

**How do Indian Students in the UK construct ‘School Success’?**

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

**By**

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May 2023

**Acknowledgments**

Thank you to my Dad, Sandeep and Simran for your continual support, time, love and moral support when I needed it most.

To my amazing sister Simarpreet, all I can say is you are my eternal patka twin. Thank you for your advice and support when times were tough - I am so lucky to have you in my life.

To Amardeep, my incredible fiancé, for your belief in me throughout this challenging journey. Your unlimited love, strength, and ability to cheer me up mean more to me than words can ever express.

Thank you to Dr Antony Williams, my research supervisor, for your endless guidance and knowledge.

And finally, to my angel in heaven, my beautiful mum. This is for you. I hope I have made you proud, and I hope you took your reading glasses with you because you’re in for a long read.

# Abstract

Indian students in the UK are academically positioned as the second highest performing ethnic group (Department for Education, 2022a) and are subjects of high expectations from key adults around them. In educational settings, they are covertly termed “model minority” students and teachers perceive Indian students as hardworking and successful. Indian parents and communities also overtly hold and express high expectations for their children around academic and occupational success. There has been limited exploration of the term ‘School Success’ with Indian students in the UK, with most research focusing on ‘academic success’ or occurring in the USA. As a result, these dominant discourses can be oppressive and marginalise students. This study explores the discourses used by Indian students in the UK to construct School Success to gain their constructions and understand how existing discourses impact their subjective experiences. Foucauldian Discourse Analysis (as described by Willig, 2013; Georgaca & Avdi, 2011 and Parker, 1992) is used to analyse semi-structured interview data from four Indian students aged between 18 and 22 in full-time education. The analysis suggests that Indian students construct School Success through four constructions, which supports and extends current literature. These include success as ‘Progress, grades, careers and the model minority student’, ‘Relaxed compared to India’, ‘A competition’ and ‘Happiness and self-development’. Participants expressed parents, teachers, and the community view School Success as academic, while they construct a more holistic understanding. Success for Indian students is developing as a person, being happy, and being content with personal progress. The research contributes to conversations in Educational Psychology around culturally sensitive practice and the impact of wider factors on the development of identity for ethnic minority children and young people.

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# Chapter 1: Introduction

## 1.1 Purpose of this research

In the UK, Indian students are statistically measured as the second highest academic achieving ethnic group, yet this statistic can hide the high levels of pressure and expectations that they face. Previous research has demonstrated that Indian parents hold and convey high expectations of Indian students (Chakrabarti, 2008; Micko, 2016). Indian students have also been stereotyped by educational settings as ‘model minorities’, a group who performs above national standards (Li & Wang, 2008). I posit that this view of success for Indian students has been created by key groups of people around them, generating a dominant discourse which students have become the subjects of. These beliefs around performance can lead to Indian students becoming a forgotten group as previous research has been limited in collecting their constructions of success and what this means for them. Due to this, they can become marginalised, as they have reduced power to act against oppressive discourses. The aim of this research was therefore to explore how Indian students construct ‘School Success’, with the purpose of gathering their arguably forgotten constructions. I endeavoured to investigate how students positioned themselves in relation to dominant discourses and whether there was acceptance or resistance of these. Without such a perspective, educational professionals or key adults around Indian students may inadvertently reproduce the harmful discourses that feed into the stereotypical viewpoint and create assumptions about the realities of Indian students.

## 1.2 Impact of discourses

Foucauldian Discourse Analysis was used to explore student views in this research. This methodology was chosen as it allows an exploration of discourse, power, and subjective experiences of Indian students. Within this thesis, discourses from multiple sources are drawn upon, including qualitative and quantitative research, newspaper articles and blog posts. This position is justified through the notion that all written forms of text are a form of communication (Hawthorn, 1992) and therefore *“‘discourse’ and ‘text’ can be used in a much broader sense to include all language units with a definable communicative function, whether spoken or written.”* (Crystal, 1987, p.116). As the term School Success is the discursive object within this research, it will be capitalised so it remains distinct.

## 1.3 Personal influences and reflexivity

I am a trainee educational psychologist currently on work placement in a multicultural city in the North of England. My experience during this placement, and my dual role as a student at the University of Sheffield led to my reflection on the stereotypes that exist around ethnic minorities. I identify as ethnically Indian and was born and raised by my parents in the UK, with one brother and two sisters. My family’s approach to education throughout my childhood was clear, as education was viewed as a priority. My siblings and I would complete maths and spellings tests recreationally, with the expectation that I would learn the same words as my older siblings. I always felt education was goal-oriented compared to my white peers and placed a lot of pressure on myself to constantly overachieve. We all achieved above average grades at each level of education, and I would retrospectively describe myself and my siblings as fulfilling the model minority stereotype. This is where the idea for this research began and was followed by literature searching around relevant research and theoretical explorations.

Throughout the literature searching, I reflected on my previous experience as a teacher in a secondary school with a high number of Indian students. I had been immersed in the discourses around ‘hardworking’ or ‘top achieving’ Indian students from the perspective of a teacher. I recall comments from colleagues around the ‘quiet’ Indian students who will just ‘get their head down’ and ‘would not need any help because they’ll get 9’s at GCSE’. Only following my readings of the model minority stereotype was I able to give this a name and understand how dangerous these discourses can be in schools.

One key reflection is that I hold an ‘insider position’ in this research (Berger, 2015) as I identify as Indian and am focusing on the constructions of Indians. I understand that this will impact my role throughout this research from conception to completion, from the literature I engage with to the analysis process and the conclusions that are made. Throughout this research, ‘reflective boxes’ have been utilised to demonstrate the use of reflexivity and transparency, given my personal influences. These include reflections from reflexive diary entries I kept throughout the research process and are structured using the evaluative criteria of Tracy (2010); more detail is provided around this in Chapter 3: Methodology.

### 1.3.1 Terminology and reflexivity

Whilst identifying as ethnically Indian, I identify my nationality as British. The differentiation between these terms will be explored in Chapter 2 but this is pertinent in the labelling of my participant group. National identity is a slippery concept and can create a dilemma for ethnic minorities as the associated values and norms of Britishness can be at odds with ethnic identity, for example conflicts around alcohol consumption, marriage, and family life (Jaspal & Cinnirella, 2013). In this research, participants were asked to label their ethnicity explicitly but were not asked to label their nationality. Given the importance of language and discourses, the term ‘Indian students’ felt too broad and did not differentiate them from Indian students in other countries, who may construct School Success in a different manner. I decided that I would refer to participants as British Indian for the readers’ ease, to indicate that participants live and have been educated wholly in the UK, therefore their constructions are based on this context.

## 1.4 Chapter summary and thesis structure

Within this chapter, the aims of this research have been introduced and the influences and conception of the research have been disseminated through personal experience. In Chapter 2, the literature relevant to this research topic is presented and critically reviewed. The aim of this chapter is to highlight the dominant discourses, debates, and constructions around School Success. In Chapter 3, the methodology of the present research study is described and justified. The procedure of semi-structured interviews with four Indian students is described and the analysis method and ethical considerations are detailed. In Chapter 4, the outcomes and discussion are given, with pertinent quotations from participants to display the discourses used, action orientation of these, subject positions, and subjective experiences. In Chapter 6, the conclusions and implications for practice are described and an evaluation of the research is presented.

# Chapter 2: Literature Review

## 2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to offer an overview of the relevant discourses which exist around Indian students in education and provide a rationale for the current research by identifying gaps in the literature. The role of ethnicity will first be considered to explore the cultural complexities for individuals from an ethnic minority background in identity formation. Following this, the entangled definition of School Success in academia will be studied to situate its meaning in this research. Finally, research around the factors which impact the construction of School Success for Indian students will be considered.

Throughout this literature review, the term ‘Indian’ will refer to people who identify as being from, or trace their heritage back to, the Indian subcontinent. The term ‘British Indian’ will refer to individuals who identify as ethnically Indian and live in the UK. The term ‘students’ will refer to children or young people in full-time education, unless otherwise specified. The term ‘School Success’ has many different meanings, and it is important to note that some of the literature in this chapter refers a similar concept termed ‘academic success’. This term will not be investigated with participants but will be considered as being closely connected with School Success so will be further explored in section 2.3.

## 2.2 Ethnicity

The Indian ethnic group makes up 2.5% of the population in England and Wales. This can be quantified to around 1.4 million people (Office for National Statistics, 2011) and constitutes the second largest aggregated group in the United Kingdom, following the majority White British population. Indians are therefore termed ‘ethnic minorities’, referring to people that differ from the dominant culture in a society. A distinction should be drawn here between nationality and ethnicity. Nationality refers to the host community a person identifies with and is often, but not exclusively, associated with country of birth (Senior & Bhopal, 1994). Ethnicity has been described by Senior and Bhopal (1994) as “...shared culture and traditions that are distinctive, maintained between generations, and lead to a sense of identity and group; and a common language or religious tradition” (p. 327).

### 2.2.1 Bi-cultural self

Ethnicity and nationality are concepts that have become intertwined as they are social constructs that have evolved and become more dynamic over time (Ford & Kelly, 2005). This is an intricate topic for ethnic minority citizens in Britain who experience two different cultures through their nationality and ethnicity, and therefore integrate both elements into their identity (Jenkins, 2008). There is a particular balance to strike, which can cause individual and community tensions or conflicts. For example, there are many contradictory aspects of Indian and British values focused around Eastern and Western ideals (e.g., family honour, marriage). Sekhon and Szmigin (2011) interviewed second-generation Punjabi Indians to explore these differences in the UK. Many participants strongly felt they would never be fully accepted into British culture and therefore self-designated their identity between British and Indian cultures. This acquisition of multiple identities led to a “bi-cultural self” (Sekhon & Szmigin, 2011, p.95), which changed based on the cultural context. However, this research was conducted with British Punjabi Indians and therefore care must be taken in transferring the insights from this research to people from outside of this geographical region. This is important as different states in India have developed their own cultures and traditions (Gajrani, 2004), and these cultures may create different identities when interacting with British culture.

When compared to first generation migrants, second generation Indians must balance “family and community demands on one hand and the expectations of the majority culture on the other” (Sekhon & Szmigin, 2011, p.81). Bronfenbrenner’s (1977) ecological systems support this notion as an individual is influenced by parents, family, community, and wider British and Indian cultures. These factors can all impact identify formation and lead to clashes in personal values, which can impact affiliation to ethnic identity. Based on this notion, it was important to ensure that a general approach was taken to identify participants’ ethnicity, which placed parameters on the social construction (e.g., identifying as Indian) but recognised this should be self-designated.

## 2.3 Academic success or School Success?

The phrase ‘academic success’ has been most commonly referenced in literature (Parker et al., 2004; York et al., 2015) and is viewed as being closely related to School Success. These two terms will now be explored and contrasted.

### 2.3.1 Academic success

Academic success is defined as the high achievement of students (Winton, 2013), assessed through grade-based assessments. These can be “…used as a tool for selection to the next level in the school system” (Cliffordson, 2008, p.57), and are therefore performance and achievement based. A merit-based approach is purported by some to be the fairest and preferred method for allowing progression through the academic sphere (Pitman, 2016) and measuring success at school (Atkinson, 2001). A criticism here is that a discourse is created around how tests are viewed as the best measure of student success in school and therefore creates a clear divide between successful and non-successful students. A further criticism is that standardised assessment results at GCSE and A-Level can be affected by many factors that are not considered including the resources and geography of the school, school quality and gender (Kingdon & Cassen, 2007), with many of these intersecting to cause further disadvantage. The achievement of School Success for ethnic minority students can also be impacted by factors, including the cultural responsivity of the educational pedagogy utilised and motivation of students (Erickson, 1987). The overall lower attainment of ethnic minority students in the United Kingdom (Isik et al., 2018) would suggest that tests are not immune to cultural bias, reducing their validity (York et al., 2015). For example, Connolly (2006) performed an analysis of data from the Youth Cohort study and found that ethnicity had a large effect on GCSE attainment. A higher number of Chinese and Indian students gained 5 GCSE’s (A\*-C) consistently over three cohorts, compared to Pakistani and Black students. As a correlational study using self-report measures, causation of these results cannot be made, but the outcomes indicate that there are wider factors that can impact this narrow definition of success.

### 2.3.2 School Success

School Success has been conceptualised in different ways and is an arguably ambiguous term. Its definition can vary depending on an individual’s perspective on the objective of education (Winton, 2013; Cuban, 2003), and the social, political, and historical nature of the society. The relevant literature around this term will now be explored, but a ‘correct’ working definition of School Success will not be provided for this research, as the aim is to gather this characterisation from participants.

In most literature referenced in this review, success is a concept is exclusively referred to within an educational context and can be achieved or failed (Erickson, 1987). Martinez (2004) referred to School Success as high levels of collegiality between school staff, administration, and classroom practices. This definition references a systemic phenomenon which is more relevant to school staff as opposed to students and therefore is not pertinent in this research. Garbarino (1976) explored School Success in a research article and noted that it is commonly defined as academic excellence measured through standardised achievement tests, which is similar to the description of academic success previously described.

### 2.3.3 A holistic definition of School Success

Instead of defining success purely through grades, Garbarino (1976) argues that the term School Success is broader as “[academic excellence] has relatively little value as social currency in the human world of the student – as opposed to the formal institutionalized system of the school supported by the adults who run it.” (p. 158). Instead, he posits that School Success can be measured through ‘educational attainment’, or the number of years completed at school. This can be linked to aspects of personal development, social status, progress sufficient for further educational opportunities and later life success, defined through socioeconomic success. These arguments were grounded in correlational research and could be said to be outdated, given the changed political and educational climate. The focus of this definition was also more socially defined, rather than gaining the individual perspective.

Teacher definitions of School Success were explored by Winton (2013) across three schools in Canada. This was linked to Hodgkinson’s (1991) research which highlights three purposes of education, the first being aesthetic which focuses on enjoyment, self-fulfilment, and happiness in school. The second purpose is economic, focused on being able to work and earn money in a competitive environment and the third purpose is ideological which is concerned with teaching the social, political, and cultural beliefs of the community. Winton (2013) found support for these purposes of education in teacher definitions of School Success, as they defined this as children being happy at school, academic learning and understanding the contextual factors. While this research is focused on the construction of School Success with a range of participants from different ethnic backgrounds, it does not gather the views of students. It would be useful to gain student constructions as they are the subjects of teacher discourses and may corroborate or work against these definitions of School Success.

### 2.3.4 A holistic definition of academic success

A definition of academic success has also been provided by Kuh et al. (2006) as “academic achievement, engagement in educationally purposeful activities, satisfaction, acquisition of desired knowledge, skills and competencies, persistence, attainment of educational outcomes, and post-college performance.” (p. 5).) This is a more comprehensive definition which allows for a multi-dimensional view of success. It includes experiential factors alongside an acknowledgement of skills outside of academia. Atkinson (2001) also indicates that the holistic student should be considered, particularly around the key transition point to university. Building on these definitions, York et al. (2015) developed an updated conceptual framework for determining student and academic success and their influencing factors, based on existing literature. This is shown in Figure 1 and depicts a potentially amorphous approach. A benefit of this model is that it is based on literature from a variety of fields including psychological, sociological, career assessments and kindergarten research, which would suggest comprehensive and rigorous support for this model. However, the review focused on researcher interpretations and definitions, rather directly capturing the voices of students, teachers, or parents. It may also be reductionist in its conclusions when balancing a large set of data from various studies. Most of the literature in this meta-analysis referred to academic and learning measures achievement, and arguably establishes a narrow view of success.

**Figure 1.**

*Diagram

Description automatically generatedA wide-ranging model of Academic Success from York et al., (2015). This consists of six areas (e.g., academic achievement, satisfaction etc.)*

A study that may help to overcome some of these criticisms was performed by Cachia et al.(2018). They focused on the definitions of academic success by sixteen undergraduate students in London and found that for them, the process through academia is equally as important as the outcome, including how you grow and change as an individual. Further to this, academic success was defined as the development of subject knowledge, completing the learning process and an improvement in their employability. Though UK university students also view success as multi-conceptual, aligning with existing research, there are some difficulties in Cachia et al.’s (2018) study which exposes a gap in the literature for my research. The average age of participants was twenty-nine which does not tackle the paucity of literature around the views of students in the UK who are earlier in their academic journey. Use of a focus group design may have led to a reduction in depth of views and may allow more dominant discourses to represent group outcomes (Smithson, 2000). A further limitation of much of the aforementioned research, and those included in York et al.’s (2015) review, is the basis of outcomes on White, Western students; this model cannot be applied to students from different cultural backgrounds.

### 2.3.5 Comparing terms

There seems to be a parallel between academic and School Success in the available literature, with both being defined through grade-based definitions and holistically as more general self-development. However, whilst academic success has been explored with students, this has not occurred around the term School Success, as research has only explored teacher perspectives. It is also unclear how this definition is affected by ethnicity of students, who may develop different definitions of success dependent on sociocultural factors in the UK. The minimal exploration with this demographic has left a gap in the literature, which is useful to explore, to analyse whether the different terminology affects constructions of success.

**Reflective box**  
Rich Rigour – I did not intend for this literature review to be systematic (e.g., exhaustive) but instead aimed for it to be critical of current research. However, I struggled to find research around the term School Success and expanded my search criteria to academic success. I am aware that some of the literature may therefore seem less relevant when situated around this term, but I believe it provides a particular viewpoint on the purpose of school and the importance placed on achieving this form of success.

## 2.4 Success for Indian students

The next section of this literature review will focus on Indian students’ achievement in previous research and how success has been defined. It is pertinent to note that most research in this section refers to achievement through academic success as research has not yet explored School Success definitions with students from an Indian background.

### 2.4.1 The model minority Indian student

In the UK, recent assessment data from GCSE level, reported by the Department for Education (2022a) showed 70.4% of British Indian students achieve 5 and above in English and Maths compared to a 49.4% average. British Indian students also consistently achieved a higher percentage of 5 or more GCSE’s than other ethnic minority groups and White students, apart from Chinese students. Therefore, British Indian students are a typically high attaining demographic and outperform most other ethnic groups academically, which has led to the formation of the “model minority” stereotype. The term was first used by Peterson (1966) to describe the self-accomplished success of Japanese Americans in the USA. It was gradually used to characterise other Asian communities (Kurashige, 2020) who were purported to achieve academic success purely through effort and willpower (Lee, 2009) and has been extended to include students who trace their ancestry to India. However, this is an arguably flawed oversimplification of students from this background as those who do not fit the stereotype would experience blame for their academic failure (Li, 2005). Teachers have been found to adopt this viewpoint and endorse the model minority stereotype (Chang & Demyan, 2007). Wong (2015) completed interviews with teachers in the UK to explore their understanding of the model minority stereotype. They described Indian students as academically successful, hard-working, focused and therefore created a discourse of expectation around Indian academic achievement.

Though the model minority seems to be a positive stereotype, such expectations reinforce cultural stereotypes which can be internalised negatively and perceived as harmful by students (Kay et al., 2013); it has been aptly termed a ‘bomb coated in sugar’ (Li & Wang, 2008, p5). The views of Indian girls were collected by Youdell (2006), who reported they were restricted by the stereotype as their ‘Indian-ness’ created and shaped the perception of them as good, compliant and hardworking students. Daga and Raval (2018) also completed interviews with Indian university students living in the USA, aged between 18 and 22. Participants believed this stereotype to be true to an extent but also unfair due to the generalisation and assumption that all Indians are successful. Some felt that the stereotype created pressures which they placed on themselves, around academia and their careers. They also felt familial pressure because of the stereotype, as their achievement would impact the family reputation. They further expressed a desire to follow an academic career, in some cases despite their own passion for other careers, suggesting this stereotype is powerful. A mixed-methods design was used, providing an increased validity and reliability of outcomes and there was an inclusion of students from a wide range of achievement backgrounds. The age of participants was useful in exploring retrospective views of post-16 students who have attained grades and are moving to the next stage in their academic journey, to see if this stereotype shapes their identity. However, this research did not fully explore the subjective experiences of Indians which would be useful, as Lorenzo et al. (1995) found Asian students reported higher levels of anxiety, depression, and isolation.

**Reflective box**

Worthy topic – Tracy (2010) argued that a worthwhile study “questions taken for granted-assumptions, or challenges well accepted ideas…” (p.840). Following this exploration of the model minority stereotype, it is clear that there are assumptions around Indian students which can have significant impact on individuals from this background. It has not received much exploration and therefore can be seen as an interesting topic to be studied. There is also a larger personal meaning, which increased my motivation and interest.

### 2.4.2 Indian student definitions of success

The research on the construction of School Success by Indian students is limited but three key studies have been conducted around this concept and are relevant to this research. Wong (2015) completed interviews with twenty-three Indian and Chinese students in London, aged between 11 and 14 to explore their views of ‘educational success’ in the context of the model minority. Students reported developing high expectations around success as their parents pushed continuous success by expecting their children to achieve top grades and particular respectable occupations. Students added that they wanted to succeed to avoid disrupting the dignity of their family, as their success is reflected onto their parents. They compared this to White British parents, who held more relaxed views towards success, and expressed that Indian views of success are greater and stricter. Finally, it was found that lower achieving Indian students questioned their own ethnicity after comparing themselves to the stereotypical definition of success. These outcomes suggest that educational settings can impact identity formation (Kaplan & Flum, 2012), linking to the notion that development is affected by the environment and systems around an individual (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). It seems that success is constructed through an academic lens by Indian students, however Wong’s (2015) study explored the views of younger students and perceptions of the model minority student, rather than definitions of success.

Overcoming these criticisms is a study by Chakrabarti (2008) who conducted interviews with students aged between twelve and eighteen from an Indian background in the USA and collected questionnaires from parents and teachers. While parents viewed success as high grade attainment, student’s saw academic success as more than just intelligence, being happy and at peace in their lives, careers, and choices. They believed this happiness was individual and down to personal satisfaction, motivation, and hard work. This was more self-developmental and differed from dominant parental views. There is an extension of York et al.’s (2015) views, which suggests that there is an importance in gaining the views of students to understand how they view this concept as it may differ from key people around them.

The final study was conducted by Micko (2016), who performed interviews with Indian parents and ‘gifted’ students in a midwestern area of the USA to analyse their constructions of the causes of academic success. They found that an academic climate was important in the home environment in creating academic success and that parents often pushed for high grades. Teachers were seen as important in challenging gifted students in school, and students were proud of their label as model minorities. Finally, the Indian cultural values were seen as pivotal to guiding views around academic excellence through competition and high expectations. This study was able to triangulate perspectives from students, parents and observations which allowed a comprehensive overview of each of the four case studies examined. However, the use of the term ‘gifted’ is unclear in their study and linked only to school identification procedures which are not listed. It is also subjective and arguably exclusionary in gaining the views of students at different ability levels. It would be important in my research to gain the views of students with a wider range of abilities. Further to this, Micko’s study focused on the contributing factors for academic success, defined through high grade attainment, whereas the focus of this research was to explore the definition of success, and whether it is demarcated solely through academic constructions. The key studies listed until this point were explored in the USA and therefore may not be representative of students in the UK who have different cultural and migration experiences.

## 2.5 The role of Indian parents

The critical role of parenting in childhood development has been a focal point in research for decades and success in academia has been attributed to parental influence (Li, 2005). Baumrind’s (1971) parenting styles are commonly used as the framework for investigation. Two of these are apposite in this review: an authoritarian style is based on a need to shape and control the behaviour of the child using strict punitive measures and an authoritative style allows the child to have self-will and express their own interest alongside firm parental control. However, there is still contention in research about the inconsistency of the replication of Baumrind’s parenting styles to the Asian population (Farver et al., 2007). It is difficult to understand the relevance of these to populations outside of Western or American cultural groups, especially given that Asian parents have developed unique cultural approaches to education. An alternative parenting style has been proposed by Chao (1994). He found scores of authoritarian parenting style were higher than European-Americans and, despite this being associated with poor academic output, Chinese students perform well academically. They suggested that Chinese parents use a style redefined as ‘training’ where there is a high involvement and close attention paid to their children’s learning, alongside a physical closeness and concern. Alongside this, teaching a sense of respect for elders in a hierarchical society is important and children trained to understand goals and expectations around success.

Farver et al. (2007) found parents of Indian students in the USA more frequently supported the training style, but those who were more assimilated into US culture were more supportive of authoritative parenting. Jambunathan and Counselman (2002) also found that Indian mothers living in the USA, who arrived before the age of four and were therefore arguably immersed in Western culture, utilised a more authoritative style. This suggests that there is a cultural shift in Indian parent approaches and values, depending on the dominant cultural views. Measures of acculturation however are arguably subjective as they were self-reported in this study, and a scale that was non-specific to Indian culture was used which may not be accurate in capturing key cultural values.

### 2.5.1 High parental expectations

Indian parental expectation has been found to be consistent, with parents expecting their children to perform highly academically. Ganapathy-Coleman (2020) reported that Indian parents often structure the routines of their children around academia to encourage the importance and value of academia. They also found that parents were reticent to share their views around their academic expectations, which suggests that gaining parental views may not be useful in this research. The views of students are just as important as Barnard (2004) argues that a student’s perception of this is more important than the parental influence itself.

Parents also create an expectation for students to pursue careers in respectable industries such as doctors, lawyers, and engineers (Chakrabarti, 2008) and an avoidance of arts-based subjects, even when they are aspirations for their children, as they deemed as *“‘not good enough’ in terms of ‘money and respect’.”* (Wong, 2015, p.9). These expectations can be set through as variety of methods including *“guilt, shame and moral obligation to control their adolescent’s behaviour…[as] in the Indian context shame induction is common practice in children’s socialization”* (Farver et al., 2007, p. 190). Micko (2016) found that ‘parental pushing’, often to the point of making students feel guilty, was used suggesting that students were motivated through a sense of obligation.

A comparison can be made between the view of parents in India and parents who have migrated to Western countries. Chakrabarti (2008) found some parents constructed academic success as achievement of high grades as this would increase their children’s chances of success in later life and lead to good careers. However, contrary to other outcomes that Indian parents set high expectations around academic success (e.g., Archer & Francis, 2006; Sarma, 2014; Vellymalay, 2011) it was found that some first-generation parents viewed success as being happy, being a good person and that success can be achieved without good grades or high paying jobs. This indicates that migration may reduce the cultural pressures around academia, supporting Farver et al. (2007) and Jambunathan and Counselman’s (2002) outcomes around a shift in parent approaches. There may be a convergence of Western views, norms and values and Indian expectations (Garcia et al., 2020) which creates a “hybrid culture” (Rapoport et al., 2020) with a more relaxed construction of School Success.

### 2.5.2 Success as social mobility

Caplan et al. (1991) argues that Asians have an aspirational culture based on achievement and education, though this generalised view should be received cautiously. Children from this background may therefore find value in education and have more of a family obligation to achieve in school. Basit (2012) performed interviews with a range of British ethnic minority participants at different stages in their educational journey or employment, between 14 and 24. Their outcomes supported the notion of ‘aspirational’ capital which surpasses socioeconomic status. Parents from different socioeconomic backgrounds all held high educational aspirations, but this is expressed in different ways, Middle status parents utilised resources such as tuition while lower status parents used available resources such as siblings, teachers, and members of the community. Participants in this study also reported that their parents were directly involved in aiding and offering advice around their education, learning and career decisions, regardless of their educational background.

The discussion around achievement and ambitions in ethnic families are suggested by Archer and Francis (2006) to be another form of social mobility which encourages achievement. They found that gaining a successful career and progressing in education was seen as a method of “upward mobility” (p137) by parents which can be seen to advance social status (Kao & Thompson, 2003). Higher expectations are reflective of the ‘immigrant paradigm’ as education can allow families to move new immigrants out of poverty and provide financial standing (Kao & Thompson, 2003). Participants from a low socioeconomic background in Basit’s (2012) study supported this outcome as they reported they aimed to achieve to take care of their parents through gaining a successful job and wanted to avoid the struggle they had seen their parents go through. This aim to improve their own lives, and the lives of their parents, creates a motivation to achieve and be viewed as successful. Micko (2016) also found that Indian parents in the USA would provide external motivation through reminding their children about the hardships they had faced, and therefore instilled the desire for their children to perform better than them. This is perhaps an adoption of the guilt inducing technique utilised, as previously mentioned, and may impact student views of education and success.

Within Indian culture, there is a collective sense of filial responsibility to succeed (Rao et al., 2003). Daga and Raval (2018) found older students worked to succeed because they did not want to cause disappointment to their family, who had worked hard to establish a foundation for them. It is important to note that negative experiences can also arise from this family pressure, which has also been shown to reduce the motivation of ethnic minority students (Isik et al., 2018), though this has not been explored with Indian students specifically.

## 2.6 The role of the community in School Success

The Indian community has been reported to be supportive and close-knit, with strong social networks (Roberts et al., 2016). When examining the educational system however, a competitive culture seems to have developed. Deb et al. (2015) suggest this is because of a lack of good quality higher level institutions in India (e.g., universities) to accommodate the growing population. Therefore, students face competition the whole way through their education. Parents are also implicated in the perpetuation of this competitive culture. In a newspaper article, Sinha (2007) describes a harmful cultural behaviour of Indian parents who ‘display’ their children’s successes, which may include academia, as a form of self-expression of their own desires. This seems to create a high level of competitiveness which develops into a type of comparative social ranking, described in another newspaper article by Kaur (2020). These articles reflect the cultural experiences of the authors though should be viewed with caution as the source of their views cannot be established. Competitive approaches to education may also encourage the high values held by parents around School Success as they are then able to ‘brag’ about their child’s achievements, academic grades, or career (Kaur, 2020). Parents who have migrated to a Western country may retain their competitive motivation in a new culture, which stems from their own experiences of this in their home nation where prioritisation of education is a way to stand out (Dhingra, 2018).

The Indian culture can lead to high levels of competitiveness around academic achievement. Parents reported in Micko’s (2016) study that education was the route to achieving a good standard of living in India and this continued following their migration to the USA. These views were reported to be rooted in the community, which caused increased motivation and reinforced the value of studying over social activities. Students reported outcome competition frustrating as grades were often used in the community for superiority and as a lecturing point by parents. These were clear negative attributes of competition, which can have further ramifications. Indian students have reported that they feel they are competing in academia which can be so fierce that it often leads to academic stress and anxieties in school level children (Deb et al., 2014). However, some participants felt motivated to perform better by the competition, and some enjoyed friendly competition with their friends and peers. It would be interesting to explore when this distinction between friendly and frustrating competition occurs as this was not specified in Micko’s (2016) study. The role of community has not yet been explored specifically within research around constructions of School Success in the UK and therefore viewing the impact of this would be important in understanding its role for students.

**Reflective box**

Meaningful coherence – It was difficult to find research literature around the role of the Indian community in constructions of success. A lot of this was referred to in other forms of discourse (e.g., blogs, newspaper articles) and still felt relevant to this construction. Given this lack of exploration, I was surprised students in this study referred to the role of the community so explicitly and frequently. I wonder if this was encouraged through my questioning and reference to the perspectives of others. It led to a richer picture of how they perceive wider discourses to impact the attainment of success.

## 2.7 Student motivation for School Success

Isik et al. (2018) performed a meta-analysis on data examining ethnic minority motivations in academic achievement. They found that individual factors played a part in their motivation including self-esteem and well-being and their beliefs, values around education. Interestingly, identity as an ethnic minority was positively correlated with motivation including pride and belonging, which relates to previous outcomes around the cultural influence of student’s achievement. However, this study cannot provide an integrative model of motivation as each study in the analysis contributed a single factor. Motivation in each study was operationalised in a different way and therefore may have made the synthesis of conclusions less reliable. This research does suggest that external factors can be internalised by students, which can impact their views of success. The systems around an individual seem to impact their development (Bronfenbrenner, 1977) and therefore construction of School Success, with closer systems (e.g., parents, community, peers) having more of an impact but other systems (e.g., teachers, school factors, educational systems) also having a level of impact.

These outcomes can be theoretically supported through Dweck’s (2000) research around two motivations for learning, termed learning and performance goals. Performance goals are based on the notion that success is achieved through ability and positive outcomes of a task when compared to others. The aim of learning is to be validated for their ability and be perceived as ‘smart’. This approach increases competition, comparative learning but increases helplessness around education when a task is difficult, or achievement does not meet self-expectation. A learning goal, however, would be based on the idea that success is achieved through effort and challenging the self by learning and improving (Watkins et al., 2007). This goal is supported by Chakrabarti’s (2008) research who reported that Indian students are motivated to achieve academically to accomplish life goals that are set for themselves and therefore may have a desire to succeed that is internally motivated. It would be pertinent to extend this theory to examine whether different goals for learning can be linked to British Indian student’s constructions of School Success.

## 2.8 Rationale for this research

When considering the literature, the term academic success has been used to gain the views around success for Indian students in previous literature. Since discourse and language is important in constructing reality (Georgaca & Avdi, 2011), it would be important to explore the term ‘School Success’ as this is arguably a broader and may allow participants to consider wider concepts that are not solely restricted to academia.

Previous research with Indian parents and communities has indicted that success is linked to the attainment of high grades and specific careers (Chakrabarti, 2008; Micko, 2016; Wong, 2015). Teachers and educational settings view British Indian students through the ‘model minority’ stereotype and therefore assume high grade achievement from those from an Indian background. Analysing the views in literature of Indian students brings a different perspective which aligns more with the York et al.’s (2015) model as Chakrabarti’s (2008) outcomes stress the importance of happiness and enjoyment in their views of success. This suggests Indian student have constructed their views of success in a different manner to the dominant discourses and are therefore necessary to explore.

The expectations that are created by key groups (parents, communities and teachers) can lead to Indian students feeling pressured to perform educationally (Daga & Raval, 2018; Wong, 2015) and may affect how they view the meaning of School Success. To understand this further, it is necessary to explore the direct constructions of British Indian students who are subject to dominant discourses in the educational context.

Similar definitions of academic or educational success have been explored with Indian students in previous studies (Chakrabarti, 2008; Wong, 2015). However, as previously stated, most research has been completed in the USA and therefore may be constrained by trans-cultural differences. The ages of students have also varied and very few of the studies covered in this literature review seem to focus on the views of success for students aged 18-22, who have completed one stage of their academic journey but are currently moving to through the next stage of their journey. This leaves a gap in the literature to explore, which is important as parents and the community have an impact on the future education and occupational decisions of Indian students (Micko, 2016). Further to this, gaining the views of students who have achieved ‘low’ attainment in contrast to the model minority stereotype a mix of achievements would be useful in understanding how these fit into the complicated picture of School Success.

The research questions addressed in this research are:

1. How do British Indian students construct School Success?
2. What subject positions do these constructions of School Success offer?
3. How do these constructions open up or close down opportunities for action for British Indian students?
4. What are the subjective experiences of British Indian students based on these constructions of School Success?

## 2.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter has outlined the relevant literature which relates to the construction of the term ‘School Success’ which will be used in this research. There has been an exploration of the model minority stereotype which exists, and the role of teachers, parents, and the community in creating a view of School Success for Indian students. The rationale for this research has been stated and research questions have been clearly outlined.

# Chapter 3: Methodology

## 3.1 Introduction

The aim of this research was to explore the views of British Indian students and how they construct School Success. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews with four participants aged between 18 and 22, who were enrolled at educational settings in the North of England. Analysis was conducted using Foucauldian discourse analysis as described by Willig (2013), Georgaca and Avdi (2011) and Parker (1992).

This chapter outlines the methodological theory and procedures that support the exploration of these research questions. It begins with an examination of the ontological and epistemological positions for this research and the theoretical foundation of discourse analysis. This is followed by a description of the research design and methods used including participant recruitment and methods for data collection. Finally, a description of how Foucauldian discourse analysis was used in this research is provided.

## 3.2 Research Orientation

The course of this research has been affected by the various ways knowledge and social experiences are constructed, and how to best study these. Ontology refers to how we view the nature of the world around us and how we come to examine this (Walliman, 2006). A realist ontological approach states that reality exists but is independent from our thoughts, feelings and language and other representations of the world (Burr, 2003). We can gain partial knowledge about this reality as these representations are underpinned by it. Conversely, a relativist ontological position argues that even if there was a singular reality, it cannot be accessed and known directly. This is because individuals construct their own reality through their culture, language, and societal influences therefore multiple realities exist (Burr, 2015). This research adopted a relativist ontological position, as it supports the notion that there are many representations of the world and therefore no homogeneity between individual constructions of reality.

Epistemology examines how we come to know about knowledge. This research adopted a social constructionist approach as knowledge is believed to be constructed through language (Willig, 2013) supporting a relativist ontology. The reality of each individual is constructed distinctly by language so differential experiences of the same phenomena are accepted. Given that Indian communities and families are defined as collectivist, members may be more likely to conform to societal constructions and define themselves through shared views (Sinha et al., 2001) even if their experience does not align with this. Exploring individual constructions would provide space and validation for varying constructions of reality within such communities and explore the role of these constructs in shaping how reality is understood.

## 3.3 Social constructionism

Gergen (2015) states that “what we take to be the truth about the world importantly depends on the social relationships of which we are a part” (p. 3). All our knowledge and understanding of the world is constructed through our interactions with others (Burr, 2015), forming our reality. What we define as “truth” is historically and culturally bound and can change over time as shared constructions change. It can also change from one individual to another. Gergen (1985) proposed a set of assumptions which underpin social constructionist approaches:

1. Experiences of the world cannot be used to create theoretical categories through a positivist paradigm to understand the world. Social constructionism therefore rejects objective views of knowledge formation and constructions of the world.
2. Behaviours, events, or experiences are highly influenced by culture, past experiences, or social situations. There is therefore no singular truth or reality, but multiple versions.
3. Understanding and knowledge of the world does not remain stable over time as social processes are constantly changing. This is because knowledge is formed and constructed through social interaction.
4. Social processes lead to descriptions and explanations that promote a negotiated and shared understanding of the world. This can support some forms of social action while excluding others, which indicates constructions are affected by power relations.

Social constructionism therefore adopts an interpretivist approach as reality is created and maintained through social relationships, practices, shared meaning, cultures, languages, and experiences (Myers, 2008). This occurs through language, which is not just a method through which we express ourselves; it is also seen as the tool for constructing our knowledge and understanding. Wittgenstein (1978) provides an analogy for how language can develop beyond individual meanings. Words as the basic building block and are used as part of a ‘language-*game*’ (p.15) in interactions. Their use may differ based on the cultural context which can lead to different meanings of the same words. The meanings of words develop over time to form patterns, with rules and conventions such as grammar, which then transgress beyond language to affect actions, objects, and environments (Tonner, 2017). Wittgenstein refers to these as ‘forms of life’, which can be interpreted to mean cultural traditions (Gergen, 2015). These are underpinned by language and represent cultural, linguistic practices and values, creating a distinct way of viewing the world (Tonner, 2017).

In a free society, language is a form of opportunity which can be taken advantage of and used to gain status and create power relations (Williams, 2020). Through this language, particular roles and identities are created which are used to encourage conformity through social approval. Whilst language can therefore be used in a cohesive way, it can also lead to oppressive practices, where failure to accept social views are seen as deviant. In these cases, language can also be used as a method of social change, where individuals can act with ‘constructive force (Burr, 2015) to work against existing practices. Language has a wider meaning in achieving goals. To uncover how language has been used to construct evolving realities, we can analyse discourses.

## 3.4 Discourse Analysis

### 3.4.1 Discourses and objects

Discourses have been defined by Parker (1992) as “a system of statements which construct an object” (p.5). Objects are concepts, phenomena, ideas, and items that are constructed through ‘texts’, which express symbolic meaning and can take a variety of forms, including pictures, artwork, written and spoken forms. Language is the medium through which discourses are typically communicated (Johnstone, 2018), as objects are constructed by the language we use and provide ‘definitions’ for the things we talk about. Objects change and can be constructed differently as boundaries and ideas shift through historical periods or social contexts (Mills, 1997). The same object may be constructed in multiple ways, so to truly examine these discursive objects, we must focus on the differences and tensions in their construction (Foucault, 2002).

Systematic analysis of these discourses can reveal the relationship between language in different sociocultural contexts as this can provide an increased knowledge of individual experience (Foucault, 2002). Discourse is powerful as it ‘carries the tradition, history, culture and way of life of its speaker’ (Hassen, 2015, p.119) and they are believed to have two functions (Georgaca & Avdi, 2011). The first is to construct the reality that we live in, as people are both affected by existing discourses and produce discourses which create their own reality. The second is to function as a form of social action to obtain an objective, as individuals may use specific language to position themselves and form their own identities during interactions (Davies & Harré, 1990). Therefore, discourse analysis is focused understanding how individuals use language to draw upon their experiences and knowledge, in order to reflect these functions.

Systematic analysis of these discourses can reveal the relationship between language in different sociocultural contexts and how this impacts an individual’s reality. Language is the medium through which discourses are typically communicated, though this could also contain non-linguistic communication (e.g., sign language, gestures, photography (Johnstone, 2018).

### 3.4.2 Subjects and stereotypes

Discourses can also construct subjects, or people, and provide them with a subject position. These positions are places from which people speak and provide a particular representation of oneself. Positioning can be beyond our control and something we cannot circumvent (Burr, 2015) as they are associated with the discourse an individual’s language reflects. Individuals can choose to accept these positions and fulfil the roles the discourse prescribes. Alternatively, they can try to resist discourses and attempt to adopt their own subject position for themselves in the context they are operating in (Davies and Harré, 1990). Either way, a subject position will have implications for the actions people take and the language they use.

Discourses and subject positions can also impact the identity individuals develop. In this research, existing as a student has connotations around age, as the discourses of education and young people are compatible given that they are both contain elements of development (Burr, 2003). Identifying as having an Indian ethnicity is a form of self-positioning (Malhi et al., 2009) and provides a certain meaning through the discourses of education and competition, and both are underpinned by elements of hard work. If Indian students accept these discourses, then their identity develops in line with the defining factors of these which are constructed from the social realm. Stereotypes, or generalised ideas about members of a social category can develop because of these discourses and identifications (Hook, 2005). This process works reciprocally (Burgers & Beukeboom, 2020) as language is used by subjects to construct the stereotypes, therefore ‘discourse cannot be conceptualized without the people, nor can the people without their discourse’ (Hassen, 2015, p119). This creates categorisations and subject positions that are adopted or imposed on the subjects of such stereotypes. These have implications for power as subject positions can provide individuals with a limited perception, ways of speaking and narratives (Burr, 2003). It is key to add that while “every discourse is potentially dangerous” (Burr, 2015, p 98) and can lead to oppressive practices based on these positionings, they can be resisted through an examination of the discourse and exploration of alternative positions that may reframe and change a subject position (Burr, 2003).

### 3.4.3 Power

The role of power cannot be ignored when analysing discourses. Gaventa (2003) explains that power is “…embodied and enacted rather than possessed, discursive rather than purely coercive, and constitutes agents rather than being deployed by them’ (p.1) Therefore, power is not a possession or force that can be held or wielded over others (Mills, 2004) as power is everywhere. Instead, by defining something and constructing discourses in a certain way, we generate knowledge and power is bought along with this (Burr, 2015). In some cases, a particular discourse can become more prevalent and gain more power as they are maintained, reinforced, and supported through language over time. They are then more widely held as ‘truth’ as they are perpetuated as the dominant view (Willig, 2008). When these discourses are drawn upon, power is reflected, and actions or language associated with these are seen as more acceptable. This can continue impacting the construction of people and objects, providing these discourses more power and disempowering those who experience the effects of it. Other discourses can then become marginalised and seen as less powerful, leading to an inequality in the positioning of truth.

However, whilst power can be repressive, Foucault (1975) argued that power can be a positive force, which produces reality and truth and should not be viewed in a solely negative manner. Instead, particular discourses can be drawn upon to resist powerful discourses. As Foucault argues ‘…discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines it and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it.’ (Foucault, 1978, p. 100-1). Therefore, those who are subject to powerful discourses can resist these through language. Using their voices gives them the position and ‘power to shape the world (…) [and] shape how people talk about the world’ (Johnstone, 2018, p.897). The discourses they draw upon can therefore change how others view them, and also empower them.

### 3.4.4 Rationale for a Foucauldian discourse analytic approach

Willig (2013) reminds researchers that the purpose of analysis in any discursive method is to analyse how language is used to construct an object using “socially available ways of talking” (p.112). The positioning of participants within a discourse and how this affects their experience can be examined through these constructions. This research is focused on discourses, power and social context which aligns with a Foucauldian discourse analysis (FDA). It is defined as a “macro” study of discourse (Phillips et al., 2004) as one aim of FDA is to examine language in order to identify discourses, power relations and subject positions in their social and historical context. Language in FDA is rooted in a historical approach, where relationships are made between language and wider social traditions (Walter, 2019). Discourses can then be assessed for how they open or close opportunities or for action and agency, which could occur through challenging existing discourses, maintaining and corroborating them, or forming new discourses in society (Georgaca & Avdi, 2011). This is completed through examination of discursive resources (e.g., how meaning is negotiated through language) to construct objects and subjects, and therefore construct reality. FDA contrasts “micro” analyses methods which focus on language devices and interactions, such as conversational analysis.

FDA strongly considers the power that exists in the discourses used (Budds et al., 2014). Willig (2015) states that the ultimate aim of FDA is to examine the oppressive powers that exist and increase the voice of marginalised voices. The dominant discourses of parents and Indian communities can create an expectation which suppress Indian student constructions. Indian students can also be constructed through the model minority stereotype (Wong, 2015), where language crafts a particular view of how an Indian student is likely to perform at school. Power also exists in institutions, such as schools, which still form through social interactions and language, but are unique in that they become self-regulated over time (Phillips et al., 2004). Discourses around the model minority stereotype, when drawn upon, maintains their use by educational staff (Maass, 1999). Discourses around Indian students in school may therefore seem immovable due to their established nature. Therefore, FDA is particularly relevant to explore these constructions of British Indian students as dominant discourses around high grades, career aspirations, and educational outcomes have crafted the model minority stereotype (Gillborn, 2008). This may provide an opportunity for social action as language is seen to serve a function (Burr, 2015) and has the ability to change the constructions of discursive objects.

### 3.4.5 Limitations

Burr (2015) argues that use of FDA as a strategy to increase marginalised voices may in fact be unjustifiable, when a singular truth does not exist using social constructionist principles. Favouring the empowerment of particular groups works against this, as it assumes that the dominant view is more truthful than others. There is therefore a difficulty in the fundamental concept of FDA, which can impact the premise of this research of empowering Indian students as it may infer their truth is more important than dominant views which already exist. To overcome this criticism, a focus was placed on how concepts are constructed through language as opposed to seeking any form of ultimate truth (Willig, 2008).

FDA can also be viewed as subjective as there is no prescribed analytical method and no sequential set of stages (Potter, 2003). The socio-cultural position that is adopted by researchers shapes their world view and can “covertly or overtly, actively and continuously” (Walter, 2019, p.25) influence how research is conducted. Positions can directly impact the creation of research questions, how these are answered and how answers are interpreted (Walter, 2019). Therefore, different conclusions about the same data can be made by different individuals, which may be criticised as a fundamental flaw of the epistemological and analysis approach. However, FDA acknowledges the reflexivity of researchers (Willig, 2008) and that a researcher will draw on a diverse range of discourses depending on their own construction of reality. Therefore, there is flexibility in how methods can be used within the research process. Despite these limitations, FDA is seen as a method through which power dynamics can be realised through critical analysis. This makes it more likely that dominant discourses can be resisted by those who are most affected through acceptance of an alternative discourse, which challenges those discourses that are socially or historically entrenched.

## 3.5 Research design

This research was designed to be exploratory which incorporates a flexible and open-minded approach (Stebbins, 2001) which considers. There is limited evidence exploring the views of Indian students in the UK and whether the powerful discourses of culture, stereotypes and upbringings affect their understanding of School Success. Social constructionism is a frame through which we can understand and become aware of the differences between people, whilst also recognising that they may not align with a collective identity that is placed upon them (Patrick, 1998). Individuals experience such events differently and reside in their own reality and multiple realities are seen to exist independent of each other. Therefore, this research will not focus on the direct generalisability of outcomes but still aims for these to have broad implications for practice.

## 3.6 Research method

### 3.6.1 Qualitative research

Qualitative research methods were deemed most suitable for this research as the aim was to understand how the social world has impacted the meanings that Indian students have created (Saldana, 2011). A semi-structured interview method was adopted to achieve this, as it allows for flexibility and acknowledges that additional questions can be asked to explore relevant information as it arises (Walter, 2019). It can also be useful in exploring topics that Indian students have a personal stake in (Braun & Clarke, 2013) and gain their viewpoints, which have been marginalised by dominant stereotypical, community and parental discourses. In this research, each individual is seen as constructing their own unique reality which is influenced by their own contextual factors. Therefore, semi-structured interview methods would allow Indian student’s voices can be bought to forefront to reveal their subjective realities and interpretations of School Success. A structured interview method would not be suitable for this research as a predetermined set of questions would suit more large-scale data collection methods which may miss the nuances of Indian student’s experiences or the exploration of issues the researcher had not anticipated (Braun & Clarke, 2013). It would also negate opportunities to increase exploration of the depth of Indian student’s constructions of School Success, through curious questioning. Focus groups were not deemed appropriate as Indian communities can be private and judgemental, and South Asian cultures often value conformity to social norms (Ruprai, 2016). This may have prevented Indian students from sharing personal information about their early life and experiences, especially if they fear a lack of confidentiality.

### 3.6.2 Assessing research quality through quality criteria

Qualitative methods do not seem to have set evaluative procedures when compared to quantitative methods. Reasons for this include their ‘relative novelty’ in research (Yardley, 2000), when compared to the establish quantitative methods, and the range of philosophical underpinnings which can impact the method adopted, of which there are many. Due to these varying factors, the validity of qualitative research has been questioned. Therefore, while conducting qualitative research, care should be taken to ensure that certain quality criteria are applied as they can help to provide structure and increased quality assurance, without adhering to norms of quantitative research. This research utilised the Eight “Big Tent” criteria proposed by Tracy (2010) as it can be used flexibly based on researcher preference. These criteria have been used to frame reflections within reflective boxes throughout the write-up of this research so the quality of research is considered and maintained throughout the complete research process. Please see Appendix 1 for a description of each criterion and how they were fulfilled within this research.

## 3.7 Procedures

### 3.7.1 Participant inclusion criteria

Ethical approval was acquired from the University of Sheffield prior to the recruitment of participants (reference number: 045168, see Appendix 2). The inclusion criteria stipulated participants were aged between 18-22, identified as having an Indian ethnicity and were attending an educational provision.

The rationale for each criterion will now be provided. Participants were required to be aged between 18 and 22 as they would have experienced at least one stage of their academic journey (GCSE’s) so would be able to reflect on how this relates to their overall understanding of School Success. Young people in this age group are also described as falling into an “emerging adult” category by Arnett (2000) where they are transitioning in their self-sufficiency and beginning to develop their own independence and identity, particularly around work and their view of the world; this is a key point of exploration for this study. Participants were also required to self-identify as having an Indian ethnicity. This was important as an ethnic identity has been argued to have various components, including self-definition, a feeling of belonging and an understanding of the cultural practices (Kinket & Verkuyten, 1997). They were also required to be attending an educational provision (e.g., school sixth form, college, university) as it was important to understand the views from young people who are still part of an educational culture.

A £5 gift voucher was offered to participants for their participation in the study. It was important to encourage participation as participants were attending sixth form or higher education settings, where the summer term dates end earlier than school settings. The availability of participants still attending an educational provision was predicted to have reduced, given the time of recruitment in the late summer term. Therefore, it was hoped that the incentive offered would provide encouragement to participate. Careful consideration was taken around coercion and willingness to participate due to this monetary reward, especially given that participants may be more willing to participate in a study when offered monetary incentive regardless of risk (Bently & Thacker, 2004). However, the size of risk was evaluated through a stringent ethical review and participants were given a reasonable choice in their participation, therefore coercion was deemed to be less of a concern (Wertheimer & Miller, 2008). It was clearly stated that there was no expectation for how much participants had to share during the interview. For example, participants would still receive the reward if the interview was terminated early.

### 3.7.2 Participant recruitment

A target range of 3-6 participants was set for recruitment. This sample size was ideal for FDA analysis as a smaller, purposive sample would enable a detailed understanding of Indian student’s constructions, their subject positions, and subjective experiences. The data was predicted to be rich in quality given the age of participants (Morse, 2000) which justifies the adequate sample size. In total, four participants were recruited via two voluntary sampling methods. In the first, the study poster (see Appendix 3) was sent out to the heads of local sixth form provisions and colleges via email. Participants were able to register their interest by completing a google form or by sending a direct email to the researcher. Two participants were recruited through this method from an independent school-based sixth form in the North of England. Following no further recruitment through this method, further ethical approval was sought and granted to advertise through social media and community-based spaces to raise awareness to a wider population (see Appendix 4). A further two participants were recruited, both of whom attended two different universities in the North of England.

**Reflective box**

Ethical – Recruitment through social media meant that I knew one of my participants prior to the study, as an acquaintance in the same Indian community. To prevent this from becoming an issue, I clarified the importance of anonymity, confidentiality and ensured there was a feeling of safety to share personal views.

Once a participant had registered their interest, they were contacted via email and provided with the consent form (see Appendix 5) and information sheet (see Appendix 6). Once these forms were returned, I arranged a time and date for the interviews and provided participants with the flexibility to arrange interviews at a time that was suitable for them. This included the option to complete interviews following the exam period and meet either online or in person.

### 3.7.3 Pilot study

A pilot study was performed with one participant who fulfilled the inclusion criteria, to test the effectiveness of the interview schedule. Following this pilot interview, the questions and structure of the schedule were deemed to be appropriate for the aims of the study and for the participant’s age and experiences. They were open enough to encourage the participant to share their school and academic journey and explore constructs using their own ideas and language. As no changes were made to the data collection method, interview data from the pilot study was also included in the final analysis.

### 3.7.4 Participant characteristics

All four participants met the inclusion criteria as they self-identified as having an Indian ethnicity, were aged between 18 and 22 and were attending an educational provision. Table 1 presents the characteristics of participants.

**Table 1.**

*Participant characteristics*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Participant** | **Age** | **Gender** | **Educational Stage** | **Family country of origin** | **Place of birth** | **Additional languages** |
| P1  (pilot study) | 18 | Female | Y13 | India (Bengal) | India (moved to the UK aged 6 months) | Bengali |
| P2 | 18 | Female | Y13 | India (Telengana) | UK (moved to India aged 7 for two years then moved back to the UK) | Telegu |
| P3 | 20 | Male | University (Second Year) | India (Punjab) | UK | Punjabi |
| P4 | 21 | Female | University (Second Year) | India/Sri Lanka | UK (moved to India aged 2 months for 2/3 years then moved back to the UK) | Hindi/Tamil |

## 3.8 Data collection

Data was collected using semi-structured interviews, which provided flexibility and allowed exploration of Indian student’s individual experiences. Each interview lasted one and a half hours and was recorded using a password protected recording app on my personal phone. One interview took place online and three were conducted in-person. The in-person interviews were conducted in a private room at a Local Authority office in the North of England. The online interview was conducted on Google Meet using a private meeting link and recorded online using the video conferencing platform.

An overview of the interview schedule is presented in Table 2 and consisted of planned activities and a series of questions to gather on the individual’s experiences. See Appendix 7 for full interview schedule with associated questions. This structure was used as a framework for discussion to build rapport, generate depth in participant’s responses and explore constructions of School Success. Guidance was taken from Walter (2019) regarding interview questioning techniques. This involved ‘descriptive and feeling questions’ to explore ideas and emotional responses and hypothetical and reflective questions to explore how they would react to alternative situations.

**Table 2.**

*Interview schedule and activities*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Stage** | **Activity** |
| 1 | Introductions, recap of aims and ethical considerations |
| 2 | Conversation prompt card activity |
| 3 | Tree of life activity based around educational journey |
| 4 | Definition forming around school success |
| 5 | Presenting of newspaper article around model minority stereotype and follow-up questions |

At the beginning of the interview, all participants were asked to re-read the information sheet as some time had passed since recruitment to the study. This re-informed them about the aims of the study, what their involvement would entail and their ethical rights including informed consent, their right to withdraw, confidentiality and anonymity. Verbal consent was also re-gained to ensure participants were willing to continue with the study. Following their agreement to proceed, conversation prompts (see Appendix 8) were used to build rapport, as it was recognised that participants would need to feel comfortable when discussing their personal journeys. This is pertinent with participants from an Indian background, who may be less likely to share personal issues with individuals from the same background as them (Chang, 2015) especially when considering concerns around gossip, cultural expectations, and family honour in collectivist communities (Schwartz et al., 2010).

The interview then moved through an adaptation of the Tree of Life activity to explore participants’ educational journey. Created by Ncube (2006), this moves through parts of the tree (e.g., roots, trunk, leaves, branches, fruit, and bugs) to explore various themes (e.g., early life, skills, key relationships, achievements, challenges). I adapted this activity using a set of questions taken from Lock (2016) and developed these to follow the educational journey and the factors that may have impacted this (see Appendix 7). The purpose of this activity was to encourage participants to rediscover areas of their past to consider how this has shaped their current view of themselves in relation to School Success, and how this may look in the future. Though it uses a narrative approach, it encouraged Indian students to share in a way that would consider their cultural background, values and beliefs and was still relevant to a discourse analytic approach.

The tree of life activity was followed by definition forming around the term School Success, where prompting questions were utilised to explore what this term meant to them, and how this may compare to other constructions of School Success. In line with a discourse analytic approach, participants were using language in this activity to construct their own reality of School Success, rather than merely describing what this is. Their construction of this term will therefore reflect the ideologies and power relations that exist for Indian students (Johnstone, 2018).

In the final activity, participants were presented with an excerpt from an online newspaper article linking to the model minority stereotype. As discourses are created through different types of text (Parker, 2004), newspaper articles can be spread on a wider platform and discourses become ‘transindividual’ where they are passed beyond one individual to many others. Parker (2004) recommends exploring the connotations of this text and its implications to gain an understanding of their meaning. Therefore, utilising this text to gain these meanings from participants would be a useful method to explore their constructions of discourses around the model minority stereotype. Participants were asked to read this article and then asked questions in relation to themselves and other Indian students (see Appendix 9). It is important to note that the inclusion of this article may have impacted the language used by some participants, and therefore the constructions of School Success, as it highlighted the term ‘model minority’. This will be further discussed in section 4.2.2.

**Reflective box**

Meaningful coherence – The newspaper article selected was focused on the model minority stereotype but was placed within a context of racist discourses and the Black Lives Matter movement. This was chosen as some aspects of this movement mirror the increasing of marginalised voices against oppressive and powerful discourses. Upon reflection, this could have been misinterpreted by participants or could have led to a conversation that focused on areas that did not relate to the research questions. However, I feel that the conversations we had engaged in up until the newspaper article aided in encouraging a focus on participant constructions of the stereotype and it led to some rich and interesting conversations around the model minority stereotype. I also reflected that even if participants interpreted the article in a different manner to my intentions, it is important to allow individual interpretation and understanding, which still provides an insight into their construction of reality.

## 3.9 Ethical considerations

The British Psychological Society guidelines were adhered to throughout this research. Participants were recruited based on identifying as ethnically Indian and inclusion of this research group is important because the 'model minority' stereotype has directly placed a pressure on British Indian students to attain high levels of School Success. It is useful to gain an increased understanding of how Indians students perceive this stereotype and the impacts these high expectations have on their experiences and constructions. The differing views of parents, teachers and students around School Success seem to be culturally bound to students from an Indian background (Chakrabarti, 2008) and therefore research with other ethnic groups may not result in the same socially constructed differences. However, inclusion of British Indian students may increase their vulnerability, as recalling and reflecting on their past experiences may cause distress, especially given the strong collectivist values placed on educational success and psychological difficulties that may be experienced as a result (Ruprai, 2016). Therefore, there was a consideration of the expectations for participation in this research and a careful construction of the wording of interview questions to be open and non-directive.

Informed consent was obtained via written and verbal methods. An information sheet was written in clear and transparent language, without any complex terminology. This included information around the nature of the project, the aims, potential risks and inconvenience, potential benefits, what participation would entail, right to withdraw, confidentiality, storage of data and the consequences of non-participation. It was made clear that participation involved complete confidentiality and anonymisation of results, so participants would not be identifiable. Consent was viewed as an ongoing process and participants were reminded throughout the interview that they were able to stop if they felt uncomfortable or overwhelmed. Support was also provided during debriefing though the provision of my own and my supervisor's email address. This was important in order to manage any effects participants may face after discussion of a potentially sensitive topic.

## 3.10 Reflexivity

Saldana (2011) states that a research topic should be selected with careful consideration. While it should be a topic of passion, it is important not to use this as a “forum for working out your personal demons” (p.67). This becomes more relevant when choosing a topic that rings true to your own experience and researchers risk a loss of integrity if there is no recognition of this throughout the duration of the research. As an Indian student who has created my own understanding of School Success, I am aware that my personal characteristics and experiences align with those of the participants. Therefore, it is impossible to detach entirely from this research and disregard my subjectivity (Lazard & McAvoy, 2020) given that my own social and cultural experiences will impact the data collection and interpretation process. By acknowledging my positionality and practising reflexively, I could consider the impact this would have on my research.

I considered my role throughout the interview process, particularly during rapport building and when responding to participants as language is a powerful part of social interactions (Burr, 2015). While participants may have similar experiences to myself, I had to ensure I was prepared for responses that may be unexpected. To pre-empt my own emotive reactions, I identified ‘fore-understandings’, which Shaw (2010) explains as being a researcher’s own prior social, cultural, and historical knowledge. Having conscious knowledge of these presuppositions can reduce any responses that may be seen as insensitive or inappropriate and consider how responses during the interview may affect research. However, this research has a strong ethnological perspective and Holstein and Gubrium (1995) add that background knowledge of a participant’s situation can be invaluable in encouraging participation. Therefore, my experience could encourage responses given my familiarity with the topic during our conversations.

Consideration of my own epistemological reflexivity was important in moving from a personal standpoint to one centred around knowledge production (Lazard & McAvoy, 2020). A social constructionist approach considers the role of the researcher in the knowledge generation process and sees the interview as an interaction where reality is constructed. Further adding to this, a discourse analytic approach considers the role of power as forming part of subjective knowledge production (Noble & McIlveen, 2012). I was aware of the power implications of my involvement both as an Indian and as an ‘interviewer’, and that it would be difficult to stop this effect entirely. I did not want this to impact participants’ responses to questions, particularly when discussing the stereotype for Indians, therefore attempted to equalise these dynamics. I encouraged participants to see me as curious to understand their constructions from their perspective around School Success. I also limited my own reflections or additions on what participants were discussing to avoid any priming or encouragement around constructions.

Throughout the data collection and analysis process, I used a critical lens to consider that the discourses around School Success may be stereotypical and oppressive for participants. I also acknowledged that gaining the views of young people who are situated within these discourses may support these discourses but may also open up opportunities for action against these long-standing discourses. Throughout this reflexive process, academic literature and academic supervision were important in guiding and structuring my approaches.

## 3.11 Method of analysis

Interviews were first transcribed and checked for accuracy (see Appendix 10 for sample transcript). A combined approach for analysis was used by taking prompts from Willig (2013), Georgaca and Avdi (2011) and Parker (1992). It was important for me to draw on multiple approaches to create a more holistic analysis method that suited the aims of this research. I chose to omit parts of ‘Level 2’ from Georgaca and Avdi’s (2011) research which focused on rhetorical strategies as I aimed to focus more generally on the discourses and wider effects of participants language, rather than the dynamics and nuances of interaction. The remaining description of this stage of analysis overlaps with Stage 3 of the analysis, which focuses on the function of discourses and how this impacts the overall interaction so is included in this section. Table 3 below outlines the full analysis method utilised and the sources of the analysis prompts.

## Table 3. – The Foucauldian Discourse Analytic method used to analyse interview data in this research

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Stage of analysis and description** | **Source** |
| **Stage 1: Discursive constructions**   * Identify the discursive objects | Willig (2013) |
| * Highlight all instances of its use, including implicit and explicit uses. Look for lack of use (e.g., referring to something as ‘it’ = unspeakable) | Willig (2013) |
| **Stage 2: Discourses**   * Use the selected sections of text that contribute to the construction of the discursive objects and place this in wider discourses | Willig (2013) |
| * Identify places where discourses overlap and seem to be describing one object in another manner | Parker (1992) |
| **Stage 3: Action orientation**   * What is the purpose of using particular discourses? | Willig (2013) |
| * What do people gain or lose from using discourses? | Parker (1992) |
| * What is the participant’s *discursive agenda* -the *effects* each participant’s talk has on the overall interaction | Georgaca and Avdi (2011) |
| * Who would want to promote or dissolve the discourse? | Parker (1992) |
| **Stage 4: Positionings**   * *Subject positions* are positions are made in discourses that people can fill and give a location from which to speak from, but don’t prescribe to what they say. How are participants positioning themselves? | Willig (2013) |
| * How does this influence what they say and do? | Willig (2013) |
| * How is language used to negotiate a position? | Willig (2013) |
| **Stage 5: Practices, institutions, and power**   * How do the discursive constructions (e.g., School Success) and subject positions (e., passive) open or close down opportunities for action? | Willig (2013) |
| * Do the discourses place any limitation what can be said or actions that are taken? | Willig (2013) |
| * Are there any dominant discourses that encourage and facilitate social and institutional practices, therefore maintaining them? | Georgaca and Avdi (2011) |
| * Are there any discourses that challenge dominant institutions and practices? | Georgaca and Avdi (2011) |
| * Look at how and where the discourses emerged | Parker (1992) |
| **Stage 6: Subjectivity**   * What can be felt, thought and experienced from adopting certain discourses? | Willig (2013) |
| * What might it mean for a person to be located in particular discourses? | Georgaca and Avdi (2011) |

Analysis began with the identification of an object, which was ‘School Success’ in this research, and transcripts were narrowed down to the relevant sections of text which referred to School Success both implicitly and explicitly (see Appendix 12 for example transcript excerpt). These sections were then examined and linked to the discourses that were used, how the object was constructed through this, and what the purpose of particular discourses achieved. Subjects were then positioned in relation to these discourses and power was considered at different levels, including institutional and social practices. The final stage focused on how discourses may impact the subjective experiences of participants (see Appendix 13 for an example of stages 2 to 6 of analysis).

## 3.12 Chapter summary

In summary, this chapter has outlined the essential structural underpinnings of this research through exploration of the theoretical and practical elements of the research design. The methodological aspects have been explored including procedures, ethical considerations, and a reflection on the role of the researcher. The analytical process has been justified and its stages have been clearly outlined.

# Chapter 4: Analysis and Discussion

## 4.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the insights gained from four semi-structured interviews performed with British Indian students and discusses these outcomes in the context of existing literature. The Foucauldian Discourse Analytic method employed was constructed using the works of Willig (2013), Georgica and Avdi (2011) and Parker (1992). The questions guiding this research were:

1. How do British Indian students construct School Success?
2. What subject positions do these constructions of School Success offer?
3. How do these constructions open up or close down opportunities for action for British Indian students?
4. What are the subjective experiences of British Indian students based on these constructions of School Success?

The analysis found four significant constructions of School Success as shown in Figure 2. This chapter will present each construction in four sections (4.2, 4.3, 4.4 and 4.5). Each section will begin with a summary of the outcomes for the discursive construction to provide a clear overview for the reader. This will be followed by a staged approach to analysis which will also include a discussion of outcomes with reference to research literature. The analysis begins with a description of the discursive constructions of School Success which will be linked to existing discourses and the action orientation of using these constructions (Stages 1, 2 and 3 of analysis). Following these, the subject positions that are offered through these constructions will be considered (Stage 4). The opportunities for action will then be studied in the context of existing power, practices, and institutions (Stage 5). Finally, a discussion of how these constructions may affect the subjective experiences of Indian students is provided (Stage 6). This section will conclude with a discussion of the intersectionality of each discourse, and how this affects the understanding of School Success.

Each construction has been visually represented in Figure 2 by size depending on how frequently they arose in participant’s dialogue. Larger circles were drawn upon more and represent dominant constructions and smaller circles were therefore less dominant. There were significant overlaps between the discourses drawn upon in each discursive construction and this intersectionality is represented through the overlying circles.

**Figure 2.**

*Four discursive constructions of School Success as identified in the analysis of participant’s discourse.*

It is important to note that, in their constructions of School Success, British Indian students referred to the experiences and views of others, including parents, teachers and Indian communities. This can be referred to as “shadowed data” (Morse, 2000, p4) and is useful as it provides an insight into the range of constructions of School Success. It also provides a rationale, from the perspective of British Indian students, for why these may differ from their own constructions (Morse, 2000).

**Reflective box**

Sincerity – Interpretation of the data was completed from my position as an Indian student. I am aware that I bring my own constructions of reality and understandings of Indian students, which is impacted by my own subjective experience. Although these results could be interpreted in a different manner by another researcher with different subjective experiences, my insider position increased my depth of understanding and knowledge around this topic. In addition, a key principle of the social constructionist approach is to consider the realities that exist for the participant and the context myself, as the researcher, will inevitably influence my interpretations of this.

## 4.2 School Success as ‘Progress, grades, careers and the model minority student’.

### 4.2.1 A brief summary of this discursive construction

British Indian students in this study constructed School Success through the views of parents and Indian communities, who believe this is achieved through high grade achievement and pursing a respectable career. The ‘model minority’ (Archer & Francis, 2007), or stereotypically high achieving Indian student, seems to develop from these parental and community expectations, and constructs this as a societal norm for children from this ethnic background, rather than the exception. Teachers are sometimes perceived to subtly draw from this stereotypical construction by placing higher expectations on Indian students, given their ethnicity. Students in this study are directly affected by these constructions as they feel an intense pressure to achieve School Success. Some British Indian students begin to reflect on this construction and resist its forces by embracing their own individual measures of success, while others are still experiencing the subjective effects of oppressive discourses.

### 4.2.2 Construction, discourses, and action orientations (Stages 1, 2 and 3)

Within this discourse, school settings encouraged British Indian students to progress beyond the expected developmental level, and this began from an early stage in the educational journey for one participant:

*“When I was in year one... Like when all the kids had to read books […] I would like get given like, the next year's books ...”* (P2, 232-236)

The purpose of an educational institution is to provide an individual with skills to develop their abilities and extend their existing knowledge (Bass, 1997), and an extra ‘push’ to exceed expectations is given to children who are deemed as being more able. This construction is situated in a performance discourse, as an importance is placed on how well they gain, retain, and accurately recall increasing amounts of knowledge (Lodge, 2001). Performance is measured by meeting or exceeding milestones during key developmental periods, and the role of the teacher is to facilitate this. An example of this can be seen when one student discussed how this was employed by teachers:

*“... there's this one girl. I think she's doing medicine. And then she got into Cambridge or something. And then the whole like, literally, the teachers put that in the assembly.”* (P2, 533-535)

Praising students who have achieved something extraordinary demonstrates how discourses of model high standards encourage school performance, and how students learn that School Success is attained through high grades and university acceptance. The aim of utilising this performance discourse could be to foster a school culture which meets wider government aims of raising academic standards (Ofsted, 2011). Pressure is placed on teachers and headteachers to improve the outcomes for students and this encourages them to perform and achieve the promoted standard. This also impacts the interactions British Indian students have with their teachers:

*“I would definitely say it’s down to the teachers in school, because teachers were always there to give you that push and pointing in that right direction.”* (P3, 309-310)

Teachers tend to use language to create and share educational knowledge (e.g., textbooks, essays, lessons), reflecting an academic discourse (Hyland & Partridge, 2013). This discourse is expected, given the purpose of school and so there is a congruence between discourse and environment. The teacher role is constructed as pivotal in academic development to students as they facilitate progress in the ‘*right direction’* towards good academic outcomes using discursive strategies which can help to support them in their learning (McVee & Pearson, 2003). The purpose of this discourse is to show teachers are expected to ensure students make progress and are successful (Lauermann, 2014). One participant explained how they viewed the role of their teacher in a positive way:

*“And I know my teachers in a way, whenever, you know, we'd have an exam, they would always like hype us up so much, I had the best teachers at school they were so sick. I feel like, you know, they inspired me as well.”* (P4, 572-575)

The support received by teachers helps this student participant feel more academically motivated and successful (Fredrickson & Rhodes, 2004), which reflects their discursive agenda. From this, a sense of admiration is gained for teachers who provide crucial help and there is a positive view on how they impact British Indian students’ educational journey. However, for British Indian students, the expectations of some teachers are constructed as being significantly higher than children from other ethnic backgrounds given the model minority stereotype, which sees grades being linked to ethnicity:

*“And then also, you know, having the really high grades and sort of, you know, being so called model, model students all throughout school. Like, teachers seeing you as that and maybe thinking they need to push you more because they know you can achieve more than other ethnicity children maybe.”* (P3, 443-447)

There is an interaction between academic and stereotypical discourses surrounding School Success. Rather than judging a student on their individual ability, what is known about a stereotypically ‘model’ British Indian student is applied to all in this category reflecting prejudiced attitudes (Peterson et al., 2016). Teachers in research have previously described British Indian students as ‘clever’ or ‘able’ (Archer & Francis, 2006), so some may hold higher academic expectations for British Indian students based on these ethnically stereotypical assumptions (Bradbury, 2013). Teachers may then encourage these students because of their perceived ability as members of this group, which continues the perpetuation of the model minority stereotype. This supports research from Wong (2015), Chang and Demyan (2007) and Youdell (2006), who found some teachers endorse the model minority stereotype around British Indian students and cultivate high expectations accordingly.

*“But I think sometimes teachers see an Indian and assume they’re good at everything, like not obviously [emphasis added] but still a dangerous assumption”* (P4, 106-107)

This student acknowledged that some teachers may have biases, but these ‘assumptions’ are always subtle, covert, and never expressed directly to British Indian students. However, they are still seen as *‘dangerous’* as they can create a false impression of a learner’s ability, which is a discourse teachers and British Indian students would want to dissolve. However, this may persist as an unconscious bias (Campbell, 2015), which is more difficult to challenge. This construction can also be linked to wider educational discourses as the Department for Education (2022b) statistics indicate that British Indian students have the second highest Attainment 8 score at GCSE level; these wider discourses may encourage teachers’ perceived high academic expectations. This is also reflective of wider discourses of structural racism as Youdell (2006) argued that Indian students are unfairly perceived to have a strong work ethic and therefore remain submissive to dominant discourses.

“*I'd say that, you know, the model minority that is sort of what the stereotype has been, like, you know, they've, like a student, they've achieved really high throughout school, they've gone on to do like, a really good course at uni. And now, you know, they're earning, like a really good wage. And everyone expects it of you, teachers, parents, people in your community”.* (P3, 602-606)

British Indian students construct the model minority student through the stereotypical view of School Success for teachers, parents, and the community. The discursive agenda here is to demonstrate the intense expectations and tensions British Indian students face from this typical trajectory. This has connotations beyond academic achievement and use of this discourse shows that there is an expected mould for students to fill. There is a reduction in autonomy around this construction of School Success, as British Indian students may lose the capacity to create their own identity and futures. Therefore, participants would want to dissolve this discourse to gain freedom from the confounds of the stereotype. British Indian students construct parental views of School Success in a slightly different manner:

**Reflective Box**

Credibility - The inclusion of the term ‘model student’ arose after this participant had read the newspaper article and therefore could have impacted their construction of school success, particularly when focusing on the perspective of teachers. It may have led to an increased focus and discussion of this term. However, I would argue that this article instead provided participants a ‘label’ for the language they expressed . I believe this led to a richer discussion around high expectations for their academic progress and grades, perhaps as this term helped them to better understand themselves and the experiences they had at school. One participant remarked, after the interview in our debrief session that this term ‘perfectly’ described how they were feeling and they were not aware that it was so widely studied.

*“… I think for, for parents, Indian achievement looks like getting 90% or more on everything and being in all the top classes, and just always pushing yourself constantly, no matter what.”* (P3, 365-367)

This also reflects a performance discourse, highlighting an alignment between student constructions of parental and teacher approaches towards School Success. Parents are constructed to view School Success as high grades, but to a greater level and more explicitly than teachers. This is perceived to consist only of academic success, supporting research from Wong (2015), who found that parents hold high expectations around grades. This also reflects a wider parental discourse as education is viewed as a priority in the Indian home environment and parents who reinforce this are depicted as being ‘good’ parents (Kingston, 2021).

Literature suggests that parents should communicate high but realistic expectations around their children’s educational achievement and future careers to improve their outcomes (Henderson & Berla, 1994). While British Indian parents strongly support education, they are also constructed as actively encouraging unrealistically high expectations:

*“Because I remember I was doing, I did a maths test. And I think I lost like... five marks and my dad was like, "Where did those five marks go?". I was like, "What on earth!? What do you mean?! My teacher told me that was the best grade in the class". And he was like, "No, where did those five marks go? You should be getting 100%.”* (P2, 282-286)

Maintaining such a high-performance discourse retains the importance of School Success for this participant and reiterates that perfection is the goal in academia. Examples of parents using more subtle approaches were also discussed by participants which further set expectations reflecting a strong parental discourse: *‘time to do your homework’* (P3, 130-131); *‘"It'd be good if you're a doctor”’* (P1, 321). British Indian students may have employed these discourses to demonstrate the pressures faced when parent’s express expectations which are constructed as unrealistic:

*“… my white friends. Their parents will just be like, "Yeah, well done for getting a C or B". And they'll like, praise and reward them for that. But then for us, it'll be like "What? That's so bad, that's a fail. That's a fail, you have to get A's and A stars!."”* (P2, 650-653)

The discursive agenda is to construct Indian parents as distinct from parents of other ethnic backgrounds and demonstrates the dislike British Indian students have towards parental views. A ‘white’ parent is described as a supportive, guiding presence who is non-judgemental and celebrates and rewards outcomes, which is described as the parent’s role in education in a newspaper article from Wahi (2022). Indian parents are constructed through the performance discourse, holding high standards and berating them for their results if they ‘fail’ to achieve a grade A or above, supporting research from Wong (2015) around the diverse constructions of Indian and white parents. This notion is supported by quantitative research by HSBC (2015) which found that parents in the UK place a higher value on their children’s happiness while parents in India place a higher value on their children having successful careers. As a study, this research collected data from a large group of parents but does not allow further explanation of why these views occur. Parental actions towards School Success are also constructed as aligning with these voiced expectations (Eng et al., 2014):

*“So every single day, as soon as I got home, she was like teaching me, right, recite the times tables, spellings. I got to the point where I just start crying.”* (P4, 92-94)

This indicates that parents with stronger expectations are more likely to actively provide support at home, using resources they have access to (Sy & Schulenberg, 2005). British Indian students view parents as ‘teachers’ at home, reflecting an overlap between parental and educational discourses. The discursive agenda here is to demonstrate that Indian parents are assuming a teacher role and instructing their children rather than providing gentle support, which is incongruous as it occurs outside of the school context. While British Indian students seem to be promoting this discourse to raise an awareness of their difficulties, parents would want to dissolve this discourse as it constructs them in a negative light.

*“Okay, so my parents would teach us and we'd do Kumon... we'd have tutors. I think for maths and English. From, like, year four onwards, I think maybe before that.”* (P1, 577-579)

Tutoring services were another key educational resource which all British Indian students were encouraged to access, reflecting wider discourses around commercialised private tuition in Indian culture as identified in secondary newspaper sources (Ghosh, 2009). Therefore, by supporting their children’s skill development and advocating for their education (Henderson & Berla, 1994) parents maintain this grades-based construction of School Success. This supports research which finds that Indian parents are more likely to engage with behaviours that encourage academic achievement for their children (Ganapathy-Coleman, 2020), both through actions that require financial resources and those that are free e.g., their own support (Basit, 2012). There is also support for a training style of parenting as parents are constructed as having active having a close involvement by teaching their children, supporting research by Farver et al (2007).

All participants constructed the Indian community as holding a strong view on the definition of School Success:

*“I think the community, I think they'll be like [School Success], it is grades. There'll be like grades, grades, grades. It’s a race, like, a game that you don’t want to play!”* (P1, 834-835)

Community and parental views align, reflecting a performance discourse to maintain high expectations and grades-based success. Within this competitive discourse, there are comparisons made between family friends who make up part of the community. This reflects a wider competitive discourse, which creates a social pressure around academic achievement, as described in a newspaper article from Shah (2021). British Indian students *‘know it’s a competition’* (P1, 402) and compete with their peers in a ‘game’ where there are losers and winners (Jacobs, 2016), and the ‘prize’ is a top grade or university admission (Stipek, 2011). There is a culmination of School Success for parents found in the career path selected by students, which may also be the ‘prize’ following the academic game. All participants supported this construction:

*“Like good subjects to them are like the science-y ones. They always love the medicine route, or like my dad was saying engineering like, they just love like, what is it? Doctor, lawyer, accountant, engineer... those are like the career paths that they like. So I feel like School Success is kind of like picking those. I think definitely medicine probably at the top of that.”* (P2, 537-541)

A traditional career discourse is reflected here as a career is viewed as the progressive next step and are chosen for lifelong job security (Smith et al, 2006). They follow a typical trajectory where performance is measured through salaries and promotions. In Western society, the career discourse has shifted, moving towards a contemporary protean view where personal choice, interests and job satisfaction are seen as more important (Smith et al., 2006). Therefore, a more entrepreneurial and self-managed pathway has emerged (Dyer & Huphries, 2002). However, for Indian parents, a contemporary view of this discourse is reflected, due to the perceived stability and security provided by these jobs as propagated by media sources (e.g., Jain, 2021). This supports the outcome that Indian parents have a higher-than-average preference for career success through the pathways of “medicine; business, management and finance; engineering; computer and information sciences; or law” (HSBC, 2015, p.14). It is implicit within these discourses that university is an inevitable next step as part of School Success as each career requires this progression. For Indian parents, university is constructed as a necessity and postgraduate qualifications are also held to high importance (HSBC, 2015). Parents are shown to have a distaste towards arts-based careers, which are viewed as non-traditional:

*“Cuz I feel like if you say I’m doing drama, well I don’t like drama, or like… music or something like that, then they'll, they'll just be like, "What? What are you doing? Why are you doing that? Like, you can't do that academically".* (P2, 534-537)

All British Indian students reflected that their decisions are heavily criticised if they do not align with their parental career choices. Careers around art-based subjects, such as drama, singing, writing are deemed to be suitable only as hobbies (Jain, 2021). British Indian students seem to lose autonomy in these discussions and their discursive agenda seems to reinforce that the stereotype still exists, as they are still not given the freedom to choose their own paths based on their interests and desires (Wahi, 2022). This supports Daga and Raval (2018) who found British Indian students are more likely to be affected by family expectations with regards to their careers.

**Reflective box**

Rich rigour – Following the construction of School Success through the key figures in students’ lives (e.g., parents, teachers) I reflected on whether I could have included interviews with these key people to explore their views directly. Ultimately, I feel this would have moved the analysis away from the constructions Indian students who are subjects of the discourses created about them. I also think that the strong role of these perspectives in the constructions of British Indian students reveals how dominant they are in influencing their own understanding of this term.

### 4.2.3 Positionings (Stage 4)

Two British Indian students positioned themselves as grateful towards their teachers as they put in *‘effort and work to help you to get to where you wanted to be’* (P3, 104). This influences how they recall their educational journey and positive language is used to reflect this. However, there seems to be a secondary position when constructing School Success through model minority stereotype. Participants position themselves as subjects to an assumption that is already created about them:

*“I guess they just want to help and make sure that you’re achieving your best but sometimes they might push you and just assume all Indians can get the good grades which isn’t always true, and sometimes can feel really unfair.”* (P3, 443-447)

Constructing teacher assumptions as *‘unfair’* would suggest that Indian students view themselves as being in a position which does not afford them equality as they are subject to differential expectations given their ethnicity. For one participant, hearing peers around them use the stereotype seemed to change their positioning:

*“…then people are like, well, you're Asian. So that's why you're smart. And it's like, well, actually, I actually study for this or whatever. But then afterwards, when I was just putting the bare minimum, I was like, well, maybe it is. Maybe just the genes, just the genetics.”* (P2, 491-494)

There is an initial resistance to the stereotype by this participant as they believe they have achieved this through their own ability so this discourse positions them as hardworking and autonomous. This seems to shift, and the participant is then positioned as the model minority when they can maintain the stereotype without working. Being a model minority is then attributed to genes, suggesting it is innate, and that School Success through grades and progress is a natural part of being British Indian. Their accountability would reduce in this position as they see the stereotype as resulting in success, suggesting they would not need to work hard for this. It is important to note this position is retrospective and related to how this participant felt in high school.

Another student currently positions themselves as distanced from the stereotype:

*“I've tried to move away from being part of [the model minority stereotype]. It doesn't mean it hasn't affected me though, just, like, less in my head if I give it less energy.”* (P3, 531-533)

Positioning themselves as distinct from this construction influences this participant to provide the stereotype with less attention and consideration. If ‘less energy’ is given to the perceptions of others, this participant may be able to move away from its harmful effects. ‘Trying’ to do this indicates that this is an ongoing process and therefore has not been achieved, suggesting the effects of the stereotype are long lasting, but they are beginning to actively work against this through their positioning.

The influence of the community can position Indian students as trapped, with some participants choosing their career in line with this:

*“So I don't know if because I've grown up in that community, that I've wanted to go into that. Um, and all the kids my age, or are slightly older have gone into the same line, which is medicine. So maybe, again, subconsciously, like "I have to go into medicine because everyone else is" like, "oh, gosh, there's no other route".* (P1, 324-324)

For Indian students, societal pressure can reduce the informed decision they are able to make around their careers as it is biased towards ones that are deemed more respectable. Khatter (2020) corroborates this pressure in a newspaper article, whilst describing the Indian education system as toxic. Some participants allowed the traditional career discourse to affect them, with three out of four pursuing degrees for careers that their parents hoped for them. This participant uses language which connotes a sense of hopelessness as there are no other perceived career choices. They have therefore chosen to follow the stereotypical route but seem to have reduced accountability for their actions as they have these thoughts ‘subconsciously’ coming from powerful societal influences. The ‘trapped’ position leads to language that indicates a panicked and uncertain choice to follow the group mentality around career choice, further reducing accountability. Another participant located themselves in an opposing position of autonomy in making their own decisions:

*“So, there's always that thing, like, you know, just do what makes you happy, because it will benefit you in the end [when compared to listening to the Indian community’s views].”* (P3, 544-545)

The positioning of this participant has influenced them to pursue their own interests and ignore pressures around them. This leads to them making a clearer choice which suits their needs and passions even if this contradicts community views, which allows for a more liberated position and increased accountability around their selections for the future. The position also allows them to use more direct and explicit language which is individualistic (Liu, 2016) when compared to the collectivist language used previously by participant 1. However, circumventing the views of parents seems to be more difficult:

*“And I told my mum, hey, I'm going to do art. She was like, "no, no, no, no, no, no". And that turned into a massive, massive argument. And at the last decision, I switched to English language and linguistics […] . I'm not getting the best results. But I feel like it's because I'm doing a course I don't really care about.”* (P4, 225-232)

This participant is positioned as deflated as they have actively subdued their own interest to placate their parent. Their language is negative towards their current degree as they have no interest in this and have selected it to avoid further argument. It is also indicative of a previous fight against parental views and a ‘defeat’ through acceptance of parental views. Therefore, their actions are directly affected by this as they have lost motivation for their educational path, resulting in their current position. There is a large aspect of self-awareness in the language used as they understand that this a decision that benefits someone else at the cost of their own academic results and passion for art. The position seems directly related to parental constructions of School Success, where progression to university has the condition of selecting a respectable degree.

**Reflective box**

Ethical *–* I found it difficult to ensure that the parents are not being ‘villainised’ as the construction of their role in School Success was dichotomous, both setting high expectations but also providing high levels of support. Participants gave examples beyond educational settings that revealed the love and support parents provided emotionally. Of course, these constructions are based on the language used by participants and reflects the power dynamics that exist around success so cannot be avoided, but I hope this is presented in a fair and balanced manner later in this section.

### 4.2.4 Practices, institutions, and power (Stage 5)

There is an overlap between the constructions of the community, teachers, and parents around School Success, as they create high expectations of grades, degrees, and careers, though teachers are not constructed as explicitly expressing this viewpoint. The construction of these initially closes down opportunities for action as British Indian students are positioned as trapped and deflated. This limits their choices around education as there is a pre-ordained pathway that is deemed more appropriate for them to follow. The parental discourse is key in supporting and maintaining the social practices around this stereotypical model minority view of School Success:

*“I mean, obviously, I do everything to my parents, and I want to please them. But I wish that I did a lot of it for myself as well.”* (P1, 591-592)

This ‘pleasing’ of parents further creates a powerful discourse which enables Indian students to feel they must achieve the parental construction of School Success or face disappointing them.

*“Because she didn't really see any big careers in art that would be, kind of, consisted me getting money. […] I just think it was, well, the fear for her. Like, she didn't want me to kind of struggle. So she picked the degree that she would think that I could have a decent job.”* (P4, 234-240)

When examining the parental discourse, these high expectations around School Success may arise from a position of positivity, as parents hope for the best for their children (Kaur, 2020). There is a worry that their child will face difficulties in their future without a stable job and income. This may have emerged from the turbulent history of India; Sareen (2020) explains in their newspaper article that years of war, British colonisation and partition resulted in a middle-class population who feared change. The adoption of ‘risk-averse’ strategies meant that there would not be a struggle for resources and an element of certainty in the changing economic context. A drive for survival meant that careers based on hobbies were not affordable and a reliable career pathway was deemed the only way to attain materialistic security. Parents therefore seem to support the economic purpose of schooling as proposed by Hodgkinson (1991) as they as are constructed as viewing success at school as being pivotal in having a ‘good’ job to earn money.

*“…it was always like a tough conversation with my dad, because he was like, "this is not realistic. You can't do anything with it [art]." […] So I wanted to pick art but he was telling me "pick IT, pick IT" because he's like an IT guy who works in IT, he loves it! And then I was like, no, I've got no connection to IT whatsoever….”* (P2, 365-370)

There may be an influence of the origin Indian values on this construction of School Success, which have remained following migration for the UK. All the parents of particiants in this research were born in India. A blog post from an anonymous source argues that Indian parents may still retain the assumption that all children have the same form of intellectual capability which would allow them to pursue academic routes and study in particular fields (Anonymous, 2020). This idea should be interpreted with caution as it is based on an unreviewed opinion, though it helps highlight a relevant cultural opinion around parental views which may originate from the author’s personal experience. Other cultural influences may include the desire for their children to pursue more successful careers than their own to experience a better quality of life (Lee, 2009). This desire for upward mobility would increase parental drive for education and School Success through their defined construction. This supports research which has found that children of migrants exceed the educational achievements and occupation of their parents (Schneider et al., 2014), which parents hope will benefit their children to further climb the social ladder. The aim of Indian parents seems to be more goal-oriented and focused on future purposes and this has been contrasted as being higher than White parents (Wong, 2015; Lareau, 2003). This supports the outcomes of Micko (2016), where cultural values can become integrated into parental beliefs, particularly around hard work, and commitment, increasing the cultural value of achievement.

*“I feel like my relationship with my mum back then, was quite strained. And I just wanted to do something [degree] that, you know, she would kind of just be happy with.”* (P4, 243-244)

There are strong Indian cultural values around respecting the wishes of parents which may propagate the expectation that children should follow the desired route for their career (Sareen, 2020). There is a dual benefit of British Indian students following this pathway as it can allow parents to ‘brag’ to others in the community about educational achievements, which provides pride and social reputation (Kaur, 2020) and an elevated social standing when ‘displaying’ their children’s successes (Sinha, 2007). Indian communities are close-knit and often exist in circles of extended family and groups of friends from similar backgrounds so preserving dignity is important (Sareen, 2020). Failure along the educational journey not only reflects on an individual, but also on their family (Wong, 2015), therefore societal judgment plays a large role in maintaining this discourse. The community seems to set the standard around this as*: “the community wants you to do something that’s respectable, that almost pleases the community”* (P3, 504-505). Indian parents may therefore maintain the performance discourse construction around School Success to avoid shame and guilt, and uphold family honour (Lee, 2009) that comes from successful grades, university, and respectable careers. These dominant collectivist values result in comparisons which directly maintain the community and parental practices, and further closes down opportunities for action for British Indian students. There is support for the outcomes of Micko (2016) and Daga and Raval (2018) through these constructions as there is an indication of obligation to the family to succeed. In some senses, British Indian students are viewed as ‘human capital’, where their value is proportionate to the amount of work put in to improve oneself, which increases upward mobility in a competitive environment (Foucault, 2008).

Within a school setting, construction of School Success through the dominant performance and stereotypical discourses enables school institutional practices, particularly in relation to the model minority stereotype. The insistence on progress and performance fits into the wider educational context in the UK and strengthens the discourse, providing it with more power. School institutions may maintain these discourses as teachers have a collective responsibility to raise achievement (Lee & Smith, 1996) and therefore look for opportunities to do this through British Indian students who are typically able to achieve. This closes opportunities for action as it creates an inflexible view of Indian students as “bright” and “hard-working” (Woolf et al., 2008). The model minority stereotype is a positive stereotype (Thompson et al., 2016) and yet for British Indian students it creates negative assumptions that create a psychological pressure to perform (Steele, 1997). There is support for the outcomes of Daga and Raval (2018) who found that students place pressures on themselves when viewed as a model minority student. This creates a powerful discourse around students which enables and maintains the high expectations in a school environment and has a dangerous impact of developing a ‘stereotype threat’, which occurs when a stereotypical view has a have a negative impact on academic performance (Mello et al., 2012). Students who cannot meet this are termed the “unmodel minority” (Saran, 2015) and this discourse can affect how British Indian students talk about themselves:

*“[Achieving lower grades makes you feel] Like, you know, you’re not good enough to be Indian and be part of the community over something so minor.” (*P3, 676-677)

Therefore, this discourse can close down opportunities for action as this participant questions their ethnic identity when not attaining the stereotypical achievement, supporting research by Wong (2015). However, British Indian students seem to be resisting and challenging this stereotype and dominant practices:

*“… why do you have that expectation of us? Can you not accept the fact that there could be Indian kids with learning difficulties? Or like Indian kids that don't think that career and like, you know, good grades are everything in life, like creative Indian kids? Like? That's something that I would question.”* (P4, 724-728)

British Indian students acknowledge the model minority discourse but begin to resist it. There is an overt idea that each individual is different and should be able to choose their own pathway, drawing from a discourse of autonomy. This opens up opportunities for action against the constraints of the discourses around them, including the performance, competitive and stereotypical discourses. This participant is more empowered and is able to speak against the practices that are reinforced by discourses in society. It could be argued that the use of such discourses which challenge the views around School Success for British Indian students are opening opportunities to change the views of those around them. Indian parents may begin to feel obligated to incorporate these values of individual autonomy into their approaches towards School Success and reduce the traditionally collectivist standards (Raphael & Varghese, 2015).

### 4.2.5 Subjectivity (Stage 6)

British Indian students are affected by the discourses which surround them, particularly performance and model minority discourses, as there is a feeling of pressure to perform:

*“I don't know I think the community views influence the parents and then this leads to the pressure of competing against other people for us [Indian students].”* (P1, 671-673)

There is an important link here, as parental and community expectations seem to create the model minority discourse through their practices and beliefs, and this maintained by teachers, parents, and community practices. This supports outcomes of Micko (2016) who reported that community values on education place pressure on parents, which leads to Indian students’ motivations to achieve. Indian students experience a requirement to be the ‘best’ for others and must set aside their own motivations. They seem to feel frustrated, controlled and trapped by these constructions of School Success and experience a feeling of inequality when compared to students from other backgrounds. This can lead to some questioning of identity, as those who identify less with the stereotype may reduce their affiliation to their ethnic identity (Thompson et al., 2016):

*“I hate to say this, growing up in a brown community was just so hard [when being compared to expectations]. It made you like, I used to think to myself, like when I was really, really young, like, why am I brown, like, you... at a young age, you shouldn't really be thinking about stuff like that, but you're kind of just taught, this is my skin colour, like, this is my culture, this is the kind of stuff that I have to deal with.,”* (P4, 634-638)

There is a feeling of exclusion from others and an acknowledgement that such difficult cultural standards should be accepted as the ‘standard’ in this ethnic group and should not be challenged. Consequently, those who do not meet the expectations set around School Success by teachers, parents and the community may feel a lack of belonging and disappointment within themselves:

*“The Indian stereotype that all Indians get good grades isn't true, because there are a lot that don't and end up feeling, um, feeling really shit about it because they don't belong with their peers, like, I know how that really feels. We need to stop saying that this expectation is there for us to make it fairer.”* (P4, 763-767)

There is a hope here that the expectations cease as there is a feeling of exclusion when accepting these discourses. This participant experiences themselves in a negative manner and is deeply affected by this, feeling excluded from their ethnic group. Therefore, when participants do not view themselves as successful at school, they do not fulfil the stereotype and have a negative sense of self. This would further apply to career-based decisions, as British Indian students may be more externally motivated to choose particular careers ‘please’ their parents and the community, which affects their thought patterns:

*“Because I want to be happy, but it doesn't mean medicine. But also, if I don't, again, it's like the community. A lot of my, um. my like thoughts stuff is based on the community, which is what I'm trying to come out of now.”* (P1, 330-332)

Acknowledgement of a community-based pattern has encouraged this participant to move away from their position in order to be ‘happy’. This may feel difficult as they would be required to change the existing ideas that have built up over time. However, without internal motivation for their career, they are more likely to feel dissatisfaction around their job, and perhaps even regret around not pursuing their own desires. When resisting the performance and model minority discourses, one participant feels optimistic:

*“But personally, for me, I know, that was like a stereotype that I actually don’t associate with, because I was like, it's not always like the high achievers that go on to earn the most, it can almost be like, the low achievers, it's just down to your personal belief.” (*P3, 606-609)

By adopting a discourse of autonomy, this participant seems to experience a sense of hope. The rejection of the model minority and performance discourse beliefs leads to a reduction in negative thoughts and feelings of expectation around grades, as success is not linearly constructed as being achieved through grades.

**Reflective box**

Resonance – This first construction was very lengthy, and I considered turning this into two separate constructions (e.g., progress and grades then the model minority. However, they overlapped so significantly that it felt very repetitive and became a more difficult read. I decided that a longer coherent presentation of this construction would be more comprehensible and hopefully make for a more interesting read.

## 4.3 School Success is ‘Relaxed compared to India’.

### 4.3.1 A brief summary of this discursive construction

School Success was constructed as less ‘extreme’ in the UK when compared to India, as the education system and expectations in India are constructed as being much harsher. Some of these views are drawn from participant’s lived experiences in India as children and others are drawn from family examples. Discourses employed reflect a reduction in strong collectivist cultural values following migration to the UK. As a result, students in India are described as experiencing more pressure and British Indian students’ express relief at their own situation. There were overlaps with other all other constructions of School Success.

### 4.3.2 Construction, discourses, and action orientations (Stages 1, 2 and 3)

School Success was constructed as having a different value in India. Following their experience of education in India, one participant explained how stressful schooling is from an early age:

*“...in India, like, they expect more from the students. And like, they literally push you really hard. So I was literally in like, year two, year three. And they were literally like, like, I was getting stressed. Why was I getting stressed!? (laugh)”* (P2, 91-94)

When examining wider discourses, it can be said that the culture in India is heavily rooted in an educational discourse, where obtaining good grades is held as the highest priority over gaining knowledge (Rentala et al., 2019) and this is reflected in student constructions. The school environment is set up to support this outcome; in a narrative newspaper about her own life experience in Indian and UK educational settings, Tanwani (2021) reported the Indian education system utilisedauthoritarian approaches to teaching and learning based on memorisation for examinations, rather than rich knowledge-based learning. This mirrors the experiences of participants in this study and can be viewed as a problematic societal norm which has led to increased competition, pressure, and high suicide rates for students have been reported in the media (Sinha, 2022). Another participant described how schooling differs for their cousin who lives in India:

*“I think back in India, it's probably way worse than it is here. Like I hear about my cousin. She stays up til five doing stuff. Gets out the door for six. I'm like, Whoa! It's a lot of pressure back in India.”* (P1, 930-932)

The educational system in India is constructed as having high expectations in line with a performance discourse, which is reported to take an emotional toll on those who are within it in the media (Schwabe, 2019). This can include daily systematic study focused solely on education and minimal time for social or leisure activities (Deb et al., 2015). Contrasting this to the UK, there is an understanding that there are differences in the ways of living, cultural expectations, and educational expectations due to this geographical shift:

*‘…living in India is completely different to an Indian person living in the UK’* (P4, 748-749).

This discourse has the purpose of highlighting how different geographical locations have resulted in varying constructions of School Success. The discursive agenda is to demonstrate the higher expectations that are placed upon students in India, even in comparison to the already high expectations described by British Indian students. Use of these discourses show clear separation between origin and new cultures and a preference for education in the UK. This discourse would therefore be promoted by young people who have experienced schooling in the UK, and they gain a sense of fortuity as they are not subject to the levels of pressure felt by those in India (Verma et al., 2002). While an educational discourse still exists in the UK around School Success, it is constructed as more forgiving than in India especially in relation to future careers:

*“I think it's much harsher in India. I think. Like, I think the consequences are higher. Like I think here, like if you don't fit that model of School Success, then like, there's ways to work around it.[…]. Like, I feel like, um, Indian parents in this country they might be a bit more lenient. But I think definitely in India, they're like, definitely more strict. There probably won't be a place for leniency. Like some people they'll probably like get disowned if they tried to go to a creative career path. So I feel like it's definitely like worse there.”* (P2, 689-696)

This construction reflects a cultural discourse. School Success is described as having separated from the native Indian cultural expectation and forming its own distinct construction in the UK. Falling short of the expectation of high grades in India results in ostracization, yet in the UK there seems to be some flexibility and even negotiation around achievement or career choices: “*Like you can persuade, like for me, like I kind of compromise with my dad” (P2, 692).* The development in cultural values supports research around acculturation, as parental norms, values, and expectations seem to have changed over time (Garcia et al., 2020). Parents are constructed to have assimilated into the UK’s cultural values, as the host country (Rapoport et al., 2020). Parents change to incorporate educational values in the UK, which places a relatively lower importance on an educational discourse, and this perceived parental ‘leniency’ develops. This supports the outcomes of Jambunathan and Counselman (2002) and Farver et al. (2007), as some Indian parents are constructed as developing an authoritative parenting approach in comparison to traditional training approaches. There is also support for Micko (2016) and Chakrabarti (2008) who also found that migrant Indian parents were more likely to ‘compromise’ as part of their parenting approach. Yet the native values in India have not been affected by any transfer of values from migrants to their home cultures (Rapoport et al., 2020) which supports the strength of this discursive construction in India. This also suggests that the educational system in India is the root cause of the high expectations, given their increased strength.

### 4.3.3 Positionings (Stage 4)

British Indian students are positioned as lucky through their direct comparisons with students from India. The language used is hyperbolic to demonstrate the intense pressure and expectation in India when contrasting this to the experience of students in the UK. Therefore, British Indian students do not want to be in the difficult situation students in India are facing. This influences how they perceive and discuss students in India as they show sympathy towards their experiences (Teigen, 1997):

*“So you can see the difference already between my parents or, like, me here in this country, compared to India? Yeah, I’d say I definitely am better off here but I feel so bad for her with what she has to go though.”* (P1, 933-936)

Through this language, they also negotiate their own position as being ‘*better off’,* which indicates a level of superiority of being educated in the UK. This position is underpinned by a global survey which reported that the UK’s education system is ranked higher than the Indian education system (Best Countries for education, n.d.) and is almost legitimised by this. There is therefore reduced accountability around success for British Indian students due to the more relaxed view, indicated through the language used to describe UK constructs of School Success (e.g., more lenient, compromise). The use of language which provides a personal experience of education in India or a real-life example (e.g., cousin) provides first-hand account which connotes more expert status.

*“I can do so much more here with my life than I would in India, like my educational journey would look so different in a bad way for me.”* (P4, 282-283)

A position is also taken around being ‘autonomous’ which differs from students in India and opens up opportunities for resistance. This difference is positive as it allows relatively increased freedom for British Indian students when compared to the perceived restricted educational system in India, especially for females who face harsher expectations because of further restrictive social practices (Kumar & Bhukar, 2013). The reduced restrictions are arguably relative as in the previous construction, participants still constructed high levels of expectation for them around School Success. Though gender differences are not explicitly assessed in this research, it could be argued that the autonomy is implicitly referred to here through more choice around career and opportunities to ‘do more’ with life outside the rigid expectations for females in India.

### 4.3.4 Practices, institutions, and power (Stage 5)

The contrasting construction of School Success in the UK opens up opportunities for action. It challenges the discourse that British Indian students face high demands around School Success when placed in an international context, which is the dominant discourse created by Indian students in previous research (see Wong et al., 2015). This may therefore reduce the dominance of the discourse around lower self-esteem for British Indian students if they are reconstructed as having more autonomy in comparison to students in other countries. This also opens up opportunities for action as it increases in ability to negotiate their own position in education when provided with a certain level of ‘leniency’ to do so.

The formal education system in India finds its roots in colonial history, when under British rule it developed into a more outcomes focused environment (Chaudhary, 2012). The educational discourse around hard work in Indian education seems to have arisen from the collectivist culture in India, where hard work and success are seen as collective values (Micko, 2016). Therefore, achieving School Success through good grades and a ‘good job’ is important for social production (Uppalury & Racherla, 2014) where education is promoted to build a community. ‘Hard work’ is a construction that can also be found in religious discourses of the dominant religions in India, which may filter through into societal norms. These are culturally variable constructs and therefore in an individualist society with a reduced concern around group success would have a reduced emphasis for School Success. This discourse is challenged by these constructions of School Success as it suggests that migration out of a collectivist culture will result in a shift in values.

### 4.3.5 Subjectivity (Stage 6)

British Indian students may experience a sense of relief when considering their reduced pressure. Their own personal situation may seem less difficult when considering the hardships students their own age are facing, as students in India experience high levels of mental health difficulties due to the academic pressure (Deb et al., 2015). British Indian students in the UK may experience a positive effect on their sense of self as they may experience increased autonomy. They also seem to experience a sense of pity for students and may feel torn about their own position when it is framed to the detriment of others.

**Reflective box**

Worthy topic – This construction was quite short, but I would argue to be significant in the political context. There is a constructed reduction in the expectations and pressure on Indian students following migration to another country, and there has been no shift in the values in India. With this heavy, unchanging focus on education, the standard of education would be expected to be quite high. Yet the Indian education system has been questioned around its quality and outcomes; this is why I found this construction to be very counterintuitive as even though education is viewed as a priority in India, this is a wide generalisation and based on socioeconomic background and access to education. Therefore, these high expectations may have multiple causes dependent on the individual circumstance (e.g., cultural values, focus on social mobility, status etc.)

## 4.4 School Success is ‘A competition’.

### 4.4.1 A brief summary of this discursive construction

School Success is constructed as a competition, though this multidimensional and is dependent on the purpose of the competition and how intense this feels (Schneider et al., 2005). Competition is something that can be enjoyed in a healthy way between friends, or something that motivates British Indian students to work harder and is seen as a key part of achieving School Success. Competition can also be viewed in a comparative manner, where students compare themselves to high-achieving peers, their siblings, or those who meet the model minority, and doubt their own ability. Parents are constructed as utilising a comparative discourse to create an expectation around School Success. British Indian students also begin to resist the negative comparative discourse through avoidance of its constructs, or by reframing the model minority stereotype.

### 4.4.2 Construction, discourses, and action orientations (Stages 1, 2 and 3)

British Indian students constructed School Success as a competition with their peers:

*“My friends are very smart. So it's kind of like healthy competition…”* (P1, 795)

A competitive discourse is reflected by this participant when discussing their approach to education. Partaking in a healthy form of competition seems to be important for young people, perhaps because unhealthy competition can lead to a fear of failure and is an external, rather than intrinsic, form of motivation (Shindler, 2009). In education, there is an element of competition created within the classroom (Campbell, 1974). The purpose of this is to increase engagement in learning (Murray, 2019) and British Indian students seem to be influenced by it, viewing competition as an important part of measuring success between peers. This competitive discourse is therefore constructed as being acceptable and low stakes when used in a ‘friendly’ manner, supporting research from Micko (2016) where Indian students viewed friendly competition with friends as suitable. British Indian students employed a competitive discourse when describing other Indian peers:

*“… like, my actual group is all Asians. And I think in that respect, everyone's quite focused on that education.”* (P1, 750-751)

The purpose of using this discourse seems to indicate that high-achieving British Indian students gravitate towards Indian peers, particularly when looking for academic competition. These students may be drawn together by shared values, drive, resources, and mutual support (Flashman, 2012). A competitive culture is then curated through this discourse, where education is a shared focus andviewed as a priority. This indicates how a competitive discourse may encourage higher achievement for British Indian students. A group mentality may be gained through this discourse as all students are striving to be ‘the best’ in a group of driven students. A positive view of competition between peers is also gained therefore participant’s discursive agenda is to demonstrate that competition can be welcomed as a useful part of School Success. British Indian students would want to promote their own construction of this discourse as it is a preferable form of competition. There is support of Dweck’s (2000) learning goal here as students construct motivational focus as a cultural value that is internal and focused on self-improvement.

Another participant constructed competition with Indian peers in a slightly more negative manner:

*“I've got this English group chat, there's this one Indian Girl that does amazing all the time. She's like, I got an 83 and I'm like, I've got 50! And it's just hard, like the comparisons, like, sometimes you don't care, but sometimes you’re like, right, I really need to apply myself…”* (P4, 482-485)

An evaluation of one’s own performance against others is described here, reflecting a comparative discourse. Language is used to indicate that the success of others can act as an inspiration to ‘apply’ oneself to achieve higher grades. There is also a sense of urgency in the language used which is indicative of competition through this comparison (Shindler, 2009). Schneider et al. (2005) describe this form of competition as a non-hostile social comparison, where assessments are made between friends in order to develop one’s own ability. Yet, this does not account for the standards created by performance-based comparisons. The use of this discourse can instead be seen on a continuum, where the motivation for learning shifts in different situations. This also supports research from Dweck (2000) as School Success is constructed as a Performance goal, as it is achieved through ability and positive performance on a task when compared to others. Therefore, both learning and performance motivations for learning can have different purposes and construct success in dichotomous manners as each goal is used in a different setting.

*“…I'd always have like, these really like genius level Indian students in my high school that will be like, "oh, I got like, an A" and I'd be like "okay, shut up" (laugh). Just shut up. Don't want to hear it…”* (P4, 493-995)

The discursive agenda of a comparative discourse is to reiterate what the model achievement is for a British Indian student, and how this may feel for a student who does not meet this expectation. By comparing themselves to high-achieving students, they lose confidence in their own ability, and this can affect their self-motivation. They seem to gain a sense of frustration towards the comparisons, as they perceive themselves as lesser. Students who are affected by this construction would therefore want to dissolve this discourse. In addition to the views of British Indian students, parents are constructed as drawing from a comparative discourse:

*“…parents they do like to brag about how good their children are doing. And they only really boast about you know, how well their child's doing. And usually it is the parents who are like, "Oh, my child's like, really high, really high up in, like, the medical field or in the law field" and then like your parents start to think that they need their child to compete with it, and you start to feel like you have to beat them.”* (P3, 545-548)

A comparative discourse is employed in an overt manner as parents ‘boast’ or ‘brag’ to highlight the achievements of their children. Parents would therefore want to promote the use of this discourse as it ensures that their children are viewed in the best light. This language is indicative of the ‘unhealthy’ form of competition where parents view the outcome of education as being grades focused, aligning with cultural views shared in media sources (e.g., Shahabuddin, 2022) and being the ‘best’ as opposed to developing one’s skills in areas they enjoy. In a newspaper article Sharma (n.d.) argues parents seem to gain validation when they share their success stories and this places a pressure on other parents to create the same idea of ‘success’ in their child. Parents also gain a sense of pride and accomplishment through the achievements of their children, as this is held in Indian communities as being the pinnacle of success.

*“…they always just like brag about how their kids are, like, doing this doing that. So I feel like that kind of makes me feel like oh, well, they're like succeeding, like they're doing so much better.”* (P2, 574-576)

Batra (2022) shares in a newspaper article that the comparison of an ‘ideal student’ may be perceived to be a motivating factor for parents and even begins to change the actions of young people. It creates the same form of comparison and reflects a discourse of honour, as students feel they must avoid shame through underachievement (Batra, 2022). This is a strong discourse which has circulated more public platforms, and one that British Indian students would want to dissolve. For another participant, a different form of this comparative discourse is seen with their sibling:

*“... because I've seen my brother [have bad feedback and grades at parents evening] and I can learn from his mistakes. So it’s a bit like, I kind of, um, take on what he couldn’t do.* *I don't want to be in the same position as my brother.”* (P1, 583-586)

A transformative discourse is utilised, which involves critical self-reflection to change fixed viewpoints and enable developmental action (Mezirow, 2003). Use of critically reflective language is significant as it indicates that this participant is contemplating their brother’s decisions and ‘learning from mistakes’ to avoid the ‘position’ of their brother. Therefore, they need to be in a better position and are determined to achieve this goal. Transformational learning is therefore occurring in this situation, as they wish to ‘build’ on their experiences, and this has changed how they view themselves as a learner (Baumgartner, 2001). This supports research by Mezirow (2000) which suggests the transformation occurs in a staged process. It begins with a difficult situation; in this case, this participant’s brother often made their parents angry following his low performance at parents evening, therefore the participant begins to reflect on this idea of low achievement. This then provokes an emotional response and here this creates a sense of fear for the participant. They reflect that obtaining good grades will result in a better position so change their values and beliefs, taking action to move beyond their brother. Sibling competition is therefore constructed to be more indirect and subtle.

*“…and obviously being the eldest child, like, she was one that kind of had to go through the whole, "I have to be perfect. I have to kind of reach this expectation".* (P4, 148-149)

The discursive agenda of this transformative discourse seems to be to demonstrate that older siblings set the expectation and have a more difficult experience with academics. This has the effect of suggesting that participants are more fortunate as they can use their siblings’ outcomes as a learning experience. Almost all participants had an older sibling (except for one who was an only child but discussed older cousins in a similar manner) and therefore, as younger siblings, were able learn change their approaches to education. Younger siblings would gain knowledge and strength in their approaches as they do not have to be involved in trial-and-error approaches. They would therefore want to promote this discourse as it provides them an opportunity to learn in an environment with a reduced level of threat; older siblings may also want to promote this if it provides aid so their sibling does not have to face the same difficulties they may have had.

### 4.4.3 Positionings (Stage 4)

Through these multiple constructions, British Indian students take various subject positions, depending on the focus of the competition. When participants themselves choose to compete, they position themselves as comfortable:

*“I think when it comes to studying like, my, my, one of my friends, we compete but, she's just like, yeah, she gives me motivation. She's Indian too but she's so organised and she finishes everything early [...] And I was like, okay, well, I'll try that.”* (P2, 514-519)

Due to their positioning, this participant views the competition as motivating, leading them to change their own approaches to education. The language used is positive and reflective and transforms competition into an opportunity for personal growth, which enables them to take steps for progression. They are also positioning themselves as comfortable in relation to another Indian student. This may inform their actions because they view the shared Indian ethnicity as an accelerant for the positive aspects of competition. However, this is not always the outcome as for another student, this self-comparative nature of competition leads to an inferior subject position:

*“[seeing Indian high achievers and not attaining top grades] Yeah, it did [make me feel demotivated] all the time. It felt rubbish like to compare and be worse than them, for me… it would just make me feel really bad cuz I didn't want to be looked down on.”* (P1, 628-629)

This participant’s subject position influences their actions as they continue to compare themselves to higher attaining students, despite a clear understanding that they are not performing as well. The language used indicates that the effects of competition differ depending on the attainment of students. Those who are high achieving and competing at this ‘level’ may not feel the same effect of competition as they seemingly meet the criteria of model minority students and do not upwardly compare themselves to others. British Indian students who are lower achieving, in comparison to the model minority stereotype, view the high standard as unattainable. They therefore compare themselves to other Indians due to the expectation of where they should be, given their shared ethnicity. This contributes to the negotiation of a position of inferiority.

When a comparative discourse is used by parents, participants are positioned as frustrated. All participants used examples of parents giving examples of their children excelling:

*“But I'll hear parents being like, "Oh, my son's done this". And then the other ones, like "my daughter has done this", "my son's done this" and it just goes back and forth I'm like, "Oh, my God, give it a rest!". (laughs). Your kid is your kid, and your kid is your kid. You know, they both have qualities.”* (P1, 383-387)

Their frustrated position clearly leads to a rejection of this comparative discourse as it is constructed as being repetitive. This participant highlights the varying abilities of British Indian students and expresses that because of this, School Success should not purely be based on competition.

### 4.4.4 Practices, institutions, and power (Stage 5)

The construction of School Success as being intrinsically competitive by students opens up opportunities for action as it can encourage more ‘healthy’ forms of competition. Healthy competition has been defined as something that is fairly achieved, not harmful and driven by an intrinsic force and a desire to win rather than a symbolic reward (Cantador & Conde, 2010).

*“So then my friends would just be like, so when we would get a test back and they were like, "Ah, I got more marks than you. That means I'm doing good!".”* (P2, 598-600)

This is constructed as a driving force for some students to develop their own abilities and push themselves further in their academic journey. Therefore, holding competitive values can be a positive attribute (Johnson & Ahlgren, 1976). A transformative discourse is similar to this as it opens up opportunities to reflect and improve oneself. Both discourses seem to encourage the institutional practices in school around creating a competitive environment, which can perpetuate the ambition to achieve high grades. However, a comparative approach adopted by students can close down opportunities for action as it can decrease self-efficacy (Butera et al., 2020) as they believe that contenders will always outperform them:

*“[when viewing self as average rather than high achieving] I just kind of feel, like, disappointed in myself. But also, it's like... I just feel really tired. Like, I'm just trying so much. So I feel like I feel I just finally just, like, gave up.”* (P2, 331-333)

There is a limitation on the actions of this participant through reduced motivation around education. This discourse could be argued to encourage and maintain the model minority discourse as British Indian students are also affected by this construction. They seem to chase this standard and hold themselves to the expectations it sets, which perpetuates the stereotype. This could also be framed as an ‘unhealthy’ competition as there is not a fair chance for all students to ‘win’ since the standards are so high. It may also be that high grades are seen as external goal within this competition, when the focus should be on the learning process (Shindler, 2009). Both factors can reinforce dominant discourses.

A comparative discourse, when constructing parents views, can close down opportunities for action as British Indian students are confined to the boundaries set by the comparisons of others:

*“…and say like if you've done really, really well, and someone's done really, really bad, there's always that comparison that's made between them too* [in the community]….” (P3, 627-629)

The competitive nature in Asian cultures seem to have a wider context. Following the world wars, Asian countries invested in education and experienced economic growth, which was attributed to these educational systems (Lightfoot-Rueda, 2018). Therefore, in Indian culture, education is seen as key to the economy (Medhi & Divya, 2015) and educational success is heavily desired. Children are therefore seen as ‘human capital’, akin to investments where they are expected to create a ‘profit’ for society by working within society (Lightfoot-Rueda, 2018). As a result, the economy in India has grown, as has the population, so a competitive culture has further developed due to limited resources (Fernando & Cohen, 2016). This cultural value seems to have been retained by parents in this study and may be a contributing factor to the dominant discourse’s students reflect, which maintains the competitive nature of the community. However, British Indian students demonstrate resistance to the competitive and comparative discourses:

*“[With regards to competing with high-achieving Indian students] I just feel like doing me. So I try not to get involved with it as much as I can.”* (P1, 761-762)

This discourse challenges the dominant practices around competition and takes a more individualistic approach to education. Self-comparison to higher achieving students is rejected as an approach which suggests that for some students, School Success is constructed as a personal achievement and journey. Therefore, a discourse of resistance opens up opportunities for action for British Indian students. Another participant expresses how these comparisons could be used more positively:

*“But you also saw people who are like, also from an Indian background, and they were low achievers as well. That sort of puts your mind at ease, because, you know, like, you know, not everyone's going to be getting high grades all the time.”* (P3, 376-379)

Use of this discourse can open up opportunities for action and challenges the dominant model minority stereotype, as it creates a more realistic standard for achievement. This is the first step towards confronting the expectations set for British Indian students. The same participant considers the root of these comparative discourses and suggests how these can be prevented:

*“Well by changing the pressure, by stopping all the comparisons and making sure that it stops in the community. That will stop all the parents worrying about how their child compares, you know, to all the other children around them. Then their children don’t need to worry and can just focus on working how well they can, to the best of their ability and making their own, like, progress.”* (P3, 682-686)

There is a clear contrast between constructed parental and student positions, as parents accept and actively partake in competition. Use of a top-down approach is suggested to prevent this perpetual competitive cycle from continuing and to challenge the massively dominant views of a cultural community. Again, individual progress is reiterated as the key component for change. There is a limit on this discourse as the capacity to change deep-rooted cultural values may be restricted, which may limit the opportunities for action.

### 4.4.5 Subjective (Stage 6)

For students who are high achieving, competition can be motivating (Murray, 2019) and can feel productive. However, when lower achieving participants make comparisons to high achieving students, they think differently of themselves:

*“But if people right next to me, are literally doing what the ideal thing is, then I'm just like, it just…makes me feel not as good.”* (P2, 589-591)

British Indian students located in this discourse seem to experience themselves negatively. Comparisons can impact their self-esteem (Felix, n,d) and reduce their self-worth. To be located in this discourse would be very isolating and could lead to a feeling of helplessness. This feeling can develop when students do not feel they are able to progress, and see their ability as fixed (Shindler, 2009). They experience a feeling of decreased internal motivation, reduced resilience and eventually may lose interest in learning altogether (Shindler, 2009).

There may be feelings of optimism experienced by participants who begin to resist the powerful effects of the competitive and comparative discourses. Through a transformative discourse, participants may also feel increasingly hopeful and relieved as they are able to avoid making mistakes in their educational journey:

*“*[When comparing to cousin’s uncertainty around future career] *And I just thought that I don't want to be put in that position where I didn't want to be I don't know what I wanted to do. So I thought, if I study really hard, get you know, goodish grades, decent grades that would push me to know where I want to go.”* (P3, 197-200)

This participant seems to have increased determination when comparing themselves to family members, as they have learned from their experiences. It seems that being located in this discourse is a fortunate position to be in and is appreciated by participants.

## 4.5 School Success is ‘Happiness and self-development’

### 4.5.1 A brief summary of this discursive construction

Within this discourse, British Indian students add to their own constructions of School Success. Success is viewed as feeling happy with one’s own progress which reduces comparisons between peers. Success is also viewed as developing socially and meeting one’s own targets and expectations. There is also a holistic approach taken towards School Success, seeing wider activities and values as important. These discourses challenge the grade and career-based discourses constructed as being used by parents, teachers, and the community and open up opportunities for Indian students to be more autonomous.

### 4.5.2 Construction and discourses (Stage 1, 2 and 3)

All participants constructed their own definitions of School Success which opposed the previously mentioned construction around grades, progress, careers, and high expectations:

*“So School Success, getting the top grades, being top of the class kind of a little bit. You know, um.. that was my thought, like growing up. But, like, upon reflection, it's a little bit different. I think School Success is doing the best that you can. I think School Success is being a good person* […] *getting involved with different school aspects, more like extracurricular stuff. So... I can see a difference because I've recognised this whole, like, stereotypical thing.”* (P1, 770-778)

A shift has occurred in this participant’s approach as they now construct School Success as an individual pathway and draw from a discourse of reflection. Language is used which indicates that reflection is occurring ‘in action’ from the practical knowledge developed over time (Schön, 2016). The purpose of a reflective discourse is to bring to light and criticise historic understandings that have developed (Schön, 2016) from prolonged beliefs around School Success. In this example, the reflection on how they adhered to the stereotypical construction has allowed them to prepare themselves for the future, by realising that they create their own success. Therefore, self-awareness has developed (Cushion, 2018) and their views have changed. This extends research by York et al. (2015) as School Success is constructed similarly to academic success. It is viewed as the expansion of knowledge beyond of academia to develop skills more widely, as opposed to just the achievement of high grades.

*“It was* [difficult seeing other high achievers] *but now looking back, I feel like I would have changed my answer because at the time it did but now I wish it didn't cuz I can see now there's no point in comparing.”* (P4, 504-506)

From this participant’s reflection, it can be inferred that the shift in views around success occurs over time with age and learning occurs following the experience of different educational stages. Another participant added to this alternative view of School Success:

*“… obviously when you're in school, the only thing that you have to care about is grades. But then when you kind of step out of school and you go to uni and you have like different experiences with like jobs, friends, like and have your own freedom you realise that school isn't everything.”* (P4, 690-693)

Similarly, a self-developmental discourse is reflected here as the participant’s construction of School Success changes as their environment changes. After increased knowledge of the world is gained, students can place their developed knowledge into a wider context. From this, participants gain an increased understanding of what is important to them and lose their fear around grades, progress and being the model minority. This discourse is therefore more individualistic (Türken et al., 2016).

*“Because like I said, it's not just to do with the grades. It's to do with, like, self-development […]. And I think that is part of School Success. It’s what you do with, like, opportunities to develop yourself…”* (P1, 865-870)

A more holistic understanding of self-development is gained from this view of success. British Indian students also gain increased independence as they are able to decide which ‘opportunities’ work well for them. The discursive agenda here is to shift the dominant discourses and create a new perspective that becoming a well-rounded individual is of more importance. Therefore, British Indian students would want to promote this discourse to reduce pressure around grades. This supports research by Chakrabarti (2008) and Cachia et al., (2018) as success is constructed as wider than grades. Being content with one’s own limits and expectations was constructed as a way of supporting this definition of School Success:

*“But you know, that you're, if I'm going if I'm getting what I need. And if I'm doing, you know what I'm capable of then that is success at the end of the day.”* (P3, 487-489)

School Success was also constructed using positive language, reflecting a discourse of wellbeing.

*“School Success … means to me, just doing the best that you can, like, applying yourself, going in school, even if you don't feel like it. And just... I feel like now, this forming memories that you can look back at, and actually be proud of, I guess or stuff that makes you laugh or makes you happy.”* (P4, 536-539)

The participant reflects a eudemonic discourse, referring to a state of happiness (Ganesh & McAllum, 2010). This is achieved by looking back at one’s own memories and gaining a sense of self-accomplishment. There is a move away from the normative form of wellbeing, where societal standards dictate happiness, and a move towards self-evaluated wellbeing, where the personal assessment of factors determines the perceived success of situations (Wistoft, 2021). The participant’s discourse also contains elements of optimism, as School Success has the minimum expectation of school attendance, which can be interpreted as an easy, accessible way to achieve success.

*“So also, at the back of my head, I'm like, even if it doesn't work out with medicine, I'm the type of person to kind of do my best at anything, like my own best. And I do feel, like, I can.... I can be happy in anything.”* (P1, 729-731)

A wellbeing discourse also has the purpose of highlighting a self-determination to succeed. There is a sense of empowerment, which originates from a growth mindset to improve and be the ‘best’ by one’s own standard. Optimism is gained as this participant is not certain of their future career but remains positive about it. There is a loss of fear of judgement from others through this discourse and a gaining of confidence in decisions for oneself. The discursive agenda is to suggest that having strong mental resilience is important in attaining happiness for British Indian students, and this cannot occur through hyper focusing on careers or educational factors.

Within this construction of School Success, all participants describe received help from siblings and cousins:

*“… I think maybe my sister helped a lot because, like, she did her A-Levels and she like, I remember she was outcome it difficult as well. So she was kinda like, just telling me like, Oh, don't worry, like, and she was like helping me out with biology.”* (P2, 524-528)

A familial discourse has been used here to indicate the encouragement that family members provide along the educational journey. The language used to describe this is positive and uncritical (Koilybayeva et al., 2022), which is a key part of providing this support. Families who use these discourses of support can increase the resilience of young people and stabilise their journey through school, even placing them in a more advantageous position in school (Leona, 2019).

*“And that helps me um... speaking to my sister a lot like she's been through university she's really helped and even like speaking to like my older cousins that went to university there are like this keep on top, keep on top of your work. Do some reading, any reading at all will help with reading. Yeah, just giving me like general advice about university and that pretty much helps.”* (P4, 468-472)

Siblings and cousins are constructed as having more experience than British Indian students and their advice is valued. The advice is practical and comes from a place of care and investment in the participant. Guidance and comfort seem to be gained from this construction and family members provide advice around achieving success along the educational journey. The discursive agenda here is to show an appreciation for key family members, and this also applies to parents:

*“…obviously I didn't get in this year, they've been quite, very supportive, actually, which I was quite surprised about.* […] *But now, they're like super on it. They're like, "Okay, let's do this, this, this", let's let's make you the best version of yourself to reapply” (*P1, 595-599)

The purpose of this discourse is to demonstrate that, while parents can hold high standards and expectations around education, they are still encouraging and compassionate and prioritise the progression of their children. It is used to suggest there are positive aspects of having parents who are invested in a career goal with their child. There is a similar gaining of advice and support which suggests that School Success is a whole-family approach and demonstrates the collective responsibility of education.

### 4.5.3 Positionings (Stage 4)

British Indian students are positioned as ‘enlightened’ as they speak from a place of knowledge and understanding:

*“….it really isn't just about grades, because grades only gets you halfway through the door. The rest is who you are as a person what you've done with your time.* […]*. So there's a lot more to it than just the academic side of things.” (*P1, 790-791)

An enlightened position provides a whole-picture view of education and success. This influences their actions as they shift away from a grades-based approach and move towards other areas of self-development, looking for opportunities outside of academia. There is still an acknowledgement of the importance of grades from this position as they are aware that these can still increase the chance of future success. However, language suggests that grades are accountable for only ‘half’ of a person’s success therefore education is an addition to life experiences, rather than an all-consuming element. As a result, ‘time’ should be spent on other aspects which creates a more multidimensional view of School Success. This extends Winton’s (2013) outcomes around teacher definitions of School Success as being happy, and growing academically, socially, and emotionally. Indian students are positioned as ‘resilient’ when placed under pressure to achieve academic success:

*“And I feel there was pressure on me to get the best grades but I didn't let it get to me, I sort of pushed it away rather than listening to it.”* (P4, 386-387)

The language implies ‘pushing’ pressures away is a tiring physical act but over time, this builds up the strength to have move against the pressures of others. This influences this participant to speak from a resilient position, where they have placed their own needs at the forefront of their decisions. A stronger ‘mindset’ seems to develop within this position as this participant seems to act more assuredly around their own needs. This can help to increased preparedness for future challenges, as School Success can be seen as flexible and therefore have less of an effect on their self-perception. One student positioned themselves as grateful towards their parents:

*“… coz I wouldn't say that my parents, they were like, really, really strict and stuck to like the stereotypes. They're sort of like, do what interests you.”* (P3, 235-236)

The role of parents has been previously constructed as ‘stereotypical’. Language used indicates that parent views still influence this student’s decision as they look to them for guidance, but they have been the freedom to choose what they are interested in. There is also gratuity felt from the support and guidance that can be provided around the educational journey. From this position, they speak more positively of parental influence and are even more likely to follow advice given as it is perceived as helpful rather than oppressive. This also indicates that there is a shift in the perspectives around success of some parents who have moved to a Western country, in a similar manner to the construction of parents in section 4.3.2. This supports research from Jambunathan and Counselman (2002) and Farver et al. (2007) as parenting approaches seem to ‘relax’ for some parents. Again, there is also support for Chakrabarti’s (2008) outcomes as some migrant Indian parents place reduced pressure around academic expectations and career choices.

Within these discourses, Indian students are also positioned as self-motivated:

“*But my, you know, my thought process was to pass every exam and do as good as I could do, because it would benefit me in the end.”* (P3, 185-185)

When British Indian students create their own definition of success, they perceive education differently. There is no high expectation placed on the self or comparisons to others, instead this student’s aim is to ‘pass’ for their own benefit. Their position allows them to take actions that are more individualistic and negotiate their own view of success. In this position, there is a clear change from success being for other people (e.g., parents, community) to measuring and achieving one’s own goals. The final position within this construction is being successful:

*“Yeah, by my definition I achieved School Success, I have friends, memories, proud times and things that make me happy. Even if I don’t really meet the stereotype, I really don’t care because I enjoyed myself!”* (P4, 545-547)

The language used within this position is confident and assured, particularly in relation to what School Success means to this participant. They have negotiated this by invalidating the stereotypical construction of School Success and reframing this to be a positive reflection of themselves. A position of success would therefore be a person who is happy with their educational journey, which would influence them to continue to make decisions that encourage this happiness along the remainder of this journey.

### 4.5.4 Practices, institutions, and power (Stage 5)

Enlightened and self-motivated positions open up opportunities for action as British Indian students are focused on their own holistic development. There are no limits on what can be said or done as determination is individually regulated, rather than comparative. The focus of School Success is self-development, achieved through means other than education:

“*Like, I always think that school, your job is like your side hustle. And like what you do in your free time, the people that you spend time with are like, your main thing, your life really shouldn't revolve around money or, you know, stress.”* (P4, 330-333)

A discourse of self-development is important as language is fundamental in forming an identity and sense of self (Miller & Mangelsdorf, 2005). The aim of education in India has been previously constructed as having high expectations and Indian students work towards these goals in a life-consuming manner. It moves away from a collectivist approach, which is a common approach in Indian culture (Willis, 2012) and towards an individualist approach which is common in the UK:

*“And how it's like generational? I think for me, personally, mine will obviously alter if I do have kids, you know what I mean, it will be different then. I know, because I have like Indian culture and kind of this culture, like British culture, it's kind of a mix between the two. So... I hope it does change.”* (P1, 923-926)

This outcome extends the concept of the “Bi-cultural self” raised by Sekhon & Szmigin (2011) to Indians outside of the Punjabi culture. Here, there is an integration of the collectivist and individualist cultural values given that there is a mixture of influences from British and Indian cultures. This supports the notion that assimilation into a dominant individualistic culture can increase success. The assimilation into British culture seems to have affected cultural values of British Indian students as they have already achieved upward mobility through the migration of their parents (Schneider et al., 2014). Therefore, they are afforded the freedom to break away from dominant discourses and work on their own passions rather than those of parents, communities, or teachers. These dominant discourses of grades-based success are challenged through these constructions, as grades and set careers are no longer a priority for students:

*“No, I feel like they are definitely changing. […] as generations change, obviously, more people nowadays, you know, they've done higher education, they know what it's like. So they're not going to put that much pressure on their children, because they're like, I feel that sometimes, they might also regret it as well. Like, "oh, I didn't, I didn't get a chance to do what I wanted to do, because I was sort of forced out a certain route" so they don't want that for like, their kids.”* (P3, 548-557)

These constructions and subject positions challenge dominant discourses and future practices around School Success as students predict a change over time, given their own experiences of feeling pressured. This would facilitate this acculturation discourse as the views around School Success relax and will eventually look different from the cultural values held in India.

Subject positions of resilience and success can open up opportunities for development as there are prospects to explore individual pathways and create their success using their own definitions. They are able to resist the dominant discourses around School Success and challenge these:

“…*I think it comes down to just, I don't know, mindset perspective. I guess just knowing from like, 15, 16 that life isn't... my life isn't going to be like one smooth, same thing.”* (P4, 387-390)

Resilient thinking forms part of the strategy to resist dominant discourses. It is crucial to hold these flexible views around education as it reduces the expectations placed on oneself. By understanding that there is uncertainty in the future provides a level of power that overcomes fears around adversity. It is also important to build resilience to unrealistic expectations set by others (Archdall & Kilderry, 2016) and for British Indian students, this begins to develop later in life since the discourses of parents and communities can be very dominant in the early years of education. Students also have less autonomy at this age which maintains the dominant discourses.

*“And also, like, School Success, also making memories with friends, because you don't want to be 40 and look back and think of all the things that you could have done when you were young.”* (P1, 871-873)

British Indian student’s construction of School Success as achieving happiness, friendships, being a good person and doing the best you can is a clear resistance to grades-based discourse and can begin to challenge the model minority stereotype. This feeds into the wellbeing discourse, as students who are happier with their choices are more likely to have the confidence to challenge discourses. It could be said that this position supports school institutional practices around a Whole Child approach. Learning would occur in addition to preparation around life and social skills, health related learning, involvement with community groups and preparation for adulthood (e.g., further study, employment), which takes a holistic view of students (Lewallen et al., 2015).

### 4.5.5 Subjectivity (Stage 6)

Through these multiple constructions of School Success, Indian students feel liberated:

*“When I was younger used to really hit me because I was like, Oh, what am I doing wrong? Like, am I not smart enough, but, like, people learn in different ways. And now it doesn't really faze me at all* […] *to be honest, I'm glad where I am, where I'm at now…”* (P4, 371-374)

Acceptance of individual ability does not occur easily for British Indian students, as constant self-comparison to model minority expectation can be upsetting. There is a shift for this participant, which is important as wellbeing is strongly linked to social comparison and levels of achievement set by others. By recognising and moving away from this construction, they experience an acceptance and contentedness with their own ability. British Indian students also feel happier with their own views of success:

*“Yeah, I'm always happy with where I am and how I'm progressing personally, but no one else will see that. There’s too much evil eye people might cast!” (*P1, 660-661)

To be located in this discourse may also come with independent and guarded monitoring of one’s progress. Though this may lead to feelings of self-empowerment and happiness (Ganesh & McAllum, 2010), there is a feeling that one might be affected by others knowing about this. There is a belief within India that negative thoughts and jealousy thought about by others can lead to illness or the downfall of successes, as shared in a newspaper article by Kannan (2016). As a cultural superstition, this source reflects a phenomenon that is not usually studied by researchers and is therefore a useful discourse to analyse in relation to participants responses. Therefore, participants may feel ‘secretly’ happy to avoid this belief by retaining the knowledge of their own progress.

**Reflective box**

Sincerity – I reflect on my own personal experience here. During my time at school, I would have defined School Success as purely academics, as this was my sole focus at the time, to reach my goal of getting into university. Now I am able to retrospectively reflect, I would say it is so much more than this, it is leading a fulfilling life and being happy with your choices. I could understand the discourses being reflected and resonated with the subject positions shared, as these shift over time as more life experience is gained. For me, it felt like participants were reflecting my inner thoughts, as you realise there is more to life as an Indian student than just academics but when surrounded by dominant discourses that it is the only thing that matters, it is difficult to see beyond this.

## 4.6 Intersectionality between discourses

Each of the four discursive constructions were presented as overlapping in Figure 2 to demonstrate the intersectionality between each construction of School Success. A summary of the discourses that were drawn upon, and who they were constructed around is shown in Table 4. This reveals how some discourses were utilised multiple times with slightly different purposes. For example, within the construction of School Success as ‘Progress, grades and the model minority student’ discourses of

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Discursive construction** | **Discourses** | **Who are they constructed around?** |
| Progress, grades, careers, and the model minority student | * Performance discourse | * Parents, teachers, community |
| * Academic discourse | * Teachers |
| * Stereotypical discourse | * Teachers |
| * Educational discourses | * Teachers |
| * Parental discourse | * Parents |
| * Competitive discourse | * Community |
| * Traditional career discourse | * Parents, community |
| Relaxed compared to India | * Educational discourse | * Students in India and participants |
| * Performance discourse | * Indian education system and students |
| * Cultural discourse | * Participants and Indian education system |
| A competition | * Competitive discourse | * Participants |
| * Comparative discourse | * Participants and parents |
| * Honour discourse | * Parents and young people |
| * Transformative discourse | * Siblings |
| Happiness and self-development | * Reflective discourse | * Participants |
| * Self-developmental discourse | * Participants |
| * Wellbeing discourse | * Participants |
| * Familial discourse | * Participants, parents, and siblings |

competition, resistance through self-development, and a comparison to the pressure faced by students in India were reflected. This indicates that School Success, whilst having clear constructions, is still an entangled term. Similarly, discourses of resistance

were reflected within each construction, which demonstrates this is a key part of School Success.

**Table 4.**

Summary of the four discursive constructions from this research, the discourses related to these constructions and who they were constructed around.

# Chapter 5: Conclusions and implications

## 5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to gain the constructions of the term ‘School Success’ from British Indian students, by analysing interview dialogue. It is important to reiterate that in this research, there is no belief that the views collected from participants hold more truth. Instead, the discourses reflected construct the reality for students in this study and are bound to their context and experiences. This chapter presents the key outcomes and conclusions of this research in relation to the research questions and relevant literature. The strengths and limitations of this research will be considered. This will be followed by the implications for EP practice and future directions for research.

## 5.2 Key outcomes and conclusions

### 5.2.1 Research question 1: How do British Indian student construct School Success?

British Indian students constructed School Success through four discursive constructions. These constructions were complex because students constructed School Success through the views of themselves, their teachers, parents, and the Indian community, as demonstrated previously in Table 3. This “shadowed data” (Morse, 2000) was useful in demonstrating the wider influences on British Indian student’s constructions of School Success.

British Indian students constructed teachers as important in their education, but also as implicitly maintaining the model minority stereotype through high expectations. Indian students expressed that they were ‘pushed’ more to achieve on the basis of the stereotypical ethnic assumptions, which supports an educational institutional construction of School Success. This extends the outcomes of Wong (2015) and Daga and Raval (2018) to an older range of British Indian students in the UK. Parents and the Indian community were constructed as providing support for an academic view of success, setting ‘unrealistically’ high grade expectations, and actively pushing for this outcome. Traditional career discourses were reflected around acceptable (e.g., doctors, lawyers) and non-acceptable jobs (e.g., arts, drama). The role of grades and academic outcomes were constructed through a competitive discourse in relation to the community. Parents were constructed as supporting British Indian students through use of extra support (e.g., tuition) and engaged in activities which would encourage academic development.

British Indian students also constructed School Success as being ‘relaxed compared to India’. Educational and performance discourses were reflected in the interviews of students, which were constructed as more extreme in India than in the UK. This suggests that values in India around education are the source of the high expectations held by parents and the community, supporting research from Micko (2016). This construction has changed and become distinct in the UK as British Indian students reflect that their parent’s expectations have lowered following migration to the UK. Therefore, there are different definitions of School Success that exist dependent on the educational system of the country. Students constructed a relatively relaxed approach to parenting, providing support for Chakrabarti’s (2008) outcomes that some parents have developed a more holistic approach, indicating that a “hybrid culture” (Rapoport et al., 2020) has developed between Indian and Western expectation. Micko’s (2016) outcomes that migrant parents will compromise on cultural values (e.g., dressing, hairstyle) can therefore be extended to educational values. Through student constructions, there is also support for the ‘training’ style of parenting, where parents demonstrate a high level of involvement in their child’s education, but that this can also shift to an authoritative parenting style following migration, supporting Farver et al. (2007).

There was a contrast between the use of the competitive discourse depending on the purpose of its use. School Success was constructed as a ‘competition’ and discourses were employed to reveal ‘healthy’ forms of competition, that allowed competition between friends. This supports research from Micko (2016) as competition with friends, when chosen by participants, was constructed as friendly. However, competition was also constructed through a comparative discourse as some British Indian students compared their lower achievement to other Indian students who were high performing. This discourse was also reflected as being held by parents, who compare their children with other children’s successes in an ‘unhealthy’ manner. Research from Dweck (2000) was supported here as two types of motivations for success were constructed, including the learning goal to improve oneself, and performance goal, to perform better than others. The role of siblings was constructed as being competitive in an indirect manner, as British Indian students did not want to face the same negative experiences, so strove to surpass their siblings.

In the final construction, British Indian students constructed School Success as being happy with their own development and focused on a more holistic picture of self-improvement. This extends research by Chakrabarti (2008) and Cachia et al. (2018) as academic success and School Success are both constructed as rounded development. These outcomes also extend research from Winton (2013) who found teacher definitions of School Success to be aesthetic (Hodgkinson, 1991) or focused on being happy throughout school, as British Indian students also adopted a similar view towards the purpose of education. Students also retrospectively construct their views now they can consider the relatively low importance grades. A wellbeing discourse was reflected, to demonstrate empowerment when moving away from the dominant constructions of success. The support of families and siblings were constructed as a key part of School Success through encouragement and practical advice. There is a novel outcome that British Indian students construct success as a positive whole-family approach.

Overall, academic success is constructed as a part of School Success but not the complete focus for British Indian students. Instead, the goal is to attain self-fulfilment in personal choices. This corroborates one of Garbanrino’s (1976) beliefs, as the views of adults in the institutionalised system differ to the views of students around School Success. It also suggests that the terms academic and School Success are defined as being achieved through holistic development and are therefore overlapping concepts. Differentiating between these two terms may not be necessary as they seem to connote similar ideas.

### 5.2.2 Research question 2: What subject positions do these constructions of School Success offer?

British Indian students adopted particular subject positions, depending on the discourse reflected. Due to the constructions of the model minority stereotype, some participants were positioned as subjects of an unfair stereotype which does not allow for equity in expectations for students at school. Other participants positioned themselves as distanced from the stereotype and were actively trying to move away from the construction. Some students were positioned as trapped by parental and community pressures around career outlooks, while another participant positioned themselves as autonomous by following their own decisions. Parental pressures around School Success and strict career expectations led to a position of deflation.

British Indian students were also positioned as lucky when comparing the constructions of School Success in the UK to India. They also negotiated a position of being ‘better off’ experience the educational systems and parental expectations in the UK. A position of independence was adopted, which is at odds with the positionings through the first discursive construction. It is argued that this is a relative position that has been adopted through this comparison. Students in India are constructed as having a more extreme experience, but British Indian students still construct their own situation as being significantly more pressured than their peers.

A position of comfort was adopted when participants constructed School Success as a healthy, friendly competition with peers. When comparing themselves to higher attaining peers, a position of inferiority was adopted. The construction of parental comparisons led to participants positionings themselves as frustrated, which led to reduced engagement with competition.

British Indian students also adopted an enlightened position when constructing School Success as a holistic concept, beyond academic success. A resilient position was also taken as they ignored pressure around grade-based achievement. British Indian students are also positioned as grateful towards family members for their influence and support, which provides an alternative viewpoint around the role of parents and siblings in the construction of School Success. A position of self-motivation was adopted for students to create their own view of success, which would allow them to term themselves successful.

### 5.2.3 Research question 3: How do these constructions open up or close down opportunities for action for British Indian students?

The constructions of School Success as ‘progress, grades, career and model minority’ can close down opportunities for British Indian students as the dominant discourses around parental expectation are powerful. This can reduce the ability of students to pursue their own careers as they hope to appease parental views. Parental expectations are constructed as being rooted in community values around grade-based achievement and careers, which can further close down opportunities for action as they are deeply entrenched and therefore dominant. The model minority stereotype can close down opportunities for British Indian students as it creates a perception of how each student should be and increases pressure to achieve highly, supporting Daga and Raval’s (2018) outcomes. When this stereotype is not met, British Indian students question their ethnic identity, supporting research from Wong (2015). However, there is resistance to the model minority stereotype by questioning its principles, which opens up opportunities to challenge its dominance.

The construction of School Success as ‘relaxed compared to India’ can open up opportunities for action as there is a shift in the understanding of expectations for British Indian students. These are constructed as significantly lower, which can reduce their dominance for students in the UK. The reduction in adherence to cultural values also seems to open up opportunities around careers as British Indian students construct more autonomy around this in the UK.

The construction of School Success as ‘a competition’ is dichotomous as it can open up opportunities when it is constructed as healthy and fair. This can increase the motivation of some students to improve themselves and their effort in academia. However, this discourse can also close down opportunities for action when constructed as a comparison with other students in an unhealthy manner. This can reduce motivation to succeed in education and can also increase social pressure. British Indian students also begin to resist these dominant discourses which can open up opportunities for action, as School Success is constructed as independent and non-comparative.

The construction of School Success as ‘happiness and self-development’ can open up opportunities for action as success is viewed through an individualist lens, which moves away from the constructions and pressures of others. Arguably this is able to occur because there is an assimilation into British cultural values which increases their ability to explore routes that they find interesting and create their own definitions of Success. British Indian students construct School Success as generationally bound which opens up opportunities for action as this may reduce pressure around Indian values on future generations. British Indian students also resist the grades-based discourse and model minority stereotype and reframe success as being happy, and therefore attainable by all.

### 5.2.4 Research question 4: What are the subjective experiences of British Indian students based on these constructions of School Success?

British Indian students in this study seem to feel trapped and controlled by the constructions of parental, teacher, and community views of School Success. There is a sense of exclusion if students do not obtain high grades or pursue particular careers as it is set as an ethnic standard, which can lead to a lack of belonging. A feeling of hope is expressed around rejection of the model minority stereotype, as it can reduce negative thoughts around self-achievement. British Indian students may also experience an increased sense of self when comparing their experiences to students in India. There are feelings of pity for the expectations of other students but ultimately a feeling of relief when considering their own relative independence.

Competitive constructions of School Success can feel productive when viewed positively and increase feelings of hope and optimism. They can also affect the self-esteem of British Indian students when constructed as unhealthy. This can be isolating for students and reduce resilience or motivation. Finally, British Indian students may feel free when moving away from oppressive discourses around School Success. This may feel difficult as some discourses are entrenched, but doing so can increase their happiness.

**Reflective box**

Resonance – A focus on the subjective experience was an important part in understanding experiences of British Indian students. I understand the emotion this evoked in myself is due to my relation to the experiences, but I wanted to expand this beyond to those with no direct experience. I hope that my interpretation and presentation of this has provided some aesthetic merit and facilitated the reader to understand the experiences and emotions of participants.

## 5.3 Implications for Educational Psychology practice

The role of an Educational Psychologist (EP) is not clearly defined and can be perceived differently by every EP (Ashton & Roberts, 2006). Therefore, the implications for practice presented are deemed to be pertinent following this research, but their application will vary dependent on individual EP needs and context. EPs are uniquely placed to provide advice and input around teacher education, particularly around the role of schools, families and sociocultural influences which can impact child development (Patrick et al., 2011). Teachers were constructed by British Indian students as endorsing and actively encouraging a model minority stereotype discourse, which could lead to a lack of identification of learning needs. This stereotype has also been suggested by participants to affect teacher practices, which impacts British Indian student’s subjective experience. Therefore, there is an importance for EPs to challenge and shift powerful discourses and reconstruct the consideration of Indian students as a homogeneous group. This could be completed through non-confrontational and collaborative explorations of cultural dynamics in an educational setting (Parker et al., 2020), such as Implicit Association Tests to explore unconscious biases, followed by structured discussions around stereotypes that might exist for students from different cultural groups. The outcomes of this could demonstrate how to support students from Indian backgrounds who have dominant stereotypes that may act as a barrier to their emotional development, particularly as it is a more ‘hidden’ stereotype. An example of a similar type of training is offered by the National Education Association around Cultural competence and considers how culture intersects with academic success.

In this research, Indian students provided an alternative discourse to how School Success is constructed when compared to existing discourses. This research has raised the importance of ensuring that Indian students are able to voice their views and are empowered to share these. This is important as the discourses of parents, teachers and communities are circulated more widely and therefore could be said to reflect a power imbalance. Therefore, it is important for EPs to prioritise approaches in their work which capture the voices of Indian students in a meaningful and impactful manner. This could be completed through the use of person-centred approaches. In this research I utilised the Tree of Life activity worked well in gathering the voice of participants, though other approaches such as PATH (Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope; O’Brien et al., 2010), or MAPS (Making Action Plans; Forest et al., 1996) would also be useful. As Gray and Woods (2022) note, the activity or methods used to gain the views are not enough as they must be underpinned by humanist values. Therefore, EPs should work to gain views of students using respect, genuine interest and use their voice in future planning.

The role of parents in the education of British Indian students has been constructed as a dominant discourse in this research. The history of parent’s cultural background should be considered alongside the culture that they currently live in and how this may impact their approaches to parenting (Cross, 1995). For Indian parents, this may include the traumatic events following partition of India, the systemic oppression and genocides amongst experienced during British colonisation (McDermott, 2007). For EP’s, collecting parental view, there should be ‘ethnic validity’ in practice. Barnett et al. (1995) define this as being respectful of the cultural needs, beliefs, and values of parents as these directly link to their ethnic identity. This is important in ensuring there is a whole team approach to supporting students. By negating or refuting the discourses of high expectations held by Indian parents, this may reduce their engagement in supporting their child. Instead, the acknowledgement of cultural values can empower parents to voice their views. McDermott (2007) offers practical strategies and questions for practitioners to consider to gain an insight into parental behaviours and thoughts around their goals for their children, what is important and cultural context, as these factors can vary for different cultures. The use of family systems theory is suggested to understand how family systems, rules, roles and culture affect the dynamics of a family. The role of the practitioner is to understand that particular family roles, such as authoritarian parenting, may be common for Indian students given their families country of origin. Exploring these factors through explicit questioning can bring to light the sociocultural factors practitioners should consider when working with parents from culturally diverse backgrounds, so the best support can be offered.

The importance of culturally sensitive practice has increased in recent years, particularly the awareness of racialised narratives that may contribute to discriminatory practices (Williams, 2020). It has been demonstrated that British Indian students are subject to stereotyped views, and it is important that EPs engage in reflexivity in their practices with children from ethnic minority backgrounds. Mitchell-Blake (2020) details a personal model of reflection which incorporates external and internal talk in order to reflect on the feelings, thoughts or even biases and stereotypes we may hold in our professional practices. This could be further extended to supervision practices through Burnham’s (2018) Social GGRRRAAACCEEESSS (e.g., gender, ethnicity, education), so practitioners can consider their own characteristics and how these may influence the work they complete.

The understanding of second-generation British Indian experiences is important for EP practice as it can indicate how ethnic minority identities and experiences are impacted by wider factors. When considering Bronfenbrenner’s ecological systems, British Indian students have been shown to be shaped by systems around them, including family and school in the microsystem (closest to the child). However, it seems that a person’s cultural background can impact where different systems are situated. The model suggests that the community sits within the exosystem and surrounds the microsystem, and therefore has an impact on parents and Indian students but it could be argued that the community can also be situated within the microsystem as it has been shows to directly impact the views of Indian students in this research. This would indicate that this model should be used in a flexible and ideographical manner and consider all factors that impact the individual systems around a person. Community views are directly impacted by the macrosystem which holds the attitudes and values of the Indian and British cultures students experience and therefore has a cumulative impact on students. When working with Indian students, or students from ethnic minority backgrounds it is also important that EPs consider these wider factors which will impact their experiences in education beyond their cognitive abilities (Robinson, 2020) including social, educational, parental and community perspectives. This can impact their identity formation so it is important that EPs are aware and sensitive to how students are navigating these experiences, and the tensions and pressures that may arise. For culturally competent practice to occur, EPs should retain curiosity around this this could be made explicit in the collection of ethnic minority student’s views, as their reflections on wider impacts could be useful in gaining an understanding of wider needs and recommendations to support them in school. An example of this could be the exploration of the ecological systems model with parents and teachers around children from ethnic minority backgrounds with a discussion around the factors at each level.

**Reflective box**

Significant contribution and Sincerity – An interesting reflection here is that I have had very limited work in my practice with children from an Indian ethnicity, which may link to wider factors around this lack of identification. I wonder if some of this is influenced by the views of parents, who do not want to see their child as requiring special support, given the cultural views around School Success. This research has helped me to reflect on a potentially ‘missed’ group of children in our practice as EPs due to perceived protective factors and values.

## 5.4 Future research directions

Although this study focused on the views of students, a large proportion of participant constructions were focused on teachers, parents, and the community. It would be useful to explore the constructions of School Success from these perspectives so comparisons can be drawn. The whole-family approach to education would be interesting to explore in future research as this may reveal protective factors around education and a broader family construction of School Success.

It would also be pertinent to analyse the intersectionality between other identity factors, such as gender, which has a strong cultural difference in Indian cultures as males are often shown favour (Singh & Mahajan, 2021). Another factor to explore would be the intersection of socioeconomic background and ethnicity to see if there are differences in School Success construction. It would also be useful to explore the views of individuals from different areas of the UK, who perhaps have lower migration rates of Indian students to investigate the role of the community further.

The subjective experiences were disseminated from the discourses of Indian students, but it would be useful to further explore how they experience academic pressure, especially in the context of mental health and stress.

## 5.5 Strengths and limitations

Throughout this research, a clear stance around the researcher’s ontology and epistemology were stated and adhered to. This allowed an in-depth analysis of the research through a discourse analytic stance and led to conclusions in line with the research aims and questions. My position as an Indian researcher was a strength in enabling participants to share rich discourses within the interviews given my ‘insider’ position. There was a sense of ‘relatability’ from participants which would have increased their confidence to discuss culturally related phenomena. Some participants directly referred to this feeling, stating ‘you know what I mean’ indicating a shared ethnic experience. Also, I already had an understanding of the cultural context during the analysis stage and the discourses that may surround the constructions for Indian students. However, my role as an Indian researcher will have affected my analysis of the data as I may have been reflecting my experiences in some form of researcher bias. To overcome this potential limitation, I ensured to engage in regular supervision, and utilised a reflective diary log as a ‘critical friend’ (Fleming, 2018) to question any assumptions or choices in the research process.

A limitation of this research was the small participant size which may be argued to reduce the generalisability of results. However, the goal for this research was not to attain a positivist view of generalisability as the discourses used by participants in this study are reflective of their contexts and views of reality. It is therefore recognised that there will be variations in the construction of School Success within the Indian population. The current results are useful in that they can be used to generate implications for EP and teacher practices in similar contexts, including children from other ethnic groups who may construct success in a complex manner given additional cultural, familial, and personal influences.

There may also be concerns around the validity of this research as this is typically used as an evaluative measure in psychological studies. Yet, in qualitative research, the focus cannot be placed on whether the data has been ‘correctly’ attained as the principles of this research are that there is no singular truth (Willig, 2008) and therefore all forms of truth are valid. Instead, principles of rigour should be applied to ensure that the research process still remains ‘trustworthy’ and follows some form of quality assurance. Throughout this research, Tracy’s (2010) criteria was used to evaluate processes and researcher choices. A full table of this evaluative criteria can be found in Appendix 1.

As participants volunteered for this study through limited advertisement channels, the participant sample was not massively diverse, and three participants had attended the same high school. Therefore, these participants were from an affluent area and attended a high school with a strong academic record as one of the top performers in this city. This may have restricted the range of views that were gathered, and while the aim was not to generalise results, a more diverse range of participants may have led to a more varied construction of School Success if students from different areas of the city were interviewed.

## 5.6 Summary

Overall, this chapter has concluded the key outcomes from this research and provided implications for EP practice. The research has been evaluated through consideration of strengths and limitations and future directions for research have been stated.

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# Appendices

## Appendix 1 – Full description of how Tracey’s (2010) Big Tent were fulfilled within this research

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Quality criteria** | **Description** | **How this was fulfilled** |
| Worthy topic | The topic chosen is able to be justified, is relevant and interesting, and has a significance in the social or political context. | The idea for this topic arose from personal and professional experiences. It is also grounded in relevant literature, which revealed that there is in fact a gap in literature, proving a relevant area for research. A focus on British Indian students is relevant as their voices have not been gathered in research pertaining School Success. There have been recent criticisms in Indian news articles around the effects of the academic culture and therefore this is timely piece of research. In the field of educational psychology, this area is under researched and is therefore relevant to explore, as it can bring to light implications that may support EP practice. |
| Rich rigour | There is richness in the data collected and this meets the aims and goals of the research. The researcher takes care to be thorough throughout the research process, including justification for data collection methods and rigorous analysis. | I have presented a clear rationale for the theoretical underpinnings of this study, including the relativist ontological and social constructionist epistemological beliefs underpinning my approach. These have been woven through the data collection methods and analysis.  The aims of this research were to explore the constructions of British Indian students. Following my recruitment methods, I had a varied set of participants from different backgrounds and ages. Semi-structured interviews were beneficial given their flexibility and ability to gather the views of a range of British Indian students in a reliable manner. I used a range of interview activities to facilitate the constructions of participants in a variety of ways.  Transcription of the data was completed and proof read to ensure it was captured accurately. The analysis method was performed and reflected upon regularly with my supervisor to ensure it was being utilised in a correct and appropriate manner. Examples of other uses of Foucauldian Discourse analysis were drawn upon to increase understanding of this approach. |
| Sincerity | Using self-reflexivity to honestly share personal biases, motivations, and strengths which promotes authentic practice. Use of transparency around the research process. | The reflective boxes throughout this thesis follow a series of entries made in a reflective diary. The aim of this diary was to monitor and mitigate any biases which may have arisen from my personal connection. It is important to reflect that these biases will inevitably affect my understanding of this research but being cognisant of this can promote authentic practice. I also ensured that I reflected on my experiences during regular supervision to share how I made sense of the data in an honest and self-reflective manner.  I found that the interview process was useful in allowing participants to share their reflections around School Success. In the pilot interview, I tried to write and record what the participant was saying in the ‘tree of life’ activity, as I would do if I was using this in my professional practice. I found that this caused me too much distraction as I was focusing on capturing their words, rather than reflecting on what they were saying and trying to develop questions in line with this. Partway through the activity, I stopped scribing which is a method I used for the rest of the interviews. |
| Credibility | Analysing the research outcomes and determining how trustworthy they are. These are presented in a detailed manner. | Use of a structured analysis approach from three reliable sources aided the credibility of the analysis process. Reading through the literature and informing myself on the purpose of discourse analysis helped me to keep in mind the underpinning theoretical principles (e.g., understandings of reality). I was initially overwhelmed by the amount of data generated and the structure of discourses analysis. I placed pressure on myself to ‘get it right’ and spent a very long time trying to use the structure in a very fixed manner. This was important to me because it was the first time I had used FDA and I did not want to make mistakes that would affect the outcomes of my research. Over time as I continued the analysis process, I learned to use it in a more flexible manner, and it became easier for me to make links or interpret the data.  The outcomes of this research were presented through the use of quotes and a combined analysis and discussion section. These quotes ensure that the analysis is grounded in the constructions of participants, but also allow the reader to interpret these in their own way.  A total of four participants fits within the target range set but could be argued to be a low number for a rich level of data. In qualitative research, this data saturation, or content validity, is more subjective and is said to be achieved when consistent outcomes are drawn from a set of data. My concern with a relatively small data set was that this point would not be reached therefore I kept a second round of recruitment in mind prior to analysis. However, following analysis, it was clear that my outcomes were rooted in a large amount of data generated from each in-depth interview. |
| Resonance | The research is written in a manner which resonates with the reader and evoke emotion or action, even with readers with no experience of the research topic. The research can be generalised in a naturalistic manner (e.g., within research rather than across). | The aim of this study was not to be generalisable to other British Indian students but instead aimed to gather the constructions from some members of this group to gain an insight into their perspectives. However, there are some outcomes that can be implied for ethnic minority students generally which can be useful in informing the practice of EP’s. Further to this, developing an understanding around School Success is important as all children go through the education system and may have different constructions depending on their backgrounds.  To ensure the writing was accessible and resonated with readers, I discussed my writing technique and flow with my supervisor. The thesis was also read by multiple people around me and I used their feedback to improve the clarity of the writing. I hope that through my write-up evokes emotion as this is a personal topic for me and I certainly experienced passion throughout the research process. |
| Significant contribution | The research can extend existing knowledge, offer new theoretical understanding, inspires future research, is practically applicable to a real-life situation or introduce a novel methodological approach. | This research has offered new theoretical understanding of the term ‘School Success’ from the perspective of the students whom it impacts. This also extends the research of similar studies around academic success, which has been constructed in a similar manner by Indian students. The key difference between these two is the terminology used and it suggests that either way, Indian students see the purpose of school as broader than grades. This is applicable to the way that teachers view Indian students and may help to challenge the stereotypes that exist.  One of the difficulties with extending the outcomes to parent approaches is that this research did not directly gather parental views, which would have been useful in extending knowledge and bringing together a shared understanding. |
| Ethical | Ethical procedures (e.g., informed consent) are outlined and adhered to and situational ethics (e.g., doing no harm) are also considered. Researchers reflect on their own character in the research and consider the ethics of how their work is presented to avoid negative consequences. | The ethical guidelines prescribed by the University of Sheffield were adhered to throughout this research, alongside the standards of the British Psychological Society.  My role as an Indian has had an impact on the conception of this research and the interpretation of the outcomes. I explained this to participants prior to beginning interviews to mitigate the power imbalance that may develop as a researcher.  It is important to note that I found it difficult to ensure that I shared constructions of parents in a balanced way to adhere to the principle of ‘do no harm’ to people indirectly affected by the study. Participants also constructed parents in a positive manner and therefore including this was important to demonstrate that they are seen as supportive. |
| Meaningful coherence | A study is able to achieve the original aims and purpose through the use of relevant methodologies and practices and relevant literature is drawn upon. The write-up should reflect the approach used so there is coherence. | Throughout the research, I revisited the aims and research questions. These did change over the course of the research I originally used the use of the term academic success and, following a discussion with my supervisor and searching of literature decided to change this to School Success.  The procedural methods used were appropriate for the aims of the research as the interviews schedule followed a variety of tasks. I found that the newspaper article was useful for exploring the model minority stereotype, the tree of life was useful for exploring how their views of School Success have changed and the impact of others. Completing the definition forming of School Success following this helped them to consider their journey and formulate their responses. |

## Appendix 2 – Ethical approval

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## Appendix 3 – Study poster

Timeline

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## Appendix 4 – Small amendment to ethics submission

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## Appendix 5 – Information sheet

**Participant Information Sheet**

1. **Research Project Title:**

School Success: What does it mean to Indian students?

1. **Invitation paragraph**

You are being invited to take part in a research project. Before you decide whether or not to participate, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Thank you for reading this.

1. **What is the project’s purpose?**

The aim of this project is to understand what School Success looks like to Indian students. This would involve having discussions with Indian students around what success means to them, what has influenced them to get to where they are currently, and their future ambitions. The reason for this research is because literature has mentioned that Indian students often face a lot of pressure to succeed at school, particularly around academic grades, and future careers. This research is being undertaken for the completion of a Doctoral research thesis in Educational and Child Psychology.

1. **Why have I been chosen?**

You have been chosen because you identify as having an Indian ethnicity, you are aged 18 or over and are attending an education provision. Between 3 and 6 participants will be recruited for this study.

1. **Do I have to take part?**

No, it is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep (and be asked to sign a consent form) and you can still withdraw at any time without any negative consequences. This will not impact on your grades, and you do not have to give a reason. Once data has been collected, anonymised, and analysed, it will not be possible for data to be withdrawn from the research past 31st September 2022. If you wish to withdraw from the research, please contact Gugandeep Rayat ([gkrayat1@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:gkrayat1@sheffield.ac.uk)).

1. **What will happen to me if I take part? What do I have to do?**

If you take part in this research, you will be asked to complete an interview that will last up to 1.5 hours. This will include asking you both open and closed questions focused around your own academic and school journey. The interview will begin with introductory questions, before moving to how you define School Success and your views around the factors that impacted your School Success. You may also be asked to complete a ‘Tree of Life’ activity, which looks at any strengths and difficulties along your school journey and how you envision your future academic journey. You may also be asked to view 'case studies' and give your ideas and perspectives on these. The aim of these questions is to understand how you define and construct School Success, as a person who identifies as having an Indian ethnicity.

1. **What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?**

You may feel uncomfortable discussing your personal journey and ideas around School Success. This could bring up feelings of distress and may bring to the surface some difficult feelings. If you are upset at any point in the interview, you will be given the option to stop, and this will not affect any reward given for your time. Following the interview, you will be provided with the details of pastoral and counselling support through your education provision, and anonymous advice services you can contact. You will also be offered a voluntary check-in shortly after the interview, if you would like to discuss any further difficulties.

1. **What are the possible benefits of taking part?**

You will be offered a £5 retail gift e-voucher to thank you for the time you take to partake in this research.

It is hoped that this work will help to inform the practice of Educational Psychologists and Educational settings, particularly when considering the perspective of students from an Indian background who may face increased pressure around School Success.

1. **Will my taking part in this project be kept confidential?**

All the information that we collect about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential and will only be accessible to members of the research team. You will not be able to be identified in any reports or publications. If you agree to us sharing the information you provide with other researchers (e.g., by making it available in a data archive) then your personal details will not be included, unless you explicitly request this.

1. **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>.’

‘As we will be collecting some data that is defined in the legislation as more sensitive (information about 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 archiving purposes in the public interest, scientific research purposes or statistical purposes' (9(2)(j)).

For more guidance on legal bases, including the additional conditions that apply to ‘Special Category’ personal data, refer to the University’s Research Ethics Policy Note, and Specialist Research Ethics Guidance paper, on ‘Anonymity, Confidentiality and Data Protection’: <https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/rs/ethicsandintegrity/ethicspolicy/further-guidance/homepage>.

1. **Will I be recorded, and how will the recorded media be used?**

The audio and/or video recordings of your activities made during this research will be used only for analysis. No other use will be made of them without your written permission, and no one outside the project will be allowed access to the original recordings.

1. **What will happen to the data collected, and the results of the research project?**

The interview data will be collated and analysed using discourse analysis, which analyses the language used in conversations. This will be fully anonymised and any personalised data will be removed before analysis. This analysis will then be used as part of the results for a thesis write-up to fulfil the requirements of the Doctorate in Child and Educational Psychology.

Only the researcher involved in the project, and their supervisor will have access to this data, including personal information and audio-video recordings. Raw data for the project will first be held on a personal laptop, which is password protected. The data will then be stored on a protected and secure Google Drive, provided by the University of Sheffield. After saving, this raw data will be destroyed. Consent forms with identifiable data will be kept separately from the audio/video recordings. All data saved onto the Google Drive will be stored anonymously, using pseudonyms so participants cannot be identified.

1. **Who is organising and funding the research?**

This research is being carried out through the University of Sheffield.

1. **Who is the Data Controller?**

The University of Sheffield will act as the Data Controller for this study. This means that the University is responsible for looking after your information and using it properly.

1. **Who has ethically reviewed the project?**

This project has been ethically approved via the University of Sheffield’s Ethics Review Procedure, as administered by the School of Education

**15***.* **What if something goes wrong and I wish to complain about the research or report a concern or incident?**

If you are dissatisfied with any aspect of the research and wish to make a complaint, please contact Dr Anthony Williams ([anthony.williams@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:anthony.williams@sheffield.ac.uk)) in the first instance. If you feel your complaint has not been handled in a satisfactory way you can contact the Head of the Department of Education, Professor Rebeccca Lawthom ([r.lawthom@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:r.lawthom@sheffield.ac.uk) ). If the complaint relates to how your personal data has been handled, you can find information about how to raise a complaint in the University’s Privacy Notice: <https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/govern/data-protection/privacy/general>.

1. **Contact for further information**

If you wish to obtain further information about the project, please contact Gugandeep Kaur Rayat ([gkrayat1@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:gkrayat1@sheffield.ac.uk)) Should the lead researcher be unavailable, please contact Dr Anthony Williams ([anthony.williams@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:anthony.williams@sheffield.ac.uk)).

## Appendix 6 – Consent form

**Graphical user interface, application

Description automatically generated with medium confidence**  **Participant Consent Form**

**School Success: What does it mean to Indian students?**

**Consent Form**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ***Please tick the appropriate boxes*** | | | **Yes** | **No** |
| **Taking Part in the Project** | | |  |  |
| I have read and understood the project information sheet dated 05/05/2022 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 opportunity to ask questions about the project. | | |  |  |
| I understand and agree that taking part in the project will include participating in an interview for up to 1.5 hours. | | |  |  |
| I agree that whilst I am participating in this interview, audio/video recordings will be made. I agree to being audio/video recorded and for these anonymised audio/video recordings to be used in the research. | | |  |  |
| I understand that my taking part is voluntary and that I can withdraw from the study at any time; 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 I choose to withdraw. | | |  |  |
| If I choose to withdraw following data collection, I will have until **31/09/22** to withdraw my data. | | |  |  |
| **How my information will be used during and after the project** | | |  |  |
| I understand my personal details such as name and email 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 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 may use my data in publications, reports, web pages, and other research outputs, only if they agree to preserve the confidentiality of the information as requested in this form. | | |  |  |
| **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 [printed] | Signature | Date | | | |
|  |  |  | | | |
| Name of Researcher [printed] | Signature | Date | | | |
|  |  |  | | | |

**Project contact details for further information:**

Gugandeep Kaur Rayat ([gkrayat1@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:gkrayat1@sheffield.ac.uk))

Dr Anthony Williams ([anthony.williams@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:anthony.williams@sheffield.ac.uk))

## Appendix 7 – Interview schedule used in semi-structured interviews

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Interview schedule** | **Development** |
| Introductions and ‘check-in’ question | * Welcome and introductions (reminder of consent and purpose of study) * Relational questions to build rapport and conversation prompts. |
| Definition forming (School Success) | * What does the term ‘School Success’ mean to you? * Who do you think has influenced the way you define ‘School Success’? Why? * How do you feel ‘School Success’ is seen in an Indian community? Does your definition align with this? * How do you feel ‘School Success; is seen by your parents? Siblings? Friends? * How do you feel ‘School Success’ is seen at school? Does your definition align with this? |
| Tree of life activity (adapted from Lock (2016) | * Prompts linked to their educational journey and perceived ‘School Success’ (e.g., their own ability) – see next page |
| Present newspaper article around Indian success, model minority and wider discourses | * Does reading this impact how you view your ‘self’? * How do these stereotypes influence your view of Indian students? Do you think they are accurate? * Do they influence you, as an Indian student going on to next stage of your academic journey? * Do you feel these views can be questioned? |

**Tree of life questions**

**Roots** (Where I come from?)

* My family, origins, family name, ancestry, extended family?
* Ethnicity exploration – what would you define this as and why?
* Those who have taught you most in your life? Important people can be from your history, they may have passed away but can still be included.
* Where did your educational journey begin? Who influenced you? What has helped you to get to where you are?
* Primary and High school experiences – teachers, educational journey (e.g., homework, extra clubs, expectations of family/friends)

**Ground** (Present situation)

* What do you enjoy doing now (e.g., hobbies)?
* Where are you on your educational journey?
* Completion of A-levels/exams?
* Is this where you wanted to be on your journey? Why or why not?
* Was there anything else you wanted to do aside from what you are doing now?
* Do you feel you have reached your definition of School Success? What about the discourse around School Success being linked to grades?

**Trunk** (Skills and abilities)

* What skills are you good at? What other skills do you have? (soft skills)
* What skills have helped you on your educational journey?
* Where did these come from, who helped you with these skills?
* How do you feel about your ‘ability’ on your school journey? Does this fit into the ideas around the ‘ability’ of Indian students?

**Branches** (Hopes, dreams, and wishes)

* What would your next steps look like on your educational journey?
* Does this fit into your definition of School Success?
* What is your big dream on your educational journey? Was this what you always hoped for?
* What are the dreams of others involved in your journey?
* Is there anything you’ve wished for along your educational journey that you never had?

**Leaves/fruit** (gifts)

* Have others given your gifts (not just material) that have helped you along your journey? (e.g., words of wisdom) (e.g., teachers, family members, friends)
* Why are these important to you?

**Storms of life** (hazards/difficulties)

* Have you faced any difficulties along your educational journey? How did these make you feel?
* Have you faced any pressures? Who/what/where have these come from?
* How did you respond to these? Were there other ways you wish you could have responded?

## Appendix 8 – Conversation prompts used with participants

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **What can you do that no-one else can?** | **If you were a film director, what genre of film would you make?** |
| **Where do you want most want to tRaval to, but have never been?** | **What is your favourite TV show/film?** |
| **What is your favourite book of all time?** | **What is the weirdest food combination you’ve ever tried?** |
| **If you won the lottery, what would be the first three things you’d buy?** | **What do you think is the best show on Netflix at the moment?** |
| **What is your favourite hobby to do in your spare time?** | **What is your favourite song/artist and why?** |
| **If you could only eat at one restaurant/food place for the rest of your life, which would it be?** | **Are you a morning person or night owl?** |

## Text Description automatically generated with medium confidenceAppendix 9 – Newspaper article used a prompt in the semi-structures interview

**Indians are being held up as a model minority. That's not helping the Black Lives Matter movement**

**London (CNN)**"White silence is violence." It's a simple but powerful message shouted at [Black Lives Matter protests](https://cnn.com/2020/06/04/world/adama-traore-david-dungay-george-floyd-protests-gbr-intl/index.html) around the world, and it marks a major shift in expectations: it's no longer OK to just not be racist, you have to be vocally anti-racist. If you're not, you're part of the problem.

But what about brown silence? Just as people are being told to acknowledge their White privilege, calls are growing louder for South Asian diasporas, particularly Indians, in the UK, US and Canada to check their brown privilege and speak out against anti-Black racism.

This tension has arisen in part because some Asian groups are still being held up as "model minorities," celebrated for achieving higher levels of socio-economic success than others, often even the White majority. It's an old tactic that has proven to cause more harm than good, but it's one that is still very much in use.

The problem with the practice is that it pits ethnic minority groups, which could otherwise be allies, against each other. It perpetuates stereotypes in and outside the group and, worst of all, it gives governments, companies and institutions of power a mask for their own systemic racism. It completely ignores the fact that one minority group may face very different challenges or levels of racism than another.

Many British media reports have pointed to the I[ndian diaspora's success](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/india/11981677/British-Indians-a-remarkable-story-of-success.html) in the country: British-Indian graduates in England and Wales, on average, earn more than most other ethnic minority groups, even slightly more than the White majority, [government data shows](https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/summaries/indian-ethnic-group). They achieve better results in primary and high school than the White majority, often second only to British-Chinese students. And they are arrested less often than White people.

Black people, [on the other hand](https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/), earn less than most other groups after graduating, achieve among the lowest levels in primary and high school, and are over three times more likely to be arrested than White people. Similar trends have been noted in the US and Canada.

There are many ways to digest this kind of data. Some look at it as a clear sign more needs to be done to tackle structural racism and close the gap, but all too often, it is used to congratulate those who have found success, and shame those who haven't.

## Appendix 10 – Sample transcript excerpt

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | I: | Yeah. Yeah. Sounds. That sounds very good. So you've got like an influence of |
|  |  | friends and I guess your sister as well, to help get you through that. Um, so I |
|  |  | wanted to ask a very big question. When I say the term School Success, what does |
|  |  | that mean to you? |
|  | P2: | Um… I think it’s like getting the top top grades, like, um… doing, like, good |
|  |  | subjects… not like drama or whatever. Cuz I feel like if you say I’m doing drama, |
|  |  | well I don ‘t like drama, or like… music or something like that, then they'll, they'll |
|  |  | just be like, "What? What are you doing? Why are you doing that? Like, you can't |
|  |  | do that academically". Like good subjects to them are like the science-y ones. They |
|  |  | always love the medicine route, or like my dad was saying engineering like, they |
|  |  | just love like, what is it? Doctor, lawyer, accountant, engineer... those are like the |
|  |  | career paths that they like. So I feel like School Success is kind of like picking those. I |
|  |  | think definitely medicine probably at the top of that. School Success. Yeah, it's |
|  |  | definitely like… there's this one girl. I think she's doing medicine. And then she got |
|  |  | into Cambridge or something. And then the whole like, literally, the teachers put |
|  |  | that in the assembly. Like, when they had the year group assembly they were like |
|  |  | "This person, they got into Oxbridge" And I was like, Oh, wow. Like they're literally |
|  |  | on the the name was on the board. So I feel like doing that stereotypical path of |
|  |  | doing medicine and getting all the top rated like A stars, doing 4 levels. |
|  |  | Like I feel like that's like, what School Success is. |
|  | I: | And where do you feel you fit into that then? |
|  | P2: | I guess two out of three are science-y. So yeah. And for my mocks, the thing is the |
|  |  | mock grades are really good. Like they were like A's. Um... So I was really happy |
|  |  | with my mock grades, but I just feel like that doesn't reflect what the real grades |
|  |  | will be. Because the mock grade, like they were just what the test that the teachers |
|  |  | made. But I feel like it was just a bit easier. And also, like it was against people in |
|  |  | my own class, like the grade boundaries. Like it wasn't against the whole country. |
|  |  | So I'm just scared of what my grades will be. So... I guess I'm kind of, I think maybe |
|  |  | above average. But definitely not the top. That is School Success… the top. |
|  | I: | Okay, yeah, that makes sense. And how, how would you think your your view |
|  |  | around what School Success is formed? Where do you think that view is coming |
|  |  | from that it is the top grades and it's being on that career path and having those |
|  |  | those subjects that you pick? |
|  | P2: | I think maybe the fact that like, that idea is praised a lot more like you see, like, you |
|  |  | see those people getting praised more you see, like them having like support |
|  |  | groups, you see them, like, meeting up with all the teachers and then like telling |
|  |  | teachers like, Oh, I got this like, and then they'll be like, "Wow, so like, happy" or |
|  |  | whatever. Like, for me like anything, like my degree apprenticeship. I didn't say |
|  |  | anything about it until like the end, like until I knew I got the offer. I feel like the |
|  |  | fact that I got the degree apprenticeship and accounting and finance was my |
|  |  | teacher's idea of success as well. That might be another idea of School Success. Like |
|  |  | degree apprenticeships. |
|  | I: | Yeah, yeah. Is there anyone else that might have influenced how you define that |
|  |  | School Success? So it could be community friends, parents? |
|  | P2: | So definitely, like, I was telling you about that community, that Indian family |
|  |  | community. Yeah, definitely them like, they always just like brag about how their |
|  |  | kids are, like, doing this doing that. So I feel like that kind of makes me feel like oh, |
|  |  | well, they're like succeeding, like they're doing so much better. So, maybe that as |
|  |  | well. Also, like on social media, sometimes I see like videos and they're like, "Oh, |
|  |  | what the campus of Harvard is like" because Harvard's like a really top school. And |
|  |  | there's one girl I know from my, like, when I was like, I was friends with her when I |
|  |  | was younger, maybe like year seven, eight. And like, I see now and then she |
|  |  | literally got into Harvard. Like, she lives here, like in London. But yes, she was like, |
|  |  | Yeah, I got into Harvard. And she's actually going to Harvard. And I was like, Whoa, |
|  |  | like, like, literally, we were literally friends. Like, we're literally like, we're literally in |
|  |  | the same year. Like, I was just thinking, wow, it is possible. Because whole time I |
|  |  | was thinking, it's not possible. Like, I'm never gonna go there. Like, even though I |
|  |  | was getting all the top grades or whatever. I was thinking, Oh, well, I'm never |
|  |  | gonna do that. That's just like, that's just very rare. But people I know... She I think |
|  |  | she's definitely the definition of School Success. But yeah, like, I'm just thinking |
|  |  | before, I just thought, oh, it's not possible. Like, it's very rare. But if people right |
|  |  | next to me, are literally doing what the ideal thing is, then I'm just like, it just… |
|  |  | makes me feel not as good. |
|  | I: | And do you think that others see you as not as good? Or do you think that that's |
|  |  | your perception of yourself? |
|  | P2: | I think that might be just me, because... I think my friend like when she like she |
|  |  | kind of just, she just said she always thinks of me as the smart one. But even if I |
|  |  | think I'm not as smart anymore. Like, I feel like I've just gone down. She said, she |
|  |  | always thinks for me like that. Like, I think in my friendship group, I was always sort |
|  |  | of the smart one or whatever. So then my friends would just be like, so when we |
|  |  | would get a test back and they were like, "Ah, I got more marks than you. That |
|  |  | means I'm doing good!". But yeah, they always used to say that like, "oh, yeah, |
|  |  | you're the smart one". Or when they had a question, they'd come to me and ask, |
|  |  | but yeah, yeah, I think. Yeah, maybe not so much now. But yeah. |
|  | I: | Do you think they don't come to you as much now? Do you mean or do you mean |
|  |  | that you don't feel that... |
|  | P2: | I feel like now I'm coming to them. When I have questions about the lesson, I'm |
|  |  | coming to them. Like, I feel like I'm clueless now. They'll just be like, like, things |
|  |  | sometimes things I learned in the lesson. They're like, "Oh, yeah, we learned that |
|  |  | last week". And I'm like, really? What's out there? Like, yeah, I was there for every |
|  |  | lesson. I just, I just forgot about it or like, yeah, I feel like, I come to them a lot |
|  |  | more now. I just kind of need to rely on my friend for the information now. Like, |
|  |  | when I've just, I don't understand something, I'll go to her. Because I think like, |
|  |  | she's not like... like, she's kind of puts a lot of effort. I think like, me, when I was |
|  |  | younger, I was kind of naturally smart. Like, I didn't have to put as much effort but |
|  |  | for her, like, she puts in a lot of effort. And that's how she gets, like, really good |
|  |  | grades. So... So I know that if she doesn't understand something, like she will |
|  |  | literally put all the effort into like, go over it again, and try and understand it, and |
|  |  | then she'll know it. So when I got to the exam, like she was literally like, walking |
|  |  | textbook, like, knew I could ask her anything. Yeah, I feel like she's kind of the |
|  |  | reliable one ...like she's, I mean, I think that's really good to her that she kind of has |
|  |  | that habit of like working really hard and like making sure she understands |
|  |  | everything. Yeah. I try. I try. I'm trying to make like to look at her and like, try and |
|  |  | be like that. |
|  | I: | Do you feel that that's not the case for you? Do you feel that you were naturally |
|  |  | smart, but didn't so didn't have to put in the effort? |
|  | P2: | Yeah, like, I didn't really have to ask for help. Like, when I was younger, like, I feel |
|  |  | like, I was a lot more independent. So I didn't really ask for help. And I think that's |
|  |  | kind of like not as good now because now I just now that I like, I don't understand |
|  |  | some things. I don't really ask for help still. Yeah, but she definitely asked for help. |
|  |  | Yeah, if she doesn't understand something, but for me, I think I find it difficult to |
|  |  | ask for help. Like, I'm not as used to it. |
|  | I: | Yeah, I see what you mean. And you said that kicked in around that A-level time |
|  |  | because of the shift in batteries because of the shift in how difficult A-Levels were? |
|  |  | Yeah, yeah. |
|  | P2: | Yeah, I remember like in the parent teacher meetings, the teachers would always |
|  |  | tell me like an improvement to like, put my hand up more like speak up more ask |
|  |  | for help. Like they would always tell me like ask for help ask for help like, but I |
|  |  | always like think, "Oh, I could just sort I could just sort it out with myself" or like try |
|  |  | and find out my it by myself. The last resort is asking the teacher... for my friend I |
|  |  | think the first thing is to ask the teacher. |
|  | I: | Yeah. Yeah. Okay, so the last thing I wanted to do was I wanted to show you this |
|  |  | article. And I'm gonna ask you just a couple questions based on this article. So I'm |
|  |  | just going to share my screen again... can see this? |
|  | P2: | Yep, I can see it now. |
|  | I: | Perfect. Right so I will let you read through just tell me when you want me to scroll |
|  |  | down okay (long pause as participant reads article). So what are your initial |
|  |  | thoughts having read that? |
|  | P2: | Yeah, I did hear about this, like, model minority ideal. I agree with it... Indians are |
|  |  | held to a higher level of success, because stereotypically, Indians tend to achieve, |
|  |  | like, higher grades and yeah. Um, I mean, yeah, I've definitely seen the stereotype |
|  |  | because I've seen like, like, videos online, and it's like, oh, well, my white friends. |
|  |  | Their parents will just be like, "Yeah, well done for getting a C or B". And they'll like, |
|  |  | praise and reward them for that. But then for us, it'll be like "What? That's so bad, |
|  |  | that's a fail. That's a fail, you have to get A's and A stars!." Um, so I think for me |
|  |  | that's kind of ingrained in my brain because, as I said to you before, like, I felt like |
|  |  | A's and B's are average. But obviously, like, that's not really average. Like, I think C, |
|  |  | maybe it's average. But, um... um I feel like for myself, I feel like if I got like, below |
|  |  | B's, like it would feel like I failed. |
|  | I: | Okay. Which fits into that stereotype of being an Indian student? |
|  | P2: | Yeah, I think so. I think most people, like Indians, would probably agree with that. |
|  |  | Yeah, I feel like we have like, similar experiences when it comes to that. |
|  | I: | Yeah. How do you think that compares to them? That definition of School Success |
|  |  | that you came up with then? |
|  | P2: | Yeah, I think that kind of matches up because I said like, School Success is like top |
|  |  | grades. I feel like in Indian communities like, we need to get top grades. Otherwise, |
|  |  | it's a fail. |
|  | I: | Yeah. Do you feel that this has any impact on you? |
|  | P2: | I feel like there is a lot of pressure because, like, if you don't, then... then yeah, you |
|  |  | just failed. But also, it's like, there shouldn't be that much pressure, pressure in our |
|  |  | communities. I feel like the comparison is definitely a problem. Comparing |
|  |  | between other students, like, other people my age. |
|  | I: | So it sounds like part of it's based in the community for you? Where else do you |
|  |  | think this Indian stereotype is being continued? |
|  | P2: | I think it is the Indian community. Well, I don't know maybe articles suggesting it's |
|  |  | like, it's maybe to do with racism. But I do think it's like within the Indian |
|  |  | community, because, like, in India, there's the same standards, or like, even higher, |
|  |  | like, there's definitely high expectations in India, like, you need to really like I |
|  |  | remember my cousin. Yeah, right now, he's literally like, studying like, 24/7 literally, |
|  |  | like, he lives in India. And he's probably like, 16 or 17. And he's like, living in a |
|  |  | hostel like by himself. Yeah. And it's basically like, he has to wake up at 4am or |
|  |  | something, and then study, and lunch, dinner, whatever. And then, like, he's |
|  |  | literally studying, like, the whole day. Then he sleeps at like, maybe midnight, and |
|  |  | then he wakes up at 4am or 5am. Again, and then he's just studying the whole day. |
|  |  | So I've only seen that in India. Because I've seen like other cousins do the exact |
|  |  | same thing. |
|  | I: | So I was going to ask you based off of what you mentioned there as well, in terms |
|  |  | of that India, versus I guess, you being over here and still identifying as Indian. Do |
|  |  | you feel there's a difference between how School Success and how that stereotype |
|  |  | is seen in India versus over here in the UK? |
|  | P2: | I think it's much harsher in India. I think. Like, I think the consequences are higher. |
|  |  | Like I think here, like if you don't fit that model of School Success, then like, there's |
|  |  | ways to work around it. Like you can persuade, like for me, like I kind of |
|  |  | compromise with my dad. Like, I feel like, um, Indian parents in this country they |
|  |  | might be a bit more lenient. But I think definitely in India, they're like, definitely |
|  |  | more strict. There probably won't be a place for leniency. Like some people they'll |
|  |  | probably like get disowned if they tried to go to a creative career path. So I feel like |
|  |  | it's definitely like worse there. |
|  | I: | So if you decided you wanted to go down the art route? |
|  | P2: | I think in India would have been like, absolutely no. Yeah. At least here like they |
|  |  | agreed up till A-level. And I guess it worked out for them, because I don't want to |
|  |  | do it anymore. But um... um yeah, in India, I think it would have been no. |
|  | I: | How do you think they would have reacted if you said to them, I want to do art at |
|  |  | university? |
|  | P2: | Oh here? (nod) I don't know... I think I did suggest it before and he was. I think they |
|  |  | just kept like, trying to just kind of trying to convince me, I don't know if I said, like, |
|  |  | 100%, I'm going to do art... I just think they would just be like, really disappointed |
|  |  | maybe? Yeah, I just think they'll just be like, "Oh, you're making a mistake, like, |
|  |  | don't do it. Like, there's no future in it". But I feel like if I kind of proved that I was |
|  |  | actually like, doing something about it, like social media and commissioned work |
|  |  | on Instagram... that would kind of be like proof to them, like, you know, I could |
|  |  | actually succeed in this industry. Because I could, because I'm already like, gaining |
|  |  | an income or something of it. But so if I already had that, like, if I started that |
|  |  | maybe earlier, because I know, there's a lot of young people who do that already. |
|  |  | So I feel like if I actually wanted to go down that route, maybe I would do that. |
|  |  | Yeah. And then they would actually have something tangible to see that. Like, there |
|  |  | is kind of a career path in that. |

## Appendix 12 – Example of stage 1 of data analysis

Self-developmental

Parent pleasing

Parents still support in achieving success

Sibling comparison and change

Parents set implicit expectations which influences approaches to education

Tutoring – outside support and parent teaching

Meeting parental expectation of success

External support

Parent support

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | But my dad, it's like, head straight. Like, you know, yeah, like, pushing me. Yeah. So |
|  |  | those are three main people. Yeah. Also the people who have given me work |
|  |  | placement, I've been able to talk to them and see, see the things, but I think mainly |
|  |  | my family. |
|  | I: | Yeah, that makes complete sense. I'll move on to the next part, how do you feel |
|  |  | about your own ability on your school journey? |
|  | P1: | I think have always known that I've been quite able. But again, I don't know. I feel |
|  |  | like it was just to please my parents for most of it. So that's why I wanted to be |
|  |  | able... |
|  | I: | I know, you said it's partly because you want to please your parents? |
|  | P1: | Yeah. |
|  | IL | What were your parents like around education when you were growing up? Did |
|  |  | they encourage this? |
|  | P1: | I mean, they did a little bit. I mean... So I think this is another thing, like, my brother |
|  |  | when he was younger, he wasn't very, like smart, like his teachers at a young age |
|  |  | would be like, "Oh, he's not really going to do anything!". And my parents also |
|  |  | thought that, you know, like "Oh, he's probably just gonna get like an office job, |
|  |  | he'll be fine". Okay, so my parents would teach us and we'd do Kumon... we'd have |
|  |  | tutors. I think for maths and English. From, like, year four onwards, I think maybe |
|  |  | before that. But I think like, see my brother, he wouldn't do as well so my parents |
|  |  | will get quite angry at him. So it's kind of like, I need to do well, because I don't |
|  |  | want my parents to be angry at me. So I was kind of like, I think I've always been |
|  |  | the one in the family to do... because I've seen my brother and I can learn from his |
|  |  | mistakes. So it’s a bit like, I kind of um take on what he couldn’t do because I don’t |
|  |  | want to, I don’t want to be in the same position as my brother. I'd say yeah... |
|  |  | Because when, especially like, within Indian communities, the parents they |
|  |  | do like to brag about how good their children are doing. And they only |
|  | I: | really boast about you know, how well their child's doing. And usually it is the |
|  |  | parents who are like, "Oh, my child's like, really high, really high up in, like…” |
|  |  | So that pleasing your parents, did that ever come in a way that worked against  Community creating comparisons |
|  |  | what you actually wanted? |
|  | P1: | I mean, obviously, I do everything to my parents, and I want to please them. But I |
|  |  | wish that I did a lot of it for myself as well. Like... hmm... I think growing up, it was |
|  |  | mainly for them. Now, it's more for me, because I understand that you can't do |
|  |  | everything for other people. So, I'm kind of coming out of that a little bit. Yeah. I |
|  |  | think even now, though, because obviously I didn't get in this year, they've been |
|  |  | quite, very supportive, actually, which I was quite surprised about. I thought they'd |
|  |  | be really upset. But obviously, they're upset. But for me, they're upset that I didn't |
|  |  | get in. But now, they're like super on it. They're like, "Okay, let's do this, this, this", |
|  |  | let's make you the best version of yourself to reapply. Yeah. Which I didn't expect. |
|  |  | Because I know that if I was in a different household, I'd probably get, like... uh... I |
|  |  | don't know. Punishment, maybe? Or something like that? |
|  | I: | I know, you said you weren't expecting it. What were you expecting their reaction |
|  |  | to be? |
|  | P1: | Kind of shouting at me. |
|  | I: | Yeah. You were expecting the punishment side of things? |
|  | P1: | I was yeah. Like I said, even before, like, with the whole boyfriend thing, because I |
|  |  | didn't really tell them about it to, like, the full extent. I thought they'd shout at me |
|  |  | when I started crying, but my mom, like, hugged me, that was her first response. |
|  |  | And my dad was like, because it happened a day or two before school ended, my  Parental reaction around success – unexpectedly supporting vs authoritarian behaviour |
|  |  | dad was, like, telling me like, you've only got a day. You've got this. Like, he's like, |
|  |  | pacing up and down, like, telling me, like, motivating me. Yeah, again. I thought |
|  |  | they're just like, shout at me. Yeah. And I thought, yeah... |
|  | I: | So it's a completely different reaction. But a good reaction? |
|  | P1: | Yeah, I was completely was completely shocked by it. Cuz I'd always been scared. |
|  |  | of, like, getting hit and stuff. Cuz we would when we were kids. |
|  | I: | Yeah. Yeah. So it was that fear that even as you got older, as well, that would |
|  |  | continue. |
|  | P1: | Yeah. |
|  | I: | So in relation to the ability question that I asked. Do you think that fits into that  Comparisons affective self-belief and perception of ability – negative wellbeing |
|  |  | idea of Indian students and ability? And where you were up to, in terms of that |
|  |  | learning at school? |
|  |  | Yeah, definitely. I think, my ability. I know, I'm not the smartest kid or anything, you |
|  |  | know, I will never claim to be. But I think when you're around kids a similar age in |
|  |  | the community, where, they are the top this top that and you're just kind of they're |
|  |  | like, Ohhhh (groan), I'm none of this. It kind of played a little bit like, oh, gosh, I |
|  |  | need to do something, I need to be like them a little bit. |
|  | I: | So it sort of motivated you. Did it ever do the opposite to you? |
|  | P1: | Yeah, it did all the time. It felt rubbish like to compare and be worse than them for |
|  |  | me… it would just make me feel really bad cuz, I didn't want to be looked down on. |
|  | I: | Tell me more about that. How did that make you feel? In terms of that negative |
|  |  | side of things. |
|  | P1: | So, hmm... it would just make me feel really bad. And I just didn't want to see |
|  |  | them. I guess I also kind of got bullied as well, because of like, money thing and like |
|  |  | education as well. And it's, I feel like it is the teachings of the parents because the |
|  |  | parents are like that. And then the parents do it to my parents, and then the kids |
|  |  | do it to me. Yeah. And also the parents do it to me. So it's like, yeah, sorry, I forgot |
|  |  | the question! (laugh) |
|  | I: | (laugh) So how did you feel? How did that negative perception of you not being |
|  |  | able to achieve as highly as those 'top achievers' make you feel? |
|  | P1: | Oh, it made me feel really bad. Cuz again, I didn't want to be looked down on. But... |
|  |  | I knew that I was already a little bit like. But that's also why I don't like talking |
|  |  | about my grades with them. Like I completely steer away, like, if people ask me Oh, |
|  |  | what did you get? Like they're so blunt about it. They're like, what did you get? And |
|  |  | I'm like, I just say "I'm happy with what I got". Cuz I don't want to tell. |
|  |  | Like the one GCSE I actually sat was in Year 10. And I got a nine in that, but I didn't |
|  |  | want to tell anyone about it. So I remember a lot of people came up to me, I had to |
|  |  | tell one person cuz they were like, "no, what did you get?" I had to say then but |
|  |  | yeah, everyone else was like, "Oh yeah, I'm happy with what I got and it kind of led |
|  |  | them to interpret what that meant. Whether it's, like, a one to nine, they've got the  Indian peer community setting competition – rejected by participant |
|  |  | whole number. Yeah, you know, they can interpret it however they want. And I |
|  |  | knew that I didn't want to be like everyone else being like. Oh my God, wait, no, |
|  |  | there's this girl, for example, who's quite a lot younger. I think she's in year nine or |
|  |  | year eight. It was like an art test or something and she got, like, 95%. And she was |
|  |  | like, "I could have got 100" and I'm just like... uhh.. Okay! (laughs). I don't know, I |
|  |  | don't know what I said, but it made me feel like... a bit like... I don't know, I think I |
|  |  | felt happy in that moment that I wasn't like her, like, I knew that whatever I'd |
|  |  | done, I enjoyed. I enjoyed art. But I didn't have to be the best in it. I knew my |
|  |  | capability. Like, I was okay at it. I don't know how to explain it! |
|  | I: | No, I see what you mean, you were happy with where you were?  Happiness and wellbeing |
|  | P1: | Yeah, I'm always happy with where I am and how I'm progressing personally, but |
|  |  | no one else will see that. There’s too much evil eye people might cast! As soon as, |
|  |  | people start saying stuff, it gets to you a little bit. Um.. but also, like I said, I don't |
|  |  | like promoting myself and saying I do this, that and the other. So when people do, |
|  |  | it's a little bit like, I can either promote myself here or I can just sit and listen. And I |
|  |  | choose to sit and listen, even though... because I don't like telling them what I'm |
|  |  | doing. Because I don't know. I don't know. |
|  | I: | Yeah. Do you think that your perspective fits in with the Indian community |
|  |  | viewpoint? Or do you think it's different to that? |
|  | P1: | [Pause]... I think it depends on who you are. I mean, I feel like if you ask these |
|  |  | people I'm talking about they'd be like, I don't know, probably a similar one in the  Cycle around expectations and pressure |
|  |  | sense that parents I feel like come into it quite a bit. I think the community |
|  |  | views influence the parents and then this leads to the pressure of competing |
|  |  | against other people for us. Some people might not care because they're at |
|  |  | the top, you know, they know where they're going to go this that and the |
|  |  | other. Yeah. I think it's a personal thing and a personal choice. |
|  | I: | So we've talked actually a bit about the next steps on your on your journey. So |
|  |  | you're hoping to do some work experience over this summer? Figure out if |
|  |  | medicines really what you want to do? And then I assume, hopefully reapply next |
|  |  | year. Is that what next year is for you? |
|  | P1: | Exactly, yeah. Because I realised I didn't really have life experience. Yeah, that kind |
|  |  | of comes into being restricted growing up. Like all my friends, they, you know, |
|  |  | they'd have jobs. They do like five different things in a week. And I'd literally just |
|  |  | get to school and come home. But it's because whenever I asked to have a job,  Gender differences in expectation |
|  |  | well, I never really asked cuz I knew the answer will be no. Because my brother had |
|  |  | asked, and my parents said no to him, like, just focus on education. Okay, and then |
|  |  | the rest will come. You know, that's one thing. |
|  | I: | Why do you feel they didn't want you to have a job? |
|  | P1: | I think my parents mindset is, as long as they're alive, they're, they're a bit like, as |
|  |  | long as we're alive. We're going to support you as much as we can financially. So |
|  |  | obviously, like a lot of my white friends, they'll get, like, the money but that is their |
|  |  | money to spend on things, like, their parents don't really give them a lot. So it's |
|  |  | based on what they earn. But, whereas, I think it's quite common in our |
|  |  | community, like our parents, give us a lot of things financially like clothes, this, that |
|  |  | and the other, like, a lot of it doesn't come out of my pocket. Like, now that it's the |
|  |  | summer and I'm on holiday. Yeah, I'm kind of meeting up with a lot of people a lot. |
|  |  | So, um, the money isn't my own. It's my parents. Yeah, that that is... they've always |
|  |  | said like education. And then we'll, I don't know, I just think it's the Indian way to |
|  |  | look after your kids until they're like 50 (laugh). You know, like financially, which is, |
|  |  | I think I quite like but also I wish I learned the value of money a little bit earlier |
|  |  | than what I do now. |
|  | I; | Yeah. I see what you mean. I know that feeling exactly. Was there anything, aside |
|  |  | from what you're doing now, that you did dream to do? And I know, we talked a bit |
|  |  | about this, that you sort of found your way coming back to medicine. You said at |
|  |  | one point was do law? Was that a dream for you? |
|  | P1: | It was a dream, but I think it's because I watched "Suits" (laugh) |
|  | I: | (laugh) and very high flying lawyers! |
|  | P1: | Yeah exactly! But I'd always liked English, but then... uh... I don't know what |
|  |  | happened. I don't think I liked it as much as I thought. Um... but I think with me, |
|  |  | because I'd always been surrounded by people who'd always known what they  Autonomy around career. Hope parents will give more guidance |
|  |  | wanted to do. I know that these friends are, since birth had been like, you're going |
|  |  | to be a doctor. No, I mean, but with with, with me, it's been me outcome it myself. |
|  |  | But sometimes, I guess I wish that my parents maybe said "you are going to do |
|  |  | this" because I think it's really hard to pick one thing. Yeah. Because now I want to |
|  |  | do so many different things. Yeah. But again, it's like, if that was me, I wouldn't |
|  |  | have a choice. So I'm not sure. Um... yeah law was a big one for a couple of years. |
|  |  | And then it's kind of, like, that kind of fell into like therapy and all that. Yeah. But |
|  |  | what I've learned is whatever I wanted to do is more so like helping people and |
|  |  | being like, in that kind of field. Yeah. So that's why I do feel like there are other jobs |
|  |  | for me, even if it isn't just medicine. Yeah. Because of who I am. |
|  | I: | I see what you mean. So if you had got into medicine, you would have been set on |
|  |  | that. And your view would have been completely different right now? |
|  | P1: | Yeah, because it's, like, a certainty a little bit like okay, medicine. So why would I |
|  |  | give that up? Yeah. For something else a little bit. But now it's, I have the time to |
|  |  | think whether or not because the thing is, at the end of the day, if I don't get the |
|  |  | grades, I might as well just go into something else, even though it's a bit, like, I'm |
|  |  | not as passionate about anything else. So it's like, do I go into a similar course, and |
|  |  | then not be happy. But also, I've heard stories about how people didn't get into |
|  |  | medicine, but now they're doing pharmacy or they're doing this, that and the  Wellbeing approach – allowing self to be happy no matter what |
|  |  | other. But they're enjoying it a lot. So also, at the back of my head, I'm like, even if |
|  |  | it doesn't work out with medicine, I'm the type of person to kind of do my best at |
|  |  | anything, like my own best. And I do feel, like, I can.... I can be happy in anything. |
|  | I: | Yeah, yeah, that's important. Very important. Before I go on to the next section is |
|  |  | have you faced any difficulties along your educational journey? |
|  | P1: | Okay, difficulties. Um... How'd you mean? |
|  | I: | So I guess any pressures, which could fall into difficulties, any, I guess, moments of |
|  |  | crisis, any moments that you, you felt like you didn't belong? Any moments that |
|  |  | of doubt along your journey or any pressures, difficulties you faced? Those types, |
|  |  | kinds of things? |
|  | P1: | Yeah. So for example, like the not belonging thing, I could really see that because I |
|  |  | moved to [school] for my A levels. And from, like, uh... you can see the difference |
|  |  | in like diversity. So it made me reflect on how I didn't really belong at the other |
|  |  | school. Yeah. |
|  | I: | And that's, that's quite interesting. Do you feel with that diversity, that things have |
|  |  | become easier on your educational journey? Do you feel that anything's changed |
|  |  | with your actual learning at school? Or do you think it's more just that feeling of |
|  |  | belonging that's changed? |
|  | P1: | Definitely the feeling of belonging. I think education wise, I guess yes. Because, I |
|  |  | think, naturally, I just fell into like an all Asian group. I mean, it's not necessarily |
|  |  | what I personally wanted because I like a mix, but it's just how it happened. So I'd. |
|  |  | like, talk to everyone, but like, my actual group is all Asians. And I think in that  Peer similarity in Asian community – shared view of success |
|  |  | respect, everyone's quite focused on that education. And they've had a similar |
|  |  | upbringing, or maybe less lenient than what I've gone through. So they're still not |
|  |  | allowed to go out or, it's like, be home at certain time. But that also makes it |
|  |  | harder to, like, go out and stuff. But education wise, um.. you can rely on each |
|  |  | other. |
|  | I: | Do they have the, sort of, same outlook as you with education? |
|  | P1: | Yes. Similar. I feel, like, they're more, like, headstrong on education some of them, |
|  |  | more than me. Uh... you can definitely see a competitive side in some of them. But |
|  |  | also, I do have, like, friends who aren't Asian who are also very competitive. So I |
|  |  | wouldn't just say it's just Indian, in that respect. But you can, you can see it a little  Avoiding competition around education |
|  |  | bit. But I, I don't know. I just feel like doing me. So I try not to get involved with it |
|  |  | as much as I can. |
|  | I: | Yeah, and try not to do that whole comparison? |
|  | P1: | Yeah, exactly. Yeah. Because I don't think that's what friendship should be. |
|  | I: | Yeah. And that's a very important part of it. Um... so the next part I wanted to talk |
|  |  | to you about was looking at what the term School Success means to you. So when I |
|  |  | say that word, School Success, what comes to your mind? |
|  | P1: | I think I'm gonna say a very stereotypical Asian thing (laugh) |
|  | I: | (laugh) Go on! |
|  | P1: | I think... it is, like, getting the top grades, what I've been conditioned to think. So  Explicit – change in view from academic and grades based success to self-development |
|  |  | School Success, getting the top grades, being top of the class kind of a little bit. You |
|  |  | know, um.. that was my thought, like growing up. But, like, upon reflection, it's a |
|  |  | little bit different. I think School Success is doing the best that you can. I think |
|  |  | School Success is being a good person. Like, in high school, I rarely talked to my |
|  |  | teachers. Now, I think, why... I wouldn't say why I'm successful, but like, grown into |
|  |  | the person I am, like, having those talks with my teachers or getting out there, |
|  |  | getting involved with different school aspects, more like extracurricular stuff. So... I |
|  |  | can see a difference because I've recognised this whole, like, stereotypical thing. |
|  |  | Yeah. But yeah, definitely back then. Getting good grades. And literally it, that is it. |
|  | I: | And now you feel as you've grown up, and you've got older, it's, it's changed. When |
|  |  | do you feel that definition sort of started and when do you feel it switched? |
|  | P1: | Yeah, I think it's switched because COVID I didn't say any of these people. I was so |
|  |  | happy for two years. I guess it's kind of a reset, actually, then going into sixth form. |
|  |  | Yeah, I was quite quiet. And I realised that I didn't want to be like that. Yeah, so I |
|  |  | just started getting involved in things and I realised that I was quite different to |
|  |  | how I was in high school. Because again, it was just like, grades and do the odd, |
|  |  | like, hockey. But now it's like doing things in school, that side of school, managing |
|  |  | your time. I saw the switch there and even throughout year 13. I think also applying  Grades-based is not the only view of Success |
|  |  | to medicine, I was like, it really isn't just about grades, because grades |
|  |  | only gets you halfway through the door. The rest is who you are as a person what |
|  |  | you've done with your time. So there's a lot more to it than just the academic side |
|  |  | of things. |
|  | I: | That makes complete sense And who do you think influenced how your original |
|  |  | definition of School Success, based around grades, formed?  Peer competition |
|  | P1: | I think friends. My friends are very smart. So it's kind of like healthy competition, |
|  |  | but also a bit in my head like, "Ohhh, I didn't do as well this, that and the other". |
|  |  | Yeah, there was a little bit of that. I think again, parents. Tthey wouldn't really say |
|  |  | anything, but you can kind of tell especially on parents evening like I'd get decent |
|  |  | parent,.. No, this is the whole, like, brother thing again. When I'd go to my |
|  |  | brother's parents evening because I couldn't stay at home, I'd see the look of |
|  |  | disappointment on my parents face. Yeah, again, my brother would get shouted |
|  |  | out. Yeah, like my parents would just be so disappointed, like, the car journey back. |
|  |  | Like, if you know it was my brother's parents evening, you know it will go bad if it |
|  |  | was mine, it was kind of good. So that was kind of why, cuz I didn't want, again, |
|  |  | parents to be like, upset. Yeah, yeah, yeah, it was influenced. I think that's about it, |
|  |  | parents and friends. |
|  | I: | And do you feel the community has impacted that for you, too? |
|  | P1: | Yeah.... um.... I think a little bit. But I wouldn't really talk about my grades like |
|  |  | throughout high school. Like that was always a topic that I just shut up. I wouldn't |
|  |  | say a word. I tried to let it not affect me, but I do feel like it did. So, I think |
|  |  | subconsciously at the back of my head, I was like "this girl's got like...". But also, but |
|  |  | also, I feel like I knew I wasn't top of the class. So I don't think I could ever compare |
|  |  | myself to them. Because, I knew I wasn't on their league. |
|  | I: | So how would all these groups have all defined School Success? For example, like, |
|  |  | your parents, your friends. And let's say to an extent the community, you think |
|  |  | their definitions would have matched with yours, around it being very grades based |
|  |  | as well? |
|  | P1: | I think when you say School Success, I think my parents would say grades. When it |
|  |  | comes to friends, it depends what kind of friends you talk. Some of my friends |
|  |  | might say, oh, yeah, just do your best. Yeah, School Success, it's been friends like |
|  |  | having friends, having a good time, experiences going out doing this, like |
|  |  | everything. But I think with maybe my other friends, they might just say grades as |
|  |  | well. Yeah, community, I'd say grades. |
|  | I: | Yeah. And how about your view? Now? That's the one that's a bit more |
|  |  | comprehensive, that looks more wider skills and extracurricular. How do you think |
|  |  | each of those so parents, friends and community, do you feel their views have |
|  |  | stayed the same? Or do you think that's have changed? Along the way, too? |
|  | P1: | I think my parents have changed. Because um... I guess with my brother and me, |
|  |  | we've applied to like health care courses. So with my brother as well, it was more |
|  |  | so going out to care homes doing this, doing that. Yeah. And it was it's a similar |
|  |  | thing with me. So my parents have probably seen it. Right. Okay. Medical Schools, |
|  |  | dental schools, they don't just care about grades as everything. So I think they've |
|  |  | also shifted a little bit. I think the community, I think they'll be like, it is grades. |
|  |  | There'll be like grades, grades, grades. It’s a race, like, a game that you don’t want |
|  |  | to play! Then just do extracurricular just to get into medical school. I don't think |
|  |  | it'll play into their actual beliefs. . I think it's more like put it on your CV, get |
|  |  | in." It's not actually, like kind of taking it in. Yeah, it's more so, do this, do that... |
|  |  | just, just to put on a piece of paper. |

Community – no shift/change

Parent views can shift

Community – grades based success

Friends – individual or grades

Parents- grades based success

Comparison of self to others (high ability students)

Sibling comparison and success

## Appendix 13 – Example of Stages 2-6 of analysis (for Progress, grades and model minority construction)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **P** | **Educational-Praising success** | **Discourse and Action orientation** | **Positionings** | **Practices, institutions and power** | **Subjectivity** |
| P3 | And then also, you know, having the really high grades and sort of, you know, being so called model, model students all throughout school. Like, teachers seeing you as that and maybe thinking they need to push you more because they know you can achieve more than other ethnicity children maybe. I guess they just want to help and make sure that you’re achieving your best but sometimes they might push you and just assume all Indians can get the good grades which isn’t always true, and sometimes can feel really unfair. | * Stereotypical and high expectation; performance discourse * Purpose = school is a place that enables the praising of success and therefore encouraging this is important * Seems to be used as a model example of what others can do and how all students can be. * Effect = shows the high aspirations to be reached for by all students, not just by former students but by teachers too | * Positioned = **inferior** * They seem themselves as looking at these ‘model’ students and comparing to them * P2 classifies themselves as part of their teacher’s construction of success through their own choices – teachers seen as important in creating and continuing success through ‘praise’ * Seeing this view of grades, model students influence how they see success | * Closes down opportunities as though this is supposed to be encouraging, it seems to have the opposite effect and may set up the unrealistic standards for young people. When they are not achieving this, it seems to be worse * Supports and enables the educational definitions of success around grades and successful university etc through celebrating these people regularly | * Disheartening * May be inspiring but unattainable |
| P2 | ... there's this one girl. I think she's doing medicine. And then she got into Cambridge or something. And then the whole like, literally, the teachers put  that in the assembly. |
| P2 | I think maybe the fact that like, that idea is praised a lot more like you see, like, you see those people getting praised more you see, like them having like support groups, you see them, like, meeting up with all the teachers and then like telling teachers like, Oh, I got this like, and then they'll be like, "Wow, so like, happy" or whatever. |
| **P** | **Parental –**  **Pushing** | **Discourse and Action orientation** | **Positionings** | **Practices, institutions and power** | **Subjectivity** |
| P1 | But I've always been, like, just naturally 'okay', at school, you know what I mean? So, for like SATs and stuff, I didn't really do a lot. But my parents would be like, well they'd give me books and be like, "come on, you can do some extra stuff". Um... Yeah. So I got my... results. And I did okay. Like, like I said, I didn't really do anything. But I think my mom said, like, "oh, you should have done a little bit more work?" and "put in a little bit more work". And I was like okay. Because I think throughout high school as well, it was more so me trying to please my parents rather than me doing it for myself. | * Implicit view of parental discourses, encouragement is subtle at times. * Purpose = to show the subtle and implicit signs that parents give to encourage work and therefore build up to success * This was also through verbal and non-verbal acts e,g, telling them to do more work or putting them in difficult situations that would push them more * Gained an increased expectation around education and progression for young people * Loss of young people’s love for education as this seems to be ‘forced upon them. * Effects = show parental importance | * Position = pushed * This influences what they do as they accept the pushing and therefore continue with education further * “Harder” = influences how they feel about this * “trying to please my parents” so the pushing was mainly to please parents rather than doing it for own benefit so this pyshing is necessary to keep them motivated (necessary evil)? | * Opens up opportunities = it allows p’s to be more focused and see education as their priority * May also close down their own autonomy to self-manage and have their own intrinsic desire to complete their work * Challenges the discourse that parents are strict, authoritarian and are explicitly forcing work. Sometimes, this is in the form of more implicit expectations and values that are instilled * Also feeds into parental pushing discourse | * Pressured * Expectant |
|  | **Stereotype**  **affecting thoughts, beliefs and actions** | **Discourse and Action orientation** | **Positionings** | **Practices, institutions and power** | **Subjectivity** |
| P1 | Because I want to be happy, but it doesn't mean medicine. But also, if I don't, again, it's like the community. A lot of my, um. my like thoughts and stuff is based on the community, which is what I'm trying to come out of now. | * Comparison discourse affecting experience * Purpose of this discourse is to show the power of the community and its wider reaching effects. This is maintained by lack of challenge from previous generations. * Loss of autonomy as the community all-encompassing and affecting their job decisions, beliefs and limits. Self becomes absorbed in this construction and becomes a part of the community. This affects feeling around own progress and can impact wellbeing when ‘it gets to you’ * Effect = shows the effect of community and how this can be changed as P is trying to dissolve the discourse as they want to move away from it | * Positioned as formed by the community. * ‘everything’ linked to community so it’s seen as the root of all decisions, actions and gives limited autonomy * This influences P1 as all thoughts, decisions are made according to their choices and perception of own ability * Movement away from this position as P1 becomes more independent and positioned as taking control of own life. Chooses instead to withhold information to resist. * Views are seen as ‘archaic’ suggesting a desire to move to modern thinking. | * Formed by the community closes down opportunity for action as there is reduced autonomy and limits actions to particular options that are deemed as desirable. This group thinking forms a dominant discourse that limits the actions outside community norms. * When others comment, they do not consider the perspective of the individual, seeing progress as a cultural norm * This discourse limits actions, thoughts and choices as there is a feeling of guilt around career choices – it dominates the social practices and maintains it as it permeates into thinking, causing doubts. * Shift in discourse has occurred to challenge community views – ability to be more confident against dominant practices around progression to higher education, breaking down stigma. | * Feeling controlled/trapped, affecting their view of themselves as being influenced by comm * Movement to being more positive about own choices, being more autonomous * Resistance to old views of community |
| P1 | Yeah, I'm always happy with where I am and how I'm progressing personally, but no one else will see that. You know, no-one externally. But as soon as, like, other people start saying stuff, it gets to you a little bit. |
| P4 | I hate to say this, growing up in a brown community was just so hard. It made you like, I used to think to myself, like when I was really, really young, like, why am I brown, like, you... at a young age, you shouldn't really be thinking about stuff like that, but you're kind of just taught, this is my skin colour, like, this is my culture, this is the kind of stuff that I have to deal with. | * MM stereotype leads to sel-doubt over ethnicity * Purpose = to show how the community can affect self-perception of own ethnicity, especially over something that is ‘so minor’ * Loss of sense of self as negative construction because of cultural values which set up a certain expectation for people to deal with. Links to previous construction as it’s the norms that cause this feeling * Effect = a demonstration to the interviewer of the difficulty of being Indian and evokes sympathy, and anger at community * Dissolving of discourse, linked to mental health | * Positioned as conflicted about Indian ethnicity - ‘I hate to say this’ because of current feeling of enjoying the culture, but awareness of effects of community on ethnicity understanding * Positioned as an advocate of mental health against community’s views – the ‘pressure’ it causes * ‘you’re not good enough to be Indian’ – there’s a clear criterion which makes you Indian and participant is not part of this | * Conflicted – closes down opportunities for action as being really young and unable to make a change is difficult – as you are taught by others on how to think and see yourself. Supports social discourse around cultural norms and ‘the way things are’ thinking – stuck in culture and limits opportunity for any difference * Mental health - opens up opportunity to be part of the change for good and make a change * Pressure in India to perform has led to suicide – maintain this social practice because of feeling that you do not meet the standards of own ethnic culture | * Feeling stuck, feeling of isolation as you cannot escape colour and culture * Experience selves as bad, negative, excluded * See own ethnicity as a negative and standards as damaging |
| P3 | [Achieving lower grades] Like, you know, you’re not good enough to be Indian and be part of the community over something so minor. I think it really need to change because mental health is becoming more talked about and in the Indian community, no-one likes to talk about it but this is one of the reasons the mental health is so bad, like, the pressure to be someone so great and that you can’t be anything else. (Educational?) |
|  | **Parental –**  **Career** | **Discourse and Action orientation** | **Positionings** | **Practices, institutions and power** | **Subjectivity** |
|  | Like good subjects to them are like the science-y ones. They always love the medicine route, or like my dad was saying engineering like, they just love like, what is it? Doctor, lawyer, accountant, engineer... those are like the career paths that they like. So I feel like School Success is kind of like picking those. I think definitely medicine probably at the top of that. | * Traditional career discourse, there is a contrast with arts based subjects and the preferred careers. Performance discourse – aim is to reach these careers * Purpose = there is an expectation to complete some level of higher study at university and pursue a career. This career is often in a particular field (medicine, doctor, lawyer accountant) * This comes from more comparisons to others and this is how the define success * Effects = resentment towards these particular routes and maybe even off putting because of how stereotypical they seem * Loss of own career option as they are taught to follow a specific pathway * P’s would want to dissolve this discourse because of the constrains that it places on them and the high expectations | * Positioned = frustrated * Influences how they talk about these options and career paths as they feel a specific pressure. * One p applies to medicine so has been influenced by this more implicit pushing * “I think that’s every Indian parents dream” = suggesting that this is something idealistic that they cannot live up to * School Success is then seen as these career paths, with medicine being the most popular = frustrated that this is the only way of being seen as successful | * Closes down opportunities as it limits the range of careers that seem acceptable for p’s * Limits what can be said and done as p’s cannot argue against this and are aware that they have not lived up to the expectation placed on them * This supports a parental discourse and even institutional discourse around pushing further education and career paths * By not choosing these careers, there is a challenge to the discourse around this expectation parents have created | * Trapped * Annoyed * Guilty * Let down |
|  | I'd say there was slight pressure, that was like, you know, like, you know, do well because it's going to benefit you. And in terms of going on specific route, quite a lot of Indian parents want their child to go down the law or like medical sort of route. |
|  | Um... I did consider law at first, but I didn't know why I switched to psychology. But my parents are happy with it. They didn't you know, say like, "Oh, don't do this, go and do something like dentistry or something like that". They were happy and trusted me to make that decision myself. I think I was quite lucky that they were more relaxed about it and didn't force me to do something I didn't want to, |
|  | …like my parents say, because I applied for medicine, my parents said, um, they say to like the community and the people like that, like, "Oh, we've never put pressure on our kids". …But also, like, yes, they've never really said to go into medicine or dentistry for my brother. But it's, you just know, it's kind of there like, they've always said, like, "It'd be good if you're a doctor, it'd be good if you do law".  impicit |