at Key Stage four, White pupils achieve less well than Asian pupils but better than Black pupils. Then at A Level the highest attainment levels shift to White ethnicities followed by, Asian, and Black ethnicities respectively (GOV.UK, 2020b), with the same pattern at university degree level (GOV.UK, 2020e). These statistics made me interested in what changes may be needed for BAME YP in the future to further their educational attainment. In addition considering that SB has a positive impact on adolescents' academic achievement (Anderman, 2002) and because good academic attainment levels also lead to positively experienced belongingness for YP (Cheung et al., 2017), I felt there would be an added benefit of asking participants themselves what could be done to enhance their SoB in the future, so that education professionals could also consider this.*

The above table provides examples of how the literature presented earlier in Chapter Two assisted the development of the research questions (RQs).

4 Methodology

4.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter seeks to present and explain some of the key methodological underpinnings and principles considered. The chapter contains the following key sections: ontological and epistemological positioning as a researcher, the design and rationale for the use of thematic analysis (TA), recruitment of participants, apparatus, procedure used, data collection, and the analytic strategy used. This is followed by ethical and quality assurance considerations, and time-management approaches. Where pertinent, some individual sections include or end with reflections. The chapter concludes with a brief section on reflexivity and reflections on the overall methodology.

4.2 Ontological and Epistemological positioning

There is interconnectivity between *ontology* and epistemology (Moses, 2020). Ontology is viewed as the "study of being" and some of the key questions around it focus on whether or not gods and universal truths actually exist (Moses, 2020, p. 448). Ontology aims to challenge peoples' thinking about their understanding of the world we live in, and to improve our understanding through interactions with other more specialised forms of knowledge (Moses, 2020). Epistemology attempts to answer questions based on "How, and what, can we know?" (Willig, 2013, p. 2); it refers to the "study of knowledge," along with the recognition of the evasiveness of social facts (Moses, 2020, p. 450).

From an ontological perspective, I have taken a critical realist approach, using concepts portrayed by the critical realist iceberg model as presented in Figure 1 below (Fletcher, 2017, p. 5-6). The latter model is composed of different levels of exploration and reality as follows:

empirical (observable events), actual (events occurring whether they are observable or unobservable), and real (events which occur at the empirical level due to causal effects in systems and structures (Fletcher, 2017). I believe that a critical realist approach acknowledges that some knowledge can be closer to reality than other knowledge (Fletcher, 2017).

Figure 1 *Critical Realist Iceberg Model (Fletcher, 2017, p. 6)*
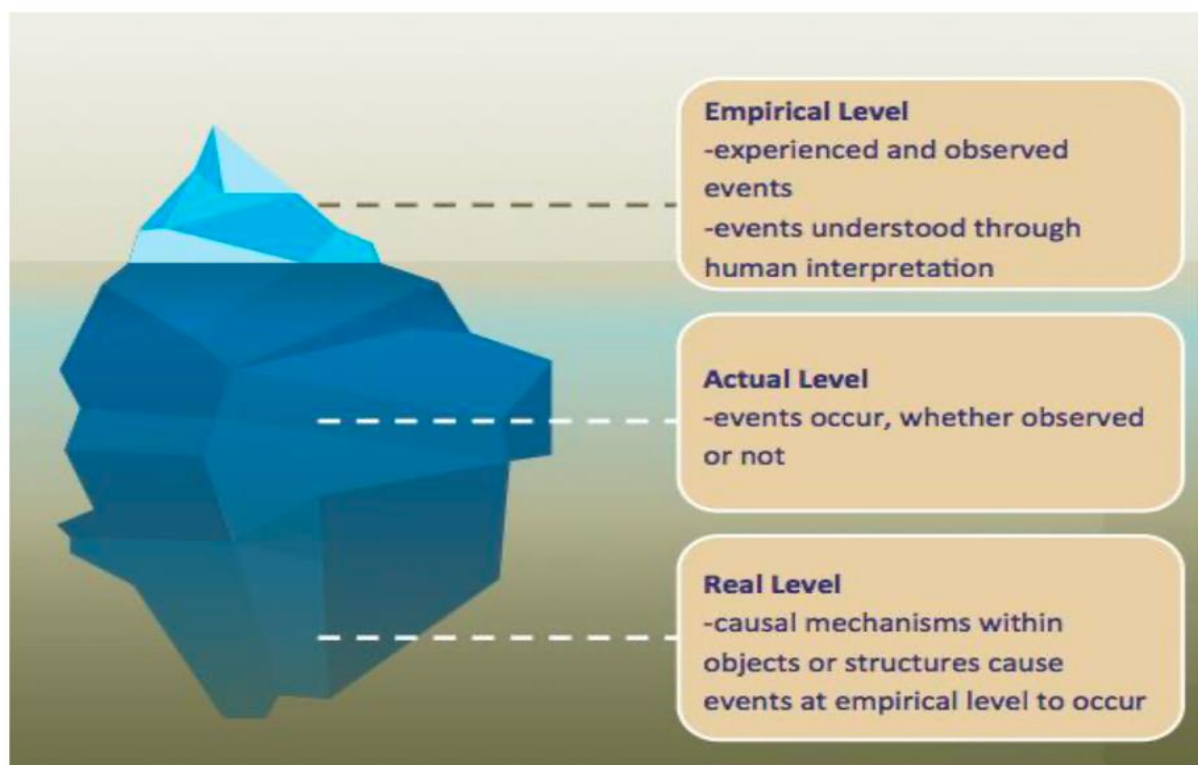
As a researcher, I held the epistemological position of a *critical realist* because I believe that it enables social events and their causality to be researched, whilst also having scope for *positivistic paradigms* (Fletcher, 2017). The latter also includes rational and scientific approaches on the one hand (Fletcher, 2017), as well as concepts embedded in *social constructionism*, such as human knowledge arises out of one's understanding of the world they live in, and function in (Burr, 2015). Critical realists look for causation, of a given social

phenomenon, and as such may be able to offer practical suggestions to help resolve social issues which occur (Fletcher, 2017). Therefore, a critical realist approach which did not adhere to specific methods, rather gave a general framework, and allows for such exploration to occur (Fletcher, 2017) was appropriate.

Critical realism recognises the role of an individual's subjective interpretations (O'Mahoney & Vincent, 2014). Taylor (2018, p. 217) states that critical realism "is a philosophy that defines an objective reality as one that exists independently of individual perception …" A critical realist stance is also an epistemological position which aligns with TA, which may also be referred to as *reflexive TA* (Braun & Clarke, 2020) and is especially useful in this research because critical realism has the capacity to activate societal change (Rafe et al., 2020). Others argue that a limitation of critical realism is that critical realists work with pre-existing structural knowledge (Kemp & Holmwood, 2003; Roberts, 2014). However, it has been argued that acquiring knowledge about specific "causal mechanisms" in given social contexts needs to be investigated empirically (Roberts, 2014, p. 12).

Qualitative research is undoubtedly a process which is interpretive (Braun et al., 2019). Similarly, in this research the data was developed and shaped through the researcher's interactions with the participants, receiving the responses with due openness, empathy, and sensitivity (Krauss, 2005) regardless of any prior knowledge held by the researcher. The data developed showed an interplay between the following factors: the participants' subjective understanding of the questions I asked; the way they chose to respond; and my own follow-up questions and prompts. Consequently, there was a process of mutual meaning-making throughout the interviews related to participants' lived experiences. Some reflections on aspects of meaning-making, making decisions around themes, what participants were

communicating, and my journey as a researcher are included in the 'findings' and 'discussion' sections of this thesis.

Researcher positionality

As the researcher is, in effect, the "research instrument," information about the researcher's positionality with respect to the area of research can deepen the understanding of the research (Dodgson, 2019, p. 20) and may offer insights into the researcher's decision-making. Lived experiences and social discourses co-exist and intermix (Gunaratnam, 2003) and meaning making of 'race' and "ethnicity" occurs "relationally" (Gunaratnam, 2003, p. 7). I was very aware that participants would see (via online video interviews) that I am a person of colour and some participants would know it was likely that I was a Pakistani through my name, and that some participants would know in the community that I was also a Muslim. In some ways whilst I felt as though I was an 'insider' with insider knowledge of being a recipient of some (not all) of the lived experiences participants described in their interviews such as obligations to fast during Ramadan (e.g., Aneeza, Nabeel) and racism reflecting some derogatory attitudes by some peers (e.g. Tyrone , Ambreen, Farzana as reported in Chapter 5 (from page 78) or wearing a headscarf as part of the Muslim faith (Farzana), I was also very conscious of this. This may also have meant that I empathised more with participants experiencing negative attitudes towards their race, culture or ethnicity. The latter examples also reflect (Gunaratnam's (2003) view that racial minorities, myself included, can make assumptions of both things they have in common as well as differences. Considering these assumptions via researcher reflexivity is important as they can affect our interpretations (Gunaratnam, 2003), reflections and the way we meaning make.

I was also conscious, and careful, not to make assumptions of what the actual experiences of participants may or may not be. I used semi-structured interviews and also pre-prepared some

general extension or supplementary interview questions as can be seen in Table 6 Time to belong - Interview schedule page 60). To avoid making researcher assumptions my research sought to gather participants' experiences, both positive and/or negative, and the aim was to capture experiences that support a positive SoB as well as any experiences which may diminish or impact a SoB negatively. I also kept a reflective diary (see Appendix 10.14 for examples), made notes after each key stage of the research and after each participant interview, and discussed post-interview thoughts with my thesis supervisor. This also helped me to consider if my own biases or assumptions were impacting my interpretations. Whilst I acknowledge I may have some elements of bias as a member of the BAME community; I also feel I brought some positive dimensions to the research for the same reason. For example, 'race' plays an important part of how people think, behave and develop (Roberts et al., 2020) and when a psychological science is strong its examination of "racialized experiences" within psychology-based phenomena also includes participants and authors of racially diverse identities (Roberts et al., 2020, p. 1296). I have a good understanding of the contexts in which Pakistani and Indian communities function as these are communities I have close connections with, and of which I have lived experience. Whilst I have connections and friends from within the Black Communities, my understanding of the Black community is an on-going learning journey, although experiences of racism appeared to cause similar frustrations about their occurrence and the pain and hurt this can cause for participants. In addition, this research has the added benefit of my nearly two decades of experience working in the secondary school sector, in a variety of catchment areas, enabling me to be very well informed about the context of secondary school life and the types of learning environments school staff and pupils (i.e. the participants in this research) may experience.

4.3   Design and rationale

The research design was based on qualitative and exploratory methodology. There is some sparsity of previous research on belonging within secondary schools and colleges in England, and an even more limited amount carried out within the context of pre- and post-Brexit society, as well as against the backdrop of a global pandemic. Careful consideration of some key advantages and disadvantages of TA was undertaken; some may be referred to elsewhere in this methodology. In brief, key advantages and disadvantages are presented below (see Table 2), some of which are expanded upon later.

Table 2 *Advantages and Disadvantages of Thematic Analysis (TA)*

Advantages of TA	Disadvantages of TA
A method which is flexible, allows rich data to be collected and permits insights which may not have been anticipated (Braun & Clarke, 2006).	Time-consuming (Harvey-Jordan & Long, 2001).
Allows for psychological and social interpretations of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).	Researchers can have (un)conscious bias (Diefenbach, 2009).
Data can be gathered, based on participants' direct or everyday experiences (Kroll et al., 2007).	Braun et al., (2019, p.11) state that a criticism of TA has been that it is "atheoretical" or "descriptive."
The researcher can explore ideas important to a participant (Gill et al., 2008).	
Participants view a (BAME) researcher as someone who sympathises with the situation (De Tona, 2006) rather than a non-BAME researcher.	
Differences within individual participant's responses (Howitt, 2010) can be considered.	
TA as advocated by Braun and Clarke (2006) is part of a "reflective practice," Braun et al., (2019, p. 2) and based on theory (Braun et al., 2019).	

Qualitative data acquisition enabled me as the researcher to gather data based on the direct experiences of participants, within the context of their everyday lives (Kroll et al., 2007) and give "voice" to marginalised (Willig, 2003, p. 12) people. Qualitative methodology also

enabled the inclusion of semi-structured interviews and TA, thereby enabling the researcher to develop an in-depth understanding of the differences that lay within individual participant responses; their reactions and relationships (Howitt, 2010).

Another advantage of using semi-structured interviews was that they also allowed the researcher to explore ideas which the participant expressed as important to them, and which as a researcher, I may not initially have thought of (Gill et al., 2008, p. 291) or considered in detail. In later interviews, Braun et al., (2019, p. 2) have clarified the TA they advocate is intended to aid the researcher's understanding "*as part of a conversation…starting point, a reflective practice*."

Criticisms of the semi-structured interview methodology include the view that it can be time-consuming (Harvey-Jordan & Long, 2001), and potentially there could be (un)conscious bias on the researcher's part (Diefenbach, 2009). However, as a researcher, I felt that my positioning as a BAME researcher, allowed participants to share their experiences more openly. Previous research supports this, and reports that participants are more open when they regard the researcher as being more sympathetic to their situations (De Tona, 2006). As such, being a BAME researcher was of key benefit to this study. Furthermore, a BAME researcher can support the elimination of the perceived, or even deeply rooted, frustrations that minority voices have been taken over by researchers belonging to ethnic groups who are in the majority (De Tona, 2006). The researcher felt that the aforementioned are powerful advantages which outweigh concerns about time-consuming methods or researcher-bias.

After ethical approval was gained (see Appendix D). Eight interviews were conducted with

BAME participants, supported by a semi-structured interview schedule, presented later within the 'interview protocols' section of the methodology section. The schedule helped to guide the explorations and was trialled with participant one and included in the research data as planned, as the interview was successful (i.e., without major issues). Next, the transcription of interviews was followed by coding and analysis using methodology as set out in the six-stage TA prescribed by Braun and Clark (2006).

At the end of each interview, and after completing recording, the researcher briefly checked in with the participant, to ensure they were okay because the research topic could potentially be 'triggering.' A 'trigger' in a psychological sense refers to a stimulus which "elicits a reaction" (APA Dictionary of Psychology, 2014), especially stemming from emotional arousal.

In this research an interview could potentially trigger trauma, based on belongingness or 'race'-based experiences which can occur in varying ways and degrees. As such, I felt it was important for me to pay attention to this and it was something I was mindful of during each interview. For example, emotional and social competencies have been found to link to a SoB (Blum & Libbey, 2004, as cited in Durlak et al., 2007). A YP's MH can be negatively impacted (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). The American Academy of Pediatrics (2020, p. 308) now recognises racism as an "expanded" adverse childhood experience (ACE). Reference to, or reminders of, enduring racism could have been experienced by the participant, whether or not they shared it with me during the interview. Trauma based on racism can also impact a YP's SoB negatively (Bowler & Razak, 2020).

Furthermore, racism has been recognised as a trauma which can result in post-traumatic stress

disorder (PTSD) as recognised by the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders'
framework for PTSD, (Williams et al., 2018). As such, I wanted to ensure that the participant
did not suffer immediate adverse effects and to check they were okay, as part of my duty of
care, as well as care for their well-being, and which if need be could potentially alert me to
whether the YP needed any further support from adults.

All participants appeared to welcome the ice-breaker conversation at the start and the
concluding checking-in conversation at the end of the interview. All left the interview
generally smiling and happy that they had participated. During these conversations some of
the participants expressed concerns about who would see what they had said, which then led
to consideration of removing full transcripts from the appendices in order to protect the
anonymity and well-being of participants. I shared these concerns with my thesis supervisor
contemporaneously.

The research was then conducted in the following key phases (Table 3), which whilst listed
numerically, acknowledges there may be interaction between the different phases:

Table 3 *Research Phases*

Phase	Processes
Phase 1	*The researcher accessed participants via appropriate adults e.g., community representatives, local authority representatives, and parent/s or carer/s of YP. In this research the approach through people in the community proved most fruitful in yielding participants.*
Phase 2	*Communications were made through various mediums including emails, letters sent by email to schools and community contacts, telephone, and occasionally in person with appropriate adults to pick up consent forms, which had been signed from my trusted and known community contacts, whilst adhering to COVID-19 restrictions and the University of Sheffield's research advice as appropriate. Once consent had been acquired from parent's and carer/s, participants, who were from BAME backgrounds, were invited to take part in the study, and mutually convenient interview times arranged.*
Phase 3	*The researcher then sent to Google-meet links to the participants via the university's Google mail. Next, semi-structured interviews were conducted using the Braun and Clark (2006) method, which allowed the collection of rich data to be gathered. Then, using Braun and Clark's (2006) methodology, the data was transcribed; coded; themes derived from the data were noted alongside the transcriptions; TA conducted, and a report of the results was written as part of this thesis.*

Overall, qualitative methodology allowed for flexibility of questioning and the facilitation of in-depth exploration of participants' thoughts. Importantly, appropriate measures of sensitivity adapted to the participants' needs, were also important when discussing sensitive topics such as racism. These included having a brief conversation, serving as an icebreaker 'chat,' at the start and a check-in conversation at the end, both of which were not recorded, as the intent here was to ensure participants' well-being. Braun and Clark's (2006) TA approach is not intended to be interpreted as a set of "rules" but as part of practice which is "reflective" (Braun et al., 2019, p. 2). Research is often "pragmatic" and has various constraints such as time and context (Braun et al., 2019, p. 14). This research was not without these, such as the researcher undertaking a practical placement alongside academic work for the DEdCPsy doctorate within given time-constraints.

In summary, the research utilised the following approaches:

►   Qualitative and exploratory.

►   Semi-structured interviews.

►   Inductive approach to data coding and analysis.

►   Thematic analysis.

►   Analysis of the lived experiences of BAME YP.

►   Participants/sample.

Trustworthiness, Transparency and Reflexivity in Qualitative Research

Qualitative research is "contextual" because it is conducted specifically in a given time and place (Dodgson, 2019, p. 20). For research to have relevance, it must be "trustworthy" (Adler, 2022, p. 598). Whilst quantitative research utilises statistical analysis to examine relationships between phenomena and is often regarded as intrinsically trustworthy, qualitative research meaning makes from actions and words which involves subjectivity rather than measurements (Adler, 2022). An important aspect of trustworthiness in qualitative research is "transparency" (Adler, 2022, p. 600). In qualitative research, the researcher is the principal instrument of research (Dodgson, 2019) and being transparent about their own biases or assumptions strengthens the authenticity of the research's findings (Reid et al., 2018). Transparency includes setting out the procedures of a study (Adler, 2022) clearly. For example, I recorded all interviews; all bar one had video recordings (one participant chose to have an audio recording only); I used a semi-structured interview schedule; I discussed each interview with my thesis supervisor; I created a spreadsheet of all themes before refining them and constructed thematic maps for themes; and I added many direct quotations from participants' transcripts within the Findings' section of this thesis (Chapter 5).

In addition to transparency (discussed earlier in Chapter 4, from page 46) reflexivity is also a key element to the assessment of trustworthiness in research (Dodgson, 2019). Adler (2022, p. 600) defines reflexivity as a process whereby "researchers should reflect" and "share" their social positioning with readers as the researcher's objectivity and bias may be affected by their participants and likewise their participants may be affected by the researcher's bias.

Qualitative research is permeated by "the dynamics of human interactions" and reflexivity enables the researcher to question their own assumptions and motivations (Reid et al., 2018, p. 69). In qualitative research, there is intersubjectivity in a researcher's expectations and "social circumstances" or unavoidable contexts such as the researcher's own beliefs (Rouse, 1987, as cited in Reid et al., 2018 p. 11-12). One's experience of the world and one's resulting knowledge is significantly shaped by our cultural and subjective perspectives as well as the activities and conversations we engage in (Yardley, 1997 as cited in Yardley 2000). My work as a researcher in this thesis was no exception to the latter. Reflexivity with regard to factors which could have affected the research such as the external constraints or pressures and why a particular investigation was undertaken (Yardley, 2000) can contribute to openness on the researcher's part. For example, my own beliefs about how BAME people are sometimes subjected to negative narratives and attitudes in society such as through political narratives and language used by politicians to secure political loyalty with a majority (e.g. of voters) discussed earlier in the literature review (from page 22-23). The latter also occurs in society, in workplaces and lived experiences such as of racism I myself have experienced in several of the aforementioned areas, as well the experiences of some friends and family, may have resulted in some researcher bias on my part. In order to attempt to balance biases, I revisited participants' interview recordings, listened and watched them back multiple times, created a spreadsheet of all themes or codes to ascertain the frequency of

occurrence (see [Appendix O](#)), I had ongoing discussions with my thesis supervisor and placement supervisors which were important elements of airing and 'checking' my own thought processes, interpretations and considering biases.

There is a view that there is not yet a definitive or widely accepted hierarchy of expertise of qualitative methodologies and lack of an agreed unitary qualitative methodology can result in some scepticism about its validity (Yardley, 2000). Later research states that "high quality" research should have clear research questions which can be justified and suggests that "the study is timely, original, rigorous and relevant" (Stenfors et al., 2020, p. 597). In qualitative research, four main evaluative criteria often used are: "credibility (*alignment between theory, RQs, collection of data, findings and analysis*); dependability (*another researcher could follow procedures in similar conditions albeit with potentially differing conclusions*), confirmability (*links or relationships between the data gathered and findings*) transferability" (describing the context of the research and how it shaped findings), (Guba et al., as cited in Stenfors et al., 2020, p.598). Additionally Stenfors et al., (2020) suggest explanations of reflexivity on the part of the researcher such as their relationship to the participants.

4.4 Participants/sample

A sample size or number (*n*), of participants where *n* equals 10-12 was used as an optimum goal to be aimed for. The conceptual basis of this goal was the greater the "information power" held by a participants' sample; the lower the number of required participants, and vice versa (Malterud et al., 2016, p. 1754). However, at this stage as a researcher, it was also noted that the effectiveness of the chosen sample size may only emerge during the analysis of the data stage and the subsequent writing-up of the report (Malterud et al., 2016).

As a researcher, I used ideal sampling criteria (Table 4) to support the selection of participants. I explored a range of options to recruit participants which was through: schools, the Educational Psychology Services, the community, and using contacts I previously had through many years as a teacher in the education sector. At the time of applying for the ethics, consideration was taken of global pandemic conditions. In order to maintain some certainty that the research could proceed regardless of any current or subsequent lockdowns or COVID-19 restrictions, it was decided to offer online video/audio interviews, including the option of this being from a home, community, or school base, dependent on the preferences of participants and their parent/s or carer/s, as well as pandemic restrictions and protocols.

Table 4 *Ideal Sampling Criteria for Participants*

Importance of criteria	*Criteria details*
Ideal number of participants	○ *10-12 BAME YP*
Essential criteria	○ *Aged between 13-16* years (*ideally Year 10/11)*
	○ *Mix of genders*
Desirable criteria	○ *YP who have attended primary and secondary school in the UK*

Recruiting participants in the midst of a global pandemic, alongside what perhaps could be deemed as a sensitive research topic was challenging. Initially I tried a two-pronged approach through schools and links in the community but schools' responses were not forthcoming; community approaches were the most productive. The latter also meant not having to explain to students why only BAME students were invited to take part in the research. Responses, possibly due to Covid-19 demands, took time. I always contacted a parent or carer first, and

asked them to seek consent from their child as part of informed consent. In total, I was able to

recruit eight participants, the details of which follow in the table below (Table 5).

4.4.1 Reflections on participant recruitment and interviews

After further consideration from advice from the university ethics' board, discussion with my

supervisor, and my own considerations and reflections of the sensitive nature of data, I

reconsidered the desirable criteria such as the practicalities of requesting the information as

part of the desirable criteria. A summary of the participants' demographics is outlined below

(Table 5).

Table 5 *Participants' Demographics*

Participant (P) number	Participant name	Sex M-Male F-Female	Age (Years)	Ethnic background/roots
P1	Aleena	F	15	Indian
P2	Ambreen	F	15	Indian
P3	Farzana	F	15	Pakistani
P4	Zubair	M	16	Pakistani
P5	Maliya	F	15	Pakistani
P6	Beena	F	15	Pakistani or Indian (not stated)
P7	Nabeel	M	15	Pakistani
P8	Tyrone	M	15	Black British Caribbean

Consequently, I used only the criteria of the young person having attended primary and secondary school in the UK, as an easily accessible practical measure. I had realised other data would be unavailable for those participants recruited through community contacts, and this could result in an imbalance of knowledge of selected data about participants. Therefore, I decided not to request this information.

4.5   Apparatus

I used a laptop to store and transcribe the data, audio recording devices such as Google meet (audio/visual) recordings, and a password protected phone (audio only). All participants were happy to conduct an audio/video interview. This was very useful because whilst transcribing, reviewing the body language, pauses, expressions, and responses of the participant, sometimes helped further my understanding, and meaning make of what the participant was expressing or trying to say. A quiet interview space was requested which was free from noise as far as possible in order to promote optimal interviewing conditions for participants. As a researcher, the British Psychological Society's code of ethics (BPS, 2016) was adhered to, as well as the University of Sheffield's ethical protocols. Specialist software which supports the use of qualitative research and data analysis, known as Quirkos (see Appendix E) was used.

The Quirkos software (Quirkos, 2022) helped to organise and colour code or highlight transcripts where I uploaded the transcripts and I created bubbles known as 'quirks' for themes. I then manually highlighted each of the key themes within the transcripts and dropped these sections within the themed 'quirks' (see the end of Appendix E). I then printed the transcripts off so that I could analyse the data.

4.6 Procedure

4.6.1 Interview protocols

Once contact had been established with a gatekeeper (a person who was going to allow some communication with participants parent/s or carer/s), further information was emailed, or discussed on the phone with a key adult i.e. parent or carer, and the participant information sheets and consent forms were emailed. Sometimes, when appropriate, this was further supported with hard copies given to trusted and known community contacts to enable easy access and completion for those involved. Once written consent was gained for the recording of the data and the use of anonymised quotes, the interviews took place via video/audio calls through 'Google meet,' a secure platform from the researcher's university.

Interviews were conducted with eight participants, supported by a pre-prepared semi-structured interview schedule, as presented in table below (Table 6). As can be seen, the actual interview questions were derived from the researcher's key RQs, in order to make them more accessible for YP. Initially, only key questions were asked, supported by some further questions where appropriate. The general extension, or supplementary questions were used to help support YP to expand upon their answers, whilst still ensuring that the data allowed the researcher to be led by participants.

Table 6 *Time to Belong - Interview Schedule*

Research Questions	Questions for participants

Icebreaker/ welcome conversation (Not recorded)	*Welcome and informed consent conversation prompts.*
	  o *Can you tell me a little bit about yourself, your hobbies, pets, family/who you live with?*
	  o *How long have you been at this school? Did you know anybody when you started here in Year7? What helped you make more friends in year 7?*
	  o *What would you like to do when you leave school?*

RQ.1. How do BAME students experience 'belonging' or 'fitting in,' in relation to their school?	*Q1. Can you tell me more about your life at school now? What do you enjoy/not enjoy?* o *Does ethnicity matter?*

RQ.2. How do BAME students feel school staff affect their sense of belonging?	*Q2. How do your teachers/school staff support you?*
	  o *Tell me about how you get on with staff?*
	  o *Does ethnicity matter?*

RQ.3. How do BAME YP feel fellow students affect their sense of belonging?	*Q3a. Tell me about your friends/friendship groups at school. What helps you feel like you belong/fit in with your friends?*
	  o *Does ethnicity matter?*
	Q3b. Tell me about your fellow students at school, and how you feel you get on and fit in with them.
	  o *Does ethnicity matter?*

RQ.4. What (changes) would BAME YP like to see to improve their sense of belonging in the future?	*Q.4. What (changes) would BAME YP like to see to improve their sense of belonging in the future?*
	  o *In the light of what we have talked about, is there anything else you'd like to add about what belongingness means to you?*
	  o *Is there anything else you feel I should have asked you but haven't?*
	  o *Do you have any questions for me?*

General extension or supplementary questions for all research questions include:
 	
(The list does not mean all the questions were asked, they were selected as, and if, appropriate, to develop/build upon young peoples' responses).
	o *Can you tell me more about that?*
	  o *Can you give examples?*
	  o *How did/do you respond to that?*
	  o *What do you think this might mean?*
	  o *What do you think about this?*
	  o *How do you feel about that?*
	  o *Why do you think or feel this?*
	  o *What can help with this?*
	  o *What helps with this?*
	  o *Why is this important to you?*
	  o *How does that affect you?*
	  o *Has anything changed? In what way?*
	  o *Who? What? Where? When? How? Why?*

4.7   Data collection

Once informed consent was acquired from parent/s to carer/s and participants, the data was

collected through the recordings, and the participants shared their lived experiences, linked to belongingness at school. All participants agreed to audio/video recordings which meant that the researcher was able to look back and listen to the tone and body language and non-verbal communications, to support further interpretation of the data, if required. The protocols of informed consent were observed, and participants were made aware of their right to withdraw at any point up until the data had been anonymised.

4.7.1 Reflections on data collection

Whilst deliberating the types of methodology to be used in this research, consideration was made of the use of focus groups (Kroll et al., 2007). However, this method was not thought to be suitable because there could be the possibility of "conformity bias" occurring, whether consciously or unconsciously, as a result of peer pressure or the potential effects of group-think (Oberai & Anand, 2018, p. 15) theory which states that conformity in individuals can be based on self-interest such as being perceived as a "team-player" but failing to act in way that upholds their privately held convictions and beliefs (Wice & Davidai, 2021, p. 1205-1206). This could have potentially invalidated data, and not have represented BAME YP's genuine or real voices on sensitive topics such as 'race' or ethnicity-based experiences of belongingness and racism.

<div style="border:1px solid">

Reflections

Data Collection: My influence as a researcher was something I considered throughout the research process, through my reflective diary and through discussions with my supervisors both at university and on placement. For example, I was very aware the participants may have been nervous whatever the topic but certainly where they were being asked to reflect on their experiences as a BAME young person. I was very conscious they may feel a little nervous at the start of interviews and this led to me having an ice breaker conversation with them before the recording which helped participants to know what to expect. Similarly, considering the nature of some of the

</div>

interview questions, it was likely that topics such as participants' views on ethnicity or racism could arise. As such, I felt it was necessary to have a 'checking-in' or closure conversation with each participant at the end of the interview and endeavour to make sure that the participant was happy and not worrying about anything they may have said. I knew that this was something that would have been important to me had I been a participant in this research at their age, and something I understood by being a BAME researcher.

I also recall whilst preparing for interviews, thinking that participants in BAME majority schools would experience less racism. However, this assumption was quickly dispelled by the first participant Aleena who told me that some people in her school "can be quite racist." This helped me keep a more open mind in subsequent interviews and was also a reminder, that assumptions should not be made. I learned it was better to be curious about whether or not something happens or occurs in a given circumstance rather than assume it does not, regardless of my own lived experiences as a BAME person. To this end, discussions with my thesis and placement supervisors about interviews and reflecting after each interview in my diary helped me to consider my own role as researcher and its potential influences.

4.8   Analysis/analytic strategy

Interviews with participants were recorded, transcribed, coded and analysed, as part of the six stages advocated by Braun and Clarke (2006). The key stages in this process are highlighted in more detail in the thematic analysis check list (Table 7) below. In brief, the key stages for Braun and Clarke's (2006) TA are: familiarisation of data, generation of initial codes, using codes to generate themes, review of the themes, then defining or naming the themes, and finally producing the report. The checklist served as a helpful reminder to aspects of TA such as not rushing each stage, and ensuring that data was not paraphrased, rather it was analysed and interpreted (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

I transcribed interviews as they were completed and reflected upon the nature of multi-faceted themes such as '*fulfilling religious obligations'* and '*role of teachers*' This enabled me to fill gaps between the return of further consent forms purposefully and productively by

working with data gathered so far, as well as enabling me to interact in a timely way with freshly acquired data. There were interactions between each stage. I would go back and check the data, review, and reorganise the themes, and then I identified final overarching themes and sub-themes guided by the TA checklist (Table 7).

Table 7 *Thematic Analysis Check List (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 96)*

Process	No.	Criteria
Transcription	1	The data have been transcribed to an appropriate level of detail, and the transcripts have been checked against the tapes for 'accuracy.'
Coding	2	Each data item has been given equal attention in the coding process.
	3	Themes have not been generated from a few vivid examples (an anecdotal approach), but instead the coding process has been thorough, inclusive and comprehensive.
	4	All relevant extracts for all each theme have been collated.
	5	Themes have been checked against each other and back to the original data set.
	6	Themes are internally coherent, consistent, and distinctive.
Analysis	7	Data have been analysed - interpreted, made sense of - rather than just paraphrased or described.
	8	Analysis and data match each other - the extracts illustrate the analytic claims.
	9	Analysis tells a convincing and well organised story about the data and topic.
	10	A good balance between analytic narrative and illustrative extracts is provided.
Overall report	11	Enough time has been allocated to complete all phases of the analysis adequately, without rushing a phase or giving it a once-over lightly.
Written report	12	The assumptions about, and specific approach to, thematic analysis are clearly explicated.
	13	There is a good fit between what you claim you do, and what you show you have done – i.e. described method and reported analysis or consistent.
	14	The language and concepts used in the report are consistent with the epistemological position of the analysis.
	15	The research is positioned as active in the research process; Themes do not just 'emerge.'

As the researcher, I took an inductive approach towards the data as this has capacity to allow the emergence of new theory and perspectives from the data. Because TA does not subscribe to a given stepped framework, this makes it an appropriate approach to the research, complementing the researcher's position as a critical realist. I found one of the advantages of the TA approach to data is that it is enabled a "reflective" (Braun et al., 2019, p. 2) and

"reflexive" approach to data as part of a process which although can be experiential is also "interpretative" and is a way of giving "voice" to participants, and which is shaped by the researcher (Braun et al., 2019, p. 4). Themes were not treated as summaries of topics, and whilst linked to a central idea, they were in many ways multi-faceted as advocated by Braun et al., (2019). Figure 2 below summarises the analytic strategy.

Figure 2 *Analytic Strategy*

Interpretative Reflective Reflexive Shaped by researcher

Participant-voice Experiential

- Data-familiarisation
- Generating initial codes
- Using codes to actively generate multi-faceted themes
- Review themes
- Define and name themes
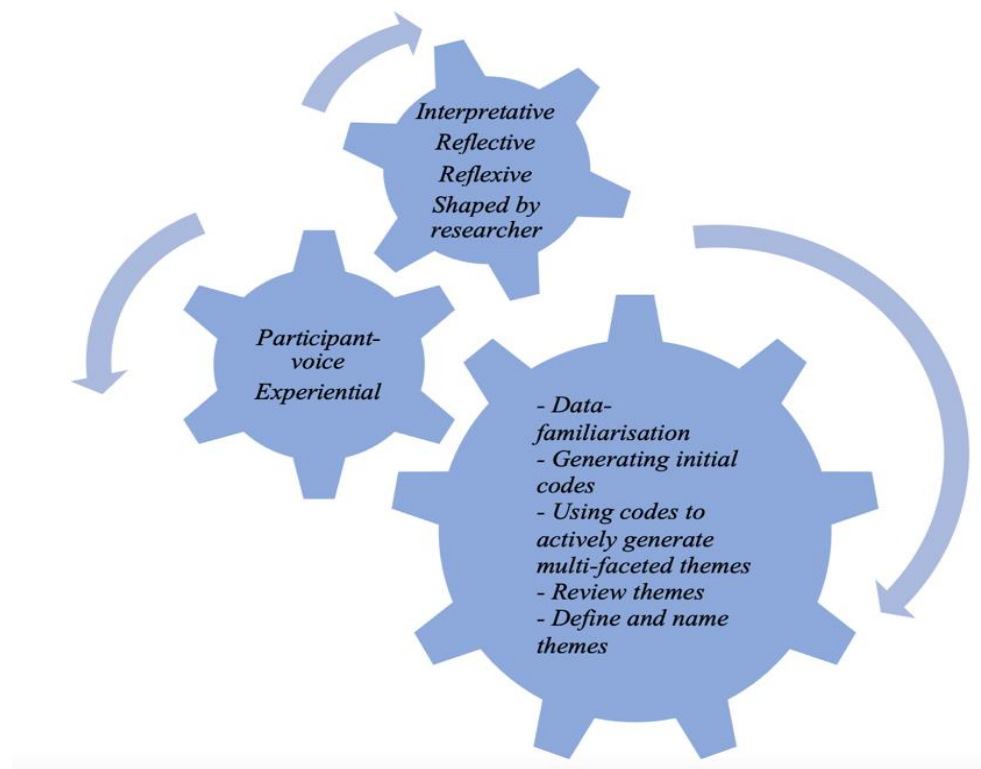
(Adapted from Braun & Clarke, 2006 and Braun et al., 2019)

Dissemination of findings: These will be disseminated further by sharing findings with interested Educational Psychology Services (EPS) colleagues. Findings may also be shared through other appropriately selected forums/bodies which have concerns about BAME YP's SoB, as well as where other appropriate opportunities arise. The reference to 'appropriate'

forums, bodies, and opportunities ideally refers to those holding academic or educational weight and where related professionals abide by linked ethics and protocols, and where the rights of BAME YP are mooted, and adhered to, particularly if sensitive transcriptions/data is shared.

4.9 Ethical considerations and Quality-assurance (QA)

The research followed ethical guidelines and protocols as conveyed by the University of Sheffield, the British Psychological Society (BPS, 2016), and the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC, 2016). Information/debrief sheets conveyed information about oversubscription of participants, sensitivity of the topic, withdrawing from the study, and anonymity. The researcher was also honest and open about being legally obligated to report safeguarding concerns should they arise. These were provided to key adults (see Appendix F) and YP (see Appendix G). The latter information sheets also contained contact details for helpful organisations and sources of support that YP, or anyone connected with the research, could access. If participants chose to share who their favourite teacher was, and if deemed appropriate by the researcher, and if agreed to by the YP, then this could be another source of support. These were accompanied by the respective consent forms (see Appendix H) and (see Appendix I).

The researcher stored the data on a password-protected laptop and secure audio recording device. The data was anonymised upon transcription by allocating numbers and pseudonyms to refer to participants. Original names were not used on any transcripts or notes. The researcher was acutely aware of the sensitivity surrounding issues around 'race' and ethnicity, social, school, and peer experiences and the potential for them to be anxiety-provoking for YP (Williams et al., 2018). As such, the researcher took particular care during the interviews, to take note of participant's body language, tone of voice, and where possible

steer the direction of the interview to less distressing aspects of the research if at any point this was appropriate, rather than a circumstance arise where a participant may experience distress.

Once the interviews were transcribed, and the data had been anonymised, samples/extracts were discussed and or quality assured by the researcher's thesis supervisor, an EPS colleague, or another educational psychologist (EP). Contact details for the researcher on the researcher's University of Sheffield thesis' supervisor were also provided should the participants have any concerns.

Protecting the data: It is intended that access to participants' data in full would only be granted access if the person/body accessing it will agree to preserve the confidentiality of the information as requested in the participant information sheet. This would fulfil the criteria of being open about the nature of the research and the integrity of the data gathered, whilst still protecting participants. Therefore, the researcher hopes to be granted permission for transcripts not to be published in their entirety. This is because negative experiences, or differential treatment based on 'race' can be very triggering, with awareness lacking in clinicians and conversations on 'race' being uncomfortable in therapeutic settings; triggering can also lead to PTSD consisting of maladaptive behaviours seeking to avoid experiences felt to be traumatic (Umberson, 2017; Williams et al., 2018). It is incumbent upon researchers to act responsibly, as per our Code of Ethics, including "the avoidance of harm" (BPS, 2021) to clients. Therefore, the researcher feels there is no benefit of publishing the data in the general public's domain, where some individuals may not be bound by ethical principles which apply to researchers and other key professionals such as EPS services. Sample extracts are provided in the appendices, (see Appendix J and see Appendix K).

4.9.1   Ethical Issues linked to participant-recruitment and interviews

The flexibility of being able to transcribe data as it was collected proved important because sometimes it would take some time for participants' parents or carers, participants themselves, or relevant intermediaries, to return the consent forms to me. I felt that giving them appropriate time to consider their participation without pressure was an important ethical obligation of this research.

4.10 Pilot study

Once the study was approved by the University of Sheffield ethics' board, a pilot interview was conducted with one participant with a view to highlighting any cultural sensitivities, ascertaining the appropriateness of the proposed research's semi-structured interview schedule, and highlighting any need for amendments. This interview was subsequently included in the research data gathered as everything had run smoothly and without issues.

4.10.1 Reflections on the Pilot study

I transcribed the interview the same day and reflected upon the pilot interview by making contemporaneous notes directly after transcription, and which are presented in the table below (Table 8).

Table 8 *Pilot Interview Reflections and Learning Points*

	Pilot interview reflections and learning points
1.	*Scaffolding seemed to be preferred on the first question on what belonging means, and the young person seemed to appreciate a little support.*
2.	*The use of the supplementary questions was very helpful in helping me to help the participant expand on answers or for me to gain further information for the research.*
3.	*Enabling subtitles on Google meet by both participant and researcher may be helpful if required. It appears that the researcher cannot put them on for both participants- I feels this could be helpful to participants to see what is being asked as I did not use them in the pilot interview. On the other hand it could distract from what is being said?*
4.	*Students being educated even within a state school where students are predominantly of Black/Asian minority ethnic backgrounds, also experience racism/racist behaviours from fellow students who are non-BAME. I had previously wondered whether they may experience it less. I will consider this and bear this in mind when I recruit or interview further participants.*
5.	*Keep all questions as open as possible.*

4.11 Time-management and Issues

In order to support time management of the research, the researcher drafted a proposed research timetable (see Appendix L). The researcher noted that other issues could potentially affect the timelines: such as gaining ethical approval, lack of access to, or restricted access to participants, and recruiting via schools (due to having to have several layers of gatekeepers), local and national pandemic (Covid-19) restrictions, or linked illnesses which could result in YP or connected adults being unavailable for research at given times, or even permanently, due to a change in circumstances. Furthermore, the researcher remained prepared for other unforeseen events such as participants withdrawing, bereavement or loss, which could affect the researcher's self-imposed deadlines, and adherence to the draft proposed research timetable.

4.11.1 Reflections on time-management issues

The proposed research timetable (see Appendix L) needed to be flexible on time-management because recruiting participants proved to be more laborious than I initially envisaged, with many schools not getting back to me. This was understandable, given the pressures of the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions and sometimes undergoing Ofsted inspections. On other occasions, despite having conversations with parents who had appeared to be very keen to participate, and who had already read the consent information before speaking to me via the community contact, they did not actually get back to me with the signed consent forms. With the topic being sensitive around belonging, 'race', and ethnicity, all I could do was wait. In two cases further contact was not made. Consequently, I had to spend more time recruiting further participants.

4.12 Reflexivity and Reflections on Overall Methodology

Further alternative approaches were considered and some of my thoughts are set out briefly (see Appendix M). In general, the methodology worked well because it gave participants the space and safety to say what they felt without feeling pressured. There were challenges because recruitment efforts did not always procure participants. Schools were busy with Covid-19 protocols and negatively impacted by staff absence. Recruiting participants through the community, whilst challenging, I think helped them feel safe as people at school did not need to know about their participation. Therefore, participants might not be asked what was said, unless they themselves chose to discuss it with someone at school. I also kept a brief reflective diary (see Appendix N) to be able to look back on to complement thinking processes.

5 Findings

"If you change the way you look at things, the things you look at change."

- *(Wayne Dyer, 2008, as cited in*

Brooks, 2022).

5.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter reports and summarises the findings. It includes brief references to how the coding process took place, thematic maps to help visualise the redefining of themes and the development of the final overarching themes derived from the data gathered from the participants.

5.2 Findings

Originally, I coded themes onto a spreadsheet, then ordered the data alphabetically to see which themes were reoccurring, as well as their frequency, an example of which can be seen in the appendices (see Appendix O).

During the collating the codes' process, key overall themes were reorganised into a mind map (Figure 3) showing overarching themes that will also be used to address the research questions. An inductive, data-driven approach to the data was taken.

Figure 3 *Initial thematic map redefining themes*
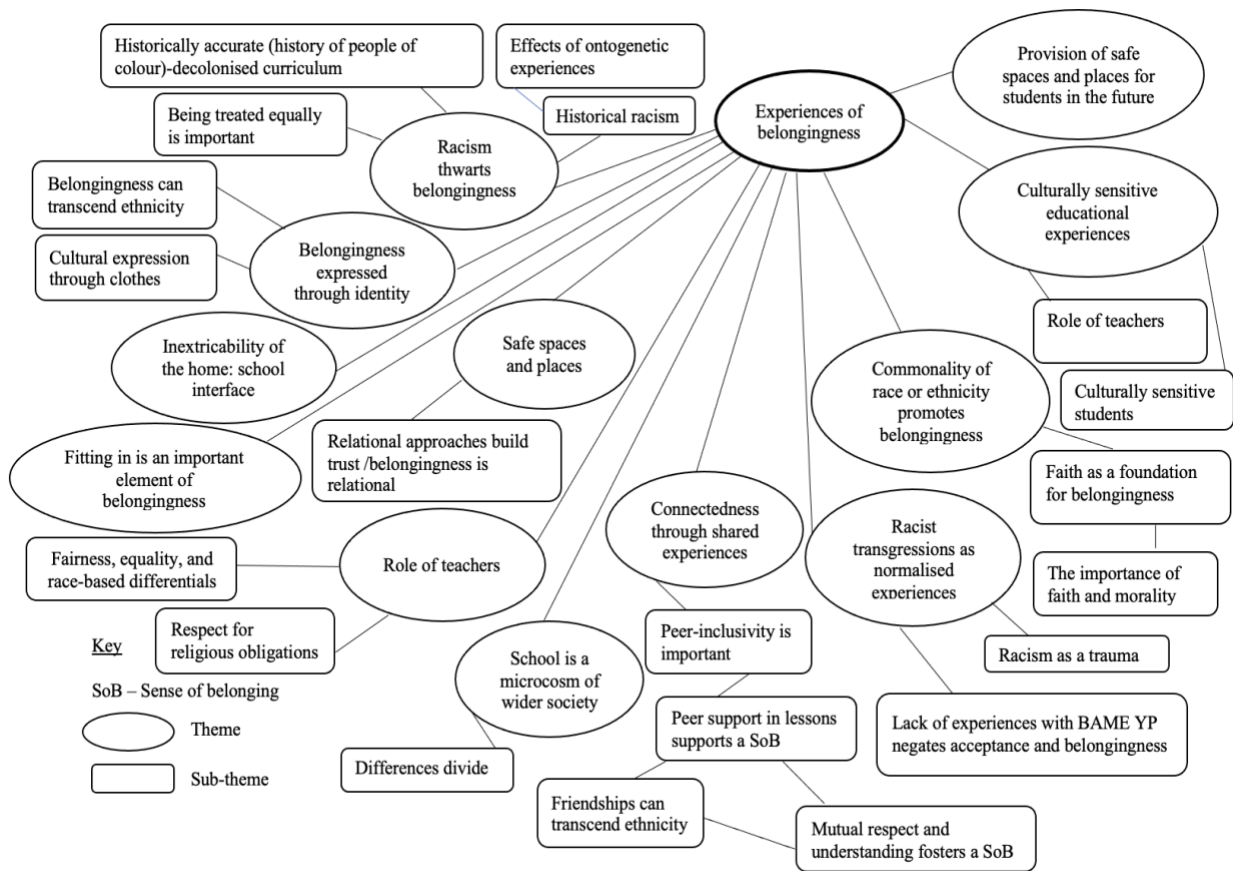
I then reviewed and reduced initial key themes, subsuming some into overarching themes

Figure 4 above. I reviewed themes for their relevance and re-organised these revised

overarching themes to correspond with the four key research questions by mapping them out

in an anti-clockwise direction, beginning with research question RQ1 on the left-hand side,

and ending with RQ4 on the furthest right-hand side.

I viewed themes as not existing in isolation. I attempted to add dotted lines to map out the

interactions between themes, but this became too busy and unclear, so I removed them. I

added them in the next stage of thematic mapping after carefully studying the above thematic

map (Figure 4). I reviewed themes to determine final overarching themes and subsequently

created a singular thematic map per RQ (Figures 5-8), adding dotted lines to highlight significant interactions between themes.

As successive RQs and themes were developing, in essence, they were 'telling a story' based on the factors affecting BAME YP experiences of belonging in relation to their secondary school experiences. In brief, the first RQ began with developing an initial understanding about what belonging or fitting in at school meant to the participant. The second RQ explored support from school staff in relation to belongingness. The third RQ explored how YP felt they fitted in with their friends and fellow students. The fourth and last RQ asked students what changes they thought schools could implement to improve their sense of belonging (SoB) in the future. I felt this brought a solution-focused and more positive end to the research interview, and the data I had collected. This supports a critical realist non-determinist approach to analysing social realities which argues that the way in which the triggering of "underlying mechanisms" occurs is contingently dependent on given conditions present in the context (Flipsnack, 2022, p. 8) of events and incidents.

In the next part of the findings' section, I will present the final thematic map for each RQ, with an account of the findings and some brief comments, followed by a discussion section where I will analyse and comment upon the findings.

Please note that if quotations from participants feature words or phrases in brackets or parentheses, they are the researcher's words to aid clarification of what is being said.

5.2.1   RQ 1 and related themes

RQ1, '*How do BAME students experience 'belonging' or 'fitting in,' in relation to their school?*' was reframed for the student participants' ease of access as. '*What does feeling that you belong or fit in at school mean to you?*'

This question sought to ascertain what belongingness meant to students as experienced through school life. Three main themes were identified from the data, alongside several sub-themes as shown in Figure 4 below.

Figure 4 *Final Thematic Map for RQ1*

Key
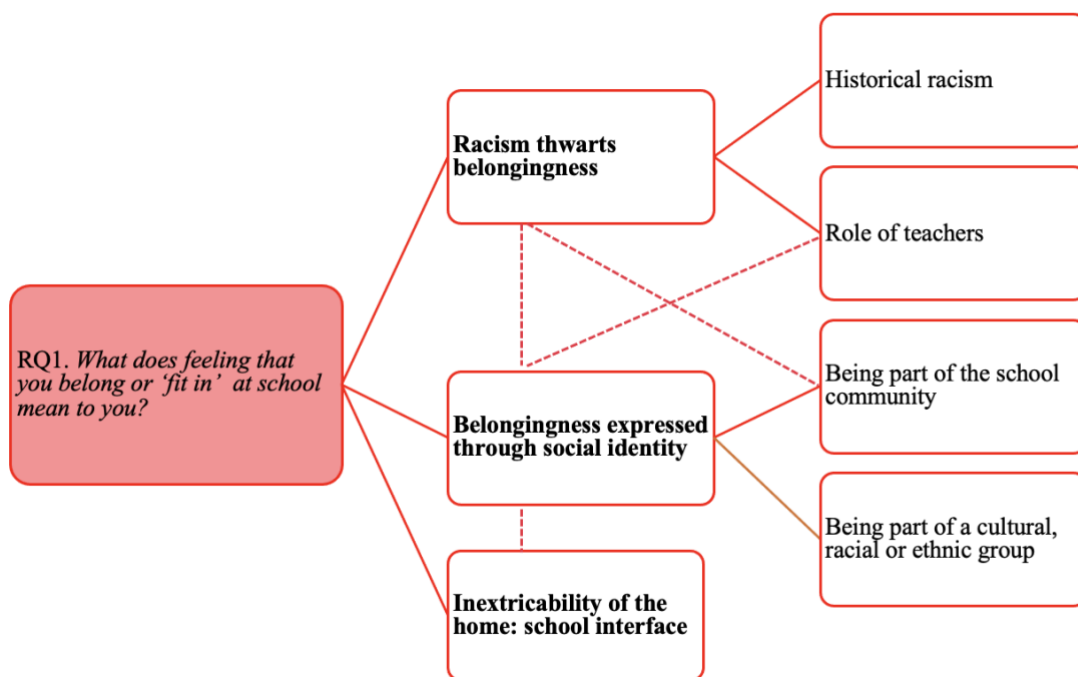
_____ Links to themes (key themes emboldened)

- - - - - Connections between themes

Notably, participants refrained from simply giving a definition, and preferred to elaborate on their lived experiences.

The first theme '*Belongingness expressed through social identity'* demonstrated two key types of social groups to which participants felt they belonged, the first *'being the school community'* and the second *'being part of a cultural, racial, or ethnic group.'*

The second theme '*Racism thwarts belongingness'* showed that when YP from BAME communities experienced elements of racism, their SoB was reduced or negated.

The third theme, '*Inextricability of the home: school interface'* showed the connections between events at school and links to home life or vice versa. The findings for each of the aforementioned themes are presented below. All participants' names are pseudonyms.

* Warning: Please note during the reporting and discussion of the findings, there are references to racial slurs which are undeniably offensive but are necessary to report the research with authenticity. Where racial slurs are reported, asterisks may be used to avoid writing out the offensive word in full.

5.2.1.1   *Belongingness expressed through social identity*

Social identity was a key theme connecting all participants. This theme was further divided into two sub-themes: '*being part of the school community'* and '*being part of a cultural racial or ethnic group*.' The findings are presented below.

5.2.1.1.1   *Being part of the school community*

Aleena enjoyed being part of the school sports' teams, in particular *"swimming and netball"*

and felt this brought her together with other students because it was something they had in *"common."* Consequently, this helped her feel *"we all like fit in together."* Ambreen said *"I didn't feel…any discriminatory behaviour towards me… because I look a bit different…"* This made her feel *"happy."*

Farzana explained that *"when I feel like I belonged in school… I feel like the teachers and everyone, there respecting me… I feel happy… when you feel you belong… somewhere. You feel happier and more better."* She said *" if you don't feel like you belong"* this made her *"feel… lonely and isolated."* Farzana did not enjoy, *"certain lessons"* because she was not with her friends, but was *"always… positive"* and recognised she could be *"with my friends at times as well."*

Zubair said *"to fit in is to feel equal, equal rights among others… among err peers… you don't feel… the black sheep."* In his school, *"there were predominantly more non-Asians"* and *"a lot of interactions between a lot of ethnicities… kind of really got on together… kind of unified us…"* Zubair valued and *"enjoyed… team building activities"* such as an annual *"sports' festival"* where *"we'll just talk and cheer, and we'd congratulate one another on their achievements…"* He defined belonging as *"being on the same level… the same mentality"* with other people and said to *"understand one another, you have to learn more…"*

Maliya reported school life was *"just normal routine… everybody just gets along… I quite like the activities that we do."* Prior to the Covid pandemic she played *"netball"* and used to *"like cooking club"* as a way *"to get to know people that I hardly speak to… you didn't see*

your teacher as a teacher… about having fun and just kinda enjoying yourself… instead of being a lesson."

Beena said, *"I believe there are no differences between one another regardless of your culture. We all look out for one another as we are part of one community."* Farzana appreciated that teachers and staff helped with *"personal matters."*

5.2.1.1.2   Being part of a cultural, racial or ethnic group

Aleena enjoys and appreciates her school community coming together with parents to celebrate occasions such as Ramadan and Eid.

Ambreen thought by letting teenagers *"know there's gonna be people who look different"* in future jobs it would *"help them feel more comfortable."* When Ambreen felt more comfortable, she said she *"definitely"* felt she belonged more. Things that made her feel more comfortable were: *"talking to… peers who were coloured, or a bit different (about) their experiences with… race and ethnicity."* Examples included *"having common interests that like White people Christian wouldn't necessarily know about, like going to temple or that kind of stuff… this has helped me like feel I'm not the only one experiencing this."*

Zubair recognises that it was *"important you learn about other peoples' ethnicities... stuff that they do… every community is different."* He nodded at me (the researcher) whilst stating *"our community and other communities… we're a multicultural ethnic nation… a lot of diverse people… it's great to know what others… do, or foods they eat... the cultural links…"*

Zubair said *"ethnicities do matter…It's important to stick to your community… know more*

about yourself…" and *"not to forget…your cultural roots."* Maliya explained, she does not think ethnicity matters *"anymore."* She thinks *"in Year Seven and Year Eight… it did matter because… people came from different backgrounds… people were maybe more judgemental than others."*

Whilst Beena thought all students were *"part of one community,"* and attributed a SoB to her faith-based school community, *"we believe in the same religion and teach each other as well as act upon the teachings of our faith."* Her school has *"a variety of ethnicities, including Indian, Pakistani, Somali, and Azerbaijani… all different culturally,"* for example, *"in terms of the food we eat."* Beena said, *"we do not judge one another as we are open to exploring different cultures. Even though our experiences vary, it doesn't mean we don't share anything in common."* She valued participating in activities: *"art… netball club, dodgeball"* and *"crafty things"* such as *"crochet"* and *"knitting."*

Nabeel enjoyed spending *"break time"* and *"lunch"* times with friends and feels ethnicity *"sometimes"* matters at school. For example, his teachers understanding his obligations to fast during Ramadan.

Tyrone defined 'belonging' as *"finding people that like respect and value you for who you are… and like you get along with…"* and who *"respect"* your choices of interests "*even if they don't necessarily enjoy the same things."* This referred to his participation in *"Drama and stuff. And it's not like I got made fun of it for enjoying it."* He enjoyed Drama because *"it's self-expressive, and you get to be who you are. Even though you can be like acting as someone else, you bring parts of yourself into the character, err, which can be quite fun."*

5.2.1.2   Racism thwarts belongingness

Five out of eight participants specifically talked about their experiences of racism, either personally, or observed, or known to have happened to someone else. This theme was further subdivided into two themes: '*experiences of racism*' and '*role of teachers.*' These are reported below.

5.2.1.2.1   Experiences of racism

Aleena reported whilst she had not encountered racism *"personally… my friends have"* and *"that is not so common in our school anymore."* When asked to exemplify the racism experienced, Aleena reported *"they've been called a lot of racial slur slurs and stuff from other people … like P**i…"* and the friend who experienced this felt *"they had to ignore it because I don't want to cause any drama…"* Aleena reported this made her feel *"quite uncomfortable because it's not nice seeing someone you're so close to being called that."*

Ambreen acknowledged what could be interpreted as a sense of relief that whilst she had not herself faced discrimination, *"…I've heard… it's not always this case in other schools… there are children who do experience racism at such a young age. I'm glad that doesn't happen to me."*

Farzana said *"sometimes"* BAME students were *"treated differently because of… ethnicity"* or the *"colour of their skin,"* resulting in her feeling *"not happy, not confident, and I guess it kind of lowers yourself esteem and self-confidence"* because you question *"why you not… being treated the same just because you're Brown or Black… if you don't feel like you belong somewhere"* then it makes *"you feel lonely and isolated."*

Like Aleena, Maliya reported she had not personally experienced racism but said *"I know a friend… felt a bit judged… she was not from the same primary (school)… She was Indian,"* and other students were *"British, White."* Whilst initially trying to excuse peers being judgemental by apportioning it to the fact that her friend was from a different primary school to others, Maliya shared an example from a Physical Education lesson stating, *"it was something to do with passing the ball… kind of I think a little bit racist… like 'can you pass the ball?' But it was in an (Indian) accent, and she got very upset… very offended…"* Maliya said she had *"just come to terms with her to just accepting the difference."* Maliya explained this acceptance, *"just a sense obviously 'cos being Pakistani and knowing that people can be a bit nasty and horrible… it does make you question how they would treat me."* She said, *"now that girl, I hardly speak to her that much… just seeing how upset she was afterwards as she got sent home, she was really upset about it."* Maliya said, *"it does make you think and consider are we different from others?"* This left her questioning if ethnic or racial differences were a negative or detrimental factor.

Maliya said, *"to be honest"* ethnicity matters at school, *"I think it's okay, but I think it's just acknowledging it… not be a big thing like not being weirded out by somebody being different. It's just accepting it and getting on with life."*

Tyrone, the fifth participant who experienced racism did so personally, initially beginning with the assertion that, *"Our school has a zero-tolerance rule against like any forms of discrimination."* Then, in later responses to RQ2 and RQ3 Tyrone described his own experiences of racism at school. Tyrone was very conscious that *"my ethnicity is part of me"* and recognises this *"has an effect on who I am as a person."* He felt this helped him to bring *"a deeper understanding"* to learning because of his *"insight"* into it.

5.2.1.2.2   Role of teachers

Whilst the question that I asked at the beginning (RQ1) was about what belongingness meant to YP, participants preferred to exemplify it with references to school, or teachers' responses to racism experienced at school, be that via teachers, peers, or the education provided. This theme overlaps with RQ2. Notably, all participants spoke about teachers first and foremost, and not support staff. Five participants spoke about the role of teachers at the start of this research.

Aleena reported the matter about the Indian girl who had been spoken to in an Indian accent by a fellow student had gone unreported to staff in school but she was *"not sure why,"* despite feeling they were *"quite comfortable going to our Head of Year."*

Ambreen said that in *"History lessons we learned that in England, or in any country… used to be just White classes or just Coloured classes… now that's all changed… different when our parents were back in school."* Ambreen's parents reminded her about when she was *"in reception"* at school and *"this girl classified me as Brown, she called me out for being Brown… apparently I came home crying…. the thought of people telling you that you're different. It just makes you insecure."*

Zubair said, *"When you grow old and you know you have your own family, you can explain to them, who you are, what you are, where you from…. it's important you know not to forget your, your cultural roots…"*

When Maliya was asked what action the school had taken (i.e. against the perpetrator in a

racist incident, although I did not use the word 'perpetrator in my question), she said, *"the girl got an after-school detention and … a…little speech in the morning about how it's not okay to discriminate against each other… that's pretty much it."*

Tyrone gave an example of when his ethnicity might matter more, *"Learning about a topic like my ethnicity, or err, my nationality… I… have an insight... a deeper understanding… it like affects… my views on different topics and situations.*

5.2.1.3   Inextricability of the home: school interface

Five participants commented on the intersectionality between home: school life. Aleena reported in her school *"a majority of the students are Asian, South Asian and are Muslims. Erm, so I am South Asian and Muslim too so I feel like I fit in."* She appreciates *"during Ramadan"* and *"Eid occasions"* her school invites *"parents to come over."* These are faith-based occasions for many Muslim students, which whilst they may be a key part of life at home, they overlap with school life as fasting continues throughout the school day. One of the Eid occasions also marks the end of Ramadan and students celebrating this often take time off from school to celebrate at home with family and friends. Aleena values the school's provision of opportunities to celebrate their (students') religious observances at school. The latter adds to her SoB and fitting in and perhaps breaks down some of the barriers of separation between home and school life and makes students feel more integrated at school.

Farzana said if somebody had *"a positive school life then at home they would feel more happier"* and they would *"want to come to school."* But if someone had a *"negative"* school life then they *"would be miserable at home, they wouldn't feel that good about themselves"* She also appreciates that teachers and the school can help "*a lot*" with *"personal matters."*

Farzana recognises connections between the environments of home and school and that positive or challenging events in one environment can affect the other, particularly emotional well-being.

Ambreen values learning about different religions in RE such as 'Christianity and Islam." She explained *"being ethnically different to other students is important because it's ... helping the other students realise ... (what) their life is going to be like for the... future...."* She recognised *"there's not going to always be people who look the same as them or have the same opinions so it is important not just for us but for them as well."* Ambreen said ethnicity was *"quite important when... there's definitely more White students than ethnically or like coloured students, so it's important to feel like you're comfortable."* She also thinks she has *"fitted in quite well."* Ambreen liked Maths because she is *"good at it"* and Science because she likes *"learning about new things... that haven't been proven yet that you think will be proven in the future."* As mentioned earlier, Ambreen's parents reminded her of a childhood incident of someone *"calling her out"* for being of a different skin colour, and she had come "home crying." Ambreen's grandmother, mother, and father *"all speak Gujerati."* She said whilst she can *"understand most of it... I can't speak it."* Despite her doubts about her head girl job application, Ambreen states that she has not experienced what she refers to as *"any major racism"* she recognises that if she did it would "*affect your school life, and education and how you feel when you get home from that kind of stuff,*" which shows that Ambreen is aware that events in one environment can impact how one feels in the other (i.e. home and school). Ambreen refers to ethnicity which includes national or ethnic origins (Equality Act, 2010) and markers related to "cultural identity" which include ancestry, religion and language (Flanagin et al., 2021, p. 622). The latter are inextricable facets/aspects of Ambreen's life at home, school and beyond. Ambreen appreciates the value of learning about

religions including her own (Islam) at school as she indicates this prepares students for meeting people different to themselves in their future lives, beyond school. She mentions she can understand but not speak her home language i.e. the language her parents and grandmother speak. This demonstrates elements of intersectionality between events experienced by Ambreen as a BAME person at school and life at home such as BAME parents' own experiences influencing their responses to their child's experiences. There is also a sense that Ambreen wants to move forwards from her parents' experiences to making a positive change and she notes the *"important role"* of parents in that they should be *"aware of the kind of things"* their *"children have been saying and the attitudes to BAME students ...at school compared to home."* Ambreen acknowledges that parents at home can have an influential role in their child's behaviours and attitudes towards BAME peers at school.

Zubair felt ethnicity mattered because *"it's important… not to forget your cultural roots…"* Zubair is comfortable with his ethnicity and appreciates his cultural roots which are rooted in his home life. Maliya recognised that whilst she enjoyed socialising with friends outside of school, they also "*have a family"* and family commitments meant socialising together was not always possible. Maliya understands her friends' family commitments at home which can affect her friend socialising with school friends. Culturally, there is an expectation in many families with Indian and Pakistani roots that commitments to family time, events and activities are important and may supersede commitments to socialising with friends, which sometimes can conflict with more westernised relationship teenagers have with family where teenagers may state they are going out to meet friends rather than ask permission and accommodate family expectations.

A somewhat surprising theme that emerged when considering the data that related to my first research question was the theme 'racism thwarts belongingness'. I had not envisaged it arising in relation to the first research question. I had thought that potentially participants would define what belongingness meant to them and had thought themes such as experiences of racism may arise when considering the themes in relation to my second and third research questions which drew on data related to questions asked about school staff and peers respectively. My own interpretations may also have been influenced by some participants raising this so quickly into the interviews. My interpretations and understanding of Zubair's reference to "culture" and "community" and Beena's reference to her "religion" (from page 76-77) were made easier by being a researcher of a BAME background with lived experience of these. I think participants felt at ease and did not feel the need to explain them further; similarly, I did not feel the need to ask them to expand. There was, therefore, an unspoken understanding, something which I feel occurred because I was a researcher from a BAME background.

5.2.2   RQ 2 and related themes

RQ2, '*How do BAME students feel school staff affect their SoB?*' was reframed for students as, '*How do your teachers/school staff support you?*' The intention was not to lead participants and creating a question that students could easily interpret.

Two key themes were derived from the data (see Figure 5). The first theme '*role of teachers'* was divided into two sub-themes: '*fairness, equality, and 'race'-based differentials'* and '*respect for religious obligations*.' The second theme, '*safe learning environment'* included one sub-theme: '*relational approaches support' a SoB*.

Figure 5 *Final Thematic Map for RQ2*

Key
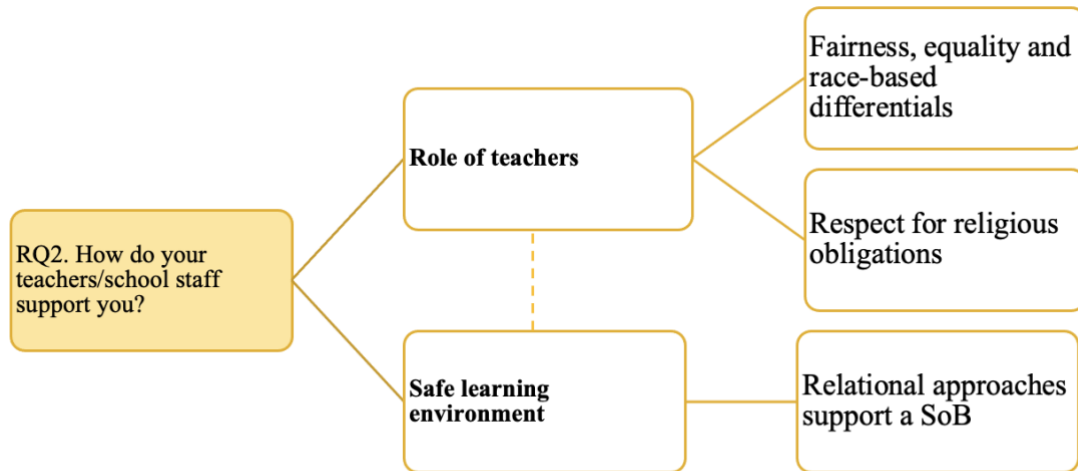
_____ Links to themes (key themes emboldened)

------ Connections between themes

SoB   Sense of belonging

5.2.2.1   Role of teachers

5.2.2.1.1   Fairness, equality, and 'race'-based differentials

Two students specifically commented on the school curriculum's historical content. Ambreen suggested learning in History lessons was improving because previously they only learned only about *"White classes… or Coloured classes…"* Ambreen said that because her school is a Christian faith school, *"there's no teachers who are …. discriminatory or feel like coloured people should be more smart or less."* She attributes this to the school's moral and faith-based values.

Tyrone said that school History lessons *"don't always teach you the full range of History and*

mainly whitewash it." However, his school "*do learn a bit more than most people,*" especially about *"intersectionality."* He recalled learning about *"World War One… how the British White soldiers were seen as heroes and amazing people and… had forgotten about all the Black and Asian soldiers who were part of the British colonies, err, they were forced to fight."* His insight continues, *"kind of shows how a lot of leaders that we might have looked up to weren't always the best, err, morally."* He appreciated being *"taught the proper History"* and knowing that *"people"* who *"have done horrible things"* would no longer be *"glorified, err, in the same way they used to be."*

Six participants expressed concerns about fairness and injustice, and lack of understanding, when dealing with racially concerning behaviours from teachers, or fellow students, along with insufficient, if any, consequences when transgressions occur.

Farzana expressed a sense of injustice in that *"sometimes in lessons"* when *"you need help with something some … teachers"* help the other girls who are *"White"* more and *"kind of favouritise"* but *"don't necessarily show the same attitude towards you."* She said that teachers *"might start getting annoyed"* more with BAME students than *"a White person"* to whom they would *"explain everything happily and not get annoyed at them…"*

Consequently, Farzana felt *"ethnicity does matter."* Farzana felt *"a bit upset"* and found it *"a bit devastating"* and unfair that teachers were not *"basing people off their personalities,"* but rather by "*the colour of the skin*." She could not "*understand why they think that is okay*," and wondered why teachers *"can't treat you exactly the same."* She said that BAME students were given less support in lessons than White peers and felt that sometimes things were not explained *"properly"* to BAME students. She alluded to this type of treatment several times

and wanted teachers to *"apply the same rules"* to all students. Farzana felt *"you have to be White just to be treated the same."*

Farzana reported when a *"White girl… was being a bit rude to the teacher, or … not following the rules, then the teacher wouldn't like shout at them as much or punish them as much"* as *"someone who was Brown, or a different ethnicity."* She said staff would *"shout"* more at BAME students. She said some students and staff *"show hate towards people of different ethnicities"* and gave examples, *"sometimes they'll be rude to you because of your beliefs and ethnicity."* She said, "*some people might find it unusual that you know other languages, not just English you know things like Urdu, Arabic, or something… they might hate you, like hate because of that."* Farzana felt that such race-based differential treatment affected her *"mentally… because… you can't change the colour of your skin."* She thought that consequently *"you might feel self-conscious about how you look after that because you think… if I was this colour, if I was White, then I would be treated the same?"* and stated *"it just makes you feel really upset emotionally, just feel really down."*

Like Farzana, Nabeel felt one of his teachers did not fully understand him. For example, his Physical Education teacher not understanding why he was fasting (discussed within the theme '*respect for religious obligations'* below). He clarified, *"I don't have any issues"* with teachers in school other than the Physical Education situation. Nabeel was keen to add, *"I think the staff should be more aware of the different cultures and erm … support them the same as everyone else. Treat everyone equal."* Nabeel said this was important because it meant that there would not be *"much favouritism"* and there would be *"equality… real, equal equality."*

Tyrone reported that in his school *"if someone said something offensive … they might be put in like isolation or have a detention… Erm, apparently, they're meant to be educated further."* He said an example of *"offensive talk,"* was *"like saying stereotypes about certain things or stuff that like err is insensitive to marginalised groups,"* Tyrone thought that not all teachers dealt with racially motivated transgressions fairly because the teachers *"act like it isn't as bad as other stuff. And they kind of just let it off. Err, just give 'em (perpetrators) a little warning…But without really doing anything to change the person's mind."* He thought it was *"disappointing"* the teachers did not use their *"full capability"* in sanctioning, deterring, or working to eliminate a perpetrator's *"bad views."* When asked what he thought the teacher could have done, Tyrone told me that the teacher could have taken the perpetrator *"out of class"* and *"talk to them about it and why it's so offensive,"* because *"just saying that they shouldn't do it doesn't really teach them"* that "*what they said was bad. It just teaches them not to do it in school or around them. but outside of school, it's justified in their kind of view still."*

Like Aneeza, Ambreen, and Zubair, whilst Maliya did not experience any issues personally, she described an incident when a student used an Indian accent to upset an Indian girl during netball, the only action that was taken was a *"little speech in the morning about how it's not okay to discriminate…. far as I know that's pretty much it,"* suggesting this was minimal.

Tyrone noted, *"a majority of the teachers I have are White,"* which led to him feeling *"a bit of annoyance when they don't really get the situations, they're talking about correct."* He thought it *"can be a bit easier when you're talking (to) someone who is like of colour 'cos they can understand discrimination a bit betta (better)."*

Zubair's experience of teachers was very positive at his school. He felt it was important that teachers were supportive and did not *"publicly humiliate you."* He expected his teachers to recognise everyone at high school is *"changing, we're growing, you know our brains aren't really fully developed as you know, psychologists say, so there is a lot of things, you know, you learn that you shouldn't do…"* Zubair said his teachers were *"very helpful,"* and that 'race' did not matter. If there were any issues his teachers *"would understand."*

5.2.2.1.2   Respect for religious obligations

Zubair appreciated his Religious Education (RE) teacher being *"very understanding especially with Ramadan and Eid."* His Physical Education teacher was understanding and allowed students who were fasting to *"sit out,"* i.e. opt out, of lessons during hot weather. Consideration of the needs of students who were fasting was also taken during the GCSE examination period, such as allowing students days off school when possible. Zubair felt that ethnicity did not really matter with teachers at school because he felt supported.

In contrast to Zubair's experiences of Physical Education during Ramadan, Nabeel said his Physical Education teacher *"doesn't understand me that I can't do anything like very strenuous because I can't drink water."* He said this made him feel *"a bit erm annoyed in a way."* He said his teacher *"should know"* that he needs to *"fast without drinking any water."* Nabeel thought that because only a *"few people"* in his school fasted *"it's a bit hard for them (teachers) to understand."* Similarly, one of Aleena's teachers commented that it was students' choice to fast so no adjustments to the timing of examinations etc., were going to be made.

All participants felt a safe learning environment was important. Arguably, it could be said the theme '*role of teachers*' could be a component of this. Most participants felt that school was a reasonably safe place to be, despite any adverse experiences of racism. Notably, none of the participants said that they did not want to go to school.

Aleena felt supported by school staff but described other students' experiences of racism, such as racial slurs, including being called *"curry muncher,"* or the *"N word."* She said that when *"staff realised… what was going on… everyone… tried to make it stop."* This was *"basically"* done through *"having assemblies"* and learning about it in lessons.

Ambreen felt supported by staff and felt she could *"go to them and ask for help."* She felt safe in her school and had not "*noticed any discrimination."* However, notably at the end of the interview, she relayed a Head Girl selection incident, discussed further within the themes in RQ3, where Ambreen is left wondering whether any discrimination took place.

Zubair described *"life at school"* as *"good."* He appreciated his teachers going the *"extra mile to help you,"* and not embarrassing students if they made *"mistakes."* He said teachers were *"really good"* when dealing with issues such as *"bullying extremes."* Like Zubair, Maliya felt safe and supported in school, stating if students felt they *"need extra help in class"* they knew they could *"always stay behind,"* and could talk to teachers about things unrelated to school, such as *"stuff at home, or friendship etc."* Maliya said teachers told students the *"door's always open"* to speak to them. Similarly, Nabeel said that teachers *"help me if I get stuck with any questions… I get on pretty well with my teachers, they support me…"*

Beena felt that if students had *"any issues"* they could *"flag them"* and make teachers aware if they were *"struggling"* or wanted *"to make a change."* Beena valued the student council which she felt truly represented *"student voice"* especially if anyone was *"struggling"* or was finding *"something hard"* because this allowed teachers to provide further resources to students to help them.

Despite Farzana sometimes feeling unsupported by her teachers, she acknowledged that a *"positive school life"* helps students feel *"happier."* Whereas a negatively experienced school life meant students may *"be miserable at home"* and *"wouldn't feel good about themselves."*

Tyrone said when offensive racist behaviour occurred, such as others presenting *"a stereotypical idea of a certain race,"* teachers did not use appropriate sanctions and that *"they don't really seem to care that much."* He did not expand on what the *"stereotypical idea"* was.

5.2.2.2.1 *Relational approaches support a SoB*

Four participants specifically commented on student: teacher relationships and spoke about the positive effects of relational approaches. Ambreen had a *"better bond with teachers,"* in subjects she excels in and appreciated receiving *"a lot of certificates and awards,"* acknowledging her good efforts. Feeling safe at school meant that Ambreen was happy to return to school when pandemic restrictions ended. She said "*it was nice to see my friends again and to be able to ask teachers questions more easily, than waiting for them to reply to an email,"* showing she felt her teachers were approachable and accessible. Beena said that

when teachers *"came along with us and take us on trips… cheer us on…"* this helped develop a *"bond"* with them.

Zubair described his teachers as *"great,"* *"helpful,"* *"supportive,"* and "*very…*

understanding," who were always *"happy to go over"* revision materials in preparation for GCSE, even during Covid when students were at home. Like Zubair, Maliya felt her teachers were approachable, and school staff offered them support from Year Seven onwards, in assemblies, telling students they could always email a *"safe teacher"* i.e., a teacher they trusted, if they needed to talk.

Reflections

When Tyrone talked about the 'full range of history not being taught in school and that *"people"* who *"have done horrible things"* would no longer be as *"glorified"* as they *"used to be,"* I was impressed that he was so aware of this. He later voiced concerns that when racist incidents occurred that some teachers acted *"like it isn't as bad as other stuff,"* I felt empathy as a BAME researcher. When Farzana voiced her concerns about differential treatment by some teachers towards BAME students and her sense of hurt when she said *"you can't change the colour of your skin,"* I could not help but feel a high degree of empathy as I could relate to differential treatment based on race. Therefore, my sense is that my own experiences did influence or inform my interpretations of both Tyrone's and Farzana's words and the feelings I understood as I associated with the experiences they described. Discussions with my thesis and placement supervisors helped me retain a sense of perspective. I am hopeful that the degree of transference from participant to researcher and vice versa (countertransference) was managed as a result.

5.2.3 RQ 3 and related themes

RQ3, 'How do BAME YP feel fellow students affect their SoB? was reframed for student participants in two parts, 3a and 3b:

Question 3a. '*Tell me about your friends/friendship groups* at school. *What helps you feel like you belong/fit in with your friends?'*

Question 3b as '*Tell me about your fellow students at school, and how you feel you get on and fit in with them?'*

I was aware there was a likelihood some participants may feel differently about their relationships and SoB with friends and friendship groups, and their SoB in relation to general peer groups. As expected, the themes overlapped, indicated in Figure 6 below by the dotted lines. However, for the purposes of the research it was useful to separately discuss YP's experiences with their friends, and with fellow students.

Figure 6 *Final Thematic Map for RQ3*

Key
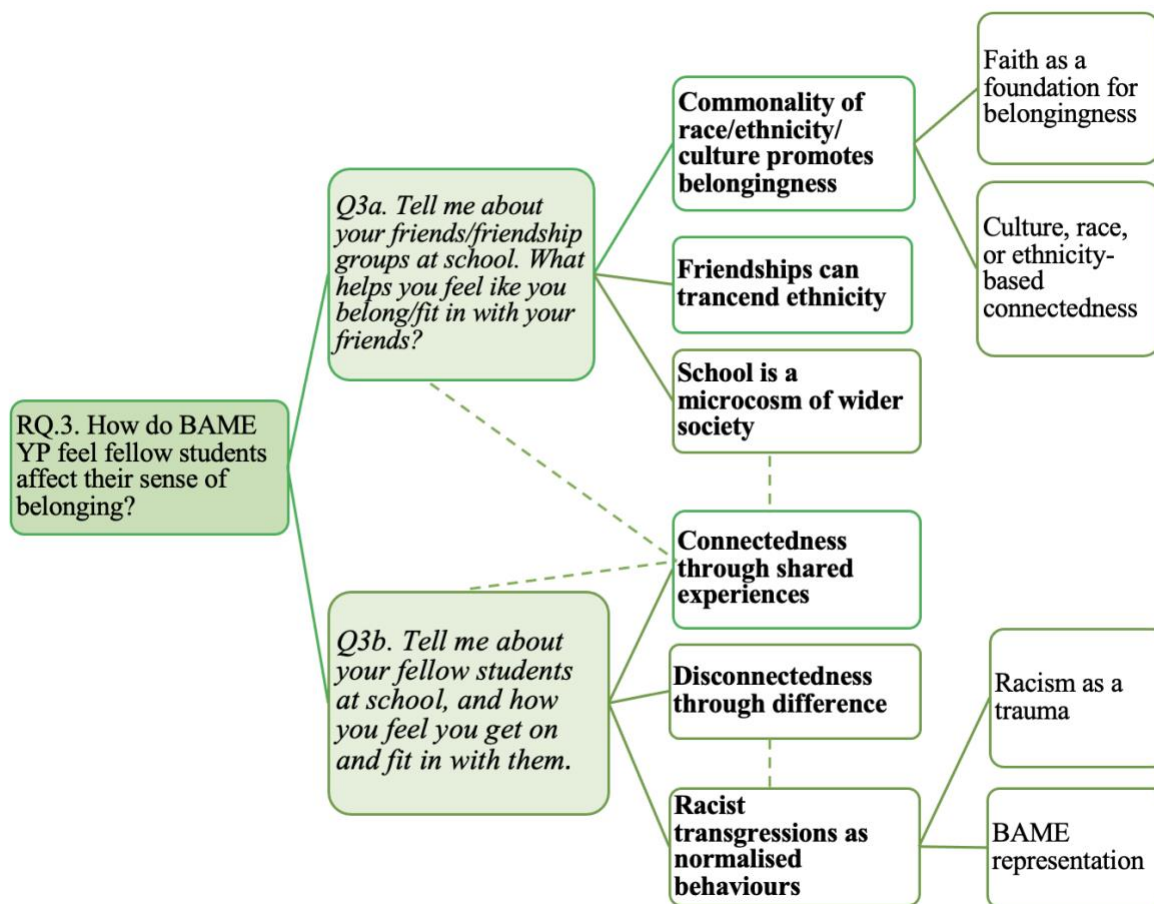
———————	Links to themes (key themes emboldened)
- - - - - -	Interconnected themes
YP	Young people
BAME	Black, Asian minority ethnic

RQ3a aimed to ascertain what helped BAME YP feel they belonged and fitted in with their friends. Three key themes were derived from the data and are discussed below.

The first theme, '*commonality of 'race'/ethnicity/culture promotes belongingness*' illustrated events such as bonding based on religious beliefs or religion-based experiences, and *'culture, 'race', or ethnicity-based connectedness,'* where YP formed connections based on similar racial, cultural, or ethnic backgrounds.

The second theme key theme *'friendships can transcend ethnicity'* demonstrated that BAME YP successfully formed friendships with peers with whom a common ethnicity was not shared.

The third theme, *'school is a microcosm of wider society'* demonstrated that experiences in the microcosm of school, in some ways, reflected experiences in wider society. YP thought some in-school experiences could potentially support or help them learn about wider society. This theme sometimes overlapped with YP's responses to their experiences with fellow students.

RQ3a. Tell me about your friends/friendship groups at school. What helps you feel like you belong/fit in with your friends?

5.2.3.1   Commonality of 'race'/ethnicity/culture promotes belongingness

5.2.3.1.1   Faith as a foundation for belongingness

At school, most of Aleena's friendship group is of a *"South Asian Muslim background"* and she also has *"a few friends"* of a *"South Asian Christian background."* Faith is a good basis for friendship because her friends *"feel comfortable talking"* to her. *"They won't discriminate against you either,"* and interactions are *"easy."* Farzana said having the *"same (religious) beliefs"* as her friends made her feel *"more comfortable."*

5.2.3.1.2   Culture, 'race,' or ethnicity-based connectedness

Four participants felt that culture, 'race' or ethnicity-based connectedness mattered. Aleena

said having friends from *"similar cultures"* meant that they *"all kind of understand each other."* Whilst her school is not a faith school, Aleena reported a *"majority"* of students are *"of South Asian Muslim background so I feel I fit in quite comfortably there."*

Farzana said, "*I don't have any… White friends… I feel… they don't want to be friends with me because of how maybe my ethnicity is or my background because they might think it is… a bit unusual,"* or because she was from *"Pakistan or India."* She felt ethnicity was *"important"* in friendships. Having a common culture with her friends was *"important"* as this made her feel *"kind of safe"* because *"they're not going to judge you because of your ethnicity or what language like you speak at home, or your family."*

Similarly, Zubair said that "*ethnicities do matter… it's important… not to forget your… cultural roots."* Maliya felt connected to some of her friends through speaking a common *"language… like Urdu … and it becomes type of a joke."* Maliya said she felt proud of her language because it is *"quite unique"* and *"there's not a lot of people"* who *"can"* speak or understand it. Maliya did not feel ethnicity mattered with fellow students. Nabeel said whilst *"close friends would understand my ethnicity… my fellow students don't really understand… I appreciate that they try…"*

Tyrone said that ethnicity mattered *"to a certain extent"* with friends. The ethnicity of his friendship groups was *"majority White people because the majority of my school is White, so it's quite hard to find other people of colour to be like… friends with."*

5.2.3.2   *Friendships can transcend ethnicity*

Six participants specifically gave examples of friendships transcending ethnicity. Despite

Aleena's friendship group mainly sharing her ethnicity, she still thinks ethnicity does not matter in friendships. She feels *"comfortable"* working with other students in class because they have *"been together since Year 7"* and feels the *"whole year group"* is *"like a big friends' group."* Aleena said *"a few years ago I had a White friend that was in our Asian group… sometimes she felt a bit left out"* and they always tried *"to include her together but she left school… we're all still close together with her."*

Ambreen met her friends when she *"started high school."* She described the ethnicities of her main friendship group as *"three of them Christian, one of them… an atheist."* With regards to ethnicity mattering with friends, Ambreen said she *"didn't think it has a major impact on whether or not they like you… it is talked about from time to time."* She reasoned, *"But they've never been discriminatory towards me or made me feel like I'm… less a part of that friendship group because I'm coloured."* Ambreen said that *"none"* of her *"friends have like called me out for my ethnicity… I think that's comforting at times to know they don't consider me different."* She said, when selecting friends *"some people aren't gonna make you feel better about yourself because of the way you look, and some people are, so it's who you choose to be friends with."*

Zubair's friends are a *"mixed group"* who are *"very welcoming"* and very accepting of him and his religious beliefs. He is happy to share information *"about Islam"* with them and explain religious obligations such as *"Ramadan,"* and "*Eid"* and why people observed these. He noted his friends *"learnt a lot,"* and that their conversations *"open horizons about religions."*

Maliya has a *"diverse"* and *"mixed"* friendship group consisting of herself who is

"Pakistani… a couple of other Pakistanis, a couple of Indians and … some English" friends and there is a mixture of *"girls and boys."*

Nabeel said he knew some of his friends from his *"last school,"* meaning his primary school. His friends of different ethnicities *"understand"* his religious obligations such as *"fasting"* and the reasons why he observes them. He feels he gets on well with all his friends and *"they get along well"* with him. He said ethnicity mattered *"very little"* with friends.

Tyrone said, *"I… fit in with my friends mainly because… they have nice interests and they're quite funny… kind of progressive… they understand… a lot of stuff about the discrimination that lots of people face…"* He reported, *"They care about everyone… they care about you,"* although this is somewhat contradicted later in RQ4, when he feels his friends could show loyalty towards him when other peers say offensive things.

5.2.3.3　　　School is a microcosm of wider society

Six participants specifically highlighted events in school impacting them in life beyond school. Some also added more clarity than others on the impact of the pandemic closures. Ambreen said that her SoB could be improved at school in the future if *"maybe parents being aware of the kind of things… (their) children have been saying and the attitudes to BAME students."* She thought *"parents have an important role… and are not always aware of their child's behaviour at school, compared to at home."* When her father responded to the selection of the Head Girl incident (discussed under *'racist transgressions as normalised behaviours'* below) when a girl of White ethnicity was selected, despite Ambreen feeling she had made very significant contributions to school life, her father told her that this was *"just*

what it's gonna be like for the rest of your life." She expressed disappointment, whilst *"you do a lot of stuff for other people, you don't, you can't, expect anything back."*

At home, Ambreen said her *"grandma… mum and dad they all speak Gujerati, and I understand most of it but I, I can't speak it."* She was happy she was learning *"Spanish and French."* She was conscious of the assumption that Asian people are expected to speak an Asian language. Ambreen appeared to like the fact she could speak European languages because they are not considered *"Asian or Indian."* Ambreen said this was *"just showing people that even though you might be Indian that doesn't mean you have to speak Gujerati or you have to do Indian things. You know, you can do whatever you want."*

Farzana felt having friends of the same ethnicity meant she was not judged for the language she speaks or for her family. Maliya found learning new subjects such as *"business… really interesting."* She said, *"I think it really helps for the future"* because students can learn *"all about debts"* and *"you need that in life."* She appreciates that students from (tutorial) groups have school council representatives such as *"faith reps"* and *"service reps"* and clarified that faith representatives were *"more general"* rather than religion based.

Some students felt returning to school after the pandemic closures was mostly a positive experience. Aleena felt quite comfortable and excited about returning to school *"cos seeing all those people, I feel like we will connect in some way,"* thereby demonstrating a positive SoB.

Ambreen said that it was *"good"* to return to school because *"it was nice to see my friends*

again and be able to ask teachers questions more easily…" Maliya said *"it was… kind of more cautious and all that but good in a way because we weren't mixing (with) like bubbles…"*

Tyrone was *"mainly happy"* to see his *"friends again and have normal lessons."* Although *"during the pandemic"* he would go online with his friends to *"play games together"* and *"could still connect… safely."* Tyrone said working *"from home… was a lot tougher and a bit more boring."*

Some students talked about the negative effects of Covid. For example, Farzana felt behaviours where students of *"Brown ethnicity"* were treated less favourably than students of White ethnicity had worsened (as previously discussed within the findings' section in RQ1). She also thought theories on how Covid *"started"* and perceptions that Asian people were spreading it contributed to this.

Zubair said that *"Covid was quite destructive"* because they could not interact *"with other year groups."* Maliya said, *"it was strange because everything had changed and nothing was really normal… different to be honest."* Participants' experiences, therefore, frequently echo or mirror events in wider society such as racism or negative effects of the pandemic.

RQ3b. Tell me about your fellow students at school, and how you feel you get on and fit in with them?

Research question 3b, sought to learn more about how BAME YP felt they got on with, and

fitted in with fellow students, i.e., how their SoB was experienced with other students beyond their friendship groups at school. Two key themes were derived from the data: '*connectedness through shared experiences*,' and '*racist transgressions as normalised behaviours*.'

The first theme, '*connectedness through shared experiences*' also overlapped with YP's experiences with their friends. To avoid repetition YP's responses to friends and fellow students will also be discussed here.

The second theme '*disconnectedness through difference'* demonstrated how YP's SoB was negated if they were treated in less favourable ways, which in turn also affected their feelings or MH.

The third theme '*racist transgressions as normalised behaviours*,' was divided into two sub-themes. The first sub-theme '*racism as a trauma*,' reports incidents experienced by BAME YP, and where expressed by participants, the impact or effects of racism. The second sub-theme, '*BAME representation*' demonstrated when participants found representation was in some way inadequate, noticeable, or has affected them at school, or beyond.

5.2.3.4 *Connectedness through shared experiences*

This key theme overlaps across experiences with 'friends' and 'fellow students' (as indicated by the dotted line in Figure 6 earlier).

All participants shared experiences indicating they valued the connectedness developed

through shared experiences with both friends and fellow students.

Aleena said she plays netball with her friends at school and "*tried it out for teams.*" Aleena said that outside of school, she, and her friends *"hung out"* together.

Ambreen also valued paired work *"in Art or DT (Design and Technology) classes"* where partners are sometimes chosen by the students and sometimes by the teacher and said they are *"comfortable with each other."* Ambreen mainly sees two of her school friends outside of school. They *"usually go to the cinemas together,"* and meet up with friends from another friendship group to go *"shopping or into town."*

Ambreen said one of her best friends *"likes sport"* including *"netball,"* and other friends also have *"the same interests."* Ambreen said it was "*easier to fit in… talking about the same things and liking the same things,"* reading *"the same book"* or watching *"the same TV programmes or movies,"* so they can talk about them at school. Ambreen appreciated that when teachers did seating plans and you were sitting "*next to someone you have not really talked to a lot before… you got to learn more about them and their lifestyle."*

Farzana felt connected to her friends when sharing activities such as going *"out to eat,"* or going *"to the park."* She felt comfortable sharing something they *"made"* (referring to items such as Asian food) with her friends and this made her feel *"happy."*

Zubair felt included by his peers and enjoyed activities with his friends such as watching a *"lots of movies, shows"* and *"swimming"* activities, going *"to town on numerous occasions"*

as well as going to *"each other's houses."* He also found sharing answers with peers in Maths helped them reach their *"goals"* and therefore supported a SoB.

Maliya said having *"similar hobbies and interests"* to her friends helped her to feel she belongs and fits in with them. Like Zubair, Maliya thought that being *"helpful"* to each other in learning, such as helping them if they had missed *"something"* in class, helped her fit in. She said that they *"sometimes"* did *"homework together."* Maliya felt engaging in such activities *"brings us all together."* She also went *"out….to the park or just generally in town"* with her friends and *"away from school"* where they would *"just talk."* With regards to working with fellow students in class, Maliya said they talk about things they have in common or can *"relate to"* such as *"movies…TV"* and *"pets"* which *"becomes… a nice conversation."* Although generally, they just *"get on with the work*" in class and *"don't really talk."*

Beena values the support from friends *"when I struggle… or need any help."* She appreciated their *"reassurance*." When she is *"feeling down"* they *"plan… somewhere to go out."* She recognises this is a way of *"getting out of that environment."*

Students at Beena's school are expected to carry out *"community service hours in their own time"* which they record and report to school. They *"try to go every weekend"* and carry out activities. Beena said they *"pick up litter, help the elderly or the homeless people, and raise money for them."* They collect money from their own local neighbours where they feel safe and then *"go to the local town centre and distribute it."* They also share other common interests such as *"being part of a team in table tennis tournaments."*

Nabeel appreciated that students *"help each other"* in lessons. For example, by explaining something someone does not understand. With his friends, Nabeel said that sometimes they *"work together"* in class and that they *"talk about stuff in lunch and break."* They shared *"hobbies… the games we play… football teams and TV shows."*

Tyrone said shared activities with his friends included *"Eco club… for the environment"* and *"work on projects together."* He also sees his *"friends outside of school"* to *"hang out, or go to town together."*

5.2.3.5 Disconnectedness through difference

This theme contrasts with the theme '*connectedness through shared experiences'* and links to '*racism as a trauma*.' The theme demonstrated that when differences were highlighted to participants by others, in particular, by some teachers or fellow students in negative ways, there was a sense of disconnectedness with others. Consequently, their SoB was diminished or negated and four participants reported this also affected their MH negatively, their emotional well-being, or at the very least, their thought processes.

Aleena's situation was an anomaly in that she reported anxiety not explicitly related to racism or treatment by peers. She said *"I don't like going outside much… once a month or something… I think I have social anxiety… if we're going out to eat somewhere I'll usually say I'm busy that day so I don't have to talk to anyone…"* She prefers *"hanging out with myself and my family… being inside your home is comfortable."*

Ambreen felt the pressure in society of being expected to live up to stereotypes such as Asian people *"wanting"* to become a *"doctor or nurse or like be in medicine"* along with

being thought to be *"more smart"* but said her teachers do not do this. She was also unhappy about the outcome of the Head Girl incident, where a student of White ethnicity had been selected for the role. Despite this, Ambreen was trying to deal with the latter saying "*you can't complain forever.*" When Ambreen heard of, or witnessed, other students experiencing racism this left her thinking there might be occasions when *"you don't feel like you belong as much as others."* She said those feelings were *"not going to go away overnight"* indicating this is something that plays upon her mind. She said she should not *"have to have a voice in the back of my head telling me … I have to be Christian to get into this school…"* which also shows that she is starting to experience and recognise differential treatment based on 'race' or religion occurring within the microcosm of school, and which may be reflected in the macrocosm of wider society.

Farzana said that when we are *"treated differently"* because of *"ethnicity or…the colour of their skin"* it makes you feel *"like not happy, not confident"* and said the impact of this was it "*lowers your self-esteem or self-confidence.*" She said it *"affects you like mentally… like you can't change the colour of your skin."*

Farzana said if a teacher was *"picking on me"* because of my skin colour, *"I think it would have a… negative impact… on your education"* because consequently, *"you are not really learning properly."*

When Farzana's Asian friend passed away during the pandemic, and racist comments were made on social media by a student at school, with no consequences, Farzana said, it can *"have a big impact on your… mental health and emotional health… you can't change your skin colour or background… it makes you feel a bit like down and… less worthy because you*

are not White…" She reported losing a friend had already been *"upsetting"* but then also experiencing this type of behaviour on social media was *"really, really heart breaking…"* Like Farzana, Tyrone also comments on something beyond a person's control, saying that it can be *"quite annoying"* when someone brings up your ethnicity *"for no reason."*

5.2.3.6 Racist transgressions as normalised behaviours

5.2.3.6.1 Racism as a trauma

Five participants experienced racism either directly, or about a fellow student they knew at school.

Aleena said although her Head of Year and most staff in school were *"quite supportive… some people in our school… can be quite racist."* She said, *"people say like racial slurs or leave you out of things because of your ethnicity or something."* She said this was more common in Years Seven and Eight and does not happen *"often anymore in our school."* Learning opportunities had been provided through *"assemblies."* Notably, Aleena said *"most of us have encountered…some racial abuse or something. So in that way we're connected."*

Ambreen referred to an incident when she applied to be Head Girl; a position she was nominated for. She said *"…4 spaces… needed to be filled… Head Girl, Deputy Head Girl, Head Boy, and Deputy Head Boy."* She reported that *"3 of the people who were nominated were also… coincidentally, doing some work for the teachers, and all together"* and she wondered *"if they had already been selected"* for these positions *"before they were nominated,"* suggesting favouritism on the part of the teachers. Ambreen thought that her interview for the role went well and she described *"how much I'd done for the school,"* and

her *"qualifications."* Consequently, she noted the interviewers had written *"a lot"* of notes *"down for me."* When the results were announced, one of Ambreen's friends got the Head Girl role, so she did not harbour any *"hard feelings."* However, she could not help wondering whether she did not get the role because *"I'm not a Christian."* She said her school only had "*Christian teachers, there's no BAME"* teachers and *"there's no proper (meaning permanent staff) coloured teachers."* She said the Head Girl who was selected was *"White,"* and the *"Head Boy's Christian, and the Deputy Head Girl is, I think, she's an atheist but she's White…"* Ambreen said the incident "*just made me realise… if there's some occasions where you don't feel like you belong, or… you don't feel like you belong as much as others,"* then *"that's just, just part of life. And no, it's not going to go away overnight."*

Ambreen said *"I shouldn't have to have this voice at the back of my head telling me…. I have to be Christian to get into this school"* and attend church and disliked *"feeling like you have to be something (else) in order to get something you know White students would normally get…. you see coloured Christians and Black Christians and Brown Christians"* and staff interviewing *"never asked for my ethnicity…. I'm not sure if… I didn't get it (the Head Girl job) because (of) you know my religion…. just a thought process…. got me thinking you know this is part of life."* This was reminiscent of what Ambreen's father had previously said when she did not get the role of Head Girl, that this was "*just what it's gonna be like for the rest of your life."* This suggests that her father also thinks that experiences, which felt discriminatory or unjust were an expected part of a BAME person's life.

Ambreen said "*there are some students who aren't as respectful towards coloured students but none I've had any personal interaction with."* She felt ethnicity did not matter with fellow students because she had not personally experienced any negative treatment. She reported

"there's some boys in the playground who mess around about sometimes and call each other P**i if they're Brown or coloured." But she said that this had been *"conveyed a bit differently"* to her and in reality this was *"the White boys calling their coloured friend."* She said this made her feel *"a little bit insecure"* and that despite people *"acknowledging that I'm coloured, or a bit different … I never thought I'd have to worry about what I look like,"* implying that she does worry about this now.

Farzana said when one of her "*Asian*" friends started wearing a "*headscarf"* the girl's White friends questioned and criticised the Asian girl, *"Why you are wearing that? Doesn't look nice on you. I think you look better without it."* In another incident when another friend in Year 10, who lived in the *"next street"* to her *"passed away"* during the pandemic and one of the "*White*" students *"posted on a social media story, that erm one Muslim's gone, one's down; we need to kill the rest of them."* Farzana was perplexed by this and said, "*I don't understand how like in a 14-year old's mind you can even think about saying one's gone so then we need to kill the rest of them."* The perpetrator lost none of her White friends over this. Farzana could not understand why other students would still want to be friends with the perpetrator. She found the incident *"quite upsetting"* that *"one of my friends has passed away"* and she had to hear *"something like that… just because of a religion, and her ethnicity."* She said this was *"really, really heart-breaking."* Subsequently, Farzana said *"ethnicity matters a lot"* with fellow students. Farzana was concerned because this type of incident makes "*you feel a bit like down" and "making you feel a bit less worthy just because you're not White."* Farzana also reported that she has heard people say, "*their food…. really stinks*" and she recognises this is a "*discriminating*" behaviour.

Maliya reported she had not personally experienced racism but did share the experience of a

friend when they were in Year Seven, who *"felt a bit judged… she was erm, Indian,"* and the perpetrators were *"British, White."* She reported an incident during Physical Education *"was something to do with… passing the ball… I think a little bit racist because it was like 'can you pass the ball? But… in an accent and she got very upset and you know very offended."*

Tyrone talked about the *"struggles... all the races…have"* of not being understood by a majority of White teachers. He spoke about his own personal *"struggles"* and said "*a lot is like being Black, I have the Afro hair, and people always like to touch it*" He identified this was *"like a microaggression… it can be quite hard to deal with… when everyone like almost all the time's doing it. Then it gets quite exhausting to always have to tell them... not to do that."* He said his friends did *"understand that"* and sometimes his friends supported him by telling other students not to do it. Whilst this support from friends was evident during these incidents, later in RQ4, Tyrone said he did not always feel supported because his friends were often still *"quite nice"* to perpetrators.

Tyrone said, *"a lot of my peers are quite offensive in some of the stuff they say. and they're not always the most educated (about) these things… like in lessons, sometimes you have to hear people saying like offensive things."* He shared a racist incident he had experienced the day before the interview, *"literally yesterday I was… walking into school, err, and someone who wasn't Black err, while saying the N word … to the point where like, it doesn't really shock you"* because *"you know lots of people say it, you, you don't wanna call them out 'cos it's like, 'cos you can't really win that argument… yeah, it's kind of hard err."* He said that students who did this could be of *"any age."* Tyrone explained how racism was not always explicit and that sometimes some people (referring to students) *"don't say the word, but like they say, the first like, but few letters, as if they're gonna say it*," referring to the 'N word,'

and *"acting as if that isn't, like almost as bad 'cos they, 'cos apparently they didn't say it…"* He said he hears this *"a lot"* and that it was *"quite hard to not see someone who would be saying these offensive stuff in our school."* He said *"it varies… how bad it can be. But I would say most people, all, all people, all people of colour would experience some form of racism at, at my school."* The latter echoed Aleena's view, expressed earlier, that *"most of us have encountered… some racial abuse…"*

When asked if he thought ethnicity mattered with fellow students, Tyrone said, *"it really depends on who you are 'cos some people that bring up your ethnicity… you don't really know them that well, it can be a bit weird 'cos like, it's like there's no reason to"* bring it up. Tyrone noted *"it can affect how some people treat you and act around you. but if you're around like other people who are a bit more progressive… they won't care as much…"* When I asked how this affected him, he said *"it can be quite annoying, 'cos you're just trying to live your life and then someone will bring it up for no reason… it's not like the end of the world but it's always… slightly annoying…"*

5.2.3.6.2   BAME representation

Six participants alluded to lack of BAME representation in school, in staff or student numbers.

Aleena had seen more instances of racism from students in Years Seven, Eight and Nine. When I asked her what she thought the reason for this might be, she replied, *"maybe it's because if they come from a school"* that did *"not have many people"* who were *"from Asia or other countries, they're not used to it I guess being with people from those countries."* She

said *"I think those years you're just more immature but in Years 10 and 11 you're just more mature."*

Ambreen said *"seeing I'm not the only one who's different or coloured"* helps her to feel like she fits in more at school. She said *"there's no proper (permanent) coloured teachers,"* suggesting that she was not always understood by non-BAME teachers.

Maliya said she had *" not really seen any Asian teachers or Pakistani, Indian, none."* She said, *"there has been some supply teachers and staff like that but ...there's just really White English."*

Tyrone said there were only a few YP with BAME backgrounds in his school, and *"the majority is White."* In contrast, he states *"Blacks like one of the err smallest groups, err ethnicity people."* He said consequently, *"it can be quite hard for people to understand"* racism and its effects. Zubair also said *"there were predominantly more non-Asians"* at his school, as did Nabeel.

Reflections

Some of the most challenging responses from participants presented within the theme 'racist transgressions as normalised behaviours,' For example, Aleena made reference to "racial slurs" and said "most of us have encountered... some racial abuse." Farzana shared that when a BAME friend from her school passed away, she experienced abuse on social media such as "one Muslim's gone, one's down; we need to kill the rest of them." Tyrone reported racism such as "the N- word" and that one of his struggles was that he has "Afro hair... people always like to touch it." As a BAME researcher, I felt a high degree of empathy but could not voice it openly when participants reported these incidents. I also felt a sense of helplessness that I could not offer more direct support at that moment. I feel the latter was ethically appropriate under the circumstances as I did not want to influence any further responses. Once the recording had stopped, and during the 'checking in' conversations at the end of each interview, when appropriate, I was able to ask if the young person needed any further support. I also pointed out the

list of helpful organisations which I had included on the information sheets prior to the interviews. Admittedly, there were elements of what was said that I found triggering, related to personal experiences of racism. Whilst the latter felt challenging at times, I also felt privileged because the participants had shared their experiences so openly and that the research was providing a space for their voices and experiences to be heard.

5.2.4   RQ 4 and related themes

RQ4, '*What changes would BAME YP like to see to improve their sense of belonging in the future?'* was reframed for student participants as, '*What changes can be made to improve your sense of belonging at school in the future?'*

I also gave participants the added option of including anything they felt that was happening in their school and that was working well in their response to this question. Two key themes were identified from the data as shown in Figure 7 below.

Figure 7 *Final Thematic Map for RQ4*

Key
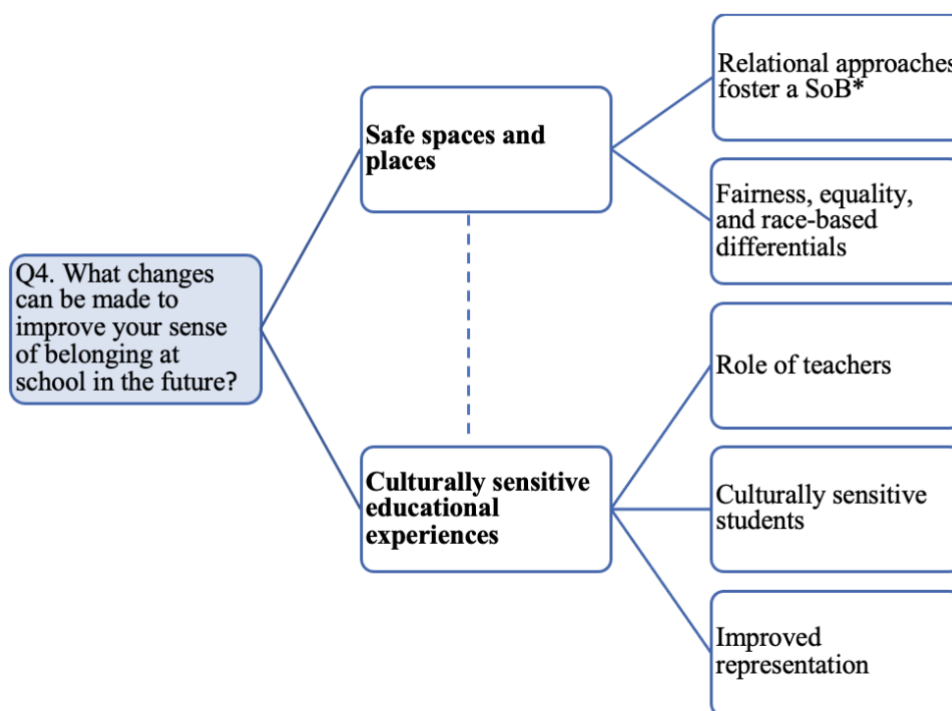
———————	Links to themes (key themes emboldened)
– – – – – – –	Interconnected themes
*SoB	Sense of belonging

The first key theme was '*safe spaces and places*.' This was further divided into two sub-themes: '*relational approaches foster a SoB*,' and '*fairness, equality, and 'race'-based differentials.*'

The second key theme was '*culturally sensitive educational experiences*.' This was divided into three sub-themes: '*role of teachers*,' '*culturally sensitive students*,' and '*improved representation*.'

The themes interact, for example *'safe spaces and places'* could be developed if schools provided BAME students with *'culturally sensitive educational experiences'* and conversely if students had *'culturally sensitive educational experiences'* at school, the school could create *'safe spaces and places'* for their learning. I chose to separate the themes, in order to provide a more focused discussion of them.

5.2.4.1   Safe spaces and places

5.2.4.1.1   Relational approaches foster a SoB

Four participants directly said relational approaches were particularly important to them. Although it could be argued that this is implicitly suggested by other participants. Aleena felt that when some staff at her school fasted *"it helped"* because both herself and her friends could see that this *"showed… support to the Muslim community."*

Ambreen showed insight into change processes, *"It comes down to a mindset… putting…. everyone's mindset and interactions together to see if they have any opinions or disagreements about your ethnicity or how you're supposed to fit in versus how you do fit in."*

Zubair liked having a place to go with his friends in *"Philosophy club"* where they used to watch movies *"when it was raining."* He also *"enjoyed team building activities"* and appreciated *"all…the help from the teachers"* whom he found to be *"supportive."* Tyrone said that if perpetrators of racist transgressions were dealt with appropriately and other BAME students *"don't have to hear that"* then it would be *"a lot nicer"* at school, suggesting that this would create a safer environment.

Six participants commented on this theme. Aleena indicated that she would like more time off for Eid rather than just *"one day"* which she felt was *"unfair"* because *"for Christmas you get two weeks off."* Ambreen felt there should be less stereotypical expectations of people from different ethnicities, such as thinking most *"Asian people… want to become a doctor."* Ambreen does not want that expectation placed upon her because it negatively impacts her *"mental health."*

Ambreen suggested parents could *"maybe"* play a role in creating better conditions for belongingness by *"being aware"* of what their children said to BAME students at school and their children's *"attitudes towards them."* She also felt that sometimes there were assumptions that just because you *"might be Indian that doesn't mean you have to speak Gujerati or have to do Indian things"* and that *"Asians are supposed to do well in school,"* or that *"Christians …go to Church every Sunday and pray every day…"* thereby suggesting she would like to see such stereotypes dispelled.

Farzana said change that could be helpful at school to improve her SoB at school is that *"we should be treated right, and the same, evenly.. just because you're different, you've got different ethnicity… you don't need to be judged on that, you have to be like judged on your personality."* She was referring to both teachers and peers.

Beena said the introduction of *"a student council"* or *"society group on the weekend"* could help *"educate people on different religions, cultures and traditions"* through enjoyable *"shared …experiences."* Farzana said there should be *"serious consequences"* for perpetrators when racist incidents occur, so "*they don't do it again.*"

Tyrone thought *"some teachers"* need to take a *"firm"* approach to the *"punishments against some of the kids, because a lot of times… they just let them get away with stuff…"* I asked him if he found things improved when students received consequences. Tyrone told me that *"it might not change their viewpoints fully…but… it helps…like err, keep it away from like err offensive stuff being said… around students of… different ethnicities,"* suggesting consequences are a deterrent and can act as both a preventative and protective factor against racism, potentially creating safer educational spaces.

5.2.4.2   Culturally sensitive educational experiences

5.2.4.2.1   Role of teachers

Six participants particularly commented on the role of teachers including a need for improving aspects of teachers' cultural competence skills. Aleena reported when Year 10 examinations at school fell within the Muslim religious observance of *"Ramadan… one of the teachers said to us… you don't have to fast for the exams,"* and she said that *"they said the same for PE."* The students felt they had to respond and say *"you do have to fast."* Aleena said, *"I don't understand 'cos we have to fast."* The Physical Education teacher also told students *"It's your choice to fast, so you have to do PE."* She explained that it was *"a White teacher that said that to us."* Aleena said *"some teachers need to understand that a bit more."* Aleena reported another teacher told students, *"the Sixth form had to"* take their *"exams in …Ramadan…. So we had to too…. it's harsh on people who are fasting."*

In contrast, Aleena also reported how supportive other staff at school could be. An occasion where she particularly appreciated support was when *"some teachers…. fasted for one of the days in Ramadan"* She said their *"Headteacher… started all of this and then Head of Year*

was like with the Headteacher too…. and the Vice Head…" and now *"they do it every year."* Despite the fact that students were *"kinda used to it,"* it can still be *"a shock and surprise."* When I asked how this made her feel, she said both she and her friends felt *"happy and proud"* of their teachers.

Ambreen said *"teachers need to bring awareness"* to educating students about the *"struggles and pressures"* that BAME students face and explain, *"not everyone feels the same way and everyone is different."* Similarly, Farzana said, " *I think some teachers in school, they need to... change their attitudes towards the students with different skin colours or ethnicities."* She said *"that would like have a great impact."* Farzana was worried that *"if my teacher… was just picking on me because of my skin colour. I think it would… have a negative impact on your… education… you don't really learn properly then as well."*

Zubair suggested schools could help by creating a *"separate room… where you could worship your religion,"* meaning that he would appreciate a prayer room so that all faiths could worship there.

Maliya said *"differences in ethnicity… or just religion… skin colour"* are taught in *"Year 10 and 11,"* in two subjects: *"RE (religious education) or PHSE (personal health and social education)."* She consequently suggested *"if they included more about it…in Year 7 or in Year 8,"* it may be helpful because *"that's when people… see other people that are different to them, and then that's when differences are acknowledged, and maybe, you know, in a horrible way,"* insightfully suggesting educating students on these topics earlier could prove beneficial.

Nabeel said he should not have to *"explain to every teacher about why I'm tired or why I'm fasting."* Rather, he felt his teachers *"should understand why I'm tired"* or *"why I want to have holidays on Eid and stuff…"* and that *"school should understand more about my religion."* Thereby, indicating that the role of teachers in school was important to him. He felt this would make *"school life easier"* for *"fellow BAME students."* Nabeel also wanted to know more about other ethnicities, showing that he was willing to learn too.

Tyrone wanted more of his teachers to *"go to the full capability"* when dealing with students who exhibited racist or *"bad views."* He believed that because the majority of teachers at his school are *"White… they don't really get the situations that they're talking about correct"* because they lacked *"insight on the actual struggles that, errm, other races erm have."*

5.2.4.2.2 *Culturally sensitive students*

Five participants thought developing more culturally sensitive students at school would help improve the environment, in particular for BAME, if not all, students.

Aleena said that when racist incidents occurred in school, *"everyone … tried to make it stop and everyone basically learned about it like having assemblies… and lessons about it."* She reported that BAME students were *"supportive"* of this approach. Aleena said that students did not wear Asian clothes to school for celebrations. Interestingly, she told me that *"people from… our background"* (the use of *"our"* indicated that she had the same background as the researcher), would "*make fun of the people from that background wearing those South Asian clothes, so it's basically discriminating against each other."* When I asked Aleena what she thought the reason for this might be, she was unsure and said "*maybe it's just having a laugh or making someone uncomfortable... I think maybe… they're not used to seeing*

someone wearing that at school." She said that one person had worn Asian clothes once to school and that *"people gossiped about that person."*

Ambreen said that it may help if students were *"educated a bit more on the struggles and pressures that coloured students feel and maybe try empathising a bit more."* When I asked her how she could see that *"education"* happening, she was clear about this being *"the teachers' job. I don't think students are going to go away and educate themselves about it."*

Maliya said that ethnicity *"is important"* in terms of improving her SoB at school in the future *"because other people (students)"* may not have *"met other people that are Asian."* She said that things such as *"a little assembly"* may prove helpful, and that the school could also play a role in sitting down with students and saying *"it's not okay to say this, or ... be a bit weird with them (BAME students) because of them being different."* She wanted students to be able to *"see your point of view instead of just theirs."*

Beena said, *"we could educate people on different religions, cultures, and traditions... we could teach each other, educate each other on erm what foods we eat? And how that erm is part of our identity."* By doing so she said *"you learn new skills and have different experiences so when you visit a new country on holiday or something, you can erm just erm explore that."*

Tyrone said the school could provide *"a bit more like education on some of the things that people say that can be offensive.... Like... having talks with students..."* When offensive things were said, he did not always feel supported by his friends because they *"would still be*

quite nice" to the perpetrator, which he found *"quite annoying."* He said, *"I expect more loyalty from my friends."*

When considering if ethnicity mattered in improving his SoB in school in the future, Tyrone deviated slightly, and rather than answer just yes or no, he gave an example of culturally competent education. He said *"I don't think it's gonna fully eradicate a lot of racism in our school but it would… help it be less of it."* He *said "I don't really see our school changing everyone's points of view as lots of people have been indoctrinated since very young."* He explained, *"it can be quite hard to err make them unlearn that kind of information… I mean it could be possible but I, I don't really see it happening."*

5.2.4.2.3   Improved representation

Three participants in particular spoke about the effects of the lack of BAME representation in their schools. Aleena said that she saw more instances of racism from students in Years Seven, Eight and Nine. She said, *"maybe it's because if they come from a school (which did) not have many people from Asia or other countries, they're not used to it I guess being with people from those countries."* She reasoned, *"I think those years you're just more immature but in Years 10 and 11 you're just more mature."*

Ambreen said *"seeing I'm not the only one who's different or coloured"* helps her to feel she fits in more at school and felt reassured that she would not *"be discriminated against in an environment where I'm supposed to study and learn."*

As discussed earlier, Tyrone said in his school *"the majority is White."* Consequently, *"it can be quite hard for people to understand"* racism and its effects.

This question served as a way inviting participants to offer any solutions or ideas based on their own experiences of belongingness and how their SoB may be improved at school in the future. When Ambreen talked about the assumptions some people made of her being able to do "Indian things" e.g. speak Gujarati, I was able to understand the pressure she felt, based on my own life experiences and therefore was able to empathise. When Tyrone spoke about wanting some of the teachers to take a "firm" approach to "punishments" against racism, my response was as follows "So, have you found that students who have had, erm, as you've called them, 'punishments,' or consequences to things like that, do you think that" this "has helped improve things?" When I reflected on this I noted that whilst I used Tyrone's word "punishments, I also added the word "consequences" to my question in an attempt to try to remain objective. I also remember thinking children are learning and perhaps relational approaches such as considering the consequences of one's actions against racism or inappropriate actions that can be seen as racism, were likely to be more impactful than a response deemed to be a 'punishment.' I think the latter was a product of being a BAME researcher and also a trainee EP who is accustomed to reframing things with the thought that reframing language can enable more positive outcomes.

Participants' final thoughts on belongingness

At the end of the interview, I asked participants if there was anything else they wanted to add about what belongingness means to them. I thought this was a positive way of ending the interview because at times they had been talking about some challenging aspects of belongingness. Their final thoughts on what belongingness means to them are captured in Figure 8 below.

Figure 8 *The Meaning of Belongingness*

THE MEANING OF BELONGINGNESS TO YOUNG PEOPLE

"Belongingness, "means feeling equal to everyone, and so our wealth doesn't (matter), race doesn't matter, looks don't matter or anything," and "feeling comfortable talking to anyone without feeling…shy."

Aleena

"Belonging means, well it encounters all of…how you feel towards your teachers, and if you feel … discriminated against because of what you look like… belonging's important and make sure you don't overwhelm yourself with all these expectations. So it's hard to be perfect at belonging but it's not impossible."

Ambreen

"Belonging is when you feel like you are safe somewhere, and you are happy like and you don't feel like you're judged…. just because of your skin colour, or your culture, or your ethnicity."

Farzana

"If I had to define what belonging means to me, it would probably just be… to fit in… with people, to get along with people, to understand one another, support one another" and be "tolerant of one another."

Zubair

Belongingness is "about being included mainly… I think belonging is sort of different people… just being one… you know being different but just all getting along… not really making a big deal of being different or from different backgrounds… just putting those to a side and just being friends as normal… because if not, obviously becomes horrible and harsh."

Maliya

Belonging and fitting in means "I don't think ethnicity matters as we are all from the same background…" suggesting "we are all the same (human) race."

Beena

"If teachers were aware of our ethnicity….then I'd feel more a part of school…I'd fit in more."

Nabeel

Belongingness means "finding people" who "respect and value you for who you are…you get along with… Sometimes people… reacted to like offensive stuff around you… people who… were my friends, they wouldn't really care… about the person saying that stuff… and they would still be quite nice to them, and it can be quite annoying…I expect more loyalty from… my friends"

Tyrone

6 Discussion

"...To bring about change, you must not be afraid to take the first step. We will fail when we fail to try..."

- Rosa Parks

6.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter discusses the findings reported in Chapter five. It begins by acknowledging Braun and Clarke's (2021) preferred way of writing up the findings and explaining how this was taken into account, whilst still retaining a more traditional, separate discussion section. Next, is a brief recap of the purpose of the research and the definition of belongingness. Following this, the research questions (RQs) are discussed in relation to the participants' responses and some relevant literature.

6.2 Retention of a separate discussion section

The process of writing the analysis or discussion was dynamic, i.e. constantly being modified as I was writing up the findings. I acknowledge Braun and Clarke's (2021) view that there appears to be some incongruency between traditional report writing conventions and reflexive thematic analysis, in that the former expects a separate results or findings' section and the latter allows for combining contextualisation of the results or findings in a discussion section alongside the analysis.

Braun and Clarke (2021) recognise that reconciling the issue of placing the discussion section alongside the results or findings' section, may prove particularly difficult for postgraduate students, and whilst they may prefer the latter format, they do not specifically address this potential issue. In order to take this into account, I did originally write initial discussion notes under each separate RQ whilst I was reporting the findings. These notes were then transferred to this separate discussion section and expanded. The decision to retain a separate discussion section also supports potential future publication formats pursuant to this thesis such as in the form of an academic journal article.

6.3 Purpose of the research

The research had the following aims/purposes:

● To make a contribution to research on school belongingness in the 11-18 years' age group. Research in the school and college sectors has previously been sparse (Slaten et al., 2018) in general, and much sparser for YP of BAME backgrounds.

● To ascertain factors affecting BAME YP's SoB in relation to their school experiences.

● To give a platform and voice to suppressed (BAME) minority voices (De Tona, 2006).

6.4 Structure of the discussion

In the discussion, a decision may have been made to discuss a theme in more detail within a given RQ even though it overlapped with another area in order to avoid unnecessary

repetition. The structure of the discussion attempts to complement the structure of the

findings' section, i.e. discussing the results per RQ, and then by:

- Stating what can be learnt from participants' contributions during interviews.

- Linking selected relevant literature from the initial literature review to participants' responses.

- Incorporating a few examples of pertinent new literature.

- Including my own reflections, as appropriate.

6.5   Definition of belongingness

At this point it is pertinent to revisit the definition of belongingness as per the literature review at the beginning of this thesis.

Belongingness can be defined as how a person experiences personal involvement in their environment (organisational relationship) or system (cultural or natural) that one feels fundamentally connected to or a part of (Hagerty et al., 1992).

6.6   Discussion of the findings

6.6.1   RQ.1. How do BAME students experience 'belonging' or 'fitting in,' in relation to their school?

Belongingness expressed through social identity

A person's social identity is drawn from their "position in society" and the roles they adopt (Booker, 2021, p. 240). Both social and personal identities coexist; a person's social, cultural and individual identities are all mutually activated within educational settings (Booker,

2021). The theme of social identity, derived from participants' data, was evident both when belongingness was positively experienced and when a SoB was more challenging, and was particularly conspicuous when participants discussed ethnic or cultural differences, or their experiences of racism.

Being part of the school community

Five participants exemplified the activities or a school ethos, which helped them feel a part of, and belong to the school community. Activities that contributed to this aspect of belongingness included participating in school *"sports"* (Aleena and Zubair), *"swimming and netball,"* (Aleena), *"team building activities"* (Zubair), extra-curricular clubs such as *"cooking"* (Maliya), and having lessons with friends (Farzana).

For participants, a supportive school ethos may be comprised of the following components. Not experiencing *"any discriminatory behaviour"* (Aleena), *"feeling that you are treated the same"* (Farzana), and that you have *"equal rights,"* (Zubair). This includes feeling supported by fellow students, such as congratulating one another when they do well, and *"being on the same level"* and sharing the same *"mentality,"* (Zubair), as this helped develop mutual understanding between fellow students. Teachers supporting students with *"personal matters"* (Farzana) was also appreciated.

Like Farzana, Tyrone voiced the importance of being respected at school. Tyrone's comment about being respected for his choices even if his friends *"don't necessarily enjoy the same things,"* shows maturity and awareness of vital life skills, and in a sense also links to the

'inextricability of the home: school interface' theme, and learning about relationships as part of everyday life. Feeling integrated as part of the school community, and feeling you function as *"one community"* (Beena) is an important concept also rooted in social identity theory. Social identity theory relates to how membership of a given group provides a person with a sense of self (McLeod, 2019). Social identity theory states that when group interests are conflicted, not only can integrated relationships become antagonistic, but they can, in turn, heighten an individual's identification with their *"in-group"* as well as their positive sense of attachment to it (Tajfel et al., 1979, p. 33). Social identity theory states that individuals tend to interact as group members rather than their own characteristics as an individual, or their personally held relationships (Tajfel et al., 1979).

Being part of a cultural, racial, or ethnic group

Feeling *"comfortable"* (Ambreen), and at ease is linked to an increased SoB and featured in several participants' responses. Some participants developed connectedness to students with whom they shared a cultural, racial, or ethnic identity. Finding security and safety within your own cultural, racial, or ethnic group occurred for several participants and was expressed in different ways. For example, inviting parents into school to celebrate religious occasions such as *"Ramadan and Eid"* (Aleena). Helping others to understand religious obligations, such as fasting (Nabeel) supported a SoB and the development of a community ethos.

Being part of your own *"community"* helps you know your *"cultural roots"* (Zubair) and being open to *"exploring different cultures"* without being judgemental (Beena) as well as integrating home: school events, demonstrates that there is a place in school, and in society,

to facilitate your own culture. Therefore, being part of the wider community beyond your own, and participation in one's own faith, 'race,' and ethnicity can, and do, co-exist.

In addition, respect for your *"choices of interests," (*Tyrone) is important in ensuring your right to autonomy, and what Deci and Ryan (2000) refer to as one's right to self-determination. Deci and Ryan's (2000) self-determination theory recognises there is a relationship between autonomous behaviours and belongingness, which in turn, can support academic success.

It was important for several participants, as referred to above, that their cultural roots and choices, if not celebrated, are at least respected in the school environment in order to foster a SoB. Craggs and Kelly (2018) state that when educational experiences are supportive they can promote school belongingness. Furthermore, such experiences support the forming of positive school, socialisation and learning schemas, which encourage students to obtain new learning experiences (Ansari, 2019).

Maliya changing her mind during the interview about ethnicity mattering at school after sharing an example of racism experienced by her friend, demonstrated that she realised this experience meant that ethnicity mattered and had negated her friend's SoB. This also made Maliya question what other students might think about her ethnicity. Maliya's response is indicative of the precarious position BAME people are in, including fears that challenging racism when seeing it happening to others in a workplace or school, may direct a perpetrators' negative attention towards the BAME person challenging it and make them a target.

Racism thwarts belongingness

Experiences of racism

These experiences also link to Critical race theory (CRT), (Bell, 1995, from p. 22) which stemmed from the work of legal professionals such as when civil rights litigation stalled, and there was lack of effective race-related reforms.

The theme of racism also interacts with the *'role of teachers'* in RQ2 as students speaking about it showed the interconnectivity between their experiences of racism which they felt demonstrated what belongingness meant to them, and feeling their teachers needed to be adept in dealing with racist transgressions. In addition, the theme of racism also connects with a later theme in RQ3b, *'racist transgressions as normalised behaviours,'* and whilst I considered putting the two themes together under RQ3b, the fact that participants had raised it when asked what belongingness meant to them at the beginning of the interview merited this theme having its own place, and demonstrates that this was something at the forefront of some of the participants' minds.

When Maliya changed her mind about ethnicity mattering in general at school after her friend experienced racism, this demonstrated that upon reflection ethnicity mattered to her. The incident, where her friend was asked to pass the ball in an Indian accent by a student of White ethnicity, made Maliya question what other students thought about her, and her own ethnicity.

Maliya reported the friend who had experienced racism was sent home. There was a sense of resignation regarding consequences for racist behaviours. BAME YP have come to accept there is a level of racism that they experience as part of their everyday life, as well as a sense

of helplessness in that they feel there is little they can do about it. This incident of racism echoes Ambreen and Tyrone's experiences, discussed later in RQ3. Several of the participants indicated there are insufficient consequences when racist transgressions occur at school. Aleena was unsure why a victim of racism had not reported a racist incident to her Head of Year. Maliya's comment about *"that's pretty much it,"* referring to the *"little speech"* students received about a racist incident suggests she thinks the school's response was a performative action rather than a long-term resolution. Tyrone also voices similar concerns which are within RQ3b below.

Farzana described an incident when a Muslim girl had started wearing her headscarf (a religious act/observance) at high school and her White friends questioned why she wore it and told her that she looked better without it. This was reminiscent of the macrocosm of the Western world being reflected in the attitudes of students within the microcosm of school. Ambreen said racism was not reported by her friend because she did not *"want to cause any drama,"* implying a fear of potential repercussions.

Whilst Aleena, Maliya, and Ambreen, to a degree, had not experienced racism personally, I wondered if by reporting it being experienced through a friend participants tried to place some distance between themselves, the perpetrator, and the victim, as well this acting as a protective factor to guard against the same fate (experiencing racism). This interpretation, derived from this research, is further strengthened by the voice of the participants, who whilst negatively affected by racism, were unable to directly challenge either the perpetrators, or the teachers, for the racism experienced and lack of strong actions and sanctions against perpetrators. This included Tyrone and Farzana, where a sense of frustration, if not

helplessness, is expressed because they felt they cannot challenge racism; this is a heavy burden for BAME YP to carry.

Conversely, I also believe it should not fall upon victims of direct or indirect racism to challenge racism: rather it is the responsibility of us all. It should be a societal norm, not merely listed in organisational policy, and supported by more effective actions when it occurs. Ideally, racism should be prevented by regular anti-racism work and anti-racist practice by education professionals.

Role of teachers

Farzana refers to being treated differently by teachers due to her "*ethnicity*," or the "*colour of her skin*." She highlights not only an in-school problem but also a societal issue. White and Whiteness generally have positive connotations, attributable both to Westernised ideologies and traditional Asian beliefs (Li et al., 2008) around beauty and even intelligence (Abrams et al, 2020; Li et al., 2008,). A pursuit of Whiteness, whilst seeking to empower 'holders,' can be disempowering for seekers (Li et al., 2008) or people of colour who aspire to it. The desire for Whiteness or proximity to it, including by people of colour, also manifests in cultural beauty practices such as having fair skin is a sign of beauty (Beckles-Raymond, 2020; Oyedemi, 2021).

Tyrone also felt that having a majority of teachers of White ethnicities at his school, and the lack of representation of people *"of colour"* on the staff, meant he felt less understood, and consequently less supported, when racist transgressions or racially motivated negative

behaviours occurred. Teachers may not be taking into account that BAME students may already be affected by historical racism in addition to experiences in school.

Since the Brexit referendum, increasingly racialised negative narratives and racial bullying of BAME YP (Farrell et al., 2020) now present as more dialogically mainstream. Farzana experienced elements of this on social media when her friend passed away, and a peer of White ethnicity suggested killing Muslims.

Inextricability of the home: school interface

Aleena's school is not faith-based but has a majority of South Asian students. Her school take time to celebrate events she values such as Ramadan and Eid and include parents and carers, which connects the home: school communities, thereby strengthening a SoB. Farzana, therefore, appreciates the inextricability of the home: school interface.

In Asian communities, socialisation events, in particular family gatherings, are a high priority and a valuable part of family life. I know this from my own experience. Socialising with friends does not always take precedence, demonstrated by participants when Maliya recognises, and accepts with good grace, that her friends cannot always socialise beyond school because they are with family. This is reiterated by Aleena, although she has the added challenge of "*social anxiety.*"

Ambreen values life skills taught at school, especially in Science, which she feels equips her with portable skills for her future career. Ambreen's memory of experiencing racism in early childhood, in her reception class at school, and her parents reminding her of this incident,

demonstrates these incidents are hurtful and traumatic, and etched deep into the memory of her parents because they saw their child suffer due to colourism, something she cannot control. Consequently, the mental representations (Dweck & London, 2004) Ambreen carries into her future may have a negative effect on future competitive situations such as applying for a promotion at work.

6.6.2   RQ.2. How do BAME students feel school staff affect their SoB?

Role of teachers

This theme also encompassed developing some aspects of cultural competence and teachers' awareness of it as part of their roles at school. Culture has been viewed as a dynamic process linking the past and present. It is, in part, sculpted by historical, social, and political contexts (Whaley & Davis, 2007. Cultural competence can be defined as possessing the capability of understanding, appreciating, and interacting with people who hold different beliefs or have different cultures to one's own (DeAngelis, 2015).

Fairness, equality, and 'race'-based differentials

Farzana feels aggrieved at the differential treatment she feels she receives from some members of staff. However, regardless of whatever intentions a teacher may have, it is concerning that a BAME young person at a British school in 2022 expresses such strength of feeling about differential treatment from teachers who perhaps lack elements of cultural competence and awareness. Farzana's perception that 'Whiteness' meant you would be treated equally and not being White results in differential treatment is indicative of 'race'-based differentials existing in wider society.

At times, it was difficult to separate the theme of '*fairness, equality, and 'race'-based differentials*,' from the theme of '*respect for religious obligations*' as was the case for Nabeel who felt his teacher should understand fasting is a religious obligation and not eating or drinking could diminish his energy levels, for example, in Physical Education.

Tyrone felt that when racially motivated transgressions occur his teachers do not take these seriously enough, and insufficient effort was made *"to change the person's mind,"* referring to changing the person's negative attitudes towards 'race' and people from different ethnic or racial communities - a belief shared by Farzana and slightly echoed by Maliya.

Where students talked about 'race'-based differentials, teachers did not always appear to either understand or respond to racist transgressions in a way that BAME students deemed fair and equitable.

Both Tyrone and Ambreen appreciated the quality of History lessons was improving, with better representation of the role of Black and Asian people in cultural history, previously presented through a White-majority perspective. They both viewed this as a positive change.

Some participants felt aggrieved that teachers were either unfairly showing favouritism to students of White ethnicity (Farzana, Ambreen), or failing to understand or address racist transgressions appropriately by using their *"full capability"* (Tyrone) to implement sanctions. This left participants feeling a sense of injustice and upset because they felt subjected to negative differential treatment, consequently diminishing their SoB.

When one considers theories such as Maslow's hierarchy of needs' theory (Maslow, 1943; Maslow, 1958) which highlights concepts such as the need for safety, belonging and self-actualisation as important, participants' classroom experiences, as described above, are concerning. For example, self-actualisation, for the purposes of this research, could be considered as YP achieving their full potential, at a level expected of their White counterparts in school, and which has been conveyed by some participants as important, albeit not using this terminology. Some participants (such as Ambreen, Farzana, Tyrone) felt their self-actualisation was hindered, on occasions due to lacking a level playing field, i.e. not being afforded the same opportunities by their teachers as their White peers, to learn to the best of their ability, or being adequately supported when 'race'-based differentials or racism are experienced.

Respect for religious obligations

Part of belongingness is having a sense of personal involvement in one's environment, such as cultural systems which are a fundamental part (Hagerty et al., 1992) of who you are. Our perceptions of belongingness stem from feeling valued, and accepted (Yıldız, 2016) as part of our environment. Zubair's confidence that his school is accepting and supportive of his religious obligations is evidence of this. In contrast, Nabeel's SoB is diminished, even negated, when his obligations to fast during Ramadan were not really understood by his Physical Education teacher, and when no allowances were made for him feeling less able to physically exert himself.

Safe learning environment

Relational approaches support SoB

Whilst considering the theme of a '*safe learning environment'* and whether or not to include a single sub-theme of '*relational approach*es *support a SoB,'* I was initially undecided. However, I think the single sub-theme was justified because of its importance to some participants. Understandably, it could also be argued that the *'role of teachers'* forms part of a *'safe learning environment,'* and as such, the themes overlap. Again, some participants' responses indicate that feeling safe at school, as a BAME student, was a legitimate concern for them.

The intersectionality between the two key themes for this RQ: *'role of teachers'* and a '*safe learning environment'* is important because potentially each theme facilitates the success of the other. One would expect that students of BAME heritage can expect to be treated with understanding and fairness by their teachers. It is right that they expect, unconditional positive regard (Wilkins, 2000) not only for, but from others (Rogers, 1951). More recent research argues that people's expectations maybe aligned implicitly to a person's skin colour (Williams, 2020). Linked to this, is research showing that teachers' expectations can vary according to different ethnic groups, and there is a mismatch between this and the lack of differential behaviour that is self-reported by teachers (Flanagan et al., 2020).

6.6.3   RQ.3. How do BAME YP feel fellow students affect their SoB?

RQ3a. Tell me about your friends/friendship groups at school. What helps you feel like you belong/fit in with your friends?

Commonality of 'race'/ethnicity/culture promotes belongingness

Faith as a foundation for belongingness

Connections made through sharing the same faith as some of their peers made students like Farzana feel safe and free from discrimination or judgement. This is understandable because Farzana speaks a different language (Urdu) at home, and she may have cultural traditions with her family, or religious obligations but feels uncomfortable sharing those with peers of a different ethnicity.

Being drawn to someone who shares your own faith may be connected with identity-formation. Research indicates as identity-formation develops, BAME YP may feel divided between different cultural demands (Lövheim, 2019), such as religious observances such as praying, and being viewed as foreign invaders by some non-minority group peers (Robins, 2020).

Culture, 'race,' or ethnicity-based connectedness

Farzana felt that not having friends of White ethnicity caused her to be judged as being *"unusual"* because of her ethnic *"background."* At school, teachers could support and encourage YP to be proud of their ethnic, racial, cultural or religious backgrounds. Research indicates that encouraging BAME YP to feel proud of who they are both culturally and racially (Baldwin-White et al., 2017) helps them balance their SoB with other challenges they face in the bio-ecological systems such as culture at home, racism at school, and in wider society. Farzana's self-consciousness about her own ethnicity, as viewed by White peers at school is understandable. This contrasts with Maliya's confidence and assuredness where she sometimes speaks Urdu in front of her friends.

Tyrone implied he wanted connections with peers of similar ethnicity. Farzana had established such positive connections with her friends from the same culture, 'race' and ethnicity. Opportunities to develop such friendships were lacking for Tyrone in his majority ethnically White school. Nabeel felt peers outside his friendship groups did not *"really understand"* his background, although he appreciates their efforts. This shows that being understood in relation to their 'race,' culture or ethnicity was an important factor for YP, because through it they found commonality and belongingness. Experiencing a SoB positively can also serve as a buffer against feelings of loneliness (Mellor et al., 2008).

Friendships can transcend ethnicity

Ambreen feels it is *"comforting"* that friends do not treat you any differently, suggesting on a deeper level there is a sense of acknowledgement that differences can divide and result in differential treatment.

Adolescents' friendships provide them with emotional support and as such are a critical developmental need to establish their sense of relatedness to others (Hamm & Faircloth, 2005). Six out of eight participants felt comfortable making friends with YP of different ethnicities indicating that for a majority of participants, developing meaningful connections with friends was more important to them than a person's background, 'race,' culture, or ethnicity.

Farzana's SoB is negated by the lack of understanding shown to her, and her ethnic peers, by students of White ethnicities, and this could be become problematic for students such as Farzana if this remains unresolved. This is because psychological outcomes for students who

feel unsupported can be negatively affected, leading to MH issues such as depression (Anderman, 2002). Farzana's experiences could lead to her feeling isolated. Loneliness has already been found by researchers to be at its peak during the period of adolescence (Qualter et al., 2015). When needs remain unmet, resulting feelings of isolation may lead to experiencing loneliness (Mellor et al., 2008).

School is a microcosm of wider society

A microcosm can be defined as *"a small place, society, or situation"* bearing the *"same characteristics"* as something *"much larger"* (Cambridge University Press, 2022). It is significant that we regard schools as such because *"as a microcosm of the community which it serves, a school reflects and engages with the greater political, social and economic issues and dynamics at any particular stage in its development,"* (Haupt, 2010). This is applicable to the participants' schools in this research.

The school as an educational institution is a component of Bronfenbrenner's (1978) macro-system within the ecological systems' theory. As such, it is one of the key institutions forming society, the others being political, legal, and social (Bronfenbrenner, 1978). Ambreen's experience of not being selected as Head Girl, despite feeling she significantly contributes to school life, and her father's comment that this was *"just what it's gonna be like for the rest of your life"* left Ambreen with a reluctant acceptance that sometimes, even if *"you do a lot of stuff"* for others *"you can't expect anything back."* Her negated SoB was apparent making her *"realise"* sometimes *"you don't feel like you belong as much as others, that's just, just part of life."* Not expecting this *"to go away overnight"* is also indicative of a diminished SoB, potentially with long term negative effects.

Farzana appears to have woven a more protective shell around her, and felt that having friends who spoke the same language as herself and her family, meant she would not be judged by peers of White ethnicities. Ambreen, Maliya, and Tyrone value what they are taught. For example, *"Spanish and French," "Business,"* and *"Drama"* respectively, and saw these as useful life skills.

The definition of school belongingness centres on the extent to which *YP "feel personally accepted, respected, included and supported,"* within their school environments (Goodenow & Grady, 1993, p. 2). Mostly, participants were happy to return to school after the pandemic because they felt more isolated from friends when learning from home. However, for Farzana, negative attitudes from both teachers and peers towards students of her ethnicity intensified, leaving her feeling less favourably treated. An example of being subjected to racial abuse from peers, such as threats verbalising the "*need to kill*" more Muslims, is discussed below within the theme of *'racist transgressions as normalised behaviours.'*

RQ3b. Tell me about your fellow students at school, and how you feel you get on and fit in with them.

Connectedness through shared experiences

One's perception of belongingness is procured from feeling valued, accepted, needed, and that you complement the environment (Yıldız, 2016) you are connected to. Participants in this research exemplified this through experiences which enabled or facilitated connectedness with their peers. Zubair felt a sense of connectedness to his friends through common activities and the respect they showed for his religious beliefs. His peers were happy to listen

to explanations of why he followed particular practises. This, along with sharing answers in Maths, supported his SoB to his friendship and peer groups.

Maliya felt the same way, i.e. she also thought that peers being *"helpful"* in class supported her to feel she fitted in with them, along with doing *"homework together."* This is echoed by Nabeel who appreciates that his fellow students *"help each other,"* and by Tyrone who enjoys sharing activities with his peers such as *"Eco Club"* and working *"on projects together."*

Beena carries out extra-curricular *"community service hours"* with peers, supported by her school. They enjoy raising money for charities together as well as other common interests such as *"being part of a team in table tennis tournaments."* Aleena enjoys playing in the school netball team and trying out for other teams. Ambreen said being seated next to someone she did not know gave her opportunities to find out more about who they are, indicating she values new peer-connections.

The sense of connectedness participants felt towards their peers fostered school belongingness, which is a positive predictor of academic outcomes. Research has shown when school belongingness is experienced positively in YP, it prognosticates both psycho-social and academic accomplishment (Allen, 2016).

Disconnectedness through difference

This theme developed later whilst writing up the findings for the *'connectedness through shared experiences'* theme. I had found the theme of MH had been alluded to by some

participants, who had at times, explicitly referenced the impact of negative differential treatment and how it made them feel. Whilst the theme of MH remains relevant, I note that the effect on MH arose through being *'disconnectedness through difference,'* so this became an additional key theme for RQ3b.

Farzana and Tyrone explicitly referred to colourism. What Farzana has said about her skin colour could be transferable to other BAME YP who may feel self-conscious if they feel their skin colour disadvantages them because having White skin leads to more favourable treatment. This could lead to further issues such as trying to find perceived remedies such as skin bleaching creams and treatments in order to look more like the 'majority.' Fair skin is deemed to be a thing of beauty as per Western ideals which have been instilled through colonialism and other 'race'-based differential treatment in society (Beckles-Raymond, 2020).

The connection between the theme of *'disconnectedness through difference,'* and the effect on MH and emotional well-being, led to deeper consideration of the links between them. For example, when we feel we are different and do not fit in, our MH can be negatively affected. When YP's positive attachment (Bowlby, 1982) needs are unmet, this may also impact their SoB negatively with effects such as lowered levels of resilience (Hindley, 2019).

Racist transgressions as normalised behaviours discussion

Racism as a trauma

Five participants shared experiences of racism and three participants did not. This is

significant because it shows instances where schools could learn good practise from one another.

Ambreen described an incident about not being selected as Head Girl just as we concluded the interview and I was checking in with her. She was happy for this to be recorded. I think at that point she felt comfortable enough to share it. This incident left Ambreen with some unanswered questions because she was unsure whether ethnicity was a contributory factor. However, Ambreen felt that a student of White ethnicity was favoured over her. Because Ambreen had been unable to raise this in school, she may go through the rest of her life wondering about this incident and may continue to experience elements of doubt about being treated fairly in terms of her ethnicity and attaining selected positions of responsibility or prestige. I feel that Ambreen's experience could negatively impact the way she views future competitive situations such as attaining higher accolades at university or in the workplace.

Ambreen noted there was no BAME representation amongst the teachers. She felt she may have been disadvantaged by this lack of representation on the interviewing panel who might have seen her skills, abilities, and talents less favourably than students of White ethnicities. Ambreen noted students selected for these positions were White, Christian or both. This suggests she thinks ethnicity, religion or whiteness influenced the assignation of those roles to pupils, favoured by teachers to do jobs for them.

Ambreen referred to stereotypes. For example, Asian students might be expected to speak an Asian language, or be smart. Earlier in her interview, (when answering RQ1), she explained how *"coloured people"* can be expected to be *"more smart."* She just wanted to be herself,

not be judged, and take her own direction in life, regardless of what she sees as unwarranted, if not somewhat anachronistic, stereotypical expectations.

Despite Ambreen finding that *"some students"* were not always *"respectful towards coloured students,"* she still felt ethnicity did not matter with fellow students because she did not feel disrespected personally. This was interesting because perhaps Ambreen has not yet developed insight into how this affects a group of students, beyond herself. Standing up for what one believes is right can be challenging for adults, let alone YP facing racism.

In a way, this also contradicts how Ambreen felt about not being selected as Head Girl. The *"voice"* Ambreen hears in the back of her head raises self-doubt. She questions whether her 'race,' ethnicity, or religion will obstruct progression at certain points of her future life. Ambreen's thwarted SoB makes her feel that this was *"not going to go away overnight,"* and demonstrates the impact of racism as a trauma. Research has stated trauma from racism can have lasting effects (Truong & Museus, 2012).

Farzana feeling that she does not have any *"White friends"* because they "*don't want to be friends"* with her demonstrates a social behaviour in school, which excludes others and which may be interpreted as racist, but also a behaviour or attitude which presents in wider society. The fact that Farzana says she feels connected to others who have suffered *"racial abuse"* is a notable indictment of what some BAME YP have to endure at school, and in life beyond, as indicated by the racist behaviour on social media when her friend passed away. As such, school can be seen as a microcosm of wider society. Participants' descriptions demonstrate some links to CRT (from page 22), (Bell, 1995) as a language and lens which enables a recognition of these experiences.

Maliya is now in Year 10 but the fact that the racist incident stayed with her (from Year Seven or Eight) indicates her trauma and her doubts which made her *"question how would they treat me?"* Maliya said the incident *"does make me think and consider are we different from others?"* suggesting she wonders if peers view her negatively.

In contrast to his responses in RQ1 where Tyrone quickly defined his school as having a *"zero tolerance"* approach *"against… any forms of discrimination."* and where no offensive talk was allowed, Tyrone later opened up and relayed some of his lived experiences of racism at the same school. I think this partly arose from him developing confidence and trust in the interviewer and perhaps even connectivity with a BAME researcher. Later in the interview, when talking about his fellow students, Tyrone reported incidents of *'racist transgressions as normalised behaviours'* such as using the *"N word,"* and peers asking him questions about his ethnicity or touching his hair, and which he understandably found *"quite hard to deal with."* Tyrone's experiences echo research that YP of BAME backgrounds see White peers asking questions on biological racism (by skin-colour) and cultural racism (by people's dress) as a behaviour reflecting ignorance, with inflections of rudeness, and which subsequently negates their SoB (Bowler & Razak, 2020).

The use of *"err"* whilst Tyrone was discussing racist incidents could indicate this is a difficult topic to speak about and finding the right words is not easy. I think having a BAME researcher enabled Tyrone, along with several other participants, to share incidents of racism; this tended to come at a later part of the interviews.

I had deliberately not asked participants an interview question specifically on racism because I did not want to lead or direct them in any way. This is because the research focused on

belongingness. However, whilst I was aware that incidents of racism may be divulged by the participants which negate their SoB, I also wanted them to share a wider range of their experiences, positive or otherwise.

The American Academy of Pediatrics (2020) officially recognises racism as an adverse childhood experience (ACE). Whilst this recognises the impact of racism and linked trauma, as professionals and as a society, we need to do more to reduce incidents where BAME YP are subject to racism and its negative effects. 'Treating' i.e. addressing root causes of racism holistically would reduce the occurrence of racism as an ACE in the first place. Research also reports that racism negatively affects BAME YP's SoB (Bowler & Razak, 2020), as confirmed by some participants in this research.

BAME representation

Six participants talked about BAME representation in school, in staff or student numbers, sometimes expressed as lack of opportunities to interact with students from varied ethnic backgrounds (Aleena, Ambreen). Sometimes a lack of BAME teachers meant BAME YP did not feel understood (Ambreen, Tyrone), especially when racist transgressions occurred.

6.6.4 RQ.4. What changes would BAME YP like to see to improve their SoB in the future?

Safe spaces and places

Relational approaches foster a SoB

In response to this RQ, Zubair was happy with teacher: student relationships in his school and his SoB was experienced positively. However, three participants felt relationships with others were negatively affected. For example, if teachers did not understand their religious obligations (Aleena), when others in school questioned their ethnicity (Ambreen and Tyrone) or if racist transgressions were not dealt with in a manner perceived to be fair and equitable by victims (Tyrone).

Fairness, equality, and 'race'-based differentials

Participants offered some practical suggestions. Aleena's view that she would prefer more time off to celebrate Eid, whilst on the surface may show some levels of operational impracticality, such as school holidays are limited, it also demonstrates the value she places on the religious celebrations, as well as the intersectionality between home, school, religion, and culture.

Linked to this theme was Ambreen's suggestion that parents also have a role to play in ensuring they were aware of their own children's attitudes towards BAME students, indicating that they have a responsibility for the way they raise their children. This also overlaps with the 'inextricability of the home: school interface' theme.

Beena suggested a student council was a good idea. Both Farzana and Tyrone felt a sense of injustice when perpetrators of racism were not met with firmer approaches; this suggests that giving greater consideration to the impact on victims and their feelings was important to participants.

Culturally sensitive educational experiences

Role of teachers

Overall, most participants wanted the role of teachers to include supporting the provision of more culturally sensitive experiences in school where people understand their racial, ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds. They wanted teachers to deal with racist transgressions, strongly and fairly, as Farzana and Tyrone have expressed. Participants wanted perpetrators to receive strong messages, and consequences, demonstrating that racism, whether explicit, implicit, or even covert, was unacceptable and would be dealt with appropriately.

Another factor to consider as to why the *'role of teachers'* in providing a *'culturally sensitive educational environment,'* is important is because a negated SoB can lead to lower educational achievement or attainment. A SoB supports optimal levels of functioning (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). School belongingness has been found to impact the academic achievements of adolescents positively (Anderman, 2002). As such, it is important that school belongingness is optimised for all students, and steps taken to ensure the quality of school experiences for BAME students is on a par with their White peers. The latter should also include consideration of academic achievement and attainment.

As stated earlier in this thesis, in the literature review, attainment gaps for students in reported examination results, with students of Black ethnicity result in them attaining lower grades than peers of White and Asian (Bangladeshi and Pakistani) ethnicity, and where Asian students have higher attainment than their White peers (DfE, 2022; ONS, 2020). As a

researcher, I ask the question, could academic attainment be even higher if students benefit from more *'culturally sensitive educational experiences?'*

Culturally sensitive students

Maliya suggests students should be educated earlier about *"differences in ethnicity…or religion …skin colour,"* in Years Seven and Eight. I suggest that such education should begin at home or when children are in nursery, and from the start of primary school onwards because research indicates children's cognizance of 'race' to be much earlier than the age of five years than when adults participating in a study thought they should be taught (Sullivan et al., 2021). Sullivan et al., (2021, p. 398) reported that participants' (adults) willingness to discuss 'race' with children was positively impacted when they were informed that "current scientific estimates" indicate that children as young as three months show some capacity for preference for faces from certain 'racial groups.'

In another incident relayed by a participant, whilst on the surface may appear somewhat incredulous or disappointing that Asian students mock fellow Asian students wearing Asian clothes to school, I wondered whether some of this arose out of nervousness of crossing what they saw as a perceived line of bringing their culture, which was meant for home and outside of school, into school. I also wondered whether they were embarrassed about this, so making fun of someone wearing Asian clothes to school may discourage them from doing so, and thereby firmly retain their cultural identity's place at home, not school.

Improved representation

Aleena, Ambreen and Tyrone all commented on a lack of BAME representation in the student populations of their schools; their fellow students' lack of interaction with people from BAME communities, which participants suggest manifests as a lack of understanding of BAME students. Whist schools cannot control the ethnicities of their catchment[4] areas, perhaps creating opportunities for students to interact with students from a range of ethnicities, at partner schools could go some way to ameliorate participants' concerns. Research has shown that, psychologically, belongingness plays a mediatory role between behavioural outcomes, school belongingness, and social systems that are protective (Lardier et al., 2019).

---

[4] *Catchment area- A school's catchment area is the geographical are served by a school. This can change each year and is only one aspect of a school's admission criteria. Other admission criteria may include social medical or social needs (e.g. looked after children); a sibling at the same school; attendance at a feeder or partner school; religion, or academic entrance level examinations.*

SchoolGuide.co.uk. (n.d.). SchoolGuide.Co.Uk. Retrieved May 22, 2022, from https://www.schoolguide.co.uk/catchment-areas-explained

7 Distinctive Contribution, Recommendations, Dissemination of Findings, Limitations, and Future research

"Raise your words, not voice. It is rain that grows flowers, not thunder."

- Rumi

7.1 Distinctive Contribution

In order to review the distinctive contribution of this research, I include reference to gaps and issues cited in my literature review, or my research proposal, along with my own thoughts, in order to support the considerations of the distinctive contributions made by this research.

Firstly, research on how a SoB is fostered is sparse (Allen et al., 2016) in the school and college sectors, and especially for BAME YP (Slaten et al., 2018). This research offers a recent contribution both as an addition to existing literature, and as a source sharing new insights into BAME YP's experiences of belongingness at secondary school.

Secondly, ethnicity-based discrimination, and the dominance of Anglo culture can lead to reluctance in YP to discuss their own cultures (Baldwin-White et al., 2017). Participants in this research speak about how they feel race, ethnicity and culture affect their SoB, both positively and, sometimes, detrimentally.

Notably, BAME YP have been subject to racial bullying, (Farrell et al., 2020). This is important because racism has been formally recognised as a trauma, especially as an ACE, by

the American Academy of Pediatrics (2020). ACEs can be harmful and may lead to an increased likelihood of disparities in MH (Bernard et al., 2021). As such, victims, including some participants in this research, need to be supported to heal from, and be protected against racism, so adverse MH experiences are less likely to occur in adulthood. Research indicates racism can have a negative impact on BAME YP's belongingness (Bowler & Razak, 2020). Therefore, it is not only vital, but a moral and social imperative, that BAME YP are given the freedom and opportunity to air their experiences of racism and to know that professional work is being carried out in order to raise awareness, and hopefully work towards establishing better solutions to eliminate racism, as far as possible from educational establishments, and beyond. Consequently the aim of this research, and its subsequent dissemination would be to strive to advocate enhancing BAME YP's SoB.

Finally, this research sought to provide a safe space and platform for suppressed minority voices (De Tona, 2006). I am confident the richness of the data gathered and the themes derived from participants' interviews demonstrate that participants felt safe enough to voice both positive experiences and more challenging events such as racism. Notably, some participants divulged instances of 'race'-based differentials and racism as interviews progressed, suggesting they felt safer in being able to do so. I genuinely believe that being a BAME researcher, meant participants felt they could trust me enough to share experiences that had been challenging for them, including where they may previously have felt their voices have gone unheard.

7.2 Recommendations

It is clear from the research that some BAME YP experience belongingness in school positively. There is some evidence of good practise that could be shared with educational

establishments and those working with YP. Conversely, some BAME YP shared negative experiences which negated their SoB.

There are learning points from both positive and negative experiences; the aim of which is to increase and enhance positive experiences, reduce and eradicate negative experiences, to subsequently improve BAME YP's SoB at school and beyond. It is with this in mind, and pursuant to the findings of this research, the following recommendations are suggested.

For schools and local authorities (LAs) to:

● Provide safe spaces and places for BAME YP in schools to share positive experiences as well as voice and discuss their concerns; this could include seeking anonymous feedback about their school experiences.

● Develop and embed anti-racist policies and practice by:

o Demonstrating compassionate, reasonable, and meaningful actions to address the valid concerns of BAME students. For example, taking into account religious obligations such as fasting, and understanding individual students may have varying degrees of religious compliance, and be affected differently, and as such, asking students in school how they might be best supported.

o Providing regular anti-racism training to all staff and students.

● Develop culturally sensitive educational experiences for all students by:

o Developing and teaching a more culturally competent curriculum, which sensitively acknowledges true historical experiences, giving due consideration to the positive contributions of past and present BAME communities. Schools should consider the feelings of BAME students when

discussing historical events such as colonialism and slavery, especially in classes where those students are a minority.

o   Training and cultivating the role of teachers in schools. This should include undertaking anti-racism training from appropriately trained professionals, knowing the ways in which racism manifests both overtly and covertly, and developing culturally sensitive school policies and protocols to swiftly deal with incidents of racism. Organisational and systemic change needs to manifest in the development of knowledgeable, self-aware, skilled practitioners who are culturally competent. (Liu et al., 2020; Sakamoto, 2007).

o   Teaching students how to be more culturally sensitive towards BAME peers, and for teachers to be proactive role models in doing so.

o   Providing all YP opportunities to interact with people from different communities in order to better understand one another. This could include celebrating different cultural events in school.

o   Including the development of culturally sensitive educational experiences in action plans, ethos, and practice.

●   Teach and develop emotional intelligence skills for students, embedding this into the school's ethos, with school staff proactively modelling this.

●   Provide all YP with access to designated MH workers in school.

●   Develop BAME representation in school staff and leadership positions, student councils and sports' teams. Schools need to seek fairer representation of BAME staff and leaders. They should aspire to decolonise the school curriculum and eradicate White privilege as the default position (Moncrieffe et al., 2020).

For Educational Psychology services (EPSs) and Educational Psychologists (EPs) to:

● Develop more culturally competent practice by raising awareness of the needs of clients from the multicultural communities with whom they interact.

● Incorporate anti-racism training as part of professional development and mandatory training.

● Improve BAME representation within EPSs e.g. in staff and resources etc.

● Formally track and monitor access to, and quality of service, for BAME clients, including collating client feedback and addressing any gaps in service provision.

● Share approaches to casework in peer-supervision and training sessions for a range of minority groups advocating cultural competency skills as per the APA (2002) guidelines and the BPS Code of Ethics and Conduct (2021).

● Compare the number of BAME students accessing EPS support and subsequently acquiring and education health and care plans (EHCPs), or additional funding, with students of White ethnicities, considering the number of students in different ethnic groups.

● Seek out opportunities for systemic work in schools on racism and the psychological effects of racism as a trauma.

7.3   Dissemination of findings

Schools and LAs, and EPSs, in my experience, have few, if any, processes in place to specifically gather the views of BAME YP, or their families, let alone provide targeted support. This research calls for this to change and for greater mobilisation of education

professionals, working together, to better support and integrate YP from minority groups with a view to maximising their SoB.

Pertinent to this research is the request for educational establishments and professionals such as EPs to take into account the voices of BAME YP with a view to developing more culturally sensitive educational, and psychology-based policies and practice. This is not about favouring a given 'race' or ethnicity; it is about recognising that their uniqueness brings its own challenges, such as religious obligations or racism. Institutional racism has been embedded in society, as evidenced in the MacPherson (1999) report and this needs to be eradicated.

Meaningful change for BAME students is an important outcome I hope to encourage and support as a result of this research. Well-written policies are meaningless, without fruitful practise. Meaningful change should therefore be observable to the groups and communities that seek or need it. It is critical that society comprehends YP's need to belong if their social behaviours are to be understood (Over, 2016), and if we strive to encourage active citizenship as BAME YP take steps into adulthood.

I hope to disseminate this research in the following ways:

- Sharing findings with those who have an interest in supporting BAME YP such as on my EPS placement, and schools or education establishments interested in meaningful change, such as developing proactive anti-racist policy and practice. Notably previous research has found evidence that discriminatory policies are in place (McKee, 2018) at government level.

● Developing small interactive workshops inviting professionals interested in supporting inclusivity and belongingness for BAME YP, providing an opportunity to meet, share good practice, and further discuss this research and its implications with the researcher and each other.

● Developing, if possible, with support from school leaders, and LAs I work in, small interactive workshops for BAME students from different schools.

● Sharing this research work with members of the community, who have supported me, some of whom work with the wider BAME community, in order to raise awareness of how YP's SoB is fostered, issues they face, and how they could be further supported.

● Sharing findings in appropriate forums that strive to give YP from BAME communities a voice.

7.4 Limitations

To report the key limitations of this study, I took into account advice offered by Ross and Zaidi (2019). They suggest consideration of the following: specifying the limitation clearly, reporting the likelihood of the limitation occurring and any alternative approaches, and explaining what was done to minimise the limitation (Ross & Zaidi, 2019). These are presented below.

The choice of the researcher to limit this research to BAME YP aged 14-16 years is a limitation of this research and the level of this limitation was high. Consequently, the results are not generalisable to full school student populations. In order to minimise the affect of this limitation, I attempted to recruit as diverse a range of BAME participants as I could, opening

the offer to participate in the research via several community contacts who knew BAME adults/parents from a range of ethnic, religious, racial and cultural backgrounds or heritage. Eight participants were selected from seven different schools in the North of England, which meant that participants' experiences were not limited to a single school which could have been affected by a common ethos within the school. Furthermore, South Asian participants were from both Pakistan and India and from varied cultural and religious backgrounds (e.g. Hindu and Muslim beliefs). There was only one participant of Black ethnicity and this limitation is discussed below.

Another limitation of this research was low representation from participants of Black ethnicity, i.e. one participant. Consequently, the level of this limitation is high and the findings may not be generalisable to all students of Black ethnicity. Several attempts were made to recruit more participants through community contacts but to no avail. For example, I had at least 3 communications (including two phone calls) with a key founder of a soon to open centre for people from the Windrush generation and their descendants who was happy to offer to help to share information sheets for recruiting participants via adults who attended. However, delays due to Covid-19, resulted in the opening of the centre being delayed and therefore I was unable to further explore this route for potential participants. I also asked several friends if they could share my information sheets, with friends or contacts they had within the Black community. Whilst further information was requested by one parent, this did not result in any further recruitment.

Researcher bias, influence and subjectivity was another limitation and the likelihood of its occurrence was high. An affect of this could be the possibility of influencing participants during the interviews by my own responses which could potentially affect researcher

objectivity or interpretations. Dodgson (2019) notes that the researcher is the principle instrument of research. As such, I was very much aware that my own experiences as a BAME person could influence my questioning, my responses to participants' answers, and subsequent findings. In order to minimise the limitation I took the following approaches. The research questions were carefully drafted and formed to develop particular areas such as how belongingness was experienced with teachers and peers. I used a semi-structured interview schedule and prepared follow-up questions (Table 6, Interview schedule, page 60); these were used as far as possible during interviews to provide consistency of approach. Adler (2022, p. 600) notes that "transparency is an important aspect of trustworthiness in qualitative research and Reid et al., (2018) state that the authenticity off the research's findings can be strengthened if a researcher is transparent about their own biases or assumptions. To support the latter, I took the following approaches. I discussed my pilot interview in detail with my thesis supervisor to support more objective feedback on the way that I had conducted the interview. I shared copies of all my transcripts with my university thesis supervisor and discussed them during supervision. I also re-read all the transcripts and included a range of direct quotations from participants' transcripts in the reporting of the findings so that their voices could be presented prominently. When discussing the findings of my research with my thesis supervisor, I tried to be as open as possible, about how some of my own experiences as a BAME person may influence my interpretations. As it is not possible to altogether eliminate one's own lived experiences from one' mind, I am aware that some of the more painful experiences around racism voiced by participants such as in themes within RQ3 (from page 92) e.g. 'racist transgressions as normalised behaviours' and 'racism as a trauma,' may have been felt more acutely by me as a BAME person. That said, I also believe that being a BAME researcher also led to participants being open about their experiences of belongingness and that my own understanding has contributed positively to

interpretations of the data. De Tona (2006) also recognises that participants are more open when they regard the researcher as being more sympathetic to their situation.

My interpretations of the data occurred partly because of who I am and shaped, as I am, by experiences of growing up and working in northern England as a woman of South Asian origin, including working in secondary schools. Others may well have asked different questions, offered different prompts, and have taken different meanings from the data. As such, who I am has shaped all aspects of the thesis from its inception to the findings offered as a culmination of this work. Therefore I acknowledge that there is significant researcher influence all the way through. To help make this transparent, I have tried to be clear to the reader about this influence throughout. For example, I have referred to my background and experiences in the introduction (from page 11); I have made my positionality as a researcher clear in Chapter four, section 4.2 (from page 46). I have also added reflections' boxes to Chapter 4, section 4.7.1, (from page 61) and in Chapter five at the end of each RQ (pages 84, 92, 111, 121) and kept a reflective diary (see Appendix 10.14).

7.5   Future research

Future research could include:

- Exploring how a SOB is fostered in YP from younger age groups, such as 11-14 years, as some of the participants indicated that racism was more prevalent in younger year groups.

- Investigating the capacity of BAME adults or YP to report or challenge racism without fear of repercussions.

8 Reflections and Conclusion

"I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character..."

- *Martin Luthor King, 'I have a Dream' speech, 1963.*

When I embarked upon proposing this research, I envisaged it was going to be challenging for both myself and potentially for BAME YP. My research did not set out specifically to root out experiences of racism. However, I was aware that when asking YP to share their experiences of belongingness, participants will likely also share challenging experiences, racism being one of them. I therefore pay tribute to the YP who have participated in this research, and have shown particular commitment, and at times courage, in sharing their experiences of belongingness at school so openly. I wish them every success for the future.

Most importantly, to sum up my research, two of the most important points for action raised by the participants are the *'provision of safe spaces'* and *'culturally sensitive educational experiences,'* and arguably the two overlap and encompass change linked to other key themes such as *'racist transgressions as normalised behaviours.'* For participants, action includes spaces and places, free from the racism which has beleaguered BAME communities for many years, both historically and in their everyday lives, as highlighted in the literature review at the beginning of this thesis.

Cultural competence, which recognises the need for cultural sensitivity, is a mandatory competency for psychologists (APA 2002). The BPS Code of Ethics and Conduct (2021, p. 6) requires practitioners to adhere to the *"fundamental"* ethical principle of respecting the

"dignity" of others *"across geographical and cultural boundaries…"* With the latter being incumbent on all practitioners, this research paper does not seek to legitimise cultural competency expectations. Bassey and Melluish (2013) respond to views defining cultural competency as problematic by reiterating that being culturally competent requires one to be critically self-aware and as possessing the ability to be able to work with *"the multi-dimensional nature of cultural identity."*

In effect, this research has indicated that there is still much work to be done. EPs can be a part of this journey because of their strong links and connections to schools and YP. As such, facilitating the improved engagement of BAME YP in the systems within which they interact, including social, cultural and educational, could prove to be a useful collaboration for educational professionals and YP.

On a personal note, I think one of the things that saddened me the most from the research was that YP from Black and Asian communities still experience racism in school, a place where they are meant to feel safe. Reflecting on my own childhood, and the experiences adults around me shared, with reference to the British National Party and the National Front, I would have hoped that things had changed and improved for BAME YP today. However, this research indicates racism still exists.

Racism can cause harm and students have been known to develop coping strategies such as *"desensitisation"* and *"emotional detachment"* towards 'normalised' racist behaviours (Wong et al., 2022). On a positive note, research also indicates school belongingness can be fostered through supportive educational experiences (Craggs & Kelly, 2018).

Standing in solidarity against racism, in my opinion, should not just be a right; it should be a professional obligation and societal expectation. More positively, research has shown that when we help YP build positive learning, school, and socialisation schemas, we can also encourage them to develop *'newer'* experiences of learning (Ansari, 2019). Subsequently, as professionals, we can strive to build positive mental representations of school experiences for BAME, and all YP, which they can carry forward into their futures (Dweck & London, 2004). Providing platforms for minority voices (De Tona, 2006) is another step in the right direction.

Belongingness, both educational and social, is a key psychological human need (Baumeister, & Leary, 1995; Olcoń et al., 2017; Roberson & Zumbo, 2019). In the context of school and adolescents, belongingness serves as a basic psychological construct linked to a range of outcomes for YP at school and in the *'quality of life'* experienced (Arslan, 2021). For participants in this research their need to belong is evident. When experiences of belongingness are positive, participants thrive. Conversely, when school experiences are negative, such as through *'race-based differentials'* or *'racist transgressions as normalised behaviours,'* participants' SoB is negated.

Therefore, this research indicates that positive belongingness experiences in school need to be afforded to all students of BAME heritage in order for them to flourish and achieve their full potential. Subsequently, this may enable them to become more active citizens in the future and to play a role in enhancing the societies we all live, function, and learn in.

All YP deserve unconditional positive regard (Wilkins, 2000) from those who work with them. BAME YP also need to feel it is their *'time to belong'* as much as their non-BAME

peers. Perhaps as education professionals, (including school staff and EPs), we could all actively aspire to working towards providing high quality educational experiences, seeking to promote a positive SoB for all YP, regardless of age, ability, ethnic, cultural or racial (or other minority) backgrounds, and in the words of one of the participants (Nabeel) in this research, offer them "*real, equal equality.*"

9 References

Abrams, J. A., Belgrave, F. Z., Williams, C. D., & Maxwell, M. L. (2020). African American adolescent girls' beliefs about skin tone and colorism. *Journal of Black Psychology*, *46*(2-3), 169-194.

Adler, R. H. (2022). Trustworthiness in Qualitative Research. *Journal of Human Lactation*, 08903344221116620.

Ahmed, M. H. (2020). Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) Alliance Against COVID-19: One Step Forward. *Journal of racial and ethnic health disparities*, *7*(5), 822-828.

Ahmet, A. (2020). Who is worthy of a place on these walls? Postgraduate students, UK universities, and institutional racism. *Area*, *52*(4), 678-686.

Aitlhadj, D. L., & Holmwood, P. J. (2022, February 15). *The People Review of Prevent*. Https://Peoplesreviewofprevent.Org/. Retrieved May 23, 2022, from https://peoplesreviewofprevent.org/

Ali, N., & Sayyid, S. (2006). *A postcolonial people: South Asians in Britain*. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing.

Aliyev, H. (2020). When neighborhood goes to war. Exploring the effect of belonging on violent mobilization in Ukraine. *Eurasian Geography and Economics*, 1-25

Allen, K. A., Vella-Brodrick, D., & Waters, L. (2016). Fostering school belonging in secondary schools using a socio-ecological framework. *The Educational and Developmental Psychologist*, *33*(1), 97-121.

American Academy of Pediatrics. (2020). *Reaching Teens: Strength-Based, Trauma-Sensitive, Resilience-Building Communication Strategies Rooted in Positive Youth Development, 2nd Edition* (2nd., pp. 307–328). American Academy of Pediatrics. (Original work published 2020).

American Psychological Association. (2002). Developing adolescents: A reference for professionals.

American Psychological Association. (2002). Guidelines on multicultural education, training, research, practice, and organizational change for psychologists. Washington, DC: Author. *American Psychologist*, *62*, 271-286.

American Psychological Association. (2022). *APA Dictionary of Psychology*. American Psychological Association. Retrieved April 25, 2022, from https://dictionary.apa.org/ontogeny

Anderman, E. M. (2002). School effects on psychological outcomes during adolescence. *Journal of educational psychology*, *94*(4), 795.

Ansari, N. A. (2019). Role and Importance of Schemas in Pedagogy and Learning. *Journal of Communication and Cultural Trends (JCCT)*, *1*(1), 45-60.

Aouragh, M. (2019). 'White privilege' and shortcuts to anti-racism. *Race & Class*, *61*(2), 3-26.

Appiah, K. A. (2018). *The ties that bind: Rethinking identity*. Profile Books.

Arnett, J. (1999). Adolescent storm and stress, reconsidered. *American Psychologist*, *54*(5), 317-326.

Arslan, G. (2021). School belongingness, well-being, and mental health among adolescents: Exploring the role of loneliness. *Australian Journal of Psychology*, *73*(1), 70-80.

Baldwin-White, A. J. M., Kiehne, E., Umaña-Taylor, A., & Marsiglia, F. F. (2017). In pursuit of belonging: Acculturation, perceived discrimination, and ethnic–racial identity among Latino youths. *Social Work Research*, *41*(1), 43-52.

Barcaccia, B., Pallini, S., Baiocco, R., Salvati, M., Saliani, A. M., & Schneider, B. H. (2018). Forgiveness and friendship protect adolescent victims of bullying from emotional maladjustment. *Psicothema*, *30*(4), 427-433.

Barzilay, S., Feldman, D., Snir, A., Apter, A., Carli, V., Hoven, C. W., ... & Wasserman, D. (2015). The interpersonal theory of suicide and adolescent suicidal behavior. *Journal of affective disorders*, *183*, 68-74.

Baskerville, D. (2020). Mattering; changing the narrative in secondary schools for youth who truant. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 1-16.

Bassey, S., & Melluish, S. (2013). Cultural competency for mental health practitioners: A selective narrative review. *Counselling Psychology Quarterly*, *26*(2), 151-173.

Baumeister, R. F., & Leary, M. R. (1995). The need to belong: Desire for interpersonal attachments as a fundamental human motivation. Psychological Bulletin, 117, 497–529

Beckles-Raymond, G. (2020). Implicit Bias,(Global) White Ignorance, and Bad Faith: The Problem of Whiteness and Anti-black Racism. *Journal of Applied Philosophy*, *37*(2), 169-189.

Bell, D. A. (1995). Who's afraid of critical race theory. *U. Ill. L. Rev.*, 893.

Bell, D. (2018). *Faces at the bottom of the well: The permanence of racism*. Hachette UK.

Bernard, D. L., Calhoun, C. D., Banks, D. E., Halliday, C. A., Hughes-Halbert, C., & Danielson, C. K. (2021). Making the "C-ACE" for a culturally-informed adverse childhood experiences framework to understand the pervasive mental health impact of racism on Black youth. *Journal of Child & Adolescent Trauma*, *14*(2), 233-247.

Bhopal, K. (2018). *White privilege: The myth of a post-racial society*. Policy Press.

Booker, R. (2021). A psychological perspective of agency and structure within critical realist theory: a specific application to the construct of self-efficacy. *Journal of Critical Realism*, *20*(3), 239-256.

Bourdieu, P. (1986). The forms of capital.

Bowlby, J. (1969). Attachment and Loss. Vol. 1, Attachment. New York: Basic, 1982. *Attachment and Loss*, *2*.

Bowlby, J. (1982). Attachment and loss: retrospect and prospect. *American journal of Orthopsychiatry*, *52*(4), 664.

Bowler, R., & Razak, A. (2020). YP as cultural critics of the monocultural landscapes that fail them. *Social Policy Review 32: Analysis and Debate in Social Policy, 2020*, 51.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative research in psychology*, *3*(2), 77-101.

Braun, V., Clarke, V., & Hayfield, N. (2019). 'A starting point for your journey, not a map': Nikki Hayfield in conversation with Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke about thematic analysis. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 1-22.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2020). One size fits all? What counts as quality practice in (reflexive) thematic analysis?. *Qualitative research in psychology*, 1-25.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2021). One size fits all? What counts as quality practice in (reflexive) thematic analysis?. *Qualitative research in psychology*, *18*(3), 328-352.

British Psychological Society (2016). *Code of good practice for psychological testing*. PTC: Psychological Testing Centre.

British Psychological Society. (2021). *BPS Code of Ethics and conduct*.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1977). Toward an experimental ecology of human development. *American psychologist*, *32*(7), 513.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1978). The social role of the child in ecological perspective/Die soziale Rolle des Kindes in ökologischer Perspektive. *Zeitschrift für Soziologie*, *7*(1), 4-20

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The ecology of human development*. Harvard university press.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1986). Ecology of the family as a context for human development: Research perspectives. *Developmental psychology*, *22*(6), 723.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (2005). The bioecological theory of human development. In U.

Bronfenbrenner, U., & Morris, P. A. (2007). The bioecological model of human development. Handbook of child psychology, 1.

Brooks, J. (2022). *Law of attraction in action - the main ingredient for manifestation Self Help and Growth*. Self Help and Growth.

Bunglawala, Z. (2019). Please, don't call me BAME or BME! - Civil Service. Retrieved 29 April 2022, from https://civilservice.blog.gov.uk/2019/07/08/please-dont-call-me-bame-or-bme/

Burr, V. (2015). *Social Constructionism*. United Kingdom: Routledge.

Byram, J. (2022). Do you trust me? Rigor and Information Power in Qualitative Research. *The FASEB Journal*, *36*

Calhoun, C. (2003). 'Belonging' in the cosmopolitan imaginary. *Ethnicities*, *3*(4), 531-553.

Cambridge University Press. (2022). *MICROCOSM | meaning in the Cambridge English Dictionary*. Dictionary.cambridge.org; CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS.

Chaffin, M., Hanson, R., Saunders, B. E., Nichols, T., Barnett, D., Zeanah, C., Berliner, L, Newman, E. & Letourneau, E. (2006). Report of the APSAC task force on attachment therapy, reactive attachment disorder, and attachment problems. *Child maltreatment*, *11*(1), 76-89.

Chessum, L. (2017). *From immigrants to ethnic minority: Making black community in Britain*. Taylor & Francis.

Cheung, C. K., Cheung, H. Y., & Hue, M. T. (2017). Educational contributions to students' belongingness to the society, neighbourhood, school, and family. *International Journal of Adolescence and Youth*, *22*(2), 226-237.

Chevallier, C., Kohls, G., Troiani, V., Brodkin, E. S., & Schultz, R. T. (2012). The social motivation theory of autism. *Trends in cognitive sciences*, *16*(4), 231-239.

Chu, C., Rogers, M. L., & Joiner, T. E. (2016). Cross-sectional and temporal association between non-suicidal self-injury and suicidal ideation in young adults: The explanatory roles of thwarted belongingness and perceived burdensomeness. *Psychiatry research*, *246*, 573-580.

Cleland, J., Anderson, C., & Aldridge-Deacon, J. (2018). Islamophobia, war and non-Muslims as victims: an analysis of online discourse on an English Defence League message board. *Ethnic and racial studies*, *41*(9), 1541-1557.

Cloutier, C., & Ravasi, D. (2021). Using tables to enhance trustworthiness in qualitative research. *Strategic Organization*, *19*(1), 113–133.

Craggs, H., & Kelly, C. (2018). Adolescents' experiences of school belonging: a qualitative meta-synthesis. *Journal of Youth Studies*, *21*(10), 1411-1425.

Cummins, I. (2018). The impact of austerity on mental health service provision: A UK perspective. *International journal of environmental research and public health*, *15*(6), 1145.

Daugbjerg, M. (2014). *Borders of belonging: Experiencing history, war and nation at a Danish heritage site* (Vol. 5). Berghahn Books.

DeAngelis, T. (2015). In search of cultural competence. *Monitor on Psychology*, *46*(3), 64.

Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2000). The" what" and" why" of goal pursuits: Human needs and the self-determination of behavior. *Psychological inquiry*, *11*(4), 227-268.

de la Croix, A., Barrett, A., & Stenfors, T. (2018). How to… do research interviews in different ways. *The clínical teacher*, *15*(6), 451-456.

Department for Education. (2015). Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years. *GOV. UK*.

Department for Education (2022, May 24). *Key stage 4 performance, 2019 (revised) GOV.UK*. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data /file/863815/2019_KS4_revised_text.pdf

De Tona, C. (2006, May). But what is interesting is the story of why and how migration happened. In *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung/Forum: Qualitative Social Research* (Vol. 7, No. 3).

Diefenbach, T. (2009). Are case studies more than sophisticated storytelling?: Methodological problems of qualitative empirical research mainly based on semi-structured interviews. *Quality & Quantity*, *43*(6), 875-894.

Dodgson, J. E. (2019). Reflexivity in qualitative research. *Journal of Human Lactation*, *35*(2), 220-222.

Durlak, J. A., Dymnicki, A. B., Taylor, R. D., Weissberg, R. P., Schellinger, K. B., Dubois, D., Lipsey, M., Greenberg, M & O'brien, M. U. (2007). Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL).

Dweck, C. S., & London, B. E. (2004). The role of mental representation in social development. *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly*, *50*(4), 428-444.

Equality Act 2010. c15

Ehrmann, M., & Antonucci, E. (1972). *Desiderata*. Brooke House.

Farrell, F., Lander, V., & Shaw, S. (2020). Britishness, Identity and Belonging.

Fekete, L. (2018). Lammy Review: without racial justice, can there be trust? *Race & Class*, *59*(3), 75-79.

Fenichel, T. (2018). *Schelling, Freud, and the Philosophical Foundations of Psychoanalysis: Uncanny Belonging*. Routledge.

Flacks, S. (2018). The stop and search of minors: A 'vital police tool'?. *Criminology & criminal justice*, *18*(3), 364-384.

Flanagan, A. M., Cormier, D. C., & Bulut, O. (2020). Achievement may be rooted in teacher expectations: examining the differential influences of ethnicity, years of teaching, and classroom behaviour. *Social Psychology of Education*, 1-20.

Flanagin, A., Frey, T., Christiansen, S. L., & AMA Manual of Style Committee. (2021). Updated guidance on the reporting of race and ethnicity in medical and science journals. *Jama*, *326*(7), 621-627.

Fletcher, A. J. (2017). Applying critical realism in qualitative research: methodology meets method. *International journal of social research methodology*, *20*(2), 181-194.

Flipsnack. (2022). *Doctoral Times - Research Methodologies, Issue 22, Spring 22*. Flipsnack. Retrieved April 14, 2022, from https://www.flipsnack.com/tuostimes/doctoral-times-research-methodologies-issue-22-spring-20.html

Forest, A. (2019, June 30). *Boris Johnson says "watermelon smiles" remark was "wholly satirical."* The Independent. https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/boris-johnson-conservative-leadership-latest-racism-watermelon-smiles-satirical-a8981166.html

Francis-Devine, B., & Foley, N. (2020). House of Commons Library: Briefing Paper Number 6385, 19 February 2020: Unemployment by ethnic background.

Gaither, S. E. (2018). The multiplicity of belonging: Pushing identity research beyond binary thinking. *Self and Identity*, *17*(4), 443-454

Gao, W., Liu, Z., & Li, J. (2017). How does social presence influence SNS addiction? A belongingness theory perspective. *Computers in Human Behavior*, *77*, 347-355.

Gill, P., Stewart, K., Treasure, E., & Chadwick, B. (2008). Methods of data collection in qualitative research: interviews and focus groups. *British dental journal*, *204*(6), 291-295.

Gillard, D. (1997). Excellence in Schools (1997) - full text online. Retrieved 29 April 2022, from http://www.educationengland.org.uk/documents/wp1997/excellence-in-schools.html

Gillborn, D. (2015). Intersectionality, critical race theory, and the primacy of racism: Race, class, gender, and disability in education. *Qualitative Inquiry*, *21*(3), 277-287. P278

Gocłowska, M. A., & Crisp, R. J. (2014). How dual-identity processes foster creativity. *Review of General Psychology*, *18*(3), 216-236.

Goodenow, C., & Grady, K. E. (1993). The relationship of school belonging and friends' values to academic motivation among urban adolescent students. *The Journal of Experimental Education*, *62*(1), 60-71.

GOV.UK. (2018, November). *School teacher workforce*. GOV.UK Ethnicity Facts and Figures. https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/workforce-and-business/workforce-diversity/school-teacher-workforce/latest#by-ethnicity-and-role

GOV.UK. (2019a, October 4). *Police workforce*. Service.Gov.Uk; GOV.UK. https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/workforce-and-business/workforce-diversity/police-workforce/latest

GOV.UK. (2019b December 11). *GCSE English and maths results*. Ethnicity-Facts-Figures.Service.Gov.Uk. https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/education-skills-and-training/11-to-16-years-old/a-to-c-in-english-and-maths-gcse-attainment-for-children-aged-14-to-16-key-stage-4/latest

GOV.UK. (2020a, August 07). Regional ethnic diversity. Retrieved December 05, 2020, from https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/uk-population-by-ethnicity/national-and-regional-populations/regional-ethnic-diversity/latest

GOV.UK. (2020b, August 11). *Average score for students taking A levels and other qualifications*.

GOV.UK (2022, May 26) *Ethnicity Facts and Figures*. https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/education-skills-and-training/a-levels-apprenticeships-further-education/average-score-for-students-taking-a-levels-and-other-qualifications/latest .

GOV.UK. (2020c, September 4). *Pupil exclusions*. GOV.UK Ethnicity Facts and Figures. https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/education-skills-and-training/absence-and-exclusions/pupil-exclusions/latest

GOV.UK. (2020d, December 11). *GCSE results ('Attainment 8')*. GOV.UK Ethnicity Facts and Figures. https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/education-skills-and-training/11-to-16-years-old/gcse-results-attainment-8-for-children-aged-14-to-16-key-stage-4/latest

GOV.UK. (2020e, December 11). *Undergraduate degree results*. GOV.UK Ethnicity Facts and Figures. https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/education-skills-and-training/higher-education/undergraduate-degree-results/latest

GOV.UK. (2022, March 28). *Schools White Paper delivers real action to level up education*. https://www.gov.uk/government/news/schools-white-paper-delivers-real-action-to-level-up-education

Graham, B., White, C., Edwards, A., Potter, S., & Street, C. (2019). School exclusion: a literature review on the continued disproportionate exclusion of certain.

Gunaratnam, Y. (2003). *Researching 'race' and ethnicity: Methods, knowledge and power*. Sage.

Hagerty, B. M., Lynch-Sauer, J., Patusky, K. L., Bouwsema, M., & Collier, P. (1992). Sense of belonging: A vital mental health concept. *Archives of psychiatric nursing*, *6*(3), 172-177.

Hall, G. S. (1904). Adolescence: Its psychology and its relation to physiology, anthropology, sociology, sex, crime, religion, and education (Vols. I & II). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall

Hamm, J. V., & Faircloth, B. S. (2005). The role of friendship in adolescents' sense of school belonging. *New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development*, *2005*(107), 61-78.

Hansard. (2015, June 3). *House of Commons Hansard Debates for 03 Jun 2015 (pt. 0003), vol 596, cols 674-5*. Publications.Parliament.Uk. https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201516/cmhansrd/cm150603/debtext/150603-0003.htm#15060332001157

Harvey-Jordan, S., & Long, S. (2001). The process and the pitfalls of semi-structured interviews. *Community Practitioner*, *74*(6), 219.

Haupt, P. M. (2010). The school as a microcosm of communities and their heritage and the need to encapsulate this in the writing of school histories. *Yesterday and Today*, (5), 15-21. http://www.scielo.org.za/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S2223-03862010000100006

HCPC. (2016). Guidance on Conduct and Ethics for Students (1st ed.). London: Health & Care Professions Council.

Heyer, E., & Reynaud-Paligot, C. (2020). Us and them: From prejudice to racism. An original analysis of race and racism. *American Journal of Physical Anthropology*.

Hindley, P. (2019). Attachment Theory, Social Connectedness and Belonging. *Social Scaffolding: Applying the Lessons of Contemporary Social Science to Health and Healthcare*, 72.

House of Commons. (2006). The Schools White Paper: Higher Standards, Better Schools For All (pp. 14-53). London: The Stationery Office Limited. Retrieved from https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200506/cmselect/cmeduski/633/633.pdf

Howitt, D. (2010). Introduction to Qualitative Methods in Psychology (p325). M.U.A.: Pearson Education Pg.

Hui, A., Latif, A., Hinsliff-Smith, K., & Chen, T. (2020). Exploring the impacts of organisational structure, policy and practice on the health inequalities of marginalised communities: Illustrative cases from the UK healthcare system. *Health Policy*, *124*(3), 298-302.

Jaeger, E. L. (2016). Negotiating complexity: A bioecological systems perspective on literacy development. *Human Development*, *59*(4), 163-187.

John, P., Margetts, H. Z., Rowland, D., & Weir, S. (2006). The BNP: The roots of its appeal.

Johnson, L. (2017). The lives and identities of UK Black and South Asian head teachers: Metaphors of leadership. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, *45*(5), 842-862.

Jones, K., Nurse, J. R., & Li, S. (2022, May). Out of the Shadows: Analyzing Anonymous' Twitter Resurgence during the 2020 Black Lives Matter Protests. In *Proceedings of the International AAAI Conference on Web and Social Media* (Vol. 16, pp. 417-428).

Joseph, A. (2020). Navigating neoliberal school spaces: Parent and school staff perspectives on racially disproportional school exclusions in England. *International Social Work*, *63*(4), 445-458.

Juvonen, J., Lessard, L. M., Rastogi, R., Schacter, H. L., & Smith, D. S. (2019). Promoting social inclusion in educational settings: Challenges and opportunities. *Educational Psychologist*, *54*(4), 250-270.

Kalra, V. S. (2019). *From textile mills to taxi ranks: Experiences of migration, labour and social change*. Routledge.

Kawalerowicz, J., & Biggs, M. (2015). Anarchy in the UK: Economic deprivation, social disorganization, and political grievances in the London riot of 2011. *Social Forces*, *94*(2), 673-698. Oxford University Press.

Kemp, S., & Holmwood, J. (2003). Realism, regularity and social explanation. *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*, *33*(2), 165-187.

Khalid, S. (2017). Rise of The Guardians: Challenging Racism in a New World Order.

Klein, O. (2018). The BNP in Blazers? A Comparison of Online Discussions of Followers of the British National Party and the UK Independence Party. *A Comparison of Online Discussions of Followers of the British National Party and the UK Independence Party (June 1, 2018).*

Knutsen, T., & Moses, J. (2007). *Ways of knowing: Competing methodologies and methods in social and political research*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Koller, S. H., Raffaelli, M., & de Morais, N. A. (2020). From Theory to Methodology: Using Ecological Engagement to Study Development in Context. *Child Development Perspectives*, *14*(3), 157-163.

Korpershoek, H., Canrinus, E. T., Fokkens-Bruinsma, M., & de Boer, H. (2020). The relationships between school belonging and students' motivational, social-emotional, behavioural, and academic outcomes in secondary education: A meta-analytic review. *Research Papers in Education*, *35*(6), 641-680.

Krauss, S. E. (2005). Research paradigms and meaning making: A primer. *The qualitative report*, *10*(4), 758-770.

Kroll, T., Barbour, R., & Harris, J. (2007). Using focus groups in disability research. *Qualitative health research*, *17*(5), 690-698.

Lardier, D. T., Opara, I., Bergeson, C., Herrera, A., Garcia-Reid, P., & Reid, R. J. (2019). A study of psychological sense of community as a mediator between supportive social systems,

school belongingness, and outcome behaviors among urban high school students of color. *Journal of community psychology*, *47*(5), 1131-1150.

Leary, M. R., Kelly, K. M., Cottrell, C. A., & Schreindorfer, L. S. (2013). Construct validity of the need to belong scale: Mapping the nomological network. *Journal of personality assessment*, *95*(6), 610-624.

Ledesma, M. C., & Calderón, D. (2015). Critical race theory in education: A review of past literature and a look to the future. *Qualitative Inquiry*, *21*(3), 206-222.

Li, E. P., Min, H. J., & Belk, R. W. (2008). Skin lightening and beauty in four Asian cultures. *ACR North American Advances*.

Liu, J., Gill, E., & Li, S. (2020). Revisiting cultural competence. *The Clinical Teacher*.

Lloyd, N. (2010). Sir Michael O'Dwyer and 'Imperial Terrorism' in the Punjab, 1919. *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*, *33*(3), 363-380.

Lövheim, M. (2019). Culture, Conflict, and Constitutional Right: Representations of Religion in the Daily Press. *Religion and European Society: A Primer*, 69-82.
Lowe, D. (2017). Prevent strategies: The problems associated in defining extremism: The case of the United Kingdom. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, *40*(11), 917-933.

Macpherson, W. (1999, February 24). *The Stephen Lawrence inquiry*. Home Office . https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-stephen-lawrence-inquiry

Magubane, Z. (2004). *Bringing the empire home: Race, class, and gender in Britain and colonial South Africa*. University of Chicago Press.

Mahar, A. L., Cobigo, V., & Stuart, H. (2013). Conceptualizing belonging. *Disability and rehabilitation*, *35*(12), 1026-1032.

Malterud, K., Siersma, V. D., & Guassora, A. D. (2016). Sample size in qualitative interview studies: guided by information power. *Qualitative health research*, *26*(13), 1753-1760.

Marcia, J. E. (1966). Development and Validation of Ego- identity Status l. *Social Psychology*, *3*(5), 551-558

Martinez, A. (2014). Critical race theory: Its origins, history, and importance to the discourses and rhetorics of race. *Frame-Journal of Literacy Studies*, *27*(2), 9-27.

Maslow, A. H. (1943). Preface to motivation theory. *Psychosomatic medicine*.

Maslow, A. H. (1958). A Dynamic Theory of Human Motivation.

McKee, M. (2018). Lessons from the Windrush generation.

McLeod, S. (2007). Maslow's hierarchy of needs. *Simply psychology*, *1*, 1-8.

McLeod, S. A. (2019, October 24). *Social identity theory*. Simply Psychology. www.simplypsychology.org/social-identity-theory.html

Meer, N., Qureshi, K., Kasstan, B., & Hill, S. (2020, April 30). *The Social Determinants of Covid 19 and BAME disproportionality*. Discover Society.

Mellor, D., Stokes, M., Firth, L., Hayashi, Y., & Cummins, R. (2008). Need for belonging, relationship satisfaction, loneliness, and life satisfaction. *Personality and individual differences*, *45*(3), 213-218

Miah, M. (2020). Next steps for BLM movement, elections and beyond. *Green Left Weekly*, (1285), 16.

Milner, A., & Jumbe, S. (2020). Using the right words to address racial disparities in COVID-19. Retrieved 29 April 2022, from https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7373398/

Mogaji, E. (2020). The Brand Goodness Quadrant: Positioning the Brand and their BLM Statements. *Available at SSRN*. https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3720237

Moncrieffe, M., Asare, Y., Dunford, R., Harper, J., Biggs, S., Patel, B., Brooks, E., Klein, U., Wisker, G., Whilby, A & Sibanda, F. (2020). Decolonising the Curriculum: Teaching and Learning about Race Equality.

Morrow, E. A., & Meadowcroft, J. (2019). The rise and fall of the English Defence League: Self-governance, marginal members, and the far right. *Political Studies*, *67*(3), 539-556.

Moses, J. (2020). Ontologies, Epistemologies and the Methodological Awakening1. *The SAGE Handbook of Political Science*, 447.

Mulholland, J. (2018). Gendering the 'white backlash': Islam, Patriarchal 'unfairness', and the defense of women's rights among women supporters of the British National Party. In *Gendering Nationalism* (pp. 165-185). Palgrave Macmillan, Cham.

Neal, J. W., & Neal, Z. P. (2013). Nested or networked? Future directions for ecological systems theory. *Social Development*, *22*(4), 722-737.

Nichols, S. L. (2006). Teachers' and students' beliefs about student belonging in one middle school. *The Elementary School Journal*, *106*(3), 255-271.

Niemiec, C. P., & Ryan, R. M. (2009). Autonomy, competence, and relatedness in the classroom: Applying self-determination theory to educational practice. *Theory and research in Education*, *7*(2), 133-144.

Norwood, K. J., & Foreman, V. S. (2014). The ubiquitousness of colorism. *Color matters: Skin tone bias and the myth of a post-racial America*, 9-28.

Oberai, H., & Anand, I. M. (2018). Unconscious bias: thinking without thinking. *Human Resource Management International Digest*.

Office for National Statistics. (2020, February 25). *Child poverty and education outcomes by ethnicity - Office for National Statistics*. https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/nationalaccounts/uksectoraccounts/compendium/economic review/february2020/childpovertyandeducationoutcomesbyethnicity

Okri, B. (2021). 'I can't breathe': Why George Floyd's Words Reverberate Around the World. *Journal of Transnational American Studies*, *12*(1).

Olcoń, K., Kim, Y., & Gulbas, L. E. (2017). Sense of belonging and youth suicidal behaviors: what do communities and schools have to do with it?. *Social work in public health*, *32*(7), 432-442.

O'Mahoney, J., & Vincent, S. (2014). Critical realism as an empirical project: A beginner's guide. *Studying organizations using critical realism: A practical guide*.

O'Reilly, M., Dogra, N., Whiteman, N., Hughes, J., Eruyar, S., & Reilly, P. (2018). Is social media bad for mental health and wellbeing? Exploring the perspectives of adolescents. *Clinical child psychology and psychiatry*, *23*(4), 601-613.

Otu, A., Ahinkorah, B. O., Ameyaw, E. K., Seidu, A. A., & Yaya, S. (2020). One country, two crises: what Covid-19 reveals about health inequalities among BAME communities in the United Kingdom and the sustainability of its health system?. *International journal for equity in health*, *19*(1), 1-6.

Over, H. (2016). The origins of belonging: social motivation in infants and young children. *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences*, *371*(1686), 20150072.

Owusu-Kwarteng, L. (2020). 'Studying in this England is wahala (trouble)': analysing the experiences of West African students in a UK higher education institution. *Studies in Higher Education*, 1-12.

Oyedemi, T. D. (2021). Postcolonial casualties: 'Born-frees' and decolonisation in South Africa. *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, *39*(2), 214-229.

Patel P.A. (2011) Bioecological Theory of Development. In: Goldstein S., Naglieri J.A. (eds) Encyclopedia of Child Behavior and Development. Springer, Boston, MA.

Patton, D. U., Brunton, D. W., Dixon, A., Miller, R. J., Leonard, P., & Hackman, R. (2017). Stop and frisk online: theorizing everyday racism in digital policing in the use of social media for identification of criminal conduct and associations. *Social Media+ Society*, *3*(3), 2056305117733344.

Persulessy, S. I. (2018). Social Values in Charles Dickens's Novel "Oliver Twist". *Advances in Language and Literary Studies*, *9*(5), 136-142.

Pickett, K., & Wilkinson, R. (2010). The Spirit Level: Why Equality is Better for Everyone. In *Google Books*. Penguin Books Limited. https://www.google.co.uk/books/edition/The_Spirit_Level/jfJMajQulfQC?hl=en&gbpv=1&dq=Wilkinson (Original work published 2020).

Power, S., & Taylor, C. (2020). Not in the classroom, but still on the register: Hidden forms of school exclusion. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, *24*(8), 867-881.

Qualter, P., Vanhalst, J., Harris, R., Van Roekel, E., Lodder, G., Bangee, Maes., M., & Verhagen, M. (2015). Loneliness across the life span. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, *10*(2), 250-264.

Quirkos (2022). *Simple qualitative data analysis software*. Quirkos.
https://www.quirkos.com/

Qurashi, F. (2018). The Prevent strategy and the UK 'war on terror': embedding infrastructures of surveillance in Muslim communities. *Palgrave Communications*, *4*(1), 1-13.

Rafe, M. M., Noaparast, K. B., Hosseini, A. S., & Sajadieh, N. (2020). An examination of Roy Bhaskar's critical realism as a basis for educational practice. *Journal of Critical Realism*, *20*(1), 56–71

Reid, A. M., Brown, J. M., Smith, J. M., Cope, A. C., & Jamieson, S. (2018). Ethical dilemmas and reflexivity in qualitative research. *Perspectives on medical education*, *7*(2), 69-75.

Remen, R. N. (2001). *My grandfather's blessings: Stories of strength, refuge, and belonging*. Penguin

Roberson, N. D., & Zumbo, B. D. (2019). Migration background in PISA's measure of social belonging: Using a diffractive lens to interpret multi-method DIF studies. *International Journal of Testing*, *19*(4), 363-389

Roberts, J. M. (2014). Critical realism, dialectics, and qualitative research methods. *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*, *44*(1), 1-23.

Roberts, S. O., Bareket-Shavit, C., Dollins, F. A., Goldie, P. D., & Mortenson, E. (2020). Racial inequality in psychological research: Trends of the past and recommendations for the future. *Perspectives on psychological science*, *15*(6), 1295-1309.

Robins, K. (2020). Tradition and translation: national culture in its global context. In *Undoing Place?* (pp. 243-257). Routledge

Rogers, C. R. (1951). *Client-centered therapy: Its current practice, implications, and theory, with chapters*. Oxford, United Kingdom: Houghton Mifflin.

Ross, P. T., & Zaidi, N. L. B. (2019). Limited by our limitations. *Perspectives on medical education*, *8*(4), 261-264.

Sakamoto, I. (2007). An anti-oppressive approach to cultural competence. *Canadian Social Work Review/Revue Canadienne de Service Social*, *24*(1), 105-114

SchoolGuide.co.uk. (n.d.). SchoolGuide.Co.Uk. Retrieved May 22, 2022, from https://www.schoolguide.co.uk/catchment-areas-explained

Sewell, A. (2018). The intersectional, structuralist, and anti-geneticism centres of Black Lives Matter. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, *41*(8), 1443-1446.

Seymour, J., & Walsh, J. (2013). Displaying families, migrant families, and community connectedness: The application of an emerging concept in family life. *Journal of comparative family studies*, *44*(6), 689-698.

Shah, V. (2020, June 26). *A Conversation with Afua Hirsch on Race, Identity & Empire*. Thought Economics. https://thoughteconomics.com/afua-hirsch/

Shiner, M., Carre, Z., Delsol, R., & Eastwood, N. (2018). The colour of injustice: 'race', drugs and law enforcement in England and Wales.

Shore, L. M., Cleveland, J. N., & Sanchez, D. (2018). Inclusive workplaces: A review and model. *Human Resource Management Review*, *28*(2), 176-189.

Shotter, J. (1993). Psychology and citizenship: Identity and belonging. *Citizenship and social theory*, 115-138.

Sivanandan, A. (1981). From resistance to rebellion: Asian and Afro-Caribbean struggles in Britain. *Race & Class*, *23*(2-3), 111-152.

Slaten, C. D., Ferguson, J. K., Allen, K. A., Brodrick, D. V., & Waters, L. (2016). School Belonging: A Review of the History, Current Trends, and Future Directions. *Educational & Developmental Psychologist*, *33*(1).

Slaten, C., Kellyyannallen, J. K. F., Vellaybrodrick, D., & Waters, L. (2018). 2. A HISTORICAL ACCOUNT OF SCHOOL BELONGING. *Pathways to Belonging: Contemporary Perspectives of School Belonging*, 7.

Spithoven, A. W., Bastin, M., Bijttebier, P., & Goossens, L. (2018). Lonely adolescents and their best friend: An examination of loneliness and friendship quality in best friendship dyads. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, *27*(11), 3598-3605.

Stamper, K. (2019, February 13). *Why We Confuse Race and Ethnicity A Lexicographer's Perspective* [Review of *Why We Confuse Race and Ethnicity A Lexicographer's Perspective*]. Conscious Style Guide. https://consciousstyleguide.com/why-we-confuse-race-ethnicity-lexicographers-perspective/

Stenfors, T., Kajamaa, A., & Bennett, D. (2020). How to… assess the quality of qualitative research. *The clinical teacher*, *17*(6), 596-599.

Storli, Y. (2019). *" On With the National Revolution!"-An analysis of the ideological reorientation of the" political soldiers" in the British National Front, 1980-1990* (Master's thesis).

Sullivan, J., Wilton, L., & Apfelbaum, E. P. (2021). Adults delay conversations about race because they underestimate children's processing of race. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*, *150*(2), 395.

Tajfel, H., Turner, J. C., Austin, W. G., & Worchel, S. (1979). An integrative theory of intergroup conflict. *Organizational identity: A reader*, *56*(65), 9780203505984-16.

Taylor, E. (1998). A Primer on Critical Race Theory: Who are the critical race theorists and what are they saying? *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*, (19), 122.

Taylor, L., & Soni, A. (2017). Preventing radicalisation: a systematic review of literature considering the lived experiences of the UK's Prevent strategy in educational settings. *Pastoral Care in Education*, *35*(4), 241-252.

Taylor, S. P. (2018). Critical realism vs social constructionism & social constructivism: application to a social housing research study. *International Journal of Sciences: Basic and Applied Research*, *37*(2), 216-222.

Theisen, A. L. (2021, December 8). *Is having a sense of belonging important?* Mayo Clinic Health System. Retrieved May 16, 2022, from https://www.mayoclinichealthsystem.org/hometown-health/speaking-of-health/is-having-a-sense-of-belonging-important

Tickle, L. (2015, February 2). *Free speech? Not at four in five UK universities*. The Guardian; The Guardian. https://www.theguardian.com/education/2015/feb/02/free-speech-universities-spiked-ban-sombreros

Tomasello, M., Carpenter, M., Call, J., Behne, T., & Moll, H. (2005). Understanding and sharing intentions: The origins of cultural cognition. *Behavioral and brain sciences*, *28*(5), 675-691.

Truong, K., & Museus, S. (2012). Responding to racism and racial trauma in doctoral study: An inventory for coping and mediating relationships. *Harvard Educational Review*, *82*(2), 226-254.

Twenge, J. M., Spitzberg, B. H., & Campbell, W. K. (2019). Less in-person social interaction with peers among US adolescents in the 21st century and links to loneliness. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, *36*(6), 1892-1913.

Uberoi, E., & Lees, R. (2020). Ethnic diversity in politics and public life. In *HOUSE of COMMONS LIBRARY*. House of Commons. https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/sn01156/

Uhrig, N. (2016). *Black, Asian and minority ethnic disproportionality in the criminal justice system in England and Wales*. London: Ministry of Justice.

Umberson, D. (2017). Black deaths matter: Race, relationship loss, and effects on survivors. *Journal of health and social behavior*, *58*(4), 405-420.

Valls. (1998). The Racial Contract. By Charles W. Mills. Ithaca, NY, and London: Cornell University Press, 1997. 171p. *The American Political Science Review*, *92*(3), 691–692.

Van Orden, K. A., Witte, T. K., Cukrowicz, K. C., Braithwaite, S. R., Selby, E. A., & Joiner Jr, T. E. (2010). The interpersonal theory of suicide. *Psychological review*, *117*(2), 575.

Vicedo, M. (2011). The social nature of the mother's tie to her child: John Bowlby's theory of attachment in post-war America. *The British Journal for the History of Science*, *44*(3), 401-426.

Vijayakumar, N., Whittle, S., Yücel, M., Dennison, M., Simmons, J., & Allen, N. B. (2014). Prefrontal structural correlates of cognitive control during adolescent development: a 4-year longitudinal study. *Journal Of Cognitive Neuroscience*, *26*(5), 1118-1130.

Walvin, J. (2016). *Making the black Atlantic: Britain and the African diaspora*. Bloomsbury Publishing.

Weed, E. (2017). *The religion of white supremacy in the United States*. Lexington Books.

Whaley, A. L., & Davis, K. E. (2007). Cultural competence and evidence-based practice in mental health services: a complementary perspective. *American Psychologist*, *62*(6), 563.

WHO. (2017). *Adolescent development*. Retrieved from World Health Organization: http://www.who.int/maternal_child_adolescent/topics/adolescence/dev/en/

Wice, & Davidai, S. (2021). Benevolent Conformity: The Influence of Perceived Motives on Judgments of Conformity. *Personality & Social Psychology Bulletin*, *47*(7), 1205–1217. https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167220963702

Wilkins, P. (2000). Unconditional positive regard reconsidered. *British Journal of Guidance & Counselling*, *28*(1), 23-36.

Williams, A. (2020). *Editorial : The Whiteness of Educational Psychology: Colonialism , Post-Colonialism and Racialisation in the Theory , Training and Practice of Educational Psychology*. *6*(1), 1–8.

Williams, M. T., Metzger, I. W., Leins, C., & DeLapp, C. (2018). Assessing racial trauma within a DSM–5 framework: The UConn Racial/Ethnic Stress & Trauma Survey. *Practice Innovations*, *3*(4), 242.

Willig, C. (2013). *Introducing qualitative research in psychology*. McGraw-hill education (UK).

Wong, B., Copsey-Blake, M., & ElMorally, R. (2022). Silent or silenced? Minority ethnic students and the battle against racism. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 1-16.

Wong, K. (2009). Do the right thing: The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report 10 years on. *Safer Communities*, *8*(3), 10

Wurster, K. G., Kivlighan III, D. M., & Foley-Nicpon, M. (2020). Does person-group fit matter? A further examination of hope and belongingness in academic enhancement groups. *Journal of counseling psychology*.

Yardley, L. (2000). Dilemmas in qualitative health research. *Psychology and health*, *15*(2), 215-228.

Yıldız, M. A. (2016). Serial multiple mediation of general belongingness and life satisfaction in the relationship between attachment and loneliness in adolescents. *Educational Sciences: Theory & Practice*, *16*(2).

10 Appendices

10.1 Appendix A: Average P8 Score by Ethnicity, Gender, and FSMs' Eligibility

Figure 6: Bangladeshi and Pakistani pupils who were eligible for FSM progressed higher than the national average of all pupils

Average Progress 8 score by ethnicity, gender and eligibility for free school meals, England, academic year 2018 to 2019
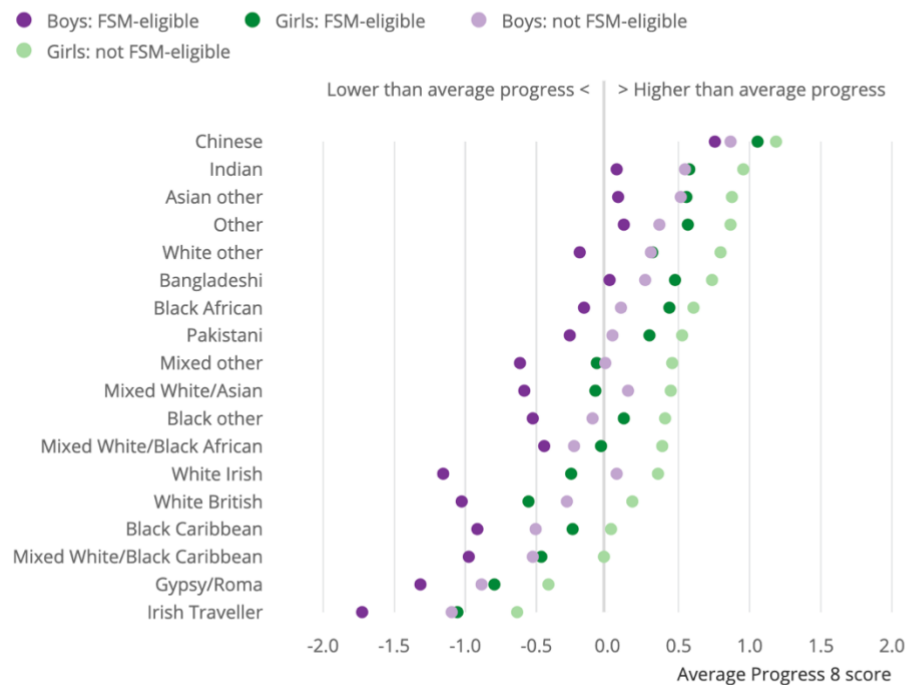
Source: Department for Education – Key Stage 4 performance, 2019 (revised)

(ONS, 2020)

Office for National Statistics. (2020, February 25). Child poverty and education outcomes by ethnicity - Office for National Statistics.
https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/nationalaccounts/uksectoraccounts/compendium/economicreview/february2020/childpovertyandeducationoutcomesbyethnicity)

10.2 Appendix B: Rates of Fixed-term Exclusion and PE Across the UK

Table 1. Rates of fixed term and permanent exclusion across the UK.

2015/2016	School population	Fixed term exclusion	%	Permanent exclusion	%
England	8559540	339360	4.0	6685	0.08
Scotland	680007	18430	2.7	5	
Wales	466555	15051	3.2	109	0.02
Northern Ireland	339785	4147	1.2	19	0.0006

(Power & Taylor, 2020, p.868)

10.3 Appendix C: The Brand Goodness Quadrant

(Text accompanying the diagram is a screenshot)

The Brand Goodness Quadrant

This conundrum around the public statement by the brands and their private actions has led to the classification of different brands. This classification is presented in the brand goodness quadrant illustrated in Figure 1. This figure is a 2X2 quadrant that intersects the public statement-making, as a form of 'saying good', a kind of advertising, PR and marketing communications and the private action, an indication of 'doing good', dismantling systemic racism and inequality, addressing lack of representation and creating access to opportunities
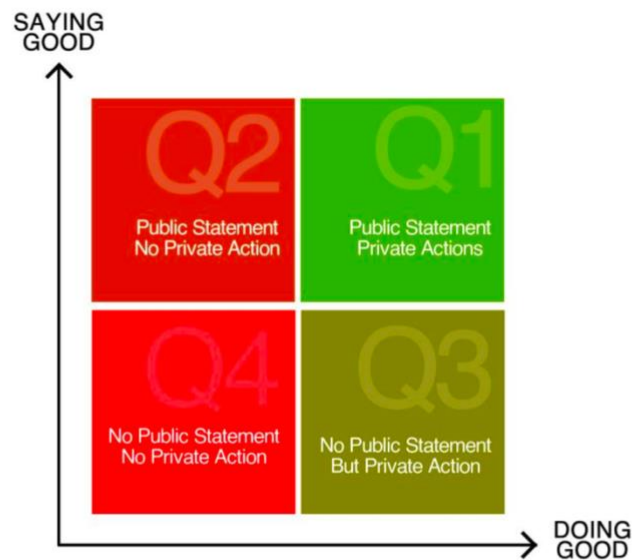

Figure 1: The Brand Goodness Quadrant

(Mogaji, 2020, p.76)

10.4 Appendix D: Ethics' Approval Letter and Email - University of Sheffield

The University Of Sheffield.

Unsah Khatoon Tabassum
Registration number: ▇▇▇▇▇▇
School of Education
Programme: DEdCPsy

Dear Unsah Khatoon

PROJECT TITLE: Time to belong: Exploring factors affecting BAME young peoples sense of belonging in relation to their school experiences.* (*working title)
APPLICATION: Reference Number 039677

On behalf of the University ethics reviewers who reviewed your project, I am pleased to inform you that on 15/06/2021 the above-named project was **approved** on ethics grounds, on the basis that you will adhere to the following documentation that you submitted for ethics review:

- University research ethics application form 039677 (form submission date: 29/05/2021); (expected project end date: 31/08/2022).
- Participant information sheet 1091087 version 3 (29/05/2021).
- Participant information sheet 1091086 version 2 (29/05/2021).
- Participant consent form 1091089 version 2 (29/05/2021).
- Participant consent form 1091088 version 2 (29/05/2021).

If during the course of the project you need to deviate significantly from the above-approved documentation please inform me since written approval will be required.

Your responsibilities in delivering this research project are set out at the end of this letter.

Yours sincerely

David Hyatt
Ethics Administrator
School of Education

Please note the following responsibilities of the researcher in delivering the research project:

- The project must abide by the University's Research Ethics Policy:
  https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/rs/ethicsandintegrity/ethicspolicy/approval-procedure
- The project must abide by the University's Good Research & Innovation Practices Policy:
  https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/polopoly_fs/1.671066!/file/GRIPPolicy.pdf
- The researcher must inform their supervisor (in the case of a student) or Ethics Administrator (in the case of a member of staff) of any significant changes to the project or the approved documentation.
- The researcher must comply with the requirements of the law and relevant guidelines relating to security and confidentiality of personal data.
- The researcher is responsible for effectively managing the data collected both during and after the end of the project in line with best practice, and any relevant legislative, regulatory or contractual requirements.

Ethical approval email confirmation from Dr. Anna Weighhall

7.4.1 Anna R
Weighall <anna.weighall@sheffield.ac.uk>   30 Jun 2021, 13:28
to Antony, Edu, me

Dear Stephanie
This is just to confirm that this is approved.
Best wishes,
Anna

Please note the ethics approval date was 30/06/22- a glitch in the system meant the letter could not be reissued, the email from the lead ethical approver Dr. Anna Weighhall.

10.5 Appendix E: Extract from Quirkos Report

Quirkos Report

Quirkos

This report was generated by Unsah on Apr 30, 2022 10:43:43 PM for the following file: TIME TO BELONG V2 .qrk

Sources Summary

| Title	Author	Date and Time	Length	Quotes #
P1 TRANSCRIPTION & PILOT TRANSCRIPTION Aleena.	Unsah	Apr 3, 2022 1:00:58 PM	28434	71
P2 TRANSCRIPTION FINAL Ambreen SAT 18TH SEPT 21 1PM	Unsah	Apr 3, 2022 1:01:55 PM	29843	81
P3 TRANSCRIPTION Farzana 26 09 21	Unsah	Apr 3, 2022 1:02:19 PM	31256	65
P4 TRANSCRIPTION PHASE 1 Zubair 02 10 21 v4 f12 03 22	Unsah	Apr 3, 2022 1:02:40 PM	20936	36
P5 TRANSCRIPTION PHASE 1 Maliya V4 02 10 21 - Copy - Copy	Unsah	Apr 3, 2022 1:03:31 PM	24073	51
P6 TRANSCRIPTION PHASE 1 V2 Beela 13 03 22	Unsah	Apr 3, 2022 1:03:55 PM	18861	42
P7 TRANSCRIPTION NABEEL V5	Unsah	Apr 3, 2022 1:04:17 PM	14674	42
P8 TRANSCRIPTION PHASE 1 V3 Tyrone - Copy	Unsah	Apr 3, 2022 1:04:35 PM	23211	61

Quirk Title	Parent	Grandparent	Description	Author	Date	Total Codes
Inextricability of the home: school interface				Unsah	Apr 13, 2022 3:53:58 PM	14
Racism thwarts belongingness				Unsah	Apr 13, 2022 11:32:52 AM	25
Belongingness expressed through social identity				Unsah	Apr 13, 2022 7:22:33 PM	38
Culturally competent teachers			also includes respect for religious obligations	Unsah	Apr 23, 2022 4:09:28 PM	29
Fairness equality and race-based differentials	Culturally competent teachers		subtheme of Culturally competent teachers	Unsah	Apr 18, 2022 1:51:25 PM	19
Safe learning environment				Unsah	Apr 18, 2022 1:51:33 PM	31
Commonality of race/ ethnicity/culture promotes belongingness				Unsah	Apr 13, 2022 5:18:24 PM	22
Friendships can transcend ethnicity				Unsah	Apr 13, 2022 12:31:58 PM	23
School is a microcosm of wider society				Unsah	Apr 23, 2022 2:57:13 PM	13
Connectedness through shared experiences				Unsah	Apr 13, 2022 6:31:43 PM	37

Quirk Title	Parent	Grandparent	Description	Author	Date	Total Codes
Racist transgressions as normalised behaviours				Unsah	Apr 13, 2022 6:14:39 PM	51
Safe spaces and places				Unsah	Apr 13, 2022 11:26:39 AM	20
Culturally sensitive educational experiences				Unsah	Apr 13, 2022 5:58:31 PM	56
PANDEMIC - return to school				Unsah	Apr 13, 2022 10:57:26 AM	7
MENTAL HEALTH				Unsah	Apr 13, 2022 6:47:18 PM	20
RQ1 DOES ETHNICTY MATTER?				Unsah	Apr 13, 2022 5:12:58 PM	2
RQ2 DOES ETHNICITY MATTER WITH TEACHERS/SCHOOL STAFF?				Unsah	Apr 18, 2022 1:33:39 PM	4
RQ3A DOES ETHNICITY MATTER WITH FRIENDS?				Unsah	Apr 23, 2022 2:57:17 PM	6
RQ3B DOES ETHNICITY MATTER WITH FELLOW STUDENTS?				Unsah	Apr 14, 2022 1:09:10 PM	5
RQ4 DOES ETHNICITY MATTER?				Unsah	Apr 13, 2022 6:42:05 PM	4

Quirk Title	Parent	Grandparent	Description	Author	Date	Total Codes
CONCLUSION- BELONGINGNESS DEFINITIONS POST INTERVIEW				Unsah	Apr 13, 2022 6:47:20 PM	8
QUESTIONS TO INTERVIEWER				Unsah	Apr 13, 2022 6:47:22 PM	2
Disconnecetdness through difference				Unsah	Apr 23, 2022 2:57:14 PM	13
TOTAL NUMBER OF CODES						449
TOTAL NUMBER OF QUIRKS						23

Main Canvas Views

Quirks Canvas - Primary
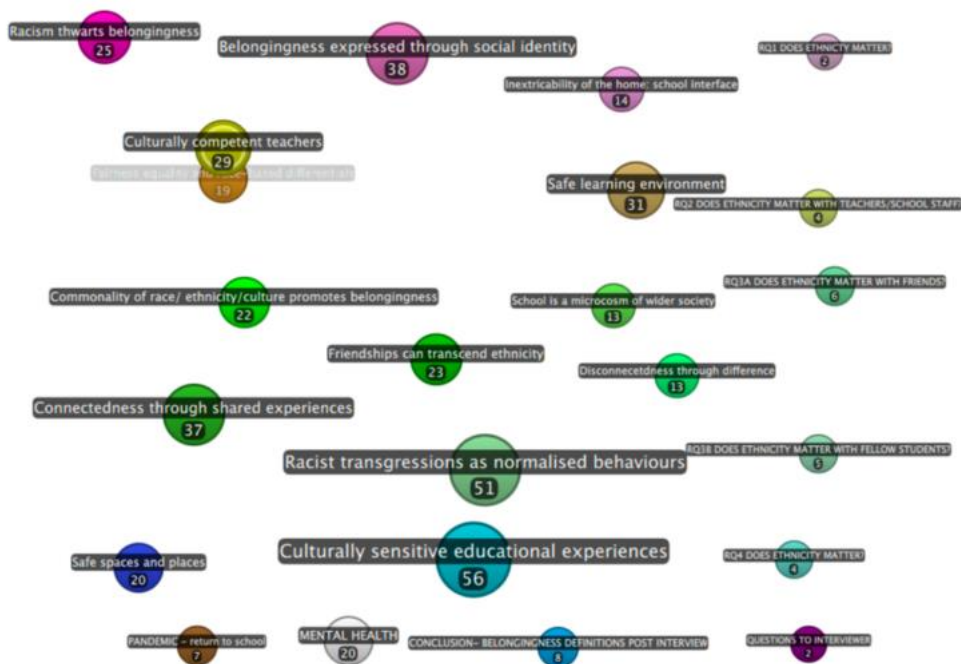
Text Sorted by Theme

Inextricability of the home: school interface

> **"**
>
> ALEENA: Okay, I go to school in (name of town redacted) called
>
> (name of school redacted) and a majority of the students are
>
> Asian, South Asian, and are Muslims. Ermm, so I am a South Asian
>
> and Muslim too so I feel like I fit in, and yeah. Err my school also
>
> like during Ramadan day they (inaudible) like Eid occasions and
>
> stuff like that all other students and parents to come over.
>
> Source: *P1 TRANSCRIPTION & PILOT TRANSCRIPTION Aleena.*
> Coded by: *Unsah* on *null*

> **"**
>
> **AMBREEN:** Ermmm. It's quite important when you're in such a big school in class or you know where there's definitely more white students than ethnically or like coloured students so it's important to feel like you're comfortable in that class. Erm and I think I've definitely fitted in quite well. I haven't like experiences any major like racism experiences and stuff erm, you feel comfortable because if you're not then definitely going with fact your school life and education and how you feel when you get home from that kind of stuff
>
> Source: *P2 TRANSCRIPTION FINAL Ambreen SAT 18TH SEPT 21 1PM*
> Coded by: *Unsah* on *null*

> **"**
>
> **AMBREEN:** I like maths at school mainly Cos I think I'm quite good at it and I also like science. I like learning about new things and ways that you can like series that haven't been proven yet that you think will proven in the future yeah
>
> Source: *P2 TRANSCRIPTION FINAL Ambreen SAT 18TH SEPT 21 1PM*
> Coded by: *Unsah* on *null*

Racism thwarts belongingness

> **ALEENA:** Erm, personally, I haven't, at my school , haven't encountered something like that but erm my friends have that is not so common in   our school anymore. So (silence).
>
> Source: P1 TRANSCRIPTION & PILOT TRANSCRIPTION Aleena.
> Coded by: Unsah on null

> **ALEENA::** Like they've been called a lot of racial slurs. and stuff, from.   other people.
>
> Source: P1 TRANSCRIPTION & PILOT TRANSCRIPTION Aleena.
> Coded by: Unsah on null

> **Aleena:** Er, so, er like "Paki." Yea
>
> Source: P1 TRANSCRIPTION & PILOT TRANSCRIPTION Aleena.
> Coded by: Unsah on null

> **ALEENA:** Err One of my friends got called "Paki" by someone in our
>
> **school and they had to just ignore it because I don't want to cause any**
>
> **D**rama or get anyone else involved so they just ignored it or they told a teacher.
>
> Source: P1 TRANSCRIPTION & PILOT TRANSCRIPTION Aleena.
> Coded by: Unsah on null

"

MALIYA: Not personally but I know a friend obviously felt a bit judged like different lessons obviously some of them are from same primaries and erm she was not really from the same primary and it's just like erm it's just 'cos obviously we knew each other. And I think it was just like a new face so I think she did feel a bit judged.

Source: *P5 TRANSCRIPTION PHASE 1 Maliya V4 02 10 21 - Copy - Copy*
Coded by: *Unsah* on *null*

"

MALIYA: Erm, she was erm Indian yeah.

Source: *P5 TRANSCRIPTION PHASE 1 Maliya V4 02 10 21 - Copy - Copy*
Coded by: *Unsah* on *null*

"

MALIYA: (answers without me needing to complete the sentence). British, White, yea

Source: *P5 TRANSCRIPTION PHASE 1 Maliya V4 02 10 21 - Copy - Copy*
Coded by: *Unsah* on *null*

"

MALIYA: Erm, it was just I think was erm, we were obviously doing PE, and erm, you know it was something to do with like passing the ball and it would just kind of I think a little bit racist because it was like can you pass the ball but it was in an accent and she got very upset and you know very offended to it but 'cos it was in Year 7, I feel like because didn't know each other, I think she definitely just judged her 'cos she knew she was Indian. So yeah

Source: *P5 TRANSCRIPTION PHASE 1 Maliya V4 02 10 21 - Copy - Copy*
Coded by: *Unsah* on *null*

10.6 Appendix F: Adult Information Sheet

The University Of Sheffield.

Participant Information Sheet V5 30th June 21
(for key adults)

Research Project Title

Time to belong: Exploring factors affecting BAME* young people's sense of belonging* in relation to their school experiences.**

*BAME-- Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic) **belonging – in this project can mean 'fitting in' or 'feeling involved in', or 'feeling a part of something.'

Invitation to participate

The researcher would like to invite young people to participate/take part in research to explore factors affecting Black Asian minority ethnic (*BAME*) young peoples' sense of belonging or 'fitting in' in relation to their school experiences. In this research *BAME* means (young) people of Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic descent, to include those of African Caribbean, African, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, or Indian descent. This helps the research to be more useful as it focuses on a smaller selection of minority groups. Please take the time to read all the information carefully. Discuss it with others if you wish before you decide whether or not to give consent for your child to take part in this research. Please ask the researcher if you have any questions or need more information. Reading information about this project does not mean your child has to take part. Thank you for your interest, and the time you are taking to read this information.

1. **What is the purpose of the research?**
   - The research aims to find out what a *'sense of belonging'* or *'fitting in'* at school means to BAME young people and what their experiences of belonging are at school.
   - Research indicates key issues around *'belonging'* experienced by BAME young people include reluctance to discuss their culture because it makes them feel different, and experiencing racist or discriminatory behaviours from others. There's less research about how belonging is experienced by BAME students so knowing more could help people working in education support them more.

2. **Why has the young person been invited to take part?**
   Your child has been invited to take part because they are aged between 11 to 16 years, and are of a BAME background or heritage (which is the focus of this research), and because the school/community establishment e.g. school/church/mosque supports the research. A maximum of 10-12 students are expected to take part.

3. **Do I have to take part?**
   No, there's no obligation to take part in the research. Both you and your child are provided with information sheets and you choose to give your consent. Consent forms can be returned to a member of staff at school/adult who gives you the information pack, or to the researcher. (Please see section 17 for contact details). If a young person agrees to take part, they can opt out at any stage of the research up until the information given during interview has been anonymised (names and identifying information removed), then they can still withdraw but their data cannot be withdrawn. The researcher will anonymise the information as soon as possible after the interview, ranging approximately between 1-12 weeks after the interview.

4. **What type of research is this?**
   This research uses qualitative methods, meaning it's based on descriptive statements (answers given by participants), and not based on numbers.

5. **What will happen to/for the young person if they take part?**
   - The young person signs a consent form and/or give verbal consent.
   - The young person takes part in an interview lasting around 45-60 minutes, online by video/audio call, to be recorded. The researcher asks questions, allowing extra time if the young person needs it.
   - The questions will generally be 'open questions,' meaning students can describe/tell me about their experiences.
   - The researcher will then write/type up the answers, remove all identifying information e.g. names, places etc., and then delete recordings from the password-protected recording device (laptop/phone).

6. **What will I have do?**
   If you agree for your child to participate in this research, adults can support them in the research activities in Section 5 above by:
   - Helping young people voice concerns or ask me any questions they have.

The University of Sheffield, School of Education *'Time to Belong'* Research Project.   1

193

- Making sure the young person has a quiet, noise-free place to sit in during the interview, with access to a computer, and the internet.
- Telling the researcher if the young person has any special educational needs or needs any extra help during the interview.
- As parents/carers, sign and return the consent form.

7. What are the possible disadvantages and risks to taking part?
- **Too many young people want to take part.** In which case further information may be requested from school to finalise who takes part. This may include young people who have spent the longest time in schools in the UK, are on free school meals, are eligible Pupil Premium, or may have experienced lots of school exclusions or detentions. Such factors can add more challenges to a young person's school experiences of belonging, and there isn't lots of research about BAME young people in these categories. Some students could choose to be standby participants if anyone drops out.
- **Staying anonymous-** Whilst adults will maintain confidentiality e.g. in school, or as parent/s or carer/s of young people, young people themselves may wish to discuss the research with friends or other students. If they choose to do this, the researcher/University of Sheffield, cannot take any responsibility for information they make known to others.
- **Sensitivity of the topic:** It's possible that a young person or family members may feel uncomfortable or distressed discussing experiences linked to race, or which may remind them of a difficult time. Young people can decide which questions they want to answer. They can later be supported by their favourite member of staff at school, and/or through helpful organisations listed at the end of the young person's information sheet (copy enclosed), and by me during the interview.
- **Safeguarding concerns:** If a safeguarding concern is revealed to the researcher, the researcher has a legal obligation to discuss this with her supervisor, and the school's child protection person, and if need be with appropriate child-protection safe-guarders/agencies.

8. What are the possible benefits of taking part?
Whilst there no immediate benefits for young people participating in the research, it is hoped that this work will have the following key benefits:
- **Support the work of professionals working in education** e.g. teachers, teaching assistants, and Educational Psychologists by helping them understand more about the experiences of BAME students in school.
- **Having a safe 'virtual' space**- where BAME young people can talk freely, and anonymously, about their school experiences about belonging/fitting.

9. Will my taking part in this project be kept confidential?
Yes, all the information collected about you or young people taking part will be kept confidential, and will be accessible only to members of the research team e.g. the researcher and her supervisor. Anonymised data isn't classed as personal data/information. The recordings will initially be stored on my personal laptop/phone which are password protected. They will be uploaded to the secure Google Drive account on the University of Sheffield server immediately after recording and then destroyed from the recording device (laptop/phone).

10. What is the legal basis for processing my personal data?
According to data protection legislation, we are required to inform you that the legal basis we are applying in order to process your personal data is that 'processing is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest' (Article 6(1)(e)). *Further information can be found in the University's Privacy Notice https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/govern/data-protection/privacy/general.'* Also, as we will be collecting some data/information that is defined in the legislation as more sensitive (information about race or ethnicity), we also need to let you know that we are applying the following condition in law: that the use of your data is 'necessary for scientific or historical research purposes'.

11. Will participants be recorded, and how will the recorded media be used?
Yes, participants and their parent/s and carer/s will be asked for their consent (permission) to record the interviews. The audio and/or video recordings of your activities made during this research will be used only for transcription and analysis.

12. **What will happen to the data collected, and the results of the research project?**
   - The data will be kept on password protected devices
   - After the interviews, researcher, and potentially a trusted transcriber, who adheres to the same data protection rules, will transcribe the recordings, and information which could identify them will be removed at the same time. The original data will be deleted 2 days-12 weeks after the recording has taken place, and no more than 12 months' later.
   - The researcher analyses this information, and will write a report about what young peoples' experiences of belonging at school. Anonymous quotes, will be shared in reports, publications and the findings of this research.
   - This research is part of the researcher's doctoral thesis and studies to attain the qualification of Doctor of Education and Child Psychology.
   - The researcher can be requested to send a copy of the research findings to the school or key adult, if you would like to read it. This will not be until at least the end of the academic year ending 31st August 2022 because the research has to go through many rigourous checks and amendments before it can be published.

13. **Who is organising and funding the research?**
The University of Sheffield, School of Education.

14. **Who is the Data Controller?**
The University of Sheffield is the data controller, and is responsible for looking after your information and using it properly according to the university's data protection rules.

15. **Who has ethically reviewed the project?**
   - The University of Sheffield, School of Education.
   - The University of Sheffield's Ethics Review Procedure, as administered by the School of Education's Psychology department, and further reviewers in the university.
   - The University's Research Ethics' Committee who monitors the application and delivery of the University's Ethics Review Procedure across the University.

16. **What if something goes wrong and I wish to complain about the research?**
If you have any questions, concerns or worries or need clarification you can use the contact details provided in section 17 below to:
   - Discuss these with the researcher who will do their best to help.
   - Contact the researcher's supervisor who will look into this, and provide further support and guidance.
   - If you make a complaint, and feel you're not satisfactied by the researcher's supervisor's reply, you can contact Dr Anna Weighall, edu-ethics@sheffield.ac.uk, the Chair of the Research Ethics Committee. If the complaint relates to how the participants' personal data has been handled, information about how to raise a complaint can be found in the University's Privacy Notice: https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/govern/data-protection/privacy/general

Safeguarding

If you are concerned about a safeguarding issue further information can be found in the University's Safeguarding policy. The designated safeguarding contact is the academic supervisor Dr Antony Williams contact details: anthony.williams@sheffield.ac.uk

17. **Contact details for further information**

Researcher: Ms. Unsah Tabassum E-mail: UTabassum1@sheffield.ac.uk
Researcher's supervisor: Dr. Anthony Williams E-mail:anthony.williams@sheffield.ac.uk
Chair of the Research Ethics Commitee: Dr. Anna Weighall E-Mail: edu-ethics@sheffield.ac.uk

Sources of support and advice
You can always ask for support or advice from the researcher, talk to staff at school, or support mechanisms at work or at home. They can also help you to find support that suits to your needs.
Should it be needed, you may find sources of support through the following:

The University of Sheffield, School of Education- '*Time to Belong*' Research Project.   3

- Gingerbread https://www.gingerbread.org.uk/information/you-and-your-childs-wellbeing/support-for-children-and-young-people/
- Young Minds   Telephone: 0808 802 5544
  Young Minds provides information and advice about mental health and emotional wellbeing for children, young people and their parent/s and carer/s. The website provides help and information on how divorce and separation affect children, and parents/carers can call the helpline for free and confidential support.
- Childline Telephone: 0800 1111
  Childline provides confidential support, counselling and information on a range of issues to children and young people. Services can be accessed by phone, instant messenger, and e-mail https://www.childline.org.uk/
- NSPCC Telephone:0808 800 5000
  Information for parents and carers supporting children who have experienced or witnessed domestic violence https://www.nspcc.org.uk/
- Cruse Bereavement Care Telephone: 0844 477 9400
  Provides information on what you can do to help a child or young person who is grieving. https://www.cruse.org.uk/get-help/for-parents
- Black Minds Matter https://www.blackmindsmatteruk.com/
- Stop Hate UK. https://www.stophateuk.org/report-hate-crime/
- Tell MAMA UK (Measuring anti-Muslim attacks. https://tellmamauk.org/
- For Sheffield University staff – you can also report hate crimes via the 'Dealing with hate crimes' website. https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/sos/hate-crime

Thank you to school staff, and to parent/s and carer/s for taking the time to read this information sheet and considering their child's participation. Please keep this information sheet for your records without obligation to allow your child to participate. If parent/s and carer/s wish to give consent (permission) for your child to participate in the research, please sign the attached consent form and return to the researcher by e-mail or to the member of school staff who has given you this sheet. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Ms Unsah Tabassum
The Researcher & Trainee Educational Psychologist

10.7   Appendix G: Participant information sheet

Participant Information Sheet VS 30ᵗʰ June 21

Title of the research
Time to belong: Exploring factors affecting BAME (Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic) young people's sense of belonging in relation to their school experiences.

Introduction
Hello,

I'm a researcher at The University of Sheffield, training to be an Educational Psychologist. You're invited to take part in a research project I'm doing to find out about the experiences BAME students have at your school and how they feel they belong or 'fit in.' In this research BAME means (young) people of Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic descent, and from African Caribbean, African, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, or Indian backgrounds.

for reading this information and considering taking part in this research - you can keep this copy. It's totally up to you. Please read all the information so you can make an informed decision.

1. What is the purpose of the research and why is it needed?
The researcher wants to learn more about BAME young people's sense of belonging, or 'fitting in' at school with teachers, friends, and fellow students. The researcher is from the Asian community, and hopes you'll feel comfortable sharing your experiences.

2. Why have I been asked to take part?
You're invited to take part because you're aged between 11 to 16 years, are from a Black or Asian background, and because your school/community/parent/carer contact has agreed to take part in this research. The researcher can work with around 10 young people in total.

3. Do I have to take part?
No. There are no consequences for deciding not to take part. It's your choice.

4. What are your 'rights?'
If you agree to participate in this study, everything you tell the researcher will have identifying details e.g. names removed.

5. How will this research be carried out? What will I have to do?
- ☐ Sign a consent/permission slip and/or agree verbally to take part.
- ☐ Take part in an interview, and answer some questions, online by video/audio call for about 45-60 minutes. You don't have to answer any questions you don't want to.
- ☐   The researcher then writes up the answers, analyses them, and writes a report.

6.What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?
Too many young people want to take part: You may feel a bit disappointed, if there aren't enough places and could be asked to be a standby participant if someone drops out.
The sensitivity of the topic: Sometimes talking about our experiences, or things to do with race or ethnicity may be upsetting. You don't have to talk about anything you do not want to. Your favourite teacher/member of staff can be asked to support you if you agree.
Safeguarding concerns: If you share information that causes the researcher to feel you are at any risk of harm, she must report concerns to her supervisor, or someone at school, and/or if need be, to appropriate child-protection safe-guarders or agencies.

The University of Sheffield, School of Education- 'Time to Belong' Research Project.   1

7. What are the possible benefits of taking part?

There are no immediate benefits to you for taking part in this research. Other benefits could include:

- **Supporting the work of professionals working in education** e.g. teachers, and Educational Psychologists by helping them understand more about BAME students' experiences.
- **Having a safe 'virtual' space**- where BAME students can talk freely, and anonymously.

8. Will my taking part in this project be kept private/confidential?

Yes. The researcher keeps your information safe by sticking to The University of Sheffield's data protection rules. Your name is removed from information you share. The recordings will be stored on my personal laptop/phone which are password protected, then uploaded to the secure Google Drive account on the University of Sheffield server immediately after recording, and then destroyed from the recording device (laptop/phone).

9. Will I be recorded, and how will the recorded media be used?

Yes an audio/visual recording will be made. The researcher then transcribes (writes up) what you have said, then deletes it. Record ➡ transcribe, and ➡ delete.

10. What will happen to the information or 'data' I give

- Once transcribed/typed up the original data will be deleted. This could be as soon as 2 days-12 weeks after the recording has taken place, and no more than 12 months.
- The researcher analyses this information and writes a report. Anonymous quotes will be shared in reports, publications, and research findings.
- This research is part of the researcher's doctoral thesis/studies for the Doctor of Education and Child Psychology qualification.
- Let the researcher know if you'd like to read the research – this won't be completed until at least the end of the academic year ending 31st August 2022.

11. What if something goes wrong?

If you're not happy with any part of the research, please contact the researcher who will do her best to help. If you're still not happy, you can write to the researcher's supervisor Dr. Anthony Williams. If you're still not happy with Dr. Williams' reply, you can write to the Chair of the Research Ethics Committee Dr Anna Weighall, edu-ethics@sheffield.ac.uk. Information about how to raise a complaint can be found in the University's Privacy Notice: https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/govern/data-protection/privacy/general.

Safeguarding

If you are concerned about a safeguarding issue further information can be found in the University's Safeguarding policy. The designated safeguarding contact is the academic supervisor Dr Antony Williams contact details: anthony.williams@sheffield.ac.uk

12. Contact details of key people

Role/name	E-mail
Researcher: Ms. Unsah Tabassum	UTabassum1@sheffield.ac.uk
Researcher's supervisor: Dr. Anthony Williams	anthony.williams@sheffield.ac.uk
Chair of the Research Ethics Committee: Dr Anna Weighall,	edu-ethics@sheffield.ac.uk

The University of Sheffield, School of Education- *'Time to Belong'* Research Project.

2

198

Sources of support and advice

You can always ask for support or advice from the researcher, or talk to an adult at school, or at home. Further sources of support are listed below:

- o Your form teacher, Head of Year, or your favourite member of staff at school.
- o **Gingerbread** https://www.gingerbread.org.uk/information/you-and-your-childs-wellbeing/support-for-children-and-young-people/
- o **Young Minds** Telephone:0808 802 5544
  Young Minds provides information/advice about mental health and emotional wellbeing for children/young people and their parent/s and carer/s.
- o **Childline** Telephone: 0800 1111 Childline provides confidential support, counselling and information on a range of issues to children/young people. Services can be accessed by phone, instant messenger, and e-mail https://www.childline.org.uk/
- o **NSPCC** Telephone:0808 800 5000 Information for parents/carers supporting children who may experience or witness domestic violence https://www.nspcc.org.uk/
- o **Cruse Bereavement Care** Telephone: 0844 477 9400 Provides information on what you can do to help a child/young person who is grieving. https://www.cruse.org.uk/get-help/for-parents
- o **Black Minds Matter** https://www.blackmindsmatteruk.com/
- o **Stop Hate UK.** https://www.stophateuk.org/report-hate-crime/
- o **Tell MAMA UK** (Measuring anti-Muslim attacks. https://tellmamauk.org/

Thanks for taking the time to read this information, and for considering taking part. If you have any questions or concerns please ask the person who gave this to you, or with parent/s or carer/s' permission, e-mail me using the contact details in section 12 above. If you'd like to take part, please sign the attached consent form.

Best wishes

Unsah

(The Researcher and Trainee Educational Psychologist).

10.8 Appendix H: Adult consent form

The University Of Sheffield.

Participant's Parental Consent Form

Project name: Time to belong: Exploring factors affecting BAME (Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic) young people's sense of belonging in relation to their school experiences.

Please tick (✓) the appropriate boxes	Yes	No
Taking Part in the Project		
I have read and understood the project information sheet dated __/___/2021 or the project has been fully explained to me. (If you will answer No to this question please do not proceed with this consent form until you are fully aware of what your child's participation in the project will mean.)		
I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the project.		
I agree to take part in the project. *I understand that my child's taking part in the project will include the following:* -- being interviewed via an online audio and/or visual call being recorded (audio and/or video)		
I understand that my child's taking part is voluntary and that my child can withdraw from the study at any point up until the data has been anonymised and included within a larger dataset. Once the data has been anonymised, I understand that my child can still withdraw from the project but their data can no longer be withdrawn. The time frame for when the data will be anonymised could range from 1-2 days to 12 weeks from the date of the interview. I understand that I, or my child, do not have to give any reasons for why I/they no longer want to take part and there will be no adverse consequences if the child/young person choose to withdraw.		
How my information will be used during and after the project		
I understand my personal details such as name, phone number, address and e-mail address etc. will not be revealed to people outside the project.		
I understand and agree that my child's words may be quoted in publications, reports, web pages, and other research outputs. I understand that my child will not be named in these outputs unless I specifically request this.		
I understand and agree that other authorised researchers will have access to this data only if they agree to preserve the confidentiality of the information as requested in this form. I understand and agree that other authorised researchers may use my data in publications, reports, presentations, web pages, and other research outputs, only if they agree to preserve the confidentiality of the information as requested in this form. I give permission for the interview data/answers that my child provides to be deposited in/on a secure drive or cloud so it can be used for future research and learning. I understand and agree that the interview data/recording will be deleted once the interviews have been transcribed. This will be no longer than a year, but the researcher aims for this to be within 2-12 weeks after the interview. I understand that the anonymised interview data/transcription is no longer regarded as personal data.		
So that the information you provide can be used legally by the researchers		
I agree to assign the copyright I hold in any materials generated as part of this project to The University of Sheffield.		

Name of participant's parent or carer [printed]	Signature	Date
		__/___/2021
Name of Researcher [printed]	Signature	Date
Unsah Tabassum	U. K. Tabassum	30/06/2021

The template of this consent form has been approved by the University of Sheffield Research Ethics Committee and is available to view here: https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/rs/ethicsandintegrity/ethicspolicy/further-guidance/homepage

10.9 Appendix I: Participant consent form

Participant Consent Form

Project name: Time to belong: Exploring factors affecting BAME (Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic) young people's sense of belonging in relation to their school experiences.

❑)	Yes	No
Taking Part in the Project		
I have read and understood the project information sheet dated __/___/2021 or the project has been fully explained to me. (If you will answer No to this question please do not proceed with this consent form until you are fully aware of what your participation in the project will mean.)		
I have been given the chance to ask questions about the project.		
I agree to take part in the project. being interviewed via an online audio and/or visual call -being recorded (audio and/or video)		
I understand that my taking part is voluntary and that I can withdraw from the study at any point up until the data has been anonymised (real names removed) and included within a larger set of data/information. Once the data has been anonymised, I understand that I can still withdraw from the project but my data can no longer be withdrawn. The time frame for when the data will be anonymised could range from 1-2 days to 12 weeks from the date of the interview. I understand that I do not have to give any reasons for why I no longer want to take part and there will be no adverse consequences if you choose to withdraw.		
How my information will be used during and after the project		
I understand my personal details such as name, phone number, address and e-mail address etc. will not be revealed to people outside the project.		
I understand and agree that my words may be quoted in publications, reports, web pages, and other research outputs. I understand that I will not be named in these outputs unless I specifically request this.		
I understand and agree that other authorised researchers will have access to this data only if they agree to preserve the confidentiality of the information as requested in this form. I understand and agree that other authorised researchers may use my data in publications, reports, presentations, web pages, and other research outputs (ways of sharing information), only if they agree to keep the information confidential as requested in this form.		
I give permission for the interview data/answers that I provide to be stored in/on a secure drive or cloud so it can be used for future research and learning. I understand and agree that the interview data/recording will be deleted once the interviews have been transcribed. This will be no longer than a year, but the researcher aims for this to be within 2-12 weeks after the interview. I understand that the anonymised interview data/transcription is no longer regarded as personal data.		

The template of this consent form has been approved by the University of Sheffield Research Ethics Committee and is available to view here: https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/rs/ethicsandintegrity/ethicspolicy/further-guidance/homepage

10.10 Appendix J: Extract from Transcript P3 Farzana (Selected sample to preserve anonymity)

1 **Participant 3 transcription – Farzana – Interview Transcription**
2 **Y10 Interviewer UT.**

ID	Pseudonym	Duration	Occupation	Age	Gender	Mode
P3	Farzana	36.06 mins	Student	15	Female	Online

3

4

5 **INT: errr to the research. And we're going to start that I just**
6 **remind you of the title. It's on your information sheets where**
7 **you got some things, that you still happy to go ahead with the**
8 **research interview thank you. Time to belong - exploring factors**
9 **affecting BAME young peoples' sense of belonging in relation to**
10 **your school experiences. So feel free, you can talk freely. If**
11 **there's anything you feel you wanted deleting from the data**
12 **where that I can do that for you. Just speak as openly as you feel**
13 **you're able to.**
14 RQ1. So question one what does feeling that you belong or fit in
15 at school mean to you?

16

17 **Farzana:** Erm. Do you know when I feel like I belonged in school
18 like I feel like the teachers and everyone they're respecting me, I
19 feel like I feel happy and it makes it hasn't impacted like my
20 outside of school life, I guess, like makes me happy as a person,
21 like I express myself.

22

23 **INT: So, do you want to give me a couple of examples of how,**
24 **how that happens where there is a question about teachers a bit**
25 **later but in general how does that happen that makes you feel**
26 **like you belong?**

27

28 **Farzana:** Erm. So, do you know how sometimes, erm, the teachers
29 if you need like or like at school, the whole school, like they just if
30 you need help like with personal matters, I think they can help
31 you. Like they always provide help most of the time, and I think
32 that's like some people who have had problems that the school
33 has helped them a lot as well.

34

35 **INT: And you said it has an impact outside of school, can you give**
36 **me an example of that please?**

37

38 **Farzana:** Erm, if somebody had erm, like a positive school life at
39 erm positive school life then at home they would feel more
40 happier. And they'd want to come to school as well again but if
41 there is a negative one that would be miserable at home, they
42 wouldn't feel that good about themselves.

43

44   **INT: So you if you were to describe it, erm, what would you**
45   **describe belonging as?**

46

47   **Farzana:** Err. In my err, I feel like belonging is like something that
48   you feel like you, like you just feel like you're in other words that
49   it's just you just belong. I don't know like exactly phrase it but you
50   can (stuck for words).

51

52   2.35 mins

53

54   **INT: You could, you can think about it…take your time**

55

56   **Farzana:** Erm, so when you belong, you feel like you belong
57   somewhere. You feel happier and more better. And err if you
58   don't feel like you belong somewhere then it made me feel make
59   you feel lonely and isolated.

60

61   **INT: Thank you for that. That's very kind of you to share that. Tell**
62   **me a little bit more about your life at school now what's it like**
63   **also that same question to ask you.**

64

65   03.10 mins

66

67   **Farzana:** Right now because I feel that because I have friends and
68   everything it feels good and I feel, I feel like happy when I go to
69   school and obviously too because of the pandemic and stuff things
70   have changed a lot. You know, we've not seen people for quite a
71   long time. But now it's because we're with our friends it feels a bit
72   more better and it made me feel more like positive about myself.
73   3.40
74   **INT: And what do you enjoy and not enjoy at school?**

75

76   **Farzana:** Sometimes, I don't enjoy like certain lessons I guess. Erm
77   or that I'm not with my friends all the time. But, then err,
78   obviously, there's like positive ones is like I like being I can be with
79   my friends, at times as well.

80

81   **INT: Is it lesson time or is it anything else as well?**

82

83   **Farzana:** Erm, sometimes I feel like erm sometimes we like treated
84   differently because some people are treated differently because
85   of their like ethnicity or they're like how their the colour of their
86   skin so if that's what makes me feel a bit right erm like not happy,
87   not confident and I guess it kind of lowers your self-esteem or self-
88   confidence because you feel like, (inaudible) why you not erm
89   being treated the same just because you're Brown or Black and
90   you're not White as well.

2

10.11 Appendix K: Extract from Transcript P8 Tyrone (Selected sample to preserve anonymity)

Participant 8 transcription – Tyrone – Interview Transcription
Y10   Interviewer UT.

ID	Pseudonym	Duration	Occupation	Age	Gender	Mode
P8	Tyrone	24.43 mins	Student	15	Male	Online

44   you enjoy personal to you. Like they respect it even if they don't
45   necessarily enjoy the same things?
46   1.53
47
48   **INT: And do you have an activity or something in mind that you**
49   **enjoy?**
50
51   **TYRONE:** Erm, like, doing drama and stuff. And like, it's not like I
52   get made fun of it for enjoying it. Errr, yeah.
53 |
54   **INT: And so can you tell me a little bit more about your life at**
55   **school? What do you enjoy? Not enjoy?**
56
57   **TYRONE:** Erm, (looks upwards thinking). At School, yeah, I enjoy. I
58   enjoy doing like, drama, film, media. Erm, yeah. Erm, yeah (shrugs
59   shoulders, indi*cating can't think of anything else*).
60   2.26
61
62   **INT: What do you not enjoy?**
63
64   **TYRONE:** Erm mainly sciences, like chemistry 'cos it's er, there's
65   lot you have to remember, then. Yeah. But yeah. (Shrugs
66   shoulders).
67
68   **INT: And so, what is it that you prefer about the drama element,**
69   **then?**
70
71   **TYRONE:** It's like, it's self-expressive, and you get to be who you
72   are. Even though you can be like acting as someone else, you bring
73   parts of yourself into a character, err, which is quite fun.
74   2.58
75
76   **INT: And do you think ethnicity matters in helping you feeling**
77   **that you belong or fit in at school?**
78
79   **TYRONE:** Erm, like I mean, like, my ethnicity is like part of me. So,
80   guess it, it obviously has an effect on who I am as a person. So, I
81   would say, yeah (nods affirmatively).
82
83   **INT: And can you give me an example of, err, an occasion a**
84   **situation, where that might matter more?**
85
86   **TYRONE:** Like, if we're like, learning about like a topic about like,
87   my ethnicity, or err, like my nationality or something like that. It's
88   like, I kind of have an insight in on it. And it's like, I have like a
89   deeper understanding, I guess. Errr. And it like, affects, like my

Handwritten margin notes:

Erm, Like, the things that you might do that, like, your interests, they will like, make fun of it. Or like stuff that is like that you enjoy personal to you. Like they respect it even if they don't necessarily enjoy the same things?

Erm, like, doing drama and stuff. And like, it's not like I get made fun of it for enjoying it. Errr, yeah.

Erm, (looks upwards thinking). At School, yeah, I enjoy. I enjoy doing like, drama, film, media. Erm, yeah. Erm, yeah (shrugs shoulders, indicating can't think of anything else).

It's like, it's self-expressive, and you get to be who you are. Even though you can be like acting as someone else, you bring parts of yourself into a character, err, which is quite fun.

Erm, like I mean, like, my ethnicity is like part of me. So, I guess it, it obviously has an effect on who I am as a person. So, I would say, yeah (nods affirmatively.
Like, if we're like, learning about like a topic about like, my ethnicity, or err, like my nationality or something

91   3.56
92
93   **INT: Thank you. So question two.**
94   **RQ2. How do your teachers and/or school staff support you to**
95   **help you feel like you fit in and belong?** (Inaudible)
96   **TYRONE:** (Inaudible) Erm**,** yes, well, our school has a zero-
97   tolerance rule against like any forms of like discrimination. Erm
98   and we have like different ways that you can like, talk about
99   situations that have happened err before sometimes to school
100   isn't always the most effective, but it really just depends on the
101   situation.
102
103   **INT: So, what does these zero tolerances look like? Could you**
104   **give me an example please?**
105
106   **TYRONE:** Well, if someone said something offensive, or like, like,
107   not like allowed, like, though they might be put in like isolation or
108   have a detention, or something like that. Erm, apparently they're
109   meant to be educated further.
110
111   **INT: I'm sorry.** (Sound dips out)
112
113   **TYRONE:** Yeah. Errr, so yeah, they try and make it so that there's
114   no, like offensive talk about it that is allowed, like any aspect of
115   school
116
117   **INT: Errm, when you say offensive, could you give me a couple o**
118   **examples of the things that would be considered offensive?**
119
120   **TYRONE:** Like saying stereotypes about certain things or stuff that
121   like errr, is insensitive to marginalised groups, and a lot of that
122   kind of stuff? (Rocks side to side on chair)
123   5.37
124
125   **INT: And so can you give me some examples of how else they**
126   **support you? So that's school policy, what else do they do to**
127   **help support you?**
128
129   **TYRONE:** Errm, some type (or sometimes, unclear) like, they,
130   when we, we learn about like history, they try and be a bit more
131   erm, progressive about it. Erm, 'cos a lot of time, especially in
132   English err, schools, they don't always teach you the full range of
133   history and mainly whitewash it. But err, from my history classes,
134   would say, err, we do learn a bit more than the most people
135   would. And it's a bit more, err, more intersectionality, about like
136   the kind of stuff that happened. And it's a bit more critical on like,
137   things err, that you might have assumed were good, I guess.

Like, I kind of have an insight in on it. And it's like, I have like a deeper understanding, I guess. Errr. And it like, affects, like my views on different topics and situations. So, I would say.

Well, if someone said something offensive, or like, like, not like allowed, like, though they might be put in like isolation or have a detention, or something like that. Erm, apparently they're meant to be educated further.

Yeah. Errr, so yeah, they try and make it so that there's no, like offensive talk about it that is allowed, like any aspect of school.

Like saying stereotypes about certain things or stuff that like errr, is insensitive to marginalised groups, and a lot of that kind of stuff? (Rocks side to side on chair).

Errm, some type (or sometimes, unclear) like, they, when we, we learn about like history, they try and be a bit more erm, progressive about it. Erm, 'cos a lot of time, especially in English err, schools, they don't always teach you the full range of history and mainly whitewash it. But

10.12 Appendix L: Proposed Research Timetable

* Please note some basic alterations to the proposed timeline were made as the realities of the research and ensued, to make sure that the researcher maintained a realistic and practical approach to completing the research in a timely manner for submission.

Proposed Research Timetable

Research /preparation stage	Key activities	Start/end	Write up/analysis expected completion	Resources/Costs
Literature review (draft)	Research	Sept-Dec 20	Jan 21	
Draft Research proposal presentation		Jan-Feb 20	16th Jan 21	
Draft Research proposal draft	Add amendments if needed. Book a further tutorial before submission if possible.	16th Feb 21- 1st March 21	Feb 21- amend after presentation and send 1st weekend of March 21	
Final research proposal with amendments if needed	Add amendments if needed.	March 21	23rd March 21	
Ethics draft submission	Completion of the University of Sheffield's relevant ethics' form/ documentation.	March -April 21	April 21	
Final ethics	Add amendments if needed.	April-May 21	May 21	

Post ethics' approval activities

Research /preparation stage	Key activities	Start/end	Write up/analysis expected completion	Resources/Costs
Preparation for recruitment	After ethical approval: Approach potential participant sources, schools, colleagues, community contacts etc.	April-May 21	June 21	Time. Participant information sheets. Consent forms. Identify potential participants.
Recruitment of participants	Information sheets sent to parents. Once informed consent is gained, send participant information sheets via key adults or as appropriate.	June 21	June 21	Time.

Gathering data	*Conduct interviews.*	*July 21* *If not possible then extend to Sept 21 – be mindful – Y10 recruited this year will be Y11s under pressure next year, so end of Y10 participants would be ideal for the study.*	*July 21*	*Interview schedules. Recording devices. Voice recorder.*
Data analysis	*Transcription of interviews.* *Refine themes.* *Thematic analysis.*	*July-August 21*	*July- August 21*	*Time.*
Report writing on findings	*Writing up findings.* *Draft to thesis research supervisor.*	*Sept-Jan 21*	*Jan 22* *Jan 22*	*Time.*
Amendments	*Make amendments if necessary.*	*Feb- March 21*	*March 22*	*Time.*
Dissemination of findings	*To EPS, via sharing of findings, with EPS supervisors, first.* *To selected staff in schools taking part, (make sure participants know when it will be fed back).* *Possibly beyond participating schools once the thesis research has passed at university.*	*Tbc***	*Tbc*	*Time.*
Amendments to Critical Literature review for thesis	*Further re-drafting and/or research.*	*April -May 22*	*May 22*	
Organising structure of thesis and writing thesis' introduction	*Drafting, re-drafting and proof-reading.*	*June -July 22*	*July 22*	
Thesis to research services	*Send/submit completed thesis.*	*August 22*	*August 22*	

*Provisional

**tbc – to be confirmed.

10.13 Appendix M: Further Consideration of an Alternative Approach

I considered the alternative approach of social constructionism (SC) but decided that if this had been taken it may have affected the research or the interpretation of the research due to potential biases the researcher may have such as their own experiences of racism. I therefore decided that CR was a suitable positioning for me to utilise because it fits in between Positivistic Paradigms and SC, as well as the fact that it acknowledges the validity of considering both observable and unobservable events and their meaning as they occur within the systems and structures (Knutsen & Moses, 2007) experienced by people, and which by loosely using the lens of Bronfenbrenner's theory (Bronfenbrenner 1986; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2007) especially with regards to the Literature review, may facilitate further insights into these experiences.

Reflective Diary

Time to belong: Exploring factors affecting BAME young people's
sense of belonging in relation to their school experiences.

U. K. Tabassum 2021-2022

\

Reflective diary entry 1

Date/time period: Sept 2021

Component: Using the term BAME throughout my thesis

What went well(WWW): Considering different viewpoints on the use of the term BAME.

Challenges: Use of BAME - I totally understand, and respect, that some people prefer not to use this term however I feel for the purpose of this research I needed an identifiable term to bring Black and Asian students together, as people of colour and their experiences of school belongingness. Also, I think the term is easily searchable in search engines.

Supervision discussion (if applicable): I understand the ongoing debate, I have used a definition that encompasses BAME has been defined as Black and Asian (Pakistani Indian and Bangladeshi), and I feel, some of the issues faced by people of colour are similar and I did not want to exclude representation by choosing either Black or Asian students.

Key learning/action points/reflections (from supervision and reflections on the thesis component/tasks/activities): Whilst there is ongoing debate about the use of the term BAME, I don't feel there is another term that brings together Black and Asian students because when compared with white students in school they become in some ways a collective minority, whilst I still recognise their experiences may differ.

Reflective diary entry 2

Date/time period: June 2021

Component: Literature review

What went well(WWW): Included a good range of elements of BAME experiences.

Challenges: The topic/data can be triggering. Lots of world events e.g. George Floyd. I did lots of reading and learned so much. However, it can be quite grim, reading back to how much racism or unfairness based on ethnicity is still around, throughout all the years I have grown up to the present day.

Supervision discussion (if applicable): Discussed with supervisor at work too, and subsequently with thesis supervisor TW. Talking about this during supervision was cathartic in itself.

Key learning/action points/reflections (from supervision and reflections on the thesis component/tasks/activities): Having a BAME supervisor helped me feel I could speak more openly about this. Lived experiences help shape our understanding in many ways. it's important to acknowledge my own experiences as well and how this may or may not impact on my research, and even interpretations.
I would have hoped that things would have changed for the better but sometimes it feels like we are stuck in times of racism which in some ways are quite similar to what my parents' generation may have experienced.

Reflective diary entry 5

Date/time period: August 2021 onwards

Component: Participant recruitment

What went well(WWW): Participant recruitment seemed to be going quite well through the community and community contacts because community contacts were keen to help. It was fairly easy to make contact with people I knew in the community and explain my research.

Challenges: Trying to recruit through schools has been difficult, in terms of it got towards the end of term before the school holidays and since then schools are understandably very busy with Covid protocols and helping students catch up, and perhaps my research was not the top of their priority list.

Supervision discussion (if applicable): I discussed the delays with my thesis supervisor in supervision

Key learning/action points/reflections (from supervision and reflections on the thesis component/tasks/activities): I think I'm quite tentative sometimes about pushing for an answer because I was a little worried about being told no if I put too much pressure on a school to participate. This has its downsides too as it can set back timeframes. However, I am sure this was the best ethical approach.

Reflective diary entry 6

Date/time period: 18/09/21

Component: Participant interviews /gathering data

What went well(WWW): PILOT & interview Participant 1 (P1),. The questions were easily understood by the participant and well-received and well-responded to. The interview also produced some interesting data on elements of racism from minority and non-minority peers.

Challenges: Waiting a long time to get the consent form but I did not want to ask because I wanted them to take their time and make an informed decision, as part of informed consent. So, as a result, this added a time delay to the project.

Supervision discussion (if applicable): Discussed with thesis supervisor how I thought participants might feel safer if they were amongst a majority group of minority ethnic people in a school but this was not the case.

Key learning/action points/reflections (from supervision and reflections on the thesis component/tasks/activities): The participant talked about BAME peers teasing a BAME student about wearing ethnic clothes. I had wrongly thought racial abuse may be less frequently experienced by young people if they were in a more ethnically diverse school, yet this was not the case. This taught me never to assume anything unless proven via official research etc. I also appreciate even if something is proven in research, experiences for young people could vary according to their particular school or context.

Reflective diary entry 17

Date/time period: 05-08 April 2022

Component: Finalising the themes.

What went well(WWW): I created several versions of thematic maps. the first one contained many of the themes Figure 3, the initial thematic map. Then I created further thematic maps and derived over-arching themes by subsuming some of the themes per RQ. (Figures 4-7).

Challenges: Creating the thematic map for a majority of the codes took me quite a long time. The 2nd thematic map was very time-consuming process because I decided to go through every script manually and highlight the themes too to check their occurrence and frequency.

Supervision discussion (if applicable): I discussed how the thematic maps had taken a long time and we agreed they were useful and added value. I myself am quite a visual learner, so appreciate having such maps that made thinking clear and clarified what the overarching themes 'looked like.'

Key learning/action points/reflections (from supervision and reflections on the thesis component/tasks/activities): I tried to summarise all the key themes in Figure 3. I was going to add a dotted line showing the connectivity between the different themes. But when I tried to do this the figure suddenly started to look messy and inaccessible so I removed this feature. In creating the final thematic maps, to discuss the final results, some themes were more difficult to place e.g. 'being happy' and 'being a multi-ethnic nation' because I was unsure if these were going to occur for all the participants. So I am currently monitoring this as I am going through the transcripts. Some of the themes I think could be added to RQ1, could be to do with 'mental health,' 'being part of the school community' or 'connectedness through shared experiences.' Currently I am unsure if any of these are going to fit as an additional themes. Further work on transcripts will conform this.

Reflective diary entry 18

Date/time period: 08/04/22

Component: Finalising the themes.

What went well(WWW): Redefining the themes into overarching themes.

Challenges: Overarching themes now felt clearer as a result of working on all the thematic maps. Whilst this delayed actual writing up my thesis, I felt this was time well-spent.

Supervision discussion (if applicable): My supervisor and I discussed the benefits of the thematic maps and implication for analysis.

Key learning/action points/reflections (from supervision and reflections on the thesis component/tasks/activities): For RQ4, when I was considering the theme 'safe spaces and places,' I did think about whether or not the 'role of teachers' and 'culturally sensitive students' could be incorporated as subthemes of a main theme of 'safe spaces and places.' I decided the theme 'culturally sensitive education' was still worthy of being a separate overarching theme.

10.15 Appendix O: Themes' Spreadsheet per Participant in Alphabetical Order (example).

	A
1	
2	Culturally-competent teachers foster belongingness **P1**
3	"Covid was quite destructive - that got in the way" (of belongingness). **P4**
4	Academic success rewarded **P2**
5	Active communication supports a SOB **P6**
6	Aware of racism experienced by other ethnic peers **P2**
7	Awareness of discrimination in other schools **P2**
8	Awareness of race-based discrimination **P3**
9	Being treated equally is important **P3**
10	Being treated equally is important **P3**
11	**Belonging make me feel happy P3**
12	Belonging makes you feel happy **P3**
13	**Belongingness can transcend ethnicity P5**
14	**Belongingness can transcend ethnicity P5**
15	Belongingness based on respect and valuing you for who you are. **P8**
16	**Belongingness formed or expressed through identities of race, ethnicity and culture and religion. P6**
17	Belongingness formed or expressed through identities of race, ethnicity and culture **P3**
18	**Belongingness formed or expressed through identities of race, ethnicity and culture P4**
19	**Belongingness fostered through commonality of race, ethnicity and culture P6**
20	**Belongingness is relational P8**
21	Belongingness thwarted by racism **P1**
22	Change to racist indoctrinations hard to achieve, and not expected. **P8**
23	Charity works fosters a SoB **P6**
24	Colourism-Worrying about the colour of my skin /looking different **P2**
25	Common interests promote peer-bonding **P2**
26	Common interests promote peer-bonding **P5**
27	Connectedness through commonality of race, ethnicity and culture **P2**
28	Connectedness through shared experiences ie sharing hobbies **P7**
29	Connectedness through shared experiences **P3**
30	**Connectedness through shared experiences P4**
31	**Connectedness through shared experiences P4**
32	**Connectedness through shared experiences P4**
33	Connectedness through shared experiences **P4**
34	**Connectedness through shared experiences P5**

THEMES PARTICIANTSOCCUR COLOUR   **THEMES ALPHABETICAL**   REVISED THEMES