

Racism, Identity and Belonging: How do these factors interact for young Black people in predominantly white settings?

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Abstract

Background: Strong feelings of school belonging are closely associated with positive outcomes for children and young people, including academic achievement, engagement and motivation. Several perspectives conceptualise belonging as a transactional process, involving subjective evaluations, feelings of acceptance and evaluations of the immediate context. Within the UK, there is a lack of research that considers the experiences of belonging for minoritised young people. However, some studies indicate that the racial homogeneity of the school context plays a role within belonging ratings of ethnically minoritised children. This area of research is particularly pertinent in the case of Afro-Caribbean, or young 'Black' people, due to a range of educational disparities experienced within education.

Current Study: Taking an exploratory approach, the current study explores the stories of five young Black people and one parent with a focus upon the factors that interacted the construction of a sense of belonging within predominantly white secondary schools. Using a grounded theory approach, data was collected through semi-structured interviews and analysed through sequential levels of coding, diagramming and categorisation.

Findings: Six interacting conceptual categories were developed through the analysis of interview data. Findings indicated that several factors were pertinent within the construction of a sense of belonging for Black pupils. Experiences that confronted their identity as Black people included subtle and overt forms of racism. Reactions to these experiences included resistance, emotional reflection and self-advocacy. Young people constructed a view of their social positioning within the school by evaluating the cultural context of the school, evaluating the meaning attached to teacher interactions, and understanding how friendships promote feelings of acceptance. Young people discussed interactions that centred and highlighted their physical appearance as a Black person, as salient within their retelling of stories about school. Belonging within the grounded theory is conceptualised as a non-static, interactional process that is in part directed by experiences that highlight racial identity. Belonging needs were 'transcended' in response to experiences of racism and othering. Young people enlist a range of sophisticated strategies to achieve self-affirmation, 'belonging to oneself' and personal growth. The findings were 'sensitised' through the application of Critical Race Theory, intersectionality and ecological perspectives. Literature relating to the role of impact of wider societal racial tension, racial socialisation, the impact of racism on mental health and belonging as well as post-trauma growth are also used to further contextualise the grounded theory. Symbolic Interactionism is considered as a useful lens in understanding the potentially restorative role of dialogue in constructing a sense of belonging with individual meaning.

Implications for future research include the need to explore additional questions relating to the relationship between resilience, belonging and personal identity. Implications for educational psychology practice are indicated, including further investigation about our competencies in supporting increasingly racially complex situations across the educational spectrum. School policy and training suggestions are made, focusing on providing support that enables systemic and interactionist perspectives of identity related issues. Critique of the current study include the approach taken to theory generation and the inclusion of both African and Caribbean participants.

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This thesis is dedicated to the young people and parents in this study, who shared their rich and powerful stories and perspectives with me. I acknowledge the hundreds of young people who develop sophisticated methods of being, who grow up making sense of many layers of identity at once, who shrink certain aspects of themselves to serve the nature of their environment and who learn to flourish despite it all.

I would like to acknowledge my wonderful family. This one is for all of us. Thank you to my friends for being my cheerleaders.

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Finally, to the future trainee educational psychologists and researchers who feel doubt about exploring an underrepresented voice, go for it.

1. Introduction

1.1 Context of the current study

The current study uses grounded theory methodology to explore the ways in which young Black people construct a sense of belonging whilst attending predominantly white secondary schools and educational settings.

A myriad of statistical data, sociological research and educational research exists pertaining to the school experiences of Black pupils in the UK (see Strand, 2019, Stranf & Lindorff, 2018; Mirza, 2002; Gillborn, 2005; Rollock 2012; Rollock, Vincent & Ball, 2012; Lander, 2015; Doharty, 2018). However, within educational psychology research, this has been less of a topical area. The current study aimed to address this, firstly by hearing the voices of young people and secondly, by analysing the role of the school context within participant constructions of belonging.

Educational psychologists are well placed to take an interactionist and ecological view of factors relating to educational outcomes and child development. In the case of Black pupils - for whom the academic narrative has been historically one sided and often centred on narratives of exclusion and underachievement - this interactionist perspective may be highly pertinent. Pairing belonging, which is associated with a range of positive outcomes, with the Black community is thought to provide a novel research approach within educational psychology.

The emergence of the current study also reflects the view that '*ongoing research into belonging, with high utility for practitioners has never been more important'* (p.6 Roffey, Allen & Boyle, 2019). It was also indicated by Roffey and colleagues that factors including race and ethnicity interact with belonging in ways that are not presently understood in clear terms within the profession. Analysis of the data in the current study aims to address this by exploring the role of both racial identity and racial context in the development of a sense of belonging.

As this is a novel piece of research, an exploratory approach will be taken. Acknowledging the many years of tension and inequity faced by Black families experiencing the education system, the study is aligned with a transformative and social constructivist paradigm. Grounded theory was thought to provide an additionally unique contribution to the research base by providing a framework to construct a conceptual and novel theory about Black pupils' experiences of belonging in predominantly white schools.

1.2 Background of and positionality of the researcher

I undertook the current research during my professional training for the Doctorate in Applied Educational Psychology at the University of Nottingham. Data was gathered within a Local Authority in the Midlands.

Up until this point in my career, I have worked in a range of roles within educational and community settings with children and families. Belonging has been a key theme when considering the inclusion, success and wellbeing of those I have

worked with. During my undergraduate studies, I analysed the way that various aspects of personal identity including ethnicity and family experiences of higher education interacted with students navigation of education.

An additional driving force behind the current research topic stems from my understanding of the historical role that educational psychologists have had in being problematically deterministic about the educational futures of many Black children (Williams, Weerasignhe & Hobbs, 2015). I sense that this history may have caused some hesitancy within the profession to critically engage with this population across research and practice policy. This assumption may be supported by the low number of returns when searching for the terms “African” and “Caribbean” on the Educational Psychology in Practice journal search engine.

As a researcher of African and Caribbean descent, I am also committed to and aware of the experiences of my communities both within education and across other institutional systems. Charmaz (2014) argues that grounded theorists need not attempt to be silent, neutral or objective. In light of this argument and of my previous knowledge and insights, I acknowledge my role in the construction of the following theory. As such, I use first person throughout, to account for this acknowledgement. I take full account of my positionality within Chapter 3 in an attempt to remain reflexive and aware of potential biases within the research process.

1.3 Overview of the thesis structure

Within grounded theory methodology, literature reviews are often presented slightly differently than in traditional thesis write-ups. I will provide a brief overview of how the thesis is structured:

- Chapter 2 provides the context for the current study. The literature here aims to present a clear rationale for the study by highlighting gaps in the current research base.
- Chapter 3 gives an overview of the methodological structure of the research. The philosophical underpinning of the study is indicated along with the qualitative methods considered for the study. Data collection and analysis procedures are highlighted. An overview of factors relating to the credibility and quality of the research is provided. Ethical considerations are explored.
- Chapter 4 illustrates the findings of the study. The conceptual categories developed through the process of data analysis are highlighted. Each category and focused code is explored in turn.
- Chapter 5 presents a second literature review. This review aims to locate the current findings within existing theoretical insights by presenting focused and relevant literature.
- Chapter 6 provides a visual representation of the grounded theory of the study along with a narrative exploration. The grounded study conceptualises that belonging for Black pupils in the current study is an interactional and ‘process-driven’ experience.
- Chapter 7 highlights links between the literature presented in the first literature review and the current grounded theory. Implications for schools, educational psychology practice and future research are provided. Further considerations

of the credibility of the research are explored. I provide a reflection of the research process overall.

1.4 Terminology

'Race' is discussed throughout the current thesis. Although it is commonly acknowledged that race is a social construct and not a biological marker of difference, various types of inequalities reside along racial lines (Williams, Weerasinghe & Hobbs, 2015), with the construct of race affecting science, politics and everyday life (Saini, 2019). The current study is also positioned by the understanding that issues surrounding race cannot be understood outside of a global and historical context.

'Black' within the current study refers to young people of African and of Caribbean descent. Whilst homogenising African and Caribbean experiences may be viewed as reductionist, I was interested in how the experience of belonging interacted with Blackness more generally, taking the educational context into account. Furthermore, the inclusion of both African and Caribbean participants reflects my positionality (explored further in Chapter 3) as a researcher of both African and Caribbean descent which leads me to viewing a sense of diasporic interconnectedness between African and Caribbean people.

'Ethnic minority' is referred to, throughout the study within quotation marks. This reflects a personal preference to highlight the problematic nature of associating these cultural groups with 'smallness'. Despite being in the minority within this country, the term 'ethnic minority' decontexualises the global communities that we are linked with. Furthermore, 'ethnic minority', as with the term BAME (Black and minority ethnic) may erase the rich, specific and diverse cultures of specific Black, Asian and non-white people. 'Minoritised groups' is used within the current study to more accurately represent the fluid nature of minority status. Wherever possible when reviewing the literature, I will be specific about the ethnic or racial background of the people I am referring to.

2. Literature Review - Part 1

2.1 Introduction

Within the literature discussing grounded theory methodology, the positioning and nature of the Literature Review has been highly contested (Charmaz, 2014). Original proponents of grounded theory methodology argue that carrying out a full literature review before conducting the research dilutes the authenticity of the study by imposing existing theoretical perspectives onto the data (Glasser & Strauss, 1967). Researchers following such a model of grounded theory are therefore encouraged to start data collection prior to conducting a full or systematic search of the literature in order to give rise to specific and localised theoretical insights with a high level of fidelity to the gathered data (Dick, 2014).

Others argue that this purist approach overlooks the complex relationship between the researcher, their perspectives and the data (Layder, 1998). The position described above is said to be problematic, as it may leave researchers vulnerable to implicit biases that are potentially more damaging to research integrity than declared biases (Thornberg, 2012; Dey, 1993). From a pragmatic perspective, the purist approach to grounded theory methodology may not be compatible with the current academic context, in which doctoral researchers are required to engage with the literature on some level, to present a theoretically viable research proposal (Birks and Mills, 2015).

The current study attempts to adopt a stance of 'theoretical agnosticism' (Henwood & Pigeon, 2003). This stance allows researchers to engage in their area of research by taking a critical view of established and relevant research which may eventually 'earn' their way into a delayed and more thorough literature review based on their congruence with the emerging themes (Charmaz, 2011).

In line with this approach, the opening literature review constitutes an intentionally broad exploration of the context for my research. The second literature review was conducted following the collection of my data, enabling me to theoretically 'ground' my study within the context of the aligned literature.

The present literature review begins by exploring definitions of belonging in general, then school belonging specifically. This is followed by an illustration of the association between belonging and positive outcomes for pupils. The review goes on to highlight qualitative studies that explore pupil perspectives on school belonging. Experiences of belonging across racial groups are analysed, followed by an exploration of experiences of belonging for Black American students in particular. The review then highlights the historical and current context of education for Black British pupils, emphasising the importance of school context. It concludes with an argument for exploring belonging within this population.

2.2 Defining Belonging

The concept of belonging encompasses a range of emotions and social processes (Cartmell & Bond, 2015). Some psychological perspectives conceptualise belonging as a key factor in the way that we relate ourselves and to others. For example, social identity perspectives indicate that self-concept is highly influenced by the attributes of

the group someone belongs to (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Similarly, ecological systems theory positions the individual or child as *belonging* to a range of different systems, starting with their familial relationships in their immediate environment and extending outward to their school and then wider community (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Within both of these conceptions of belonging, individual life is conceived as an extension of wider systemic influences.

Other theories locate belonging as a human need. For example, humanistic perspectives conceptualise 'belongingness' as a psychological need to be regarded and respected, which has a direct impact on social behaviour. If unmet, the need to belong becomes a driving force behind behaviour, prompting the individual to search for their place within a range of groups (Maslow, 1943). Theories of attachment position belonging as a need that is fostered and cultivated in early caregiver-child relationships, and which is strongly influential on an individual's approach to future relationships (Bowlby, 1988; Allen & Bowles, 2012).

Integrating a number of these perspectives, Baumeister and Leary (1995) characterise belonging as the need for close, continuous interpersonal relationships that involve affection, concern and stability. Belonging is typified as a process, involving the search for high-quality and positive relationships, rather than a large quantity of relationships. Indeed, when people have a high sense of belonging, feelings of social isolation and loneliness are thought to decrease, enabling the search for additional bonds to reduce. This conceptualisation indicates the importance of the social context in the process of finding a place to belong.

Although broadly accepted, it may be important to consider how these models and descriptions of belonging represent the experiences of migrant, minoritised and differently abled individuals who may experience the social world in ways unrepresented by popular models.

2.3 Defining School Belonging

Libbey (2004) highlights the '*confusing definitional spectrum'* in the area of school belonging research. 'School connectedness', 'school attachment', 'school bonding' and 'school climate' have all been used interchangeably within the literature and all refer to slightly different processes (Libbey, 2004). 'Belonging', more so than the other terms above, provides a broad enough landscape to accommodate a variety of experiences, social process and structures and as such, due to the exploratory nature of the current study, this is the selected term for the current study.

Goodenow's (1993) description of school belonging is commonly used within the literature (e.g. Osterman, 2000; Furrer & Skinner, 2003; Fredericks, Blumenfeld & Paris, 2004). Goodenow proposed that school belonging means: '*being accepted valued, included and encouraged by others (teachers and peers) in the academic classroom … feeling oneself to be of importance to the life and activity of the class'* (Goodenow, 1993 p25.).

Libbey (2007) argues that pupils need to feel safe, cared for and fairly treated by teachers to attain a sense of school belonging. Both Libbey and Goodenow's

descriptions position a feeling of acceptance and of inclusion as being central to the development of a sense of school belonging. Although useful conceptualisation, these descriptions of belonging could potential be criticised for lacking in specificity, making them difficult to accurately explore.

In their study exploring school belonging amongst resettled Somali adolescents, Kia-Keating and Ellis (2007) usefully explain that definitions of belonging generally include:

- A pupil's sense of personal investment and attachment to their school
- A child's compliance with school expectations and demands, or their 'commitment' to their school
- Their involvement in the school community; for instance, the extent to which they are engaged in extracurricular aspects of school
- Belief in the values of the school

Whereas the definitions above are focused on largely internal processes (i.e. belief, investment, compliance) it could be argued that constructions of belonging require a more explicitly ecological lens, to account for the transactional process between the individual and their context.

Allen and Kern (2017), interpret research findings about school belonging through the lens of Bronfenbrenner & Ceci's (1994) bio-ecological model. As such, they present the 'Bio-Psycho-Socio-Ecological' framework of school belonging based on their synthesis of literature relating to factors affecting school belonging. Within the framework, they argue that the following factors dynamically interact to influence how pupils experience belonging in school at any given time:

- Biological factors which predispose a pupil to behaving in a particular way
- Psychological factors, such as 'cognitive style', emotions and ways of thinking
- Social factors relating to the quality of relationships within the school
- Ecological factors such as wider community issues, cultural norms and relevant policies

Understanding school belonging through this lens might be appealing to the educational psychologist who takes a systems approach to their practice (Wolfson, Whaling, Stewart & Monsen, 2003) due to the acknowledgement of the dynamic interaction between a range of factors. However, the framework seems to make some assumptions that could be interpreted as potentially deterministic in their conceptualisation of children. For example, the authors discuss worldview, and psychological make-up as something fixed which interacts with the surrounding world. It is my view that these qualities are not fixed, but magnified, supported, diminished, accepted or discouraged by the environment in which they are expressed. In this way, although the model takes account of a range of factors, the extent that these are viewed as interactionist is less clear. Instead, it would seem that these factors are viewed as elements that may improve or reduce belonging, rather than interact with belonging in complex and nuanced ways.

2.3.1 Belonging and Positive Outcomes

A range of measures of school belonging have been developed (e.g. Psychological Sense of School Membership Scale, Goodenow, 1993; School Connectedness Scale,

Lohmeier & Lee 2008; Student Engagement Instrument, Appleton, Christenson & Reschly, 2006) making this a ripe area of study for positivist research and quantitative analysis. Research in this area has in some cases established a positive correlation between belonging and academic achievement (Sari, 2013; Pittman & Richmond, 2007).

A commonly cited study within this area by Furrer & Skinner (2003) shows that school belonging is positively correlated with indicators of academic motivation, namely emotional engagement. This study, conducted in the US, used a 20-item self-report questionnaire about the friendships, perceived academic control and academic disaffection of 641 elementary school pupils. However, the age group of the pupils in the study was not clearly defined, making it difficult to generalise findings. This is important, as both age and stage of schooling are shown to interact with ratings of belonging (Gillen-O'Neel & Fulgni, 2013). Furthermore, aspects such as engagement in extra-curricular activities and children's agreement with school values could have added further context to the findings.

The relationship between school belonging and academic motivation is a trend which is also observable over time. Gillen-O'Neel & Fuligni (2013) studied the relationship between school belonging, academic achievement and motivation in American high school students aged 13.94 – 19.15 years of age over the course of 4 years. Throughout the course of high school, belonging declined for female but increased for male participants. In the same study, longitudinal analysis showed that belonging was felt most highly when pupils rated the enjoyability and usefulness of schools highly, indicating a positive relationship between belonging and engagement. Early research by Mahoney & Cairns (1997) provides partial support for Gillen-O'Neel & Fuligni's (2013) study, by illustrating that school dropout risk was significantly lower in pupils who engaged in extracurricular activities, which are conceptualised as a key aspect in the development of school belonging (Kia-Keating & Ellis, 2007; Bouchard & Berg, 2017). Further understanding of the interpersonal factors that facilitate a relationship between motivation, engagement and belonging could be useful for the aforementioned studies. For example, Goodenow (1993) argued that the *subjective* element of belonging, particularly individual perceptions of interpersonal support and feeling respected are seen as most important when considering the relationship between belonging and motivation.

School belonging has also been shown to have a positive link with markers of psychological wellbeing such as 'happiness' (O'Rourke & Cooper, 2010), academic self-efficacy (Battistich, Solomon, Kim, Watson, & Schaps, 1995), self-efficacy (Kia-Keating & Ellis, 2007) and self-esteem (Nutbrown & Clough, 2009).

In a longitudinal study of 10- and 15-year olds in New Zealand, Jose, Ryan and Pryor (2012) found a bi-directional relationship between school connectedness and wellbeing. However, they found that peer relationships were not influential within this relationship. In an additional study amongst refugee pupils in Australian schools, factors that promoted a general sense of belonging (including feeling 'at home', and accessing opportunities to become a part of the new environment) most predicted measures of wellbeing within the first 3 years of arrival (Correa-Velez, Gifford &

Barnett, 2010). However, for pupils in this study their perceptions of their family's status within the wider community was more predictive of their wellbeing than within school factors, such as their perceptions of peer relationships.

The range of findings here indicate that accessing the pupil voice is key when exploring belonging and the factors that influence it.

2.3.2 Belonging through the voice of the pupil

Although the association between school belonging and positive outcomes is strong, fewer studies examine pupils' perspectives of the factors that constitute a sense of belonging (Cartmell & Bond, 2015). Gathering perspectives from pupils is crucial when attempting to provide the research base with meaning and relevance. The following studies provide perspectives from pupils about the factors that enable belonging to develop across a range of different contexts.

Nind, Boorman and Clarke (2012) gathered the voices of girls who had been excluded from mainstream schools and were attending an alternative secondary provision. Researchers used 'photo-elicitation' within their methodology, to explore participants' educational journeys through digital media and video diaries. Participants' experiences of belonging within their current setting were intertwined with previous feelings of rejection and labelling in mainstream school environments. Participants discussed feeling that teachers within their previous setting who read paperwork about them would treat them differently. Researchers described this as a 'communal memory' of the participants' challenging behaviour. The construction of identity was important to the participants, who expressed a desire to have agency over their own sense of identity and have a sense of congruence between their sense of self and the way they were perceived by adults.

Cartmell & Bond (2015) explored the experiences of International New Arrivals to the UK. Within one of the two case study schools, pupils discussed the importance of having their culture and religion accepted. Researchers argued that participant comments about personal development illustrated a sense of belonging for the participants. These comments were seen as relating to participants feeling holistically acknowledged within their setting.

In a recent study of 84 UK based pupils aged 3-16 with a range of special educational needs, relationships were found to be the most important factor in the children developing a sense of belonging with feelings of acceptance as a sub-theme (Migden, Theodoratou, Newbury & Leonard 2019). Researchers in this study used participatory methods which participants reported further improved their sense of belonging. The researchers conceptualised belonging as a process of exploration, with no specific end-point which can be facilitated by democratic processes that enable pupil voice.

In an additional study, pupils with a range of different scores for school connectedness all highlighted peer relationships as the most important aspect of their school experience (Gowning, 2019). These peer relationships were shown to have a heavy influence upon other aspects of schooling both positively and negatively.

Through conducting a qualitative meta-analysis of pupil voice centred research, Craggs & Kelly (2018) developed a higher order concept of belonging, conceptualising

this as '*feeling safe to be yourself in and through relationships with others in the school setting'* (p.13). This concept positioned the intersubjective and transactional nature of belonging as important. Across studies, belonging was shown to have a strong relational dynamic with peer group membership offering opportunities to connect and opportunities to experience a sense of 'fit' when pupils felt unmatched to their environments.

Although studies support the prominence of relationships within the development of belonging, some researchers have found that the emphasis placed on peer relationships may be different across teachers and pupils. For example Bouchard & Berg (2017) elicited the views of both teacher and pupils, finding that pupils expressed a desire for teachers to facilitate friendship formation and support with peer conflict resolution, however the teachers tended to take a 'hands off' approach in favour of pupils developing emotional independence. This study highlighted the importance placed upon pupils about peer acceptance, within their construction of a sense of belonging. Similarly, Greenwood & Kelly (2019) found that adults in the study placed less of an emphasis upon pupil friendships, which were prioritised by young people in the study.

Perceiving oneself as being a valued and accepted member of a group, based on these studies, seems like a key aspect of developing belonging. The studies also highlight that marginalised pupils place importance upon their role in the construction of their identity within a setting. Whereas correlational studies of belonging tend to conceptualise it as static, these studies demonstrate the fluid, process-oriented nature of belonging.

2.3.3 Belonging, 'Race' and ethnicity

Researchers indicate that aspects of identity, including gender (McLellan & Morgan, 2008), sexual orientation (Aerts, Van Houtte, Dewaele, Cox, & Vincke, 2012) and socioeconomic status (Allen & Kern, 2017) may play a role in the development of school belonging.

It is also likely that our understanding of belonging as a construct is anchored by our cultural background (Cartmell & Bond, 2015). This idea is supported by social identity perspectives (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) and ecological perspectives (Bronfenbrenner, 1989) which position group membership as a key factor in the process of belonging development. Hill (2006) highlights that within American Indian ethnic groups, a sense of belonging is characterised by the individual seeing themselves as an extension of their cultural group (family, extended family, local community). This cultivates a sense of self which is defined by a collective experience ('we') rather than an individualistic experience ('I) (Sutton & Broken Nose, 1996 in Hill, 2006) positioning cultural identity at the centre of 'belonging'.

Racial identity is an additional aspect of identity that may impact school belonging.

Researchers have posited that racial and 'ethnic minority' populations may have unique experiences of belonging (Allen, Vella-Brodrick & Waters, 2016). In Booker's study (2007), 13 African American students completed the Psychological Sense of School Membership Scale (PSSM, Goodenow, 1993) and took part in interviews about

their own sense of belonging and their relationships with peers and teachers. Pupils reported that feelings of belonging and acceptance were supported when they felt others appreciated and accepted them for who they were. Furthermore, belonging was facilitated when pupils perceived that they were similar to others in the school community. Booker conceptualised this phenomenon as 'likeness' and posited that perceptions of cultural and personal difference between the individual and the wider school community may reduce feelings of belonging. Although this was a small and non-statistical study, there was no linear relationship between belonging and GPA (standard assessment) scores.

A further study highlighted the importance of racial centrality (the extent to which race is felt to be a central part of identity) in school belonging (Boston & Warren, 2017). Multiple regression analysis indicated that racial centrality was the only predictor of school belonging for African American high school students, suggesting that pupils who felt their race was a central part of their identity felt more connected to school. Researchers argued that centrality provides a protection against bias because of the support gained through identifying with other racially minoritised group members who have shared experiences of discrimination. They argue that schools need to cultivate a meaningful acceptance of all racial groups in order to facilitate belonging. The measure of school belonging used in this study (National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health's School Connectedness Scale) has been evaluated as having acceptable reliability and concurrent validity across 18 different cultural groups (Furlong, O'brennan & You, 2011), strengthening the findings.

Research would suggest that experiences of belonging in education are tied to the perceptions and expectations that an individual may have about the way they will be engaged with based on their race or ethnicity (Walton & Cohen, 2007). Walton and Cohen conducted an experiment to test how 'belonging uncertainty' - the notion that '*people like me do not belong here',*- impacts upon the academic motivation and achievement of Black students and white students in American universities. They hypothesised that Black students would be more sensitive to belonging uncertainty, citing the following reasons:

- Black students are numerically underrepresented on US College campuses (Naylor, Wyatt-Nichol & Brown, 2015)
- Black students have reported experiences of implicit and explicit discrimination
- Black pupils often receive lower grades
- Black pupils are more likely to downplay their ethnic identity

Within the first experiment, both Black and white participants rated their sense of fitting in within their environment and were asked to rate their academic potential. Both groups were then asked to name 8 friends within their academic department. The role of this task was to introduce 'belonging uncertainty', as naming 8 friends within an academic context would be challenging for anyone. Whilst white pupils' sense of 'fit' and academic potential did not significantly change following this task, this decreased by almost 1 standard deviation for the Black participants. This experiment was shown to therefore confirm the hypothesis that Black pupils would be more susceptible to belonging uncertainty.

In a second experiment by Walton & Cohen (2007), they analysed the impact of adversity across a day upon participants sense of social 'fit'. In this case, social fit referred to how accepted and comfortable participants felt within their academic department. For white pupils, 4% of the day to day variance in their social fit was accounted for by their experience of adversity across the day. Whereas in the Black group, almost 60% of the variance in their sense of social fit was accounted for by their experienced adversity. Walton & Cohen highlight that Blackness on the university campus may impact both upon the way students are treated and may have an impact on their construal of events. They also make the case that the underrepresentation of Black students in their studies higher educational setting meant that the differences in perception shown by Black students may have been an adaptive response to real experiences. The study did not account for the level of 'actual' adversity experienced by white and Black students and how this may have played a role in their findings.

Bottiani, Bradshaw & Mendelson (2016) examined the relationship between school belonging, perceptions of fairness and the way that white and Black pupils were disciplined. They sampled 19,726 high school pupils with a mean age of 15.9. Within schools where Black pupils received higher levels of school suspension, Black pupils had significantly lower scores of school belonging. Within the white sample, this association was not significant. The researchers posited that this finding suggests that the disproportionate exclusion of Black pupils sends a message regarding the degree to which Black pupils are welcome within the school community. They also found that the homogeneity of the school context played a role in perceptions of equity in the school. Black students had less favourable perceptions of equity in predominantly white schools and this pattern was observed for white students in predominantly racially diverse school. This was the case when pupil-level factors (socio-economic status, academic grouping, gender) and contextual factors (overall student diversity, overall fixed term exclusion rates, socio-economic status) were accounted for (Bottiani, Bradshaw & Mendelson, 2016). This research is broadly in line with wider research which finds that when levels of misbehaviour are similar to that of other racial groups, Black American pupils receive harsher sanctions (Finn & Servess, 2013; Toldson & Lemmons, 2013).

In Faircloth & Hamm's (2005) study, they analysed the way that belonging was experienced across European American, Latino, Asian and African American high school students, through survey data. They hypothesised that belonging would have a mediating role upon motivation and achievement and that the following dimensions would give rise to a holistic sense of belonging: relationships with teachers, peer relationships, involvement in extracurricular activities and perceived ethnicity-based discrimination. Although perceived ethnic discrimination was not a commonly considered factor in school belonging at the time of the research, Faircloth & Hamm argued that perceptions of fairness were fundamental in the 'affective tie' that young people construct within their school context. They used the following model (figure 2.1) to represent the relationship between the process of belonging and its mediating effect upon academic motivation and achievement (success):

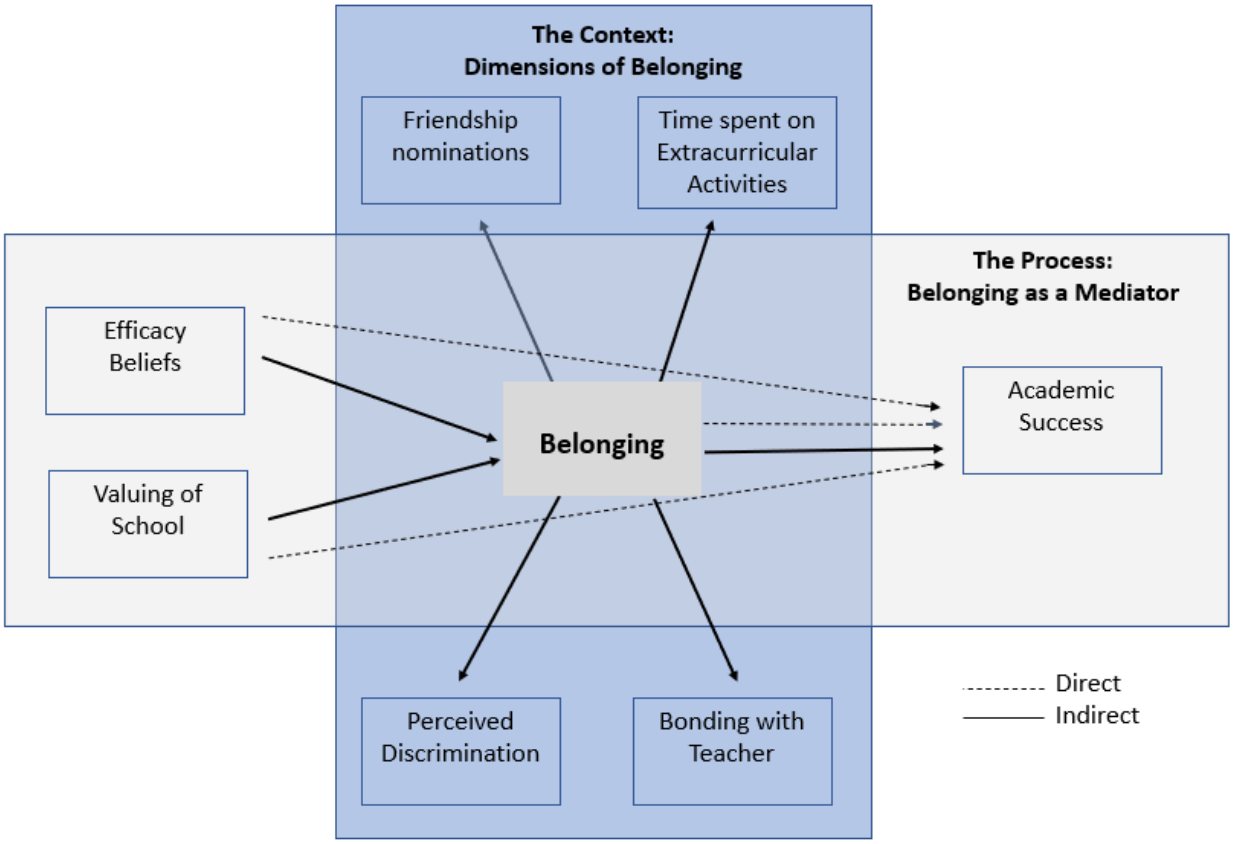


Figure 2. 1 Adaptation of Faircloth & Hamm's (2005) Theoretical Model of the Dimensions of Belonging

They found that, for European American and Latino students, the 4 dimensions above were predictors of belonging. With African American pupils and pupils of Asian descent, relationships with teachers, extracurricular activity and perceived discrimination were predictors of belonging, but peer relationships were not. By integrating various dimensions of belonging, they were able to illustrate that belonging can be developed through a range of domains and can be experienced differently by different pupils, indicating that some factors vary across racial groups.

Findings from the studies above have potentially significant implications for their respective environments and show us the importance of the intersecting nature of 'race', school context, perceptions of equity, acceptance and belonging. However, these studies lacked qualitative perspectives to supplement the associational nature of the findings.

2.3.4 School belonging and minoritised pupils in the UK

There is a scarcity of UK research examining the experiences of school belonging amongst minoritised pupils, however, some studies provide an indication of important factors.

Biggart, O'Hare & Connolly (2013) carried out research out within predominantly white schools in Ireland. They found that Irish Traveller, Chinese and European migrant populations had a lower sense of belonging than their 'settled' white peers. School belonging was lowest amongst the Irish Traveller population. The researchers suggested that *"the hierarchy of prejudice that has been shown to exist among White, settled Irish pupils may play their part" (p.189)* citing evidence from local attitudinal surveys. This indicates again, the important role of acceptance and the detrimental role of ethnic prejudice upon the development of belonging.

Secondary aged pupils have been shown to differ with regard to their levels of school connectedness. Within Chung's (2019) doctoral research, a survey method was used to measure the school connectedness of White, Black and Asian secondary school pupils. All populations scored above '3' on the Psychological Sense of School Membership Scale (Goodenow, 1993) indicating generally positive connections to school. Scoring above this cut off is meant to indicate that pupils are at a lower risk of social exclusion (Goodenow, 1993). However, Chung highlights that Black pupils in the national context were three times more likely to be excluded from school at the time of her study. This, along with differing attributions for behaviour across pupils and teachers, was discussed when accounting for the fact that Black pupils in her study scored lowest for school connectedness across populations.

In a 2018 study with eastern European migrants in Irish schools, O'Shea found that pupils gradually developed a sense of belonging following initial feelings of vulnerability when they first joined the school. O'Shea posited that this *'journey toward a sense of belonging*' was an unconscious journey which reflected the need to belong (Beaumister & Leary, 1995). Part of this journey toward belonging involved the emergence of a strong sense of self belief, developed by pupils taking 'back' control that they lost when first entering the school. In some cases, pupils felt they needed to work hard to prove their intelligence due to feeling that their migration background may play a role in the way their academic abilities were perceived by teachers. O'Shea also indicated that in some cases, pupils presented 'denial' about the impact of negative transition experiences, suggesting that denial may protect them from emotionally painful events.

A large national piece of research conducted in 2002 exemplified factors that interacted with the development of school belonging for 'ethnic minority' children attending predominantly white schools (Cline, de Abreu, Fihosy, Gray, Lambert & Neal). Cline et al., gathered data from 35 different local authorities, using a combination of surveys and interviews. They found that within school contexts with less than a 6% 'ethnic minority' population, the racial context in itself was not a barrier for inclusion. Black, Asian and Mixed-Race children experienced similar patterns of friendships within their peer group as their white counterparts. Furthermore, some of those sampled had additional networks based on their family connections outside of schools. However, over a third of the pupils who were interviewed discussed being called racist names at school or on their way to or from school. Case study data showed that schools were able to win the confidence of pupils and parents when they took a firm and procedural approach to managing these incidents and when there was a clear 'lead' of any investigation.

At the time this research was conducted, none of the schools had developed methods or approaches to assist pupils (from any background) to navigate a diversifying society. At the time the research was conducted there was not a focus from Ofsted or within the national curriculum that encouraged teachers to embed issues of ethnic or racial diversity within the curriculum.

This research is one of the only large-scale studies that broadly analysed the experiences of Black, Asian, Mixed-race and other non-white children who live outside of major cities. It provides a useful canvas for understanding how school context might have implications for school belonging, however, it is now quite dated and the validity of the reported findings to modern school contexts might be considered somewhat limited.

Within an ethnographic study with Black secondary pupils in Ireland, Wright (2010) found that a sense of 'not belonging' was compounded when pupils felt that they had been treated unfairly due to their race.

The studies above indicate that the racial context of the school, along with the way pupils feel they are being received by the school community play a potential role in belonging development. This highlights school ethos as a potential area of interest when considering the experiences of belonging. The Centre for Disease Control (2009) conducted a literature review in which they identified aspects of school ethos that foster belonging. They indicated that adult support through the dedication of time and emotional support was a key factor. They also found that the physical environment and psychosocial climate sets the scene for pupils' perceptions of the school. It was argued that interventions to improve ethos is an approach to school improvement that may close the gap between 'resource rich' and 'low resource' schools, as improvements to ethos may be relatively inexpensive. This again, reinforces the importance of the school context.

2.4 The historical context for young Black people in UK schools

School exclusions, discrimination and underachievement have long dominated the discourse surrounding Black pupils and their trajectory through the UK education system (Harris & Parsons, 2001; Gillborn 2005; Gregory, Skiba & Noguera, 2010). Many researchers have therefore chosen to humanise Black children by focusing on different aspects of their developmental experiences such as resistance to stereotyping, the education strategies of the Black Middle classes and the childhood experiences of mixed heritage children, to name a few (Abijah-Liburd, 2017; Rollock, Vincent & Ball, 2012; Mclean, 2016). For the purpose of positioning the current study, I will consider the historical context, to make sense of the present-day situation which sees Black children as three times as likely to be excluded from school (DfE, 2019), disproportionately likely to be labelled as having social emotional and mental health needs (Strand & Lindorff, 2018) and highly represented within the youth criminal justice system (MoJ, 2016).

In 1971, Bernard Coard produced a well-known piece of critical research on race inequality which highlighted the disproportionate labelling of Black children as educationally subnormal through the widespread use of inappropriate cognitive testing. The landscape of policy around that time can provide some context for the tone used when describing non-white populations. McLean (2016) highlights 'The Education of Immigrants' policy from the Department of Education and Science (1971) which says the following about non-white families: *'For the West Indian child ... the environment is one in which marriage is not always considered important... the unknown father with which his mother may be living... Asian mother's tendency to live a withdrawn life....' (*DES, 1971, pp.4). This provides us with a view of the 'script' being developed within policy about the way Black and Asian families functioned differently to Whites.

Cole (2004) underlines how some of these policies contributed to the 'taken for granted' views of Black children which stereotyped them as psychically intimidating, troublesome, educationally inferior and in later years, violent. According to Hiro, one such policy, in response to white parental concerns about immigration, was to ensure that Black and Asian children were dispersed amongst schools, below a 30% threshold to ensure that school standards were upheld (Hiro, 1971).

These views of Black children are rooted in deeper 'myths' about Black people: that they are lazy, unintelligent, hypersexual and aggressive (Howitt & Owusu-Bempah, 1994). Myths of this sort can part be located within eugenics, which is the racist classification of humans based on the assumption that race is a biological marker of difference, when it is in fact a social construction (Saini, 2019). This ideology was deeply intertwined with and influential over British foreign and national policy in the 18th and 19th century (Saini, 2019). This ideology is also at the root of the development of psychometric testing (Mackenzie, 1974). As such, educational psychologists have been encouraged to take a self-reflective approach to analysing their historical involvement in the practices that involved historically biased use of psychometric testing with culturally diverse children (i.e. Booker, Hart, Moreland & Powell, 1989).

Recent research from the Institute of Public Policy found that Black Caribbean pupils were 3.9 times more likely to be educated in pupil referral units than would be expected based on their representation in the general population (Gill, Quilter-Pinner & Swift, 2017). This mirrors Coard's (1971) finding of disproportionately high numbers of Black children in disciplinary units or 'sin-bins' as they were referred to at the time (Cole, 2004). This leads to the question of how significantly the experiences of school exclusion have actually changed for Black pupils over the years.

The Department of Education (DfE) commissioned a review to explore literature and research that would illuminate why some populations are disproportionately excluded. In the case of Black Caribbean boys, the authors stated the following: '*The literature review found much less material on unique factors, apart from racism, which could explain why Black Caribbean boys had such a high risk of exclusion*' p.96 (Graham, White, Edwards, Potter & Street, 2019).

These contextual and historical factors, which start in the 1970's and bring us up to the present day, highlight the need for further research into the educational

experiences of this Black children and young people specifically. Feelings of being respected, receiving interpersonal support and feeling accepted are all key for belonging. This historical context indicates how systemic patterns of oppression, and racist attitudes may interact with Black pupils' feelings of belonging within the education system.

2.5 The utility of holding an ecological perspective in mind

It has been argued that researchers and educators who have an affiliation to working with populations who have experienced disparities within the education system can take on a rhetoric of 'blame'; this leads to ineffective outcomes for marginalised groups (Howarth, 2004). The context set out in section 2.8 highlights this rhetoric as a potential danger for the current research. Whilst it is acknowledged that taking a specific theory and applying this to the data can reduce the integrity of grounded theory studies, keeping an ecological frame in mind is thought to improve researcher reflexivity by staying open to a range of different factors. This is because, the ecological perspective simultaneously gives focus to contextual systems, individual factors and the interdependent relationship between them (Eriksson, Ghazinour & Hammarstrom, 2018).

Furthermore, this is a theoretical perspective that has been influential both within my studies on the doctorate for Applied Educational Psychology and within my practice as a trainee educational psychologist where I am regularly bringing an ecological perspective to my work. In the name of transparency, I will explore why this perspective is thought to add, rather than detract value from the current grounded theory study.

Gray, Hope & Matthews (2018) advocate for an ecological perspective to be adopted when investigating school belonging in minority groups. They propose that researchers should investigate the instructional, interpersonal and institutional structures that enable pupils to meet their belonging needs. Gray, Hope & Matthews (2018) also encourage researchers to take a wide view of factors that may influence belonging, including historical and societal factors relating to specific populations. They argue that educational psychology (US) research that fails to account for factors wider than the school, lacks historical, social and cultural validity and therefore lacks usefulness for minority pupils. This theoretical perspective may be useful in positioning the current study, to move away from the danger of using a rhetoric of blame and retaining usefulness and intellectual critique.

Researchers who have used an ecological perspective when exploring the school experiences of Black pupils have managed to achieve a complex and nuanced representation of factors that impact school life. For example, Rhamie (2012) employed the use of an ecological perspective in her research about Black experiences of schooling. Her findings highlighted the ways in which positive experiences within home systems minimised the impact of negative experiences within school systems. Using this framework, Rhamie was able to conceptualise how the interaction of experiences across different systems enabled her participants to develop institutional resilience.

Furthermore, many of the definitions of belonging explored above indicate that belonging is developed through a range of processes, including teacher and peer relationships, involvement with extracurricular activities, academic achievement and the school ethos and climate. This also supports the role of an ecological perspective being kept in mind when researching experiences of belonging.

2.6 Research aims and questions

The literature review above broadly highlights that school belonging is associated with a range of positive outcomes and that school belonging can be experienced differently depending on the background of the pupil and the context of the school.

Whilst research has analysed how some minoritised pupils experience belonging in non-diverse schools, to the researcher's knowledge, this has not yet been investigated in the case of Black pupils in UK schools using grounded theory methodology. The historical and contextual factors highlighted in section 2.8 indicate that this is a population deserving of further academic consideration.

Educational psychologists have recently called for further research that broadens our understanding of the cultural factors that may impact school belonging (Roffey, Boyle & Allen, 2019). The current study aims to make a distinctive contribution to the literature that explores the school belonging experiences of minoritised pupils.

The study is considered to uniquely impact educational psychology research due to its positioning at the intersection of educational psychology, race, belonging and school context.

As this is a novel piece of research, an intentionally broad research question has been developed, based on the literature posed above:

How do Black pupils experience 'belonging' when they attend predominantly white schools?

3. Methodology

3.1 Overview of Chapter

This chapter provides an overview of the ontological and epistemological positioning of the current study. A range of qualitative methods are evaluated, leading to a discussion around why constructivist grounded theory was judged as the aligned methodology for the current study. The procedure I followed is described in detail, including sampling, data collection, data analysis and theory building. I provide an overview of my positionality then outline measures taken to address the credibility and trustworthiness of the study. Finally, ethical considerations are explored.

3.2 Ontology and Epistemology

Gaining clarity about the philosophical underpinning of a research study is important due to the bearing that these underpinnings have on the research process and its outcomes (Hardy & Majors, 2017). Within educational psychology research, some of the key stakeholders, and those with the most to gain from research outcomes, are marginalised young people and those who care for them. The potential vulnerability of these stakeholders makes gaining philosophical clarity particularly pertinent for the current study.

The ontological position of a study refers to the way that the researcher understands reality giving rise to their epistemology, which is the researcher's relationship to that reality (Mertens, 2010). These beliefs about the social world, along with our approach to the investigation of it, constitute a '*moral sense-making framework',* or paradigm (p.3 Bawden, 2010).

3.2.1 Positivism

The basic ontological belief in a positivist paradigm is that reality is objective and apprehensible (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Perry, Riege & Brown 1999). Researchers operating within this paradigm bring a level of distance, de-contextualisation and objectivity to their process of enquiry (Mertens, 2010), aligning experimental methodologies closely with the paradigm (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). As such, researchers aligning with this paradigm might wish to write in the third person to maintain a level of detachment.

Positivism was the dominant paradigm in psychological research until recent years, leading to a historical investment in and elevation of scientific methods across psychological research (Crotty, 1998; Ponterotto, Kuriakose, & Granovskaya, 2008). The assumption that reality is predictable, universal and fixed can exclude people who do not 'fit' within a normative understanding of reality (Ward, Hoare & Gott, 2015), causing populations to become marginalised and minoritized within research. Positivism is philosophically incompatible with the research questions of the current study.

3.2.2 Post-Positivism

Post-positivism provides a broader acknowledgement that much of human life (such as cognition or emotion), requires investigation, but is not easily or universally

measurable (Mertens, 2010). Researchers operating within this paradigm are searching for findings that represent a probable rather than a certain truth (ibid). This paradigm is broadly aligned with quantitative and some systematic qualitative methods (Hill, Thompson & Williams, 1997).

The value placed on procedures such as random sampling within post-positivist methodologies has been criticised for its exclusion of minoritised groups (Ponterotto, 2010). The application of a statistical rationale is thought to 'silence' the existence of groups who sit outside the research norm and devalue their voice within the research canon (Mohatt & Thomas, 2006). Philosophical paradigms that are more relativist in nature are better suited to researching the lived experiences of underrepresented people (Ponterotto, 2010), therefore post-positivism was also viewed as incompatible with the current study.

3.2.3 Constructivism

Constructivists have an ontological belief that reality is contextual, subjective and constructed through the process of 'living' (Romm, 2015). As such, constructivism allows space for multiple versions of reality to co-exist, with researchers accepting that reality is constructed through the process of living (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Researchers aligned with this paradigm construct their findings by interacting with participants, whilst taking account of their role in this construction.

Constructivist epistemologies invite researchers to use qualitative methodologies that enable in-depth contact with participants to develop a complex representation of the truth for a specific population (Ponterotto, 2010). Exchanges between researcher and participant within the constructivist paradigm are thought to be transformative, as they create a change in both the researcher and participant (ibid). The aims of the current research align with these characteristics of constructivism.

Researchers aligned with this paradigm are called to pay attention to their linguistic choices to ensure that they do not undermine the relativist principles of the paradigm (Crotty, 1998). As such, I describe my study as 'aligning with' rather than being 'positioned within' this paradigm, to illustrate that relativist conceptualisation of paradigm boundaries.

3.2.4 The Transformative Paradigm

The transformative paradigm *intentionally* creates a change in those involved in the research paradigm, through an acknowledgement that reality is subjective, but also governed by power and social positioning (Mertens, 2010). Researchers are therefore oriented toward uplifting the experiences of less dominant populations within research (Mertens, 1999). This prompts an ethically minded approach to choosing methodology that is participatory and inclusive of participants from 'less powerful' groups (Romm, 2015).

This research paradigm is underpinned by a set of axiological assumptions, or ethical beliefs that recognise the implications of power differences that give rise to experiences of privilege, oppression, and invisibility (Biddle & Schaffft, 2015).

3.2.5 The ontology and epistemology of the current study

The current study is aligned with constructivism and the transformative paradigm. My investigation of a minoritised group, within a specific context, lends itself to a subjectivist understanding of reality. Furthermore, the context and rationale set out in Chapter 2 highlight an understanding of the importance of social positioning and context in the life experiences of young people of colour. This acknowledgement is paired with an openness and a desire to remain non-deterministic about the level of power and agency experienced by my participants.

3.4 Qualitative Research Methods

The ontology and epistemology of this study prompts me to explore qualitative research methods, to gain an understanding of how my participants construct their reality. In this section, I will outline further arguments for choosing qualitative methodology.

Quantitative methods have historically been a common feature in educational and child psychology research as a result of the previous dominance of the positivist paradigm (Hardy & Majors, 2017). Some have argued that this has resulted in educational psychology research with clear functions for educational policy, but with little functions for the empowerment of minoritised or 'disadvantaged' populations (Billington & Williams, 2017). Hardy & Majors (2017) argue that this has created a research tradition in which the individual experiences of children are decentralised. As such, qualitative methods were seen as the most pertinent, both philosophically and in terms of the aims of my research.

Qualitative research methods are suited to specific contexts, providing a higher depth of analysis, rather than a wide breadth of conclusions. In line with the Children and Families Act (2014), which underlines educational psychology work, qualitative research methods can provide us with the direct voice of the child, rather than sources unaligned with their perspective.

A potential benefit of qualitative methodologies is the diversity in the underpinning epistemologies and approaches to research (Hardy & Majors, 2017). However, to do qualitative research well, there is a need for:

- Coherence
- Transparency and clarity about the method
- An informed awareness of the philosophical perspectives underpinning the approach

(McLeod, 2001; Hardy & Majors, 2017).

Within the current study, the experience I was attempting to analyse (belonging), the context (predominantly white schools), and the population (Black secondary aged pupils), gave it a level of specificity that aligned it with the characteristics of qualitative methodology outlined above.

Quantitative methodologies could have been used to gather a wide range of experiences, through tools such as a survey or questionnaire. This was not thought to be appropriate for two reasons:

a) My research question is concerned with the role of the context in belonging for Black pupils. The potential depth in data arising from these explorations will not be accessible through quantitative methodology.
b) I considered triangulating qualitative data with quantitative measures of belonging. However, based on my ontological and epistemological positioning, this could have brought the philosophical coherence of the study into question.

3.4.1 Qualitative methods considered for this study

Interpretative phenomenological analysis, discourse analysis, and grounded theory are sometimes called 'Big Q' methods, to reflect their focus on the lived experiences and meaning of participants' (Willig 2005; Kidder & Fine, 1987), whilst providing clear and prescriptive frameworks for data analysis (Hardy & Majors, 2017). 'Small Q' methods, such as thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), refer to qualitative tools and techniques that can be positioned within a positivist paradigm and have less complex frameworks for analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2019). The current study is within the scope of 'Big Q' methods', some of which are explored below.

Discourse analysis (DA) explores the workings of power by revealing the laws that govern social interaction (Oliver, Serovich & Mason, 2005). DA finds its roots within the critical theory paradigm (Anderson & Holloway, 2020), in which the researcher changes the social world of the participants through the research process (Perry, 1997). It analyses what discourse says about the way that power impacts the lives of participants (Cameron, 2001 in Oliver, Serovich & Mason). Although I acknowledge the role of power in the social world, I was concerned that using discourse analysis may have diluted my aim of exploring belonging, through a sharp focus on power. I was also keen that my analysis was a 'true' reflection of the experiences of the participants, therefore I sought an analysis approach that would enable more than one aspect of their experience emerge.

Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) attempts to gain an in depth understanding of both the participant and their narrative (Smith, 2011). The product of an IPA study is a clear account of how individuals make sense of their own experiences (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). IPA is underpinned by hermeneutics, or the theory of interpretation (ibid). The analytic process utilises a 'double hermeneutic', in which the participant finds meaning in their experience and the researcher extracts this meaning and attempts to understand what it represents to the participant (Smith, 2011). This provides an idiographic and detailed account of participants emotional and cognitive reactions to their experiences through the interpretative analytic process (Smith, 2011). It was felt that a methodology which embedded structures that would enable me to verify and question my interpretations, might have provided further trustworthiness to the overall study, especially in light of my positionality (explored in 3.8.1).

3.5 Grounded Theory Methodology

Grounded theory (GT) (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) potentially removes *some* of the concerns mentioned about IPA by offering a methodology that enables findings to be firmly grounded in the data through systematic levels of coding. Below, I will explore some of the key features of the methodology, along with three different approaches to GT. Throughout, I will discuss why GT was judged to be the most appropriate for the current study.

In GT, researchers attempt to suspend their preconceptions and are led by the data to arrive at new theoretical insights (Allen & Davey, 2018), making GT a method enabling genuine 'theory discovery' (Jones & Alony, 2011). As such, GT is often used in areas where there is a dearth of theoretical guidance to direct new research, or where only tentative theoretical concepts exist (O'Reilly, Paper & Marx, 2012). The following guiding principles are attached to GT methodology, to assist researchers in 'truly' exploring new insights:

- Discovery of data over verification of previous ideas
- Explanation of data, over description
- Emergence of data, rather than forcing

(Stern & Porr, 2011 p.88)

The current study is relatively novel within educational psychology research in the UK, therefore this approach to gaining new insights was seen to be in alignment.

GT focuses on the interpretations, contexts, and processes involved in the lives of key individuals (O'Reilly Paper & Marx, 2012; Frost, 2011) by lending itself to exploratory 'how' questions, and answering explanatory 'why' questions through the constant comparison of collected data with new data (Frost, 2011). The current study has a focus on interpretation, and processes involved in creating a sense of belonging for Black pupils in predominantly white schools, therefore this was considered to align well with the current study.

It has been suggested that the a priori essence of GT makes it the optimal approach for examining emerging issues related to the lives of people of colour (Green, Creswell, Shope & Clark, 2007). This is because GT ensures that experiences of underrepresented groups are foregrounded within factors related to the area of study, through the analysis process (Draucker et al., 2014). Green et al., (2007) presented a framework to evaluate how race and ethnicity are incorporated in GT studies, suggesting that race explorations can be '*primary, complementary, peripheral* or *absent'* within the research process. At the 'absent' level, GT studies typically use White-British or White-American populations (Draucker et al., 2014). At the *primary level*, race is a central theme without which the study would radically change. Within *primary level* studies, researchers typically explore the experiences of people of colour exclusively, examining how 'diversity-related' issues affect the area of study (Draucker et al., 2014). I would describe my study as placing race at the *primary* level. However, I acknowledge that this categorisation is problematic because all humans have a racial descriptor or a 'race'. This kind of categorisation may normalise whiteness and 'other' people of colour by suggesting that studies that focus upon white populations have an 'absent' level of racial interest.

GT requires researchers to sequentially 'abstract' meaning from their data, through systematic categorisation and conceptualisation, culminating in the theoretical analysis of data (Bryant & Charmaz, 2019). Abductive reasoning is key within the analysis of data in GT. It requires a fluid movement between different possible theoretical explanations of data, followed by the testing of these explanations against new gathered data (Charmaz, 2017). This is different from both deductive reasoning – inferring something specific about a case, from a general rule; and inductive reasoning – inferring a general law from a specific case (Frost, 2011). This once again highlights the uniqueness of the current approach. As discussed in the literature review, much of the research around 'belonging' for Black pupils has either been quantitative or developed from non-psychological academic fields. I believed that the process of abductive reasoning would apply a level of rigour to the analysis of my qualitative psychological data, adding to the current literature.

Some of the broad 'pillars' of GT also made it an appealing approach from an ethical perspective. For example, grounded theorists are prompted to ask themselves whether non-specialists in the area understand the generated theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p.237). As this study aligns itself with a transformative paradigm, this was a key part of the appeal of GT methodology for the current study.

The underlying premise that multiple realities exist aligns GT with a constructivist paradigm (Ponterotto, 2010). Associated with this paradigm, the originators of GT attempted to ensure that the procedures within the method were not mistaken for experimental procedures. For example, Glaser & Strauss (1967) made it clear that the process of 'constant comparison' (explored further below) was not implemented as a means of replicability. Instead, GT was conceived as being scientific in 'attitude' rather than in 'character', by approaching findings with scepticism (Robson, 2011; Hardy & Majors, 2017).

3.5.1 Classic Grounded Theory

Glaser & Strauss (1967) developed GT in response to the general approach to sociological research, where researchers would verify existing theories rather than substantively creating new perspectives.

Within the 'classic' GT methodology, researchers code qualitative data in three stages, as represented in Figure 3.1 (adapted from Kenny & Fourie, 2015):

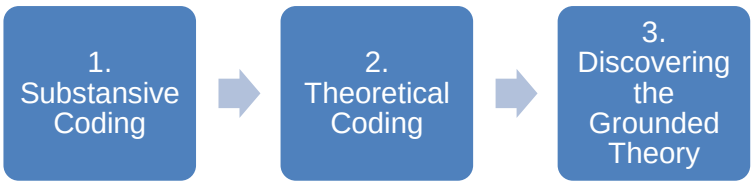


Figure 3. 1 Coding stages in Classic Grounded Theory

The coding stages in classic GT are thought to be the anchor that underpins the research process from start to finish (Kenny & Fourie, 2015). Coding in classic GT gives rise to the discovery of a theory from qualitative data. The premise that

researchers can 'discover' an objective reality, unmediated by the bias or interpretation of the research, has been criticised for positivist undertones (Jones & Alony, 2011).

3.5.2 Straussian Grounded Theory

A later iteration of GT, developed by Strauss and Corbin (1990), redesigned the coding process (Kenny & Fourie, 2015). Strauss & Corbin argued that the addition of further levels of coding improved the effectiveness of GT in developing sound theories (Strass & Corbin, 1994). The coding stages necessary for Straussian GT, adapted from Kenny & Fourie (2015) are presented in Figure 3.2:

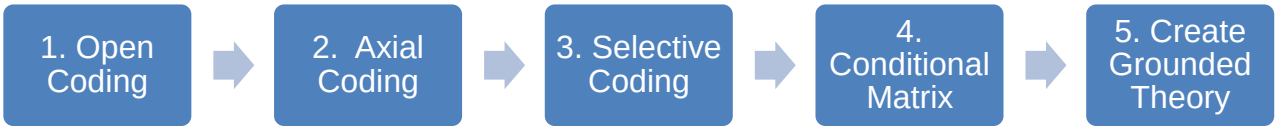


Figure 3. 2 Coding stages in Straussian Grounded Theory

Straussian GT has been criticised for detracting from and obscuring the experiences of participants and creating a dense and overly complicated coding structure (Charmaz, 2000;). Again, this version has been criticised for aligning with positivism (Charmaz, 2014).

3.5.3 Constructivist Grounded Theory and The Current Study

The most recent imagining of GT is constructivist GT, where researchers 'construct' a theory around the data. This contrasts with Classic GT, in which theories are 'discovered', and Straussian GT, in which theories are 'created'. The term 'constructivist' was chosen by Charmaz to acknowledge the role of the researcher in the interpretation and construction of the data (Charmaz, 2014). As such, this approach aligns with my epistemological and ontological position.

Constructivist GT sets clear parameters for the process of constant comparison. The constant comparative method enables researchers to refine the structure, definition, and interrelatedness of the categories that form the basis of the eventual theory (Lawrence & Tar, 2013).

Constructivist GT arose from criticisms about the inflexibility of the previous iterations, and their potential to stifle the creativity of the researcher (Charmaz, 2014), leading to a different coding process. The coding stages involved in constructivist GT, adapted from Kenny & Fourie (2015) are presented in Figure 3.3 and will be explored in depth within the procedure below:

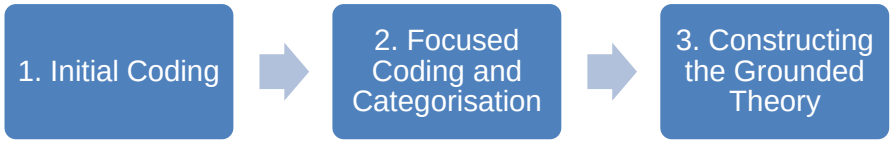


Figure 3. 3 Coding stages in Constructivist Grounded Theory

Within the constraints of doctoral research carried out in the 'real world', this approach was judged to be appropriate as it was more condensed than Straussian GT. Furthermore, the acknowledgement of the researcher role within constructivist GT was judged to provide more of a theoretical alignment with my ontological position than Classic GT.

Many GT studies are criticised for failing to keep fidelity to one approach to GT and for using a contaminated combination of elements from each of the approaches mentioned above, devaluing the overall theory (Evans, 2013). To develop a level of coherence, and due to my alignment with the constructivist paradigm, I attempted to follow the procedures involved in constructivist grounded theory, which are explored in section 3.6.

3.6 Procedure

3.6.1 Inclusion Criteria

The sample I required were pupils from Black backgrounds who attended predominantly white schools. I defined 'Black' as having both parents from African or Caribbean backgrounds and young people who were born in the UK. This distinction was made due to my awareness that the migrant experience is a distinct area of deserving of separate focus. I defined 'predominantly white' as schools that were defined as having a 'predominantly white population' within the most recent OFSTED inspection report. Due to the level of conversation required to achieve the desired depth of study, I decided that the youngest participant would be 13. The upper age limit would be 18, as I wanted to ensure that participants were close enough to their secondary school experiences to discuss them clearly within the interview.

3.6.2 Purposive Sampling

Unlike quantitative data methodologies that attempt to provide a representative sample of the general population, qualitative data methodologies search for information-rich cases from specific areas of interest (Etikan, Musa & Alkassim, 2016). My research was concerned with the experiences of belonging for Black pupils in specific contexts, so this is the sample that was sought out.

3.6.3 Recruitment Process

The first participant was accessed by chance. During my capacity as a trainee Educational Psychologist, I was visiting the home of a family in June 2019, as I was

working with their youngest, primary-school aged child. Once my work was complete, The parents took an interest in the origins of my surname, my background, and my research. After telling them about the basis of my research, they informed me that they had an older child who fit the inclusion criteria, who they felt would be happy to participate.

I also attempted to recruit participants using an 'opportunities' method by emailing EP colleagues within my host Educational Psychology Service (Appendix 1). One member of the team informed me that her child met the inclusion criteria and that she would initially have an informal conversation with him about the research, but mentioned that from a parent's perspective, she was happy for him to participate.

Another member of the team suggested getting in contact with a Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo) within a secondary school where we had previously conducted joint work. During my final visit to the school during the summer term of 2019, I had a conversation with the SENCo about my research. This was followed up with an email during September 2019 (Appendix 2). The SENCO was provided with parent information (Appendix 3) and participant information (Appendix 4) about the study. He was asked to initially provide parents with information sheets, provided their child met the inclusion criteria. This resulted in him getting in touch with 6 parents, to inform them about my study, all of whom agreed to provide their details for me to get in touch with them about the research. This process resulted in the recruitment of 3 participants who met the inclusion criteria.

Each parent and participant involved was provided with both verbal and physical information about the study and provided signed consent. See Appendices 3-4 for copies of information provided to participants. In line with General Data Protection Guidelines, each participant was also provided with a privacy notice, detailing information about the storage of their data (Appendix 5). Participants were also provided with verbal information about how their data would be anonymised at the beginning of the interview (Appendix 6).

At the point of discussing the study with parents, each were provided with a general overview of the grounded theory methodology which may have made it necessary for me to conduct an additional interview with them, or their child, following analysis. See section '3.7.6 – Theoretical Sampling' for further information about the recruitment of parent participants.

3.6.4 Sample Size and Characteristics

Various arguments have been made about the best sample size for grounded theory studies, but this seems to miss the point. Sampling should instead be focused on the development of relevant theoretical categories that are saturated with rich data (Charmaz, 1990).

In line with this, I allowed the data to guide me in the number of participants required (see section 3.7.6 Theoretical Sampling and section 3.7.9 Theoretical Saturation). I ended up with a total sample of 5 pupils and 1 parent.

3.6.5 Participant Characteristics

School demographic information was gathered from each schools most recent OFSTED. Participant characteristics, along with a pseudonym for each participant, is presented in Tables 3.1 and 3.2:

Pseudonym	Gender	Age at time of interview	School Information
Toni	F	15	Majority white British population Maintained State school
Judah	M	17	Majority white British population Private school
Leo	M	13	Majority white British population Multi-Academy Trust
Ray	M	15	Majority white British population Multi-Academy Trust
Tashoma	M	18	Majority white British population Multi-Academy Trust

Table 3. 1 Pupil Participant Characteristics

Pseudonym	School characteristics of child
Lisa	Majority white British population Multi-Academy Trust

Table 3. 2 Parent Characteristics

3.6.6 Initial Data gathering: Semi-structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews are recognised as a suitable means of data collection in GT (Robson, 2011). Many of the interviews within GT literature use a structured series of open-ended questions to enable participants to express their experiences, followed by prompts when needed (Fassinger, 2005).

Research supervisions, an essential aspect of the development and structure of a GT, were utilised to discuss the proposed interview schedule (Miller, 1995). I took iterative versions of the interview schedule to research supervision to develop non leading questions that would still provide rich data.

I used Charmaz's (1990) approach to intense interviewing as a broad guide for the interview schedule. This approach begins by establishing facts about the area of interest which gradually moves towards more reflective questions that elicit participants thought, feelings and perspectives. Charmaz indicates the following 5 sequence for interview question types:

1) Factual questions that cover 'neutral ground' about the area of interest.
2) Informational questions that elicit a chronology of key events, including an establishment of the level of awareness of the participant of their circumstances.
3) Reflective questions: Once a rapport has been built, these questions enable the researcher to assess how participants view themselves.
4) Feeling questions to gain an overview of the way that participants were feeling at key points of their stories.
5) Ending remarks that attempt to end the interview on a positive note

Charmaz indicates that this approach to sequencing enables trust to slowly be built throughout the interview process. It is also suggested that where there is tension within the iterview, this sequence may serve to promote a gradual development of rapport. The questions within the interview schedule included the topics of favourite academic topics, teacher support, socialising in school, friendships, fairness, participants perceptions of the cultural make-up of the school, and within interviews 3-5, physical appearance. These topics broadly cover the aspects of belonging highlighted by Faircloth & Hamm (2005) whose model of belonging is represented in figure 2.1. Although the current study is not analysing belonging as a mediator in the way that was conceptualised for Faircloth & Hamm, the dimensions of belonging they identified combined broadly accepted aspects of belonging (relationships, perceptions of academic success) with aspects of belonging that may be particularly important for Black pupils (perceptions of fairness) based on the literature reviewed in section 2.4.

The development of the interview schedule was informed by discussion with young adult relatives of the researcher, with the intention of ensuring the questions were understandable to school age interviewees. Conversations in this regard were particularly useful in ensuring the language used was and age appropriate. See Appendix 7 for the proposed interview schedule and Appendix 6 for the final interview schedule which was developed following these conversations.

3.6.7 Interview Procedure

All interviews were conducted within a quiet and private space, on an individual basis and on separate dates between August 2019 and February 2020. As stated in the information provided to the participants, they were able to choose the time and location of the interview, to ensure that they felt comfortable to express their views. Participants were informed that they were able to have an additional adult present if they felt this would make them more comfortable. All participants chose to conduct the interviews on their own with me. Interviews 1 & 2 took place at the respective homes of the participants. Parents were present at the time of both of these interviews and both sets of parents provided me with a separate space within which to conduct the interview. Interview 1 was conducted within a conservatory and Interview 2 in a front living room. Interviews 3 & 4 both took place within a meeting room close to the

reception area of the school. Interviews 5 & 6 took place within a café in the local community of the participants upon their request.

During the process of providing informed consent, I provided an additional reminder that the interview would be recorded, anonymised, transcribed and securely stored. The recording device was on the table between myself and the participant.

The interviews were with participants of a range of different age groups with participants with a range of different experiences. Therefore, a level of flexibility and responsiveness was required when judging the most appropriate level of depth for each interview. As such, interviews lasted from between 30 minutes to 1.5 hours.

The youngest participant – Leo – was interviewed at his school. He was accompanied to the interview room by a teaching assistant who was 'on hand' close to the interview room, should he become upset. He was informed at the beginning of the interview that he was able to leave to go and speak to her at any point and was also informed that he could sit just outside the interview room – where there was a quiet seated area – should he require any space at any point of the interview room. Ray was also interviewed at school. He was brought into the interview room by the SENCo who explained that he was available in his room, should we require any additional support throughout the duration of the interview. In both interviews that took place in the homes of the participant, they were informed they could go to a safe place in the house should any of the content in the interviews upset them. Both interviews that took place in the community were in places that were selected by the participants themselves. After each interview, participants were taken through a debrief (see section 3.9.5) where they were provided with my contact details should they become upset following the interview. Although none of the participants contacted me to inform me that they were upset by the interview, each participants concerns would have been taken on a case by case basis and relevant signposting and supportive strategies would have been implemented for the age and stage of development of the participant.

3.7 Data Analysis

3.7.1 Transcription

Transcription of recorded interviews can be time consuming. However, it is important to consider the approach taken to transcription, to ensure that this is in line with the overall research aims (Oliver, Serovich & Mason, 2005).

Naturalised transcription takes account of speech patterns, involuntary vocalisations, pauses, and emphasis. This is useful as it avoids misrepresenting the conversation and privileges the narrative of the participant, ensuring that interviewers do not commit intellectual 'imperialism' (Schegloff, 1997; Oliver, Serovich & Mason, 2005).

Denaturalised transcription refers to taking note of the content of the conversation, rather than the intricacies. This is a logical approach for GT, which is interested in the meanings, perceptions, and interactions represented by the participants, rather than the *way* that they speak (Oliver, Serovich & Mason, 2005). In line with denaturalised transcription, I manually transcribed each interview verbatim, taking note of the conversation and leaving out the mechanics unless these were judged to be significant for the meaning of the speech.

3.7.2 Memo Writing during Initial Data Gathering

Within GT, the researchers are required to use a method of constant comparison, wherein connections between different aspects of the data emerge quickly and organically (Miller, 1995). Memo writing enables researchers to capture these thoughts and connections before they are 'obliterated' by a new incoming thought (ibid).

Memo writing - which should occur throughout the study - documents the thinking of the researcher and transforms the data into a theoretical account (Glaser & Strauss 1967; Montgomery & Bailey, 2007). The memo writing process should start early in the research, as this enables the researcher to flexibly move beyond concrete data and abstract meaning until the data becomes theory (Charmaz, 2014). The first significant memo in the current study was written following the first interview and is shown in Figure 3.4 and documents the thoughts that were pertinent during the process of initial data gathering:

8th August 2019

Memo – Reflecting on the first interview

*Yesterday was the first participant interview. It was with *Toni, a 15-year-old pupil from Zimbabwean descent. When I asked if the school was mixed, boys and girls, she began to talk about the racial mix of the school.*

Body image felt like an important issue for her. It came up several times in the interview. After completing the interview and asking if there was anything else she wanted to add, this topic came up again.

The misinterpretation of her confidence as aggression seems pertinent now.

She talked about spirituality and support from her friends and family.

She came across as having a narrative of 'this has made me stronger now'. This might help to accept what has happened.

I asked how she felt after the interview. She smiled and said 'So much better'.

It could be that adults, other than her parents have not yet been able to discuss this. It seemed that when she talked about her teachers, they were fair but perhaps problematic in the way they managed her situation.

Mental health feels like an undercurrent because of how she talked about the way she dealt with everything – dieting, isolation.

Resilience.

Figure 3. 4 Memo written to reflect on the first interview

The initial memo also enabled me to begin developing ideas about the meaning and the actions represented by the first participant. I attempted to write memos quickly

and organically, whilst preserving my original thoughts and providing me with a space to be a 'human' rather than a 'social scientist' (Charmaz, 2014 p.84)

3.7.3 Initial Coding line-by-line coding

The first stage of data analysis was line-by-line coding of the transcribed interviews. This was achieved through labelling each line of the data with short, active terms to create a lens of process and action rather than 'description' and 'topic' (Charmaz, 2011). Although coding each line felt arduous at times, coding in this way encouraged me to become immersed in the meaning and actions represented in the data. According the Charmaz, this level of immersion enables researchers to listen to the data, rather than transposing thoughts about what the data should say (Charmaz, 2014). At this stage of coding, the following questions are said to be of central focus in keeping the researcher grounded:

- What is the data a study of?
- What is actually happening in the data?
- What are the main concerns of the participants?

(Evans, 2013).

These questions enable eventual theory to be grounded in discovery and explanation, rather than verification and description (Stern & Porr, 2011 in Evans, 2013). Initial coding is considered important in contemplating a broad range of ideas linked directly to the data, prior to coding at a more distant level of abstraction (Charmaz, 2014). Furthermore, line-by-line coding, rather than coding by page or by paragraph, enabled me to allow analyse all instances, rather than being distracted by particularly noticeable accounts (Willig, 2013).

I also re-visited transcripts to validate, criticise, or fill in initial codes with a fresh mind. This was thought to be important in developing a dense, thorough theory (Glaser & Holton, 2004) whilst ensuring that categories and theoretical relationships developed later in the analysis were fundamentally grounded in the data (Willig, 2013).

Charmaz (2014) highlights strategies that can be used flexibly at the point of line-by-line coding. I incorporated the following strategies into the initial line-by-line coding of each interview:

- Comparing data with data
- Identifying gaps in the data
- Extracting implicit meanings and actions represented in the data
- Staying open to nuances in the data by revisiting it several times
- Approaching the task with speed and flexibility

Following these strategies enabled me to align this stage of analysis with the constant comparative method. As initial coding progressed through the interviews, I began to notice participants referring to specific incidents while explaining their accounts of belonging. Charmaz discusses the use of incident by incident comparisons when analysing observational data (2014). Although this was not observational data, I adopted the concept of incident by incident comparisons when I got to the later stages

of my initial coding. Here, I compared specific incidents explained by the participants to ones explained earlier on during the data gathering process.

The completion of careful initial coding was judged to help fulfil the criterion of 'fit and relevance' (Charmaz, 2014). The study would eventually be able to 'fit' the empirical evidence base around Black pupils' experiences of school and belonging, because of this careful initial process. The study would also be relevant, due to the thorough process of suspending my preconceptions and using action terms to describe what the participants were accounting for.

An example of initial line-by-line coding is provided in Appendix 8.

3.7.4. Focused Coding and Categorisation

During the next stage of analysis, I was attempting to use a selective and conceptual approach, rather than looking at the data on a line-by-line basis (Charmaz, 2014). Focused coding enables the researcher to use earlier codes to 'sift' through the data and analyse it in larger chunks (ibid).

Focused codes are constructed through the constant comparison of the initial codes within and across the data (Thornberg, Halldin, Bolmsjö & Petersson, 2011). In this process, initial codes are being selected for their analytic value, by selecting the most frequent or pertinent codes to formulate a focused code (Charmaz, 2014).

One of the challenges at this stage was suspending my preconceptions and grounding the decision-making within what the data was telling me. I used memos at this stage, to help my thinking. This enabled me to begin focused codes that made sense, by trying to question them. Unlike the process of line-by-line coding, which was quick, this process required a higher level of thought and consideration to ensure that the codes were grounded in the data. See Appendix 9 for an example of focused coding.

Within the current study, focused coding began once initial coding had taken place for each initial interview. Focused codes developed during early interviews helped to inform questions asked in the second phase of interviewing (see section 3.7.6 - Theoretical sampling).

Focused coding should prompt the researcher to go back to previously coded data to make explicit what may have been too tacit to detect at an earlier stage (Charmaz, 2014). This meant that focused coding was not a linear process: focused codes developed in later interviews helped to make sense of data that was implicit within the early interviews. Figure 3.5 provides an example of a memo written during the process of focused coding:

December 2019

Memo – Sharing a language with the participants

I'm listening back to Judah's interview again and reflecting on what he said about his hair. He told me about his hair and used the word 'nappy' without needing to contextualise. He also said that 'any black person knows this about hair', in a kind of 'obviously, you know this' tone.

I'm thinking about culturally located understandings and how this relates to our conversations.

Leo used Patwa in the interview, several times and I obviously didn't need to ask him what he meant. But this was after he established that I was Jamaican. I wonder, if we weren't able to use that shared language, how it might have affected the research process. Also, he talked about home, and cooking and his grandparents a lot. And smiled. It felt like this was a way 'in' to him exploring topics that felt close to him. Before this, it felt a bit – stunted.

Leo also described a friend as 'calm', but I knew that he meant this in the street context. Ray also said something that I had only ever heard from other black people.

Initial codes in Judah, Leo, Ray and Tashoma's have these aspects of shared language and shared understandings. I'm not sure if 'shared language' or 'shared understanding' is more appropriate for the focused code title. But I think that it's actually both.

I wonder how language related more broadly to the research context created between myself and the participants.

I read something by Fassinger who says researchers with similar characteristics gain specific insights. I'm wondering about how taken for granted meanings give rise to deeper insights. If there is a lot you don't need to explain to people, you can tell them your truth. If you don't have to explain your existence, you can go further with your story which otherwise may continue to be 'hard to reach'.

If there aren't researchers to elicit the voices, the stories remain at the margins. If there were more voices being heard, it would reach a critical mass and then maybe actual change.

Figure 3. 5 An example of a memo written during focused coding

I went through a structured process of listing each of the focused codes and attempting to cluster the codes in a theoretically sensible manner based on the area of experience, action, or meaning that was being represented by the participant. This involved combining some of the codes to form stronger focused codes. This process continued, with some focused codes being raised to form tentative categories when they explained a cluster of codes, with categories being given names that I thought described 'what was happening in the data' (Thornberg & Charmaz, 2017). The process of forming categories was iterative, involving many rough diagrams and

decision-making using tables. Whilst I was using my research question to guide me in the decision-making process, I was also trying to stay open to the data. This process of categorisation is argued to be a key element of the eventual grounded theory (Charmaz, 2017).

Once this process was finished, I had developed six categories which were aligned with original focused codes and more specific focused codes. Appendix 10 provides a table of focused codes prior to the clustering process, after the clustering process and the corresponding developed categories.

To evaluate the tentative categories and establish the relationship between each of the categories, I engaged in memo-writing (see section 3.7.5) and diagram drawing (see section 3.7.10). This was to enable me to develop my understanding of how the categories were integrated with one another and to provide the categories with 'explanatory power' (Tie, Birks & Francis, 2019). This was in line with, but not an exhaustive version of the 'storyline' approach withing GT methodology which enables a narrative to be developed from categories (ibid).

3.7.5 Memo-writing during coding and categorisation

The process of memo-writing is described as a conversation with self, to conceptualise the data and bring forth new insights (Charmaz, 2006). As stated previously, memo-writing occurred throughout the research process. At the coding stage, memos were a key part of my attempt to follow a constant comparative method, as they enabled me to make comparisons of data between and within codes (ibid). This enabled me to give greater conceptual weight to specific focused codes that were instrumental in understanding my emerging ideas.

At the point of categorisation, memos were written about each draft category after I had made an initial diagram exploring the potential link between categories. This enabled me to evaluate the logic of the emerging theoretical model and to 'flesh out' the categories (Charmaz, 2014). Importantly, memo-writing enabled me to begin clarifying the names of the categories, reassemble their link to one another, and reorganise some of the codes that constituted the categories (Appendix 11)

To maintain theoretical coherence, memo-writing was continued throughout the whole research process. This was thought to be an important element of retaining fidelity to grounded theory methodology:

'If the researcher skips [memo writing] by going directly to sorting or writing up, after coding, she is not doing grounded theory' (Glaser, 1978, p.83 in Evans, 2013).

3.7.6 Theoretical Sampling

When questions arise around gaps in the data, vague definitions, or queries about the relationships between categories, or indeed the finished theory, researchers are encouraged to answer these questions by going back to data-gathering with new resources or a new population (Tie, Birks & Francis, 2015; Thornberg & Chamaz, 2017). This is called theoretical sampling which is thought to provide the study with quality and integrity, yet it is a regularly omitted stage in GT research (Charmaz, 2014).

Within the current study, theoretical sampling happened at two stages. After the first two interviews were conducted and coded, the centrality of physical appearance emerged as a common and pertinent focused code in understanding the way that the participants experienced a sense of belonging. Theoretical sampling enabled me to pick this up and modify the interview schedule to include a question about physical appearance in future interviews.

The second stage of theoretical sampling took place at the participant level. During the initial recruitment process, I provided parents with telephone information about the study. These conversations were rich with perspectives about the research topic. An example of a memo written following a particularly pertinent conversation is provided in Appendix 12. Furthermore, throughout the analysis process, the role of family dialogue and support became a pertinent theme which required further understanding. I therefore thought that it was important to build upon this to further contextualise this finding to build insight into the role of the parental voice within the construction of a sense of belonging. When initially speaking to parents, I informed them that the study may require me to access their perspectives. I got back in touch with the two parents over the phone, one of whom was contactable and available within a time frame appropriate for the completion of research.

3.7.7 Initial and focused coding (2)

The steps for transcription, initial coding, and focused coding were carried out for data from the parent interview.

3.7.8 Theoretical Saturation

Theoretical saturation is the point at which there are no new insights being generated through data analysis (Charmaz, 2014). At this stage, generated codes can account for the variation in the data, despite further research being possible (Miller, 1995). Reaching saturation is assisted by theoretical sampling which enables researchers to obtain a wide scope and variation of concepts (Morse & Clark, 2019). This stage of GT is often criticised for ‘vague intuitionalism’ but can be a strength as it provides a rationale for reaching an end point, unlike other qualitative methods (Flick 2019; Bryant, 2019). Within the current study, analysis of the final interview, through initial and focused coding, enabled categories to be well fleshed out.

3.7.9 Diagrams

Charmaz (2014) advocates for the use of diagrams for a range of purposes throughout the research process. I developed various rough diagrams, maps and visuals throughout the research process, to assist me in graphically representing the complex relationships between a range of different topics. Rough diagrams also enabled me to make sense of the relationship between initial and focused codes within interviews (Appendix 13).

At the point of categorisation, I developed several rough, iterative diagrams to evaluate the relationships between tentative categories (see Appendix 14 for an example). This process was useful in exploring the properties of the categories and was a key part of my analysis. It also enabled me to attempt to find the correct titles and words to include in category titles.

I also developed a conceptual map of the final grounded theory to report and illustrate how the theory fits together along with the relationships between the conceptual categories (see figure 6.1). The process of creating diagrams and maps enabled me to gradually move towards a sense of coherence amongst pieces of deep, rich and dense data.

3.7.10 Theory Building

Within GT, memos, codes, diagrams and maps are the building blocks of the categories that go on to form major themes within the developed theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Once I had gone through the lengthy analysis process and gathered my findings, I started a second literature review, to theoretically sensitise my findings prior to writing my theory, which is presented in Chapter 6.

At the stage of theory building, I was acknowledging that the theory, although a representation of the participants' experiences, was constructed by me. I also found it important to ensure that the study did not run the risk of becoming disconnected from its social context, as small GT studies have often been described as fragmented from the wider world (Charmaz, 2014).

To build the theory, I utilised key insights from the second literature review, along with maps, diagrams and key memos. Throughout this process, I attempted to ensure that I was open to a range of possibilities by taking an attitude of 'theoretical playfulness' (Charmaz, 2014). This involved me attempting to be 'unorthodox' and innovative when developing ideas about what was happening within the data (Thornberg, 2012).

Figure 3.6 provides an overview of the steps taken throughout the data gathering and analysis process:

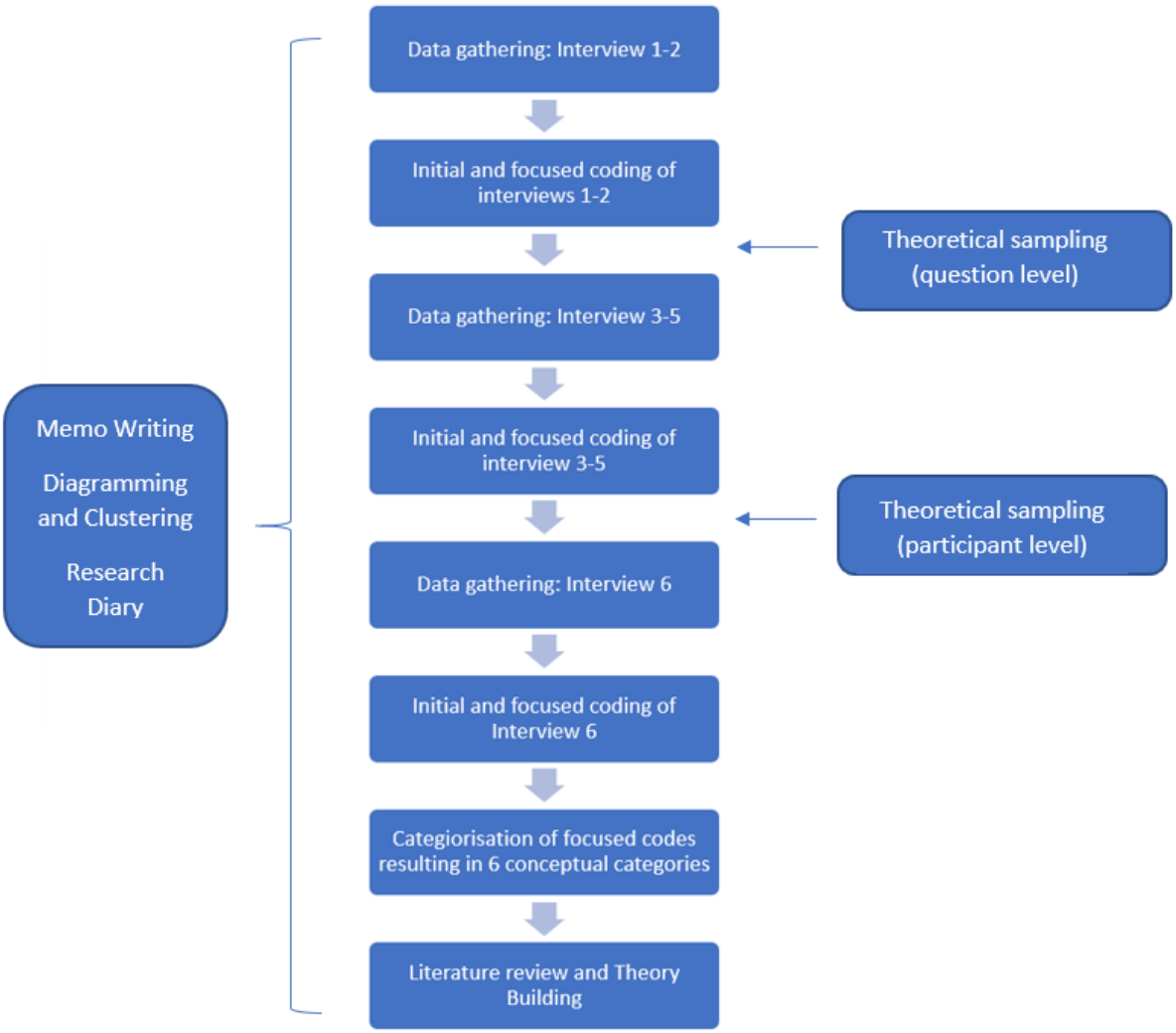


Figure 3. 6 A diagram representing the stages of data gathering and analysis from August 2019 – April 2020

3.8 Evaluation of Research Validity and Quality

3.8.1 Researcher positionality and reflexivity

Grounded theory requires researchers to get 'close' to their topic of study through in-depth interviews, meaning that they must reflect on their own biases and interpretations (Aspers & Corte, 2019). Researcher positionality has various impacts upon the research process including the worldview brought to the task of research and by extension, the research questions (Berger, 2015).

I will now explore my worldview and beliefs to provide transparency and to position my role in the research process.

My worldview comes from my identity as a Black British researcher of African and Caribbean descent who has pursued education until doctoral level and has a commitment to the emotional health of my community. During my own educational journey, I have had experiences of being validated, encouraged and invested in at

various stages. I possess several privileges that have given me access to a range of opportunities academically and otherwise. I have also had experiences throughout my education that I believe are rooted within unconscious levels of bias and racism. I therefore have a complex relationship with academia and education. Whilst I firmly believe that education has the ability to provide self-actualisation and social mobility, I can see that (as with any institutional system) it can harbour oppressive structures and practices that serve to maintain status quo rather than create radical change. My worldview also extends to the educational experiences of my community members which have been equally complex and nuanced. Although there are many educational 'success stories' from the 'Black' community, the language used to describe these successes often centres the perseverant qualities of individual people, rather than upon the complex dance between communities and the systems that they interact with (e.g. 'risen aspiration', 'breaking down barriers'). I operate from a position where I consider both the individual and their unique journey to be important.

Charmaz (2014) emphasises the importance of the 'social locations' of both the interviewee and the researcher when considering the openness, willingness and perceptions of participants about sharing their views. It could be suggested that participants may be more prepared to discuss their truth with me as a co-member of the Black community, however this may present other dynamics. For example, it has been suggested that responses provided in the research context are not just pieces of information, but they are artefacts of the participants perception of the researcher, their relationship and the context (Shah, 2004).

I am a female researcher, meaning I shared this characteristic with 2 of my 6 participants. I am also considerably older than my school aged participants and younger than the parent participant. These factors are also important to consider when assessing potential bias within the shared research process.

Furthermore, I had an experience of working within one of the schools in the study within capacity as a Trainee Educational Psychologist. Although this was not occurring at the time of my study, it may have played a role in my knowledge of the context and therefore in the way I engaged with the topic.

Due to my experience of working with and talking to young people from a range of backgrounds, I judged that I had sufficient experience in conducting interviews without unduly allowing personal bias to steer the process. However, maintaining reflexivity through an awareness of my involvement in the research process was necessary to reduce the influence of my preconceptions on the outcomes (Kolb, 2012). I kept a research diary throughout the process to reflect upon each interview and ensure that I could improve upon my approach if necessary. Furthermore, the process of theoretical memo-writing throughout the process enabled me to keep a level of 'distance', by abstracting from the data. Within the categorisation process, I reflected upon the way that my positionality may have influenced my construction of one of the categories. See the following extract from Appendix 11:

February 2019

Suspending my own thoughts was the most difficult aspect of constructing this category. I have written about that extensively it in my research diary, but actually, I think I need to reflect upon how my identity interacted with the construction of this category. What happened with some of these young people was, in my view, wrong. I think that a part of me was slightly crushed when I was trying to approach the organisation of these focused codes with an appropriate level of 'distance'. Looking back on the bulk of the categorisation process, my energy was very low because of the mental work of attempting to do something constructive with something painful, but I was also incredibly motivated to get it done. It was a strange space to be in and I wonder if something about the level of cognitive work attached to this, impacted upon the way I made sense of it.

Figure 3. 7 An extract from the Memo 'Experiencing othering based on Blackness'

3.8.2 Credibility

Judgement about the legitimacy of qualitative research often uses terms such as trustworthiness and credibility, rather than reliability and validity, as used in quantitative research.

One of the key aspects of attempting to maintain credibility within the research is ensuring that the researchers' assumptions and worldview does not dominate the participant accounts of their lived experiences (Charmaz, 2014). This, along with other measures taken to enhance the credibility of the research are explored in Table 3.3:

Credibility	Measures taken
	Ensuring that the language, worldview and values of participants were respected by ensuring they felt comfortable to use informal or personalised language (Denzin, 2007) I checked the interview schedule for leading questions that could have affected the legitimacy of the answers given. Familiarity with the topic was gained through a broad literature review. Familiarity with the context was gained through me working in the local authority as a TEP. Familiarity with the population was gained through my status as a member of the same racial community, having experienced the navigation of predominantly white settings. A range of views were gained through the process of theoretical sampling. Participants from three different types of school (state, private and maintained) were sampled. Additional perspectives from a parent added to the richness of the data.

	An in-depth level of exploration and analysis was gained through conducting 30 minute to 1hour 30 minute long interviews. 6 interviews were conducted. Analysis was verified through memo-writing, multiple iterations of coding and keeping a research diary.

Table 3. 3 Measures taken for research credibility

Further details of measures to improve the quality of the study are provided in Chapter 7.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

Prior to the research commencing, it received ethical approval from the Ethics Committee at the University of Nottingham (Appendix 15). Due to my role as a Trainee Educational Psychologist, all of my interactions with young people and schools are bound by professional ethical guidelines including the British Psychological Society (BPS) Code of Ethics and Conduct (2009), guidance from the Health Care Professions Council on conduct for students (2012) and the BPS's code of human research ethics (2014).

3.9.1 Informed Consent

Informed consent provides vulnerable participants with a clear explanation of the research and their rights, enabling them to make an informed decision about their involvement. Educational Psychologists may be well placed to facilitate conversations about informed consent, due to this procedure being part of our professional dialogue when carrying out work with young people. This professional experience enables attunement and responsiveness in our interactions with research participants (Hardy & Majors, 2017).

Following the recruitment of participants, each parent and pupil were sent relevant information about the study. Within the information, which was tailored to parents and pupils separately, information about the purpose and scope of the study, along with the parameters of data storage, was provided (Appendix 5).

Prior to each interview, this information was provided again verbally, to ensure that participants understood their involvement. Participants were able to ask questions prior to the study. Once this was completed, and participants indicated they were happy to take part, participant consent forms were signed.

3.9.2 Right to Withdraw

Within the written information participants were informed that they were under no obligation to participate. At the point of contacting participants about their agreement to participate, this was again reiterated. The right to withdraw was verbally reiterated prior to the start of each interview. At this point, I was informing participants that they were able to terminate the interview at any time and also verbally reiterating their ability to withdraw their input at any point up to the transcription of the data, as was stated in the information about the study.

3.9.3 Confidentiality

Participants were made aware of their rights to anonymity in written (Appendix 4) and verbal information (Appendix 6). During transcription, all identifying information (names, school names, locations, geographical data) was anonymised. All participants were provided with pseudonyms throughout the transcription process and within the written thesis. To maintain anonymity, full transcripts are not included in the final thesis. Audio data and transcripts were stored on a private, password protected computer, in line with the Data Protection Act (2018). I considered backing up the data to a cloud location but chose against this to reduce the risk of hacking. Participants were made aware that any information that led to safeguarding concerns or malpractice would lead to information sharing with relevant parties. All interviews took place within quiet and relatively private environments.

3.9.4 Minimising Harm

Drawing upon regular experience of having in-depth interactions with young people, I attempted to validate experiences that were challenging, using professional discretion when deciding how to redirect the conversation. None of the participants showed signs of being upset or uncomfortable during the course of the interviews, however the conversations were passionate, and heart felt. I also ensured that pupils had opportunities to discuss their positive experiences at school along Questions were framed both positively and negatively (e.g. '*What do teachers do that makes pupils here feel supported?'* and *'What might make someone here feel unsupported?').*

All participants or parents expressed at some stage a positive perspective about their inclusion in the research. Each parent that I spoke to prior to the interview had their own dialogue to share about their experiences, and most parents talked about feeling positive that their child's views would be included in my research.

3.9.5 Debriefing

At the end of each interview, participants were invited to ask questions and raise concerns before I gave a brief overview of the interview. In the first two interviews and in the final interview, this approach allowed participants to raise additional aspects of their school experience. Most pupils explained they would be interested in the findings. All participants were invited to get in touch at any stage if they had any concerns or wanted to discuss anything raised in the interview. My contact details were provided on the information sheets and participants were reminded of this. Participants all took a copy of the information sheet, along with my contact details away with them, to ensure they could contact me if necessary. I intend to disseminate my findings with participants.

4. Findings

4.1 Introduction

The current research aims to illustrate a theoretical account of how Black pupils experience and construct a sense belonging when they attend predominantly white schools. Within this chapter, findings from the analysis of five interviews with Black secondary school pupils and of one interview with a parent is presented.

I will provide a brief overview of the key characteristics of each participant for background and context. Interview 1 was conducted with Toni who was 15-year-old female and attended a state school. Following the interview, Toni expressed an interest in discussing Psychology, as she was looking ahead to making her A-level choices. Interview 2 was conducted with Judah, who was 17 years old at the time of our interview and attended a private school. Judah was attending the Sixth form attached to his school and during the interview, he referred mainly to his school experiences. Interview 3 was conducted with Leo who was 13 and was attending a multi-academy trust mainstream secondary school. To account for his younger age, I decided to play an ice-breaker game of Jenga with Leo prior to starting the interview. Each Jenga piece had a question on it, which would enable each of us to get to know each other slightly better (e.g. what is your proudest moment). During discussions about the research with the SENCo at Leo's school, the SENCo explained that a member of staff had recently sworn at Leo during a classroom interaction however he did not raise this during the interview. Interview 4 was conducted with Ray who was 16 and was attending a multi-academy trust. Interview 5 was conducted with Tashoma who was 18 at the time of our interview. During the interview, Tashoma referred back to his school experiences. Interviews with the young people took place between August 2019 and December 2019. Interview 6 took place in February 2020, with Lisa, a parent whose child attended a multi-academy trust.

The 'final' interview schedule (Appendix 6) generally followed Charmaz's approach to intensive interviewing, as stated in Chapter 3. The schedule consisted of open-ended questions that started with neutral topics, including general aspects of the school such as class size and the physical aspects of the school. This was followed by questions about how pupils viewed their relationships with staff, their friendships, how welcoming they found the school, their view of the cultural make-up of the school and whether they felt pupils were treated fairly. Interviews with Toni and Judah indicated that physical appearance was a pertinent aspect of their experience, therefore this topic was carried forward within interviews 3-5. All pupils referred to their secondary school experiences predominantly, however Judah and Tashoma also compared experiences in school to other educational settings. Towards the end of each interview, the young people were asked about the way they felt about key events and what they were thinking or feeling at the time. The interview with Lisa, the parent participant, was carried out as part of theoretical sampling, following the analysis of interviews with the young people. This interview was centred upon her view of her child's experiences within school, how she provided support and her thoughts about the school's approach to managing her child's concerns (Appendix 16).

The findings below provide an account of the 6 conceptual categories that were constructed following the stages of analysis detailed in figure 3.6 in Chapter 3. These stages of analysis are accounted for in the Methodology Section and examples of the sequential stages of the coding process can be found in Appendices 7-8. Table 4.1 provides an overview of the resultant conceptual categories from the data analysis.

Category Number	**Conceptual Category Name**
Category 1	**Confronted with their identities**
Category 2	**Reacting through emotional reflection, resistance and advocacy**
Category 3	**Constructing their position within the context**
Category 4	**Navigating a Black image**
Category 5	**Transcending the need to belong through personal growth**
Category 6	**Utilising the research space to express authentic voice**

Table 4. 1 Table of conceptual categories developed through the grounded theory analysis process

Each category is rooted within a series of focused codes which were in turn rooted within initial coding. A list of focused codes and final focused codes are presented in Appendix 10.

These categories were theoretically sensitised through the completion of a secondary literature review, enabling these categories to form the basis of the eventual theory which is presented in Chapter 6. This presents an arc spanning from the data, to initial coding, to focused coding, to categories and grounded theory.

Below, each category is explored in turn through a visual representation of the category and constituent focused codes along with extracts from participant interviews. In places, there is clear similarity in the wording between the category title and some of the focused codes beneath it. Where this is the case, aspects of the focused codes were considered to have such analytical weight that they were elevated to the level of a category. Although they are presented sequentially, the categories are

best understood as an integrated network (Charmaz, 2015), so I have made reference to other focused codes and categories where necessary.

4.2 Category 1 - Confronted with their identities

This category is based on the focused codes presented in Figure 4.1

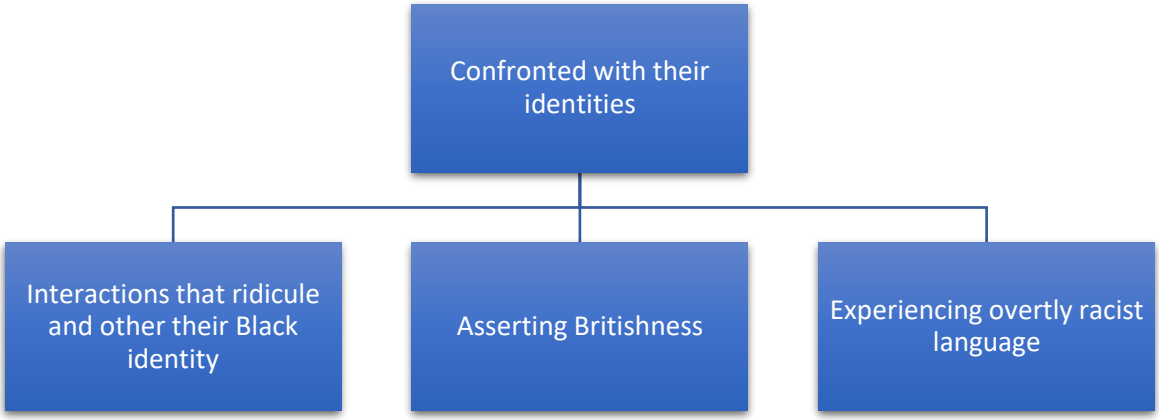


Figure 4. 1 Category 1 - Confronted with their identities

4.2.1 Focused codes: Interactions that ridicule and other their Black identity; Asserting Britishness

These focused codes highlight a range of interactions participants had with their White peers in school. The focused code '*interactions that ridicule their Black identity*' highlights how peers drew upon racial tropes about Black people as a site of ridicule. The focused code 'Asserting their Britishness' was drawn from the transcript of the interview with Toni and concerns how this ridicule is paired with Toni's attempt to assert her Britishness whilst taking account of her African identity.

Toni's account details questions about her country of origin that have a potential subtext or function of questioning her Britishness.

> *They've sort of been like 'oh if you don't really like it here, why don't you just go back to so and so where you're from' (…) They haven't necessarily said anything about me being an immigrant – well they have, but like (…) (Toni, p.13, 312-313).*
>
> ***Researcher: You mentioned earlier, something about being called an immigrant. Has someone said something like that before?***
>
> *Toni: They said – I don't know the exact term, but it was like, 'why don't you go back to your Africa'. They were like 'do you have a British passport?' I was like 'Yes and I also have an African passport' and they would giggle in their little*

group and say, 'ha-ha immigrant' and stuff like that in their little group (p 14. 336-339).

Toni's account of her first few days in school highlights a sequence of questions, starting with a plausible and neutral question that is followed by a question that highlights her racial difference:

Toni: Um, my first few days…A lot of staring. A lot of questions. Lots and lots of questions.

Researcher: What sort of questions?

Toni: Um, 'where are you from?' These are normal question for me, but then it was like… 'Oh Africa, oh does your grandma live in the mountains?' and stuff like that. And it's like – 'No?'. But ok. And then they were like 'Oh is your hair fake? Oh, are you bald?' (p.9, 194 – 198).

Ray also highlighted an interaction that involved a question being used to highlight his Blackness, however this question was posed as a joke.

Ray: It's not really that diverse here, obviously, as you would imagine. That's not a bad thing, but sometimes yeah, some situations, they, just, they don't understand.

Researcher: What sorts of things do you mean?

Ray: Let's say we're in a lesson and someone puts on a film, and they turn the lights off. Someone would say like 'where's Raymond?' and I'm like, 'is it that funny though?' Yeah. (p.6, 196-200)

Toni recalled an additional account where she discussed peers mocking her choice in food:

(…) and then it would be like 'Oh um, what's your favourite restaurant?' [I would say] McDonalds because everybody loves McDonalds. They would be like 'Do you like chicken?' and they would be like 'Do you like Nandos?' and I would be like no, and they would be like 'Oh I swear that's not allowed for Black people' (Toni, p.9, 207 – 210)

In addition to the experiences highlighted above, Judah explained that he been the butt of the '*odd slave joke'* during football matches, which aligns itself with this focused code and will be fully explored further in Category 2.

During the parent interview, the following interactions were indicated. As well highlighting one of her son's experiences of being confronted, she also asserted that he is British:

I've had them be called terrorists by other kids. And those things which are automatically swept under the carpet. I said you know, after the Manchester attack, my son was called a terrorist. That is really not good (…) He was born here. Do you know what I mean?

4.2.2 Focused code: Experiencing overtly racist language

Ray and Tashoma both described feeling that their concerns about racist language were dismissed by the school. These accounts are explored further in Category 3. The incidents that caused them to approach the teachers in the first place, comprise this focused code.

> *[Sigh] I think...it could have happened before, but I think [pause]. Yeah, like this one time as well, I was in Maths. And someone, uh, called me the N word. And that didn't turn out very well (…) (Ray, p.7, 236-238)*

Tashoma described the following interaction which took place during a football match:

> *Just keep on consistently trying to hurt you and keep on kicking you. He'd consistently do things like that to try and aggravate me. His friends would say stuff to him like 'are you going to take that, he's not reacting, are you going to take that' (…) He'd say stuff like 'I can do whatever I want, that monkey's not going to do anything'. When my friends told me he said that, I was like, I'm not going to do anything off word of mouth. Then he said it to me, and I said 'listen, if I do anything, I'm going to get in trouble, I don't want to do that' (Tashoma p.6, 22-232)*

Tashoma went on to provide a detailed account of his thoughts about the rise of racism though racial tropes in football, providing national and international examples with a historical context. However, this cannot be fully covered within the current thesis.

4.3 Category 2 - Reacting through emotional reflection, resistance and advocacy

This category is built upon focused codes that explore the way participants reacted to experiences in Category 1 and to other experiences. A diagram of these focused codes is illustrated in Figure 4.2:

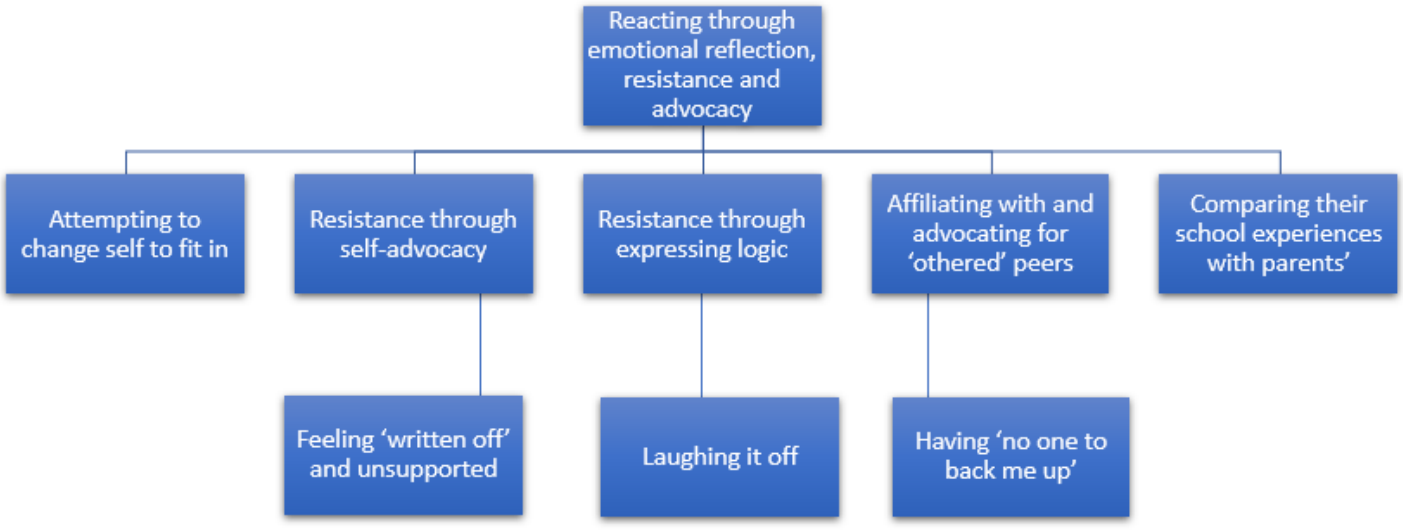


Figure 4. 2 Category 2 - Reacting through emotional reflection, resistance and advocacy

4.3.1 Attempting to change self to fit in

This focused code refers to Toni's emotional response to the way she was made to feel about her body:

> *I lost a lot of confidence because of the comments they made about my body. I went on, I cannot tell you how many diets. I went on this one called Keto where you just stop eating carbs and stuff. That messed my head up. I was not sleeping at all. I went on a water diet. Starved myself for I don't know how long. I just felt like, I don't know when I just said to myself – enough is enough – you're not going to change who you are because of what people are saying. I know I'm large, or obese or overweight or whatever they say. But this is who I am. There are times when I'm going to feel like I really want to change myself. Let me feel that but cause I'm feeling that, not cause people are saying, she's fat, she's this and that and she's got eight chins and stuff like that. I just feel like it really wasn't necessary. I understand that you haven't seen anyone like me before but there are ways about asking people why – not why are they different but asking different questions that you're intrigued to know. Asking me, why are my lips big, is not a question that you'd be interested in. I was born with it, it's who I am (Toni p.18, 415-427).*
>
> *(…) And that caused me – I wouldn't say depression – but like, I stopped eating and I stopped engaging in social activities and smiling (Toni p.18, 432-433)*

4.3.2 Focused Codes: Resistance through self-advocacy; Resistance through expressing logic

In this focused code, participants used 'in the moment' interactions to address what they felt were unfair actions, comments or interactions with peers and teachers. Within these accounts, participants were also attempting to set boundaries around how they wanted people to interact with them:

Tashoma highlighted a series of thoughts that were associated with him eventually challenging a teacher who he felt had put a spotlight on his behaviour:

> *(…) it was just a bit like, why is she treating me like this? And then at the time, a lot of kids started to pick up that something's not right. (p.2, 44-45)*
>
> *(…) thinking like, I can't take this because it's the start of the year and I can't have this for two years. I can't have every class, feeling as though I'm under a spotlight. (p.2, 66-68)*
>
> *(…) she said I kicked the pen, whereas the pen was on the floor because kids were throwing the pen around the class. And then I said, 'well they're throwing the pen around the class and I've been told to get out, it's unfair'. (p.1, 32-34)*

Toni account highlights how she responded to instances of being called an immigrant by expressing pride in her heritage. Toni's response also read with a sense of pure logic:

I've just told you I have a British passport and I'm not an immigrant. My Dad moved here, because he was called from Africa for his job. So how exactly am I an immigrant? (p.15, 339-341)

(…) I've sort of been like, I'm not here by choice, number 1. I love Africa, it's hot, the weathers amazing. I would go back, proudly. But I just kind of have to feel like, why are you still saying this in this day and age? I feel like I keep repeating that (Toni p.14, 315-317).

I just feel like, you're saying all of this like 'you're not mean to be here, blah blah blah' but many, many of the things you have in this country are not from a white British person. So, I don't understand what you are trying to say to me (Toni p.14, 323-325).

Ray's accounts highlight his attempts to engage teachers both through approaching senior leadership and through advocating for himself in the moment:

(…) I tried to talk to the senior teachers here about it say that I feel like I'm being picked on and they basically dismissed it. (p. 7, 233-234)

Some teachers, some things they said – it's not very professional (…) I got sent out because we were going through Geography homework and he was like 'Oh yeah I won't, I won't erm ask anyone what they got it doesn't matter what they got' and then he went 'Oh wait, I'll ask you, what did you get?' I was like 'I thought you said you weren't going to ask anyone?' And then he went 'I'm asking you' Then I said, 'Oh, well sorry Sir, I feel like you're picking on me' then he just went 'Yeah get out, I'm gonna keep picking on you' stuff like that. And it's like, there's no need for that. Could have handled it differently. But you know. (p.6-7, 223-230)

4.3.3 Focused Code: Laughing it off

Within this focused code, participants are recalling times when they were made to feel othered because of their race and attempted to laugh it off:

Judah: (…) You just kind of make a joke of it really. You have the odd slave joke here or 'ah, you're closer to them in colour' or whatever [pause] I don't really take it to heart. I love football, so. It's never, it's not malicious. (p.18, 414-417)

Ray: [Sigh] At first, I would laugh like, but now it's like, it's not funny, it's a bit old now (…) It's not that deep but yeah. There's always one, once in a while, something like that (…) but, what can I say? (p.6, 203-207)

Tashoma: (…) I'd say at that age, it was just a case of wanting to belong. You kind of want to belong and just think, fine whatever, it is what it is. Then you try and laugh it off, like ha-ha whatever. Also, I don't think I was in a position to do anything. (p.9, 338-340)

4.3.4 Having no one to 'back me up'

Within the focused code 'having no one to back me up', two participants describe times when they felt they were managing challenging interactions on their own. Within both of these accounts, participants have the impression of being resigned to managing these situations on their own:

> *Tashoma: Let's say, 5,6,7 white boys, I'd be alone, so if I said something, I'd be outnumbered and vice versa. If it was 5,6,7 of my Black friends and I said something, I'd be outnumbered. I feel like [inaudible] didn't really matter. (p.9, 340-342)*
>
> *Toni: And those were in the days when I didn't have the friends I have [now]. So I really had no one to back me up so I would just sit there and just let the questions come to me (p.9, 212-215).*

4.3.5 Focused Code: Feeling 'written off' and unsupported

This code is comprised of experiences that illustrate aspects of teacher-pupil dynamics that made them feel unsupported.

Tashoma explained that in his previous school, he was informed that teachers used personal characteristics (ethnicity, SES etc) to help calculate predictive GCSE grades (this is further explored in Category 3). Below, he descried how this made him feel:

> *I felt like, a sick feeling in my stomach. I felt like I'd been written off before I had been given a chance. I must have been 11,12,13 at the time. To be told you won't amount to anything. If you don't get a pass, it's a well done. I was thinking that's really annoying. (p.11, 405-407)*
>
> *(…) Then if you think about it, a kid that young shouldn't have to think about being subjected to things like that. (p.11, 423-424)*

Ray explained how he felt about how much he was supported by teachers:

> ***Researcher: (…) is there anything that the staff do here to make you feel supported?***
>
> *Ray: In what sense of support?*
>
> ***Researcher: Anything really, so however whatever staff do that make you feel like ok, they've got my back sort of thing.***
>
> *Ray: [Pause] Not much really (p.7-8, 264-269)*

He was then asked about whether he felt teachers were invested in him:

> *Ray: Mmm, to an extent. I'd say my Business and English, they teacher know it. They do push me quite a bit. I guess. Yeah to an extent yeah.*

Researcher: And what's the other side of that, because you said mm to an extent?

> *Ray: Depends what my targets are or what I need to do to get there. You know, but in English they hold these sessions where you can go. And I get a lot out of it so. Yeah they kind of do but maybe not. Not on a personal level but, maybe to an extent. (p.3 108-113)*

4.3.6 Focused Code: Affiliating with and advocating for 'othered' peers

This focused code refers to the solidarity that participants expressed towards children who were 'singled out' or picked on. Toni made a connection between the homogeneity of the pupil population and the way other pupils were treated. Toni gave three accounts at different points in the interview, highlighting a context where there was intolerance for multiple levels of difference:

> *(…) I feel like with the white people, they are all generally from [*town name*]. there's only a few from other sort of [places]. And I have a friend called Sonia and although she is white, she does kind of experience - I wouldn't say bullying, but they insult her because of her accent and the way she says stuff. So, she has a really thick Liverpudlian accent and when she speaks, she says words differently and the boys would be like 'Oh Sonia say that again, say that again'. And she'll just like be annoyed with it (p.12, 272-278).*

> *I haven't seen anyone else treated the way I have, but I've seen. As I walk through the school, I've seen unfair treating. I would see a Chinese girl walking to her lesson with a few white boys behind her who say 'ling ling' and they find that funny (Toni p.16, 369-371).*

> *At the same time, I don't feel like it is just skin colour. I think it's the way you look. I have a friend called Amy and she fits right into their sort of group. She's British, straight British, no other, born in [*town name*], accent is the same as them, but she is a bigger person. They kind of make fun of her for that. It just makes me feel like, OK, it's not just skin colour, it's also the way you look (Toni p.16, 372-376).*

Ray expressed a sense of affiliation to a younger pupil by empathising with his loneliness as Ray understood the experience of feeling new and anxious:

> *(…) But like, this one kid. He's a bit lonely. He's in Year 7 and he's South Asian. And you know, he came in, I seen him and he came with a picnic and tried to share it. He doesn't speak English very well. I see him on his own. I feel really bad. On his own, quite lonely. Sometimes, kids like, throwing food at him. He's trying to eat. Like stop, like, come on he's trying to eat in peace. (p.10, 358-363)*

> *(…) Yeah sometimes like, I sometimes say 'lads, why we doing that' let him eat in peace'. Sometimes, once in a while I'll sit with him. He doesn't say much but, I'm there, just being there.*

> ***Researcher: Do you see that as your duty?***

Yeah. Probably being the oldest in the school as well. I feel like, I know what it's like to be new as well. Yeah. To feel anxious as well. Confused. As to why it's happened to him. I don't know. (p.10, 365-371)

4.3.7 Focused Code: Comparing their school experiences with their parents' school experiences

One of the ways that pupils made sense of their experiences within the school, was to compare or reflect upon the experiences that their parents had with either racism or education. Tashoma discussed feeling that his mother's experiences in education enabled him to develop the resilience needed to navigate school:

Because when my Mum went to University, this was during the apartheid in South Africa, she went to Rhodes. So, she was telling me that she was literally scared for her life at points. But then she said you can't let people get in the way of you achieving what you need to do. Then she said if I sat there and take it, I'm sort of like letting her win and you can't let people do that.

Researcher: That's fantastic. Do you feel like your Mom's University experience informed how you responded to your education?

Tashoma: I mean, I thought of it as what I'm going through is nowhere near as bad as what she went through. Whereas everyone knows, racism was legal, and rife, to the point where a white man and a Black man couldn't walk into the same place at the same time. So, I took it and said listen, my Mum could do that, to give me the things that I have now, the opportunities I have now for free education. I said you know what I should be able to take this on the chin, to win the battle so that her sacrifices weren't in vain sort of thing. (p.3, 79 - 95)

Toni expressed compared her experiences with her those of her parents, which enabled her to arrive at a point of questioning her experiences:

But it's sort of like, my parents have grown up and never once had to face things like this. And if in their generation they didn't have to face things like this, why is it happening in this what we call like a modern-day generation? (p.14, 317-320).

4.4 Category 3 - Constructing their position within the context and population

Within this category, participants are constructing a view of their position within the context by describing and dissecting processes, actions and events within the school context. This category is built upon the focused codes in Figure 4.3:

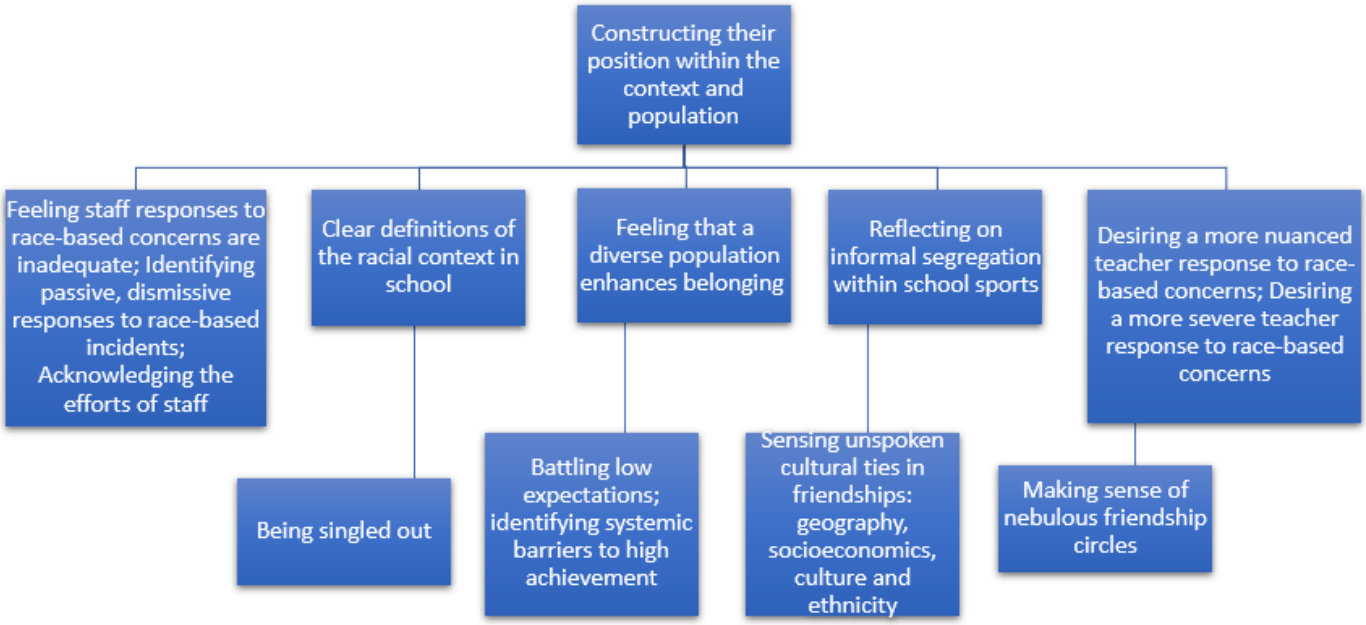


Figure 4. 3 Category 3 – Constructing a position with the context and population

4.4.1 Focused code: Clear definitions of the racial context in school

During the first interview, Toni was asked about whether her school was a mixed or single gender school. In her response, she described the racial context of the school with clarity and quantity without being prompted. Whilst this could be a result of Toni's knowledge of the research topic, it raised the possibility that the racial context of the school was salient to her experience, causing her to describe this when describing the general context of the school. As seen below, most participants described the racial context of their school with some clarity:

> ***Researcher: Is it a mixed school or a girl's school?***
>
> *Toni: Ah it's a mixed school. Mainly uh, white people. There are quite a few Black people. I would say in the whole school there are about 15 I think. Um yeah, uh, there's not a lot of Asians. I'd say about 10 in the whole school (p.2, 322-327).*
>
> *Definitely mainly white. And then probably, after that Indian and then Pakistani. A few um Chinese people especially in sixth form that come from China. And stay again in quite a close-knit group. And then in terms of Black people I think in school, in the school of about 800-900, there are 5 Black people, so, not very many at all. When I lived where I used to like, I think, 5 out of those – did I say, 5, so 4 out of 5 of those Black people were on the same bus. So again, all kind of same area and that kind of thing (Judah p.14, 19-24)*

It's like. Mostly white people. There're not many Black kids in this school. There is some but like, not many. (Leo, p.10, 346-347)

Well it's predominantly obviously, uh, Caucasian. In the whole school I'd say there's three to four Black lads and girls. Maybe 5,6 at a push. So yeah, it's, it's different to my old one. (Ray, p.10, 330-331)

Um, when I moved school to [school name] which was a predominantly white school, I was one of two Black kids in my race and the other Black child was mix raced as well (…) In the whole school. Like, it was alright at times but at times I could feel a bit like, different. (Tashoma, p.1, 14-19)

4.4.2 **Focused code:** Feeling that a diverse population enhances belonging

Within the focused code '*feeling that a diverse population enhances belonging*', participants describe feeling accepted and respected within racially diverse settings. Toni and Ray had previously attended racially diverse settings and were comparing their current school experience to their previous one. Leo on the other hand, had not attended a racially diverse setting previously, and spoke about this topic hypothetically:

Leo: Because, if it's a mixture of all people yeah, I can like, if there was an equal amount of Black people, equal amount of Indian people, equal amount of Filipin people, equal amount of white people. You connect yeah, but it can make you feel yourself. If it's mostly one race in a school or somewhere else, yeah, it can make you like, I need to fit in with them, because I'm different, I need to fit in with them.

Researcher: Do you feel like that?

Leo: No

Researcher: How do you feel?

Leo: Just be me (p.11, 375-383)

Researcher: Did you ever have similar experiences at the other school?

Toni: No. Never. Not once. I feel like at my old school there were a lot of us. So we were kind of just in our own group. But we had like white people there, but they would never ask questions like that. I don't know if it was that they were scared to ask or if they just had respect and just knew that…there are some things you can ask and there are some things that you just don't say. (p.10, 218-222)

(…) I just feel like it's because there are a lot of them, that they just feel like they are superior. And I'm sort of like inferior to them. (Toni p.14, 26-327)

Well, [previous school name] is a lot more diverse. There's a lot more like, Asian, African, all like different races as well. Because when people come to the country and live in [city name], the council, if they find them a school, it's normally [school name]. Very diverse, they accept you no matter what you wear. Here, they like, there's only one other African person in my year. There's also my Somalian friend, so it's a bit different so yeah. (Ray, p.1, 19-23)

Ray also discussed cultural identity as important to him, but feeling it wasn't a sentiment held by the wider school population;

Researcher: And do you feel like cultural identity is important to the pupils here?

Ray: Yeah, I think it's very important but I think it's kind of - I don't want to say overlooked. But it's not seen as important. But I find it important.

Researcher: And why is it important to you?

Ray: It makes people who they are. And it's made me who I am. So, I think it's important in that sense. (p.9, 333-337)

4.4.3 Focused code: Reflecting on informal segregation within school sports

This focused code refers to participants construing of informally segregated sports games as the 'done thing at school'. Judah begins this account with some apprehension and reflects upon the morality of this issue further in Category 6:

I probably shouldn't I don't know if I should tell you this or not but, um whenever we play football which we do every day in the summertime, it's always white vs Browns. Always. Yeah, and my a drama teacher found out about that last year and she was very like 'oh my gosh you can't do that' but again that happens throughout the years it's not just our year. Which is interesting again. (Judah, p.17, 381-385)

Judah: People just, it's just White vs Brown, just an easy way to…

(…) Of course, you would have those games of white vs Black – that's just high school, that's what happens (Toni p.12, 331-332)

4.4.4 Focused Code: Feeling staff responses to race-based concerns are inadequate; Identifying passive, dismissive responses to race-based incidents; Acknowledging the efforts of staff

The above focused codes refer to the ways that participants experienced teacher responses to their concerns about race-related interactions. Some participants acknowledged that staff had attempted to intervene, but felt their interventions were inadequate, unresponsive or insensitive. Other participants highlighted dismissive and passive responses to their concerns. It is possible to draw parallels to concerns raised in Category 4, where Judah indicates his hair does not fit in with the appearance policy.

Tashoma felt that there was a subtext in the way his concerns were responded to. He thought that his teachers didn't believe he could have felt threatened by a white pupil.

He also felt misunderstood; his attempt to address his issue with teachers was not about feeling threatened but about mitigating the discipline he would have received through responding the situation by himself. In this way, he described feeling that his hands were tied:

> *Tashoma: Other things, like there was a time when a person kept insulting me, my brother, my mother. I went to someone and they didn't do anything about it. (…) I tried to say 'with all due respect, I came to you about this and you didn't do anything, he carried on and was telling everyone he's gonna knock me out' So when I retaliated and he realised, 'oh he's friends with all those guys, I'm in danger' that's when they said this that and the other. And I found that a bit unfair. (p.6, 194 - 200)*

> *Tashoma: Also, that happened to me two times. I'd go to someone and then they'd ask why I didn't, and I say I wasn't taken seriously. The also said 'how come a guy like you is coming to a teacher? you're big, you're this that and the other, you shouldn't need to'. That was the reaction I'd get. So, I'd say, 'if I take matters into my own hands, it would be trouble I'm trying to avoid' (…) Yeah, 'why would a big kid like you need to come to us' and stuff like that.*

> ***Researcher: How many times did you get that sort of response**?*

> *Tashoma: Two times off the top of my head. Maybe a few other more minute but two major, major times that I can think of (…) Hindsight, they were probably saying 'you're a big Black lad, he's a small white kid, why are you feeling threatened?'. But then, it's not a case of threat. It's just that I don't want to be in this situation, I feel uncomfortable, can you deal with him because I don't want to do something I'm going to regret. (p.6 201-211)*

Toni acknowledged her teacher's efforts to support her but indicated that she felt the approach was not 'right':

> (…) *I had a bit of reassurance from some of the teachers. They were asking me, 'are you ok? Is everything going ok?' and I think the reason they were asking me that is because they knew I was sort of like a minority in that school (…) my friends did encourage me to go and talk to the head of year about what was going on and stuff and she made me like write down what was happening and stuff like that and she sort of dealt with it. But I feel like the way she dealt with it didn't really help me. Cause she sort of like. We were in a lesson together with the people that were making me feel that way. She approached them in that lesson and told them. So, it was kind of like they were just like staring and giving me dirty looks and stuff and I was just thinking – oh ok. Yeah. But I do appreciate her trying to help me, but it was just the way she went about it, I didn't think that was the right way to do it (p.6-7, 136-146)*

When discussing a teacher's response to discovering that football matches were informally segregated, Judah acknowledged the challenge she faced with intervening then indicated no action was taken:

Researcher: So, your drama teacher, what did she say? Did she try to intervene?

Judah: She, I think at first, she was like 'this has to be stopped'. But nothing happened. And when she, because there isn't really an issue and it's not like it's one year group. It's like she'd have to… how would you change that would you have teachers say 'alright this team needs more white people' or how would you if the school are happy to do that? It would be hard to monitor. (p.19, 430-434)

Ray indicated that when he was called the N-word, he felt that teachers didn't take action to support him:

And then, the teacher was just like, I don't know like, they didn't really take action on him [pause] like, they, they were just like yeah, just yeah 'you shouldn't say that [pause] take a day out'. He never came back since but like, I think stuff like that like should be a bit like sterner. (p.7, 240-243)

During the parent interview, we discussed the incident where her son was called a terrorist:

But then I was never called about it. I want you to balance the scales here. I was never called about it. My son told me about it. I waited, no one called me. When they went down the register and said do you speak English, no one called me (…) However, when he was called the N-word three times in class, I had the head teacher call me because he reacted to it. 1 his friends were there, 2 his girlfriend was there. Three times? And he's like, what are you saying? And the guy kept repeating. And he just lost it and he got up. I got a call he said 'I understand he was called the N-word but his reaction was excessive. I was like, is that an objective or a subjective conclusion? Because if you are not a 'n' person, you cannot understand the emotions that it invokes. So, pubs, football groups, workplace. People have big bust ups because of that word. So, you can't tell me how he should react to that word. But now that you've called me I'm glad you've called me, because this has been said to my son before and no-one called me, but because he's reacted. It was the final straw that broke the camel's back. You want to exclude him? No, I'm not having that (…) In the end, she just went quiet.

4.4.5 Focused code: Desiring a more nuanced teacher response to race-based concerns; Desiring a more severe teacher response to race-based concerns

This focused code refers to the desires of participants for a more effective approach to their race-based concerns. These responses indicated that they would like staff responses to be more nuanced, well-thought out, or severe:

(...) Because I say that there are better ways that she could have dealt with it. But I don't really know why. So that's how I like why I understand how she did it but I feel like not being in the same lesson really would have helped a bit. And just being like 'girls, like you have some certain teachers who have seen that

you've been rude to this student or other students and not mentioning names – that would have helped but. I feel like there were other ways she could have done it, but I can't necessarily think (Toni p.7 150-155)

Ray felt that when he was called the N-word, he would have wanted an alternative response*:*

Ray: Well, it should be, it should be like a severe punishment like. I'm not saying like kick out and then never return. It should be like an exclusion or on-site exclusion or isolation to reflect on what they've said. Or, some kind of like, you know, something to do with it. Something to do with like. So, he don't actually feel like what he said is like, you know. But I feel like he kind of got let off easy. (p.7, 255-259)

4.4.6 Focused Code: Being singled out

This code refers to pupils feeling singled out within classroom interactions with teachers. They discuss teachers taking a hyper-sensitive approach to behaviour that they seem to perceive as neutral or fair.

(…) there were times when I felt evidently different and at times, I was treated different (…) So for a lot of the teachers it was like one rule for me and another rule for other pupils (…) (Tashoma, p.1, 19- 22)

But then, let's say I've raced through all the work, I've done the work and I'll have been sitting there, I've done the extension and then obviously you get a bit bored, so because I'm not actively doing anything, they'll get onto me really quickly and I'd like say oh but Sir I've done all the work. Whereas they've not done all the work, they're on question 2 or 3, I've completed it. And then they'd get onto me about replying, so I wouldn't say anything for a while. (Tashoma, p.1, 24-29)

Also coded under this category, was the excerpt from Ray, who explained his account of being sent out of a Geography lesson. This is detailed under the focused codes: *Resistance through self-advocacy; Resistance through expressing logic (p.6-7, 225-230).*

During the parental interview, an additional experience of being singled out was identified:

For example, you had like a supply teacher who came in for English, looked down the register, noticed my sons name. Probably my son was the only one with a different name and got to his name and said, do you speak any English? Do you understand English?

4.4.7 Focused Codes: Battling low expectations; identifying systemic barriers to high achievement

Within these focused codes, pupils expressed feeling that expectations of the academic understanding and achievement was low. These experiences referred to

low expectations on an interpersonal level, from teachers. It also referred to procedures that pupils described, which re-enforced low expectations.

Tashoma highlighted a system he'd been informed about, where teachers used pupil's demographic information within their calculation of predictive GCSE grades. He felt that this showed they didn't care about him and expectations of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds were brought down by this system:

> *I spoke to one of my English teachers at [previous school name] before I left and she was talking about target grades. She said, 'Your target grades a C' and I was like 'how is it a C when I'm working at a B+ early? And she said it was based on where you're from, your parents, how much they earn. All stuff that doesn't really matter. All of my target grades were like a C,D,C and in maths, it was D. My Mum was infuriated, so my teacher was like, 'I don't know why you're mad, he's meeting his target grade'. So, my Mum was like 'Is a D a pass?' they were like 'no', so she was like 'why would I be happy if my son's failing?'. So those were the things there that told me they don't really care. Looking at it that way, I thought, they don't really care for me that much. They care if I say, 'Sir, I've got a problem can you help me?', but they don't in the sense I need to get good grades or I need to do something to make it worthwhile. When I saw it like that, that was one of the reasons I moved school. (Tashoma, p.10, 358-369)*

> ***Researcher: Just to go back to what you said about the target grades being based on demographic information. How did you find all that out?***

> *Tashoma: Because, I was in the third set for English. There were seven sets, so I was roughly in the middle. I was speaking to my teacher and she was fed up anyway. She was leaving, so she was kind of a whistle blower. So, I asked 'why I am I in third set when I'm getting this grade, and there are kids in this set, getting this grade, surely I should be above them if I'm doubling their scores'. She said 'it's based on your target grade' so I explained i got a good SATs grade. She said 'it's not solely based on that, it's based on what we think you can get at GCSE and that is based on your home life, so how much your parents earn, whether it's a single parent household, what area it is, what the colour of your skin' all the general census stuff, so when you tick the boxes for a school like 'Black English', single mother, it just brings it down and down and down. (p.11, 491-402)*

Ray felt that getting three rather than four choices for his GCSE options showed his teachers didn't see his potential:

> *(…) I should have got an extra choice, but for some reason they sent me down, so I only got to have three (p.1, 31-32)*

> *Ray: Yeah, a few things like when I got like, when people decide what options they get, how many they can get – I got three like, I just felt like they didn't rate me. Not to be informal.*

> ***Researcher: It's ok to be informal.***

Ray: I don't feel like they saw potential in me. So, a few things like that. (p.2, 272-275)

Ray also highlighted that pupils who had lower grades than him, got to pick four options for their GCSE's. He implied a question about whether his demography (Black and from a council estate) played a role in him getting 3 options. Ray discussed the following in reference to feeling unsupported by the way the school approached their GCSE parents evening:

So, we all went to this thing where you pick your options and there's this big sheet and stuff. We all went in, and they got like these sheets and everyone's in like the three to four. You get four if they think you did really well. And they say they base it off target grades but I don't think that that's true because I know people who got to pick four. My target grade is usually a 6 which is like the old B. There's people whose target grade is a 5 which is the old C, D and they got to pick four. I don't know why, because I'm still a 6 and they're still a 5 but they're in the higher stream, the higher band. When they do a paper, they get to do the high paper. Some of them, I had to do the foundation paper. I asked them to specifically push me up to the higher paper for some subjects. (p.8 286-295)

I don't know why but, I know in my previous school they used to base it on catchment area, income, ethnicity, first language. I don't know if it's the same here, but if it is. Obviously, I'm not going to say it's definitely that reason, but there is a correlation there...between the people who get to pick 3 to 4 and the people who didn't.

Researcher: Oh really? Who else didn't get to pick?

Ray: People like, some of them didn't deserve to pick 3 to 4 because they weren't as intellectually capable. But some people in there. Like, just like the area they're from, like, [village name] is more like one of those affluent areas. Whereas some of them come from like [council estate name] and like I said, they didn't get the choice. (p.8, 296-304)

During the parent interview, this system was explored again:

I went to parents evening, I think the year before his GCSE's and you know how they are grading them now (…) I go to English, he's got a 5, they go oh he's doing very well, he's on the right track. I got to Geography he's got a 6. I go to Maths he's got like 4a or 4c and I'm still getting the same thing – oh he's doing really well (…) Then I asked, hang on, am I being dumb or am I missing something, how can a 6 and a 4 have the same outcome? And then the maths teacher said well he's meeting his target. I said what do you mean? He said well the government sets the target according to where he lives, his nationality, first language, you know basically our immigration background. Right. So I was doomed before he started. We live on a council estate, my first language is not

English, I'm a single parent. All these things taken into perspective, they were just happy for him to just get on by.

Tashoma explained that his attainment levels were not communicated within his school transition, meaning he started at the 'bottom':

(…) when I first moved school, my school didn't send my grades over, so I started at the bottom of all the classes. (p.1, 23-24)

Tashoma described an additional account where a teacher suggested that he couldn't understand the work:

(…) Or she's going through slides and she's call me out and say 'Tashoma, are you sure you understand this' And I'll say, 'yeah, I understand this'. (p.2, 39-40)

The thing is, it's funny because if I look back on my GCSE grades, that was one of the classes I actually got an A in. So, for me it was just a bit like, why is she treating me like this? (p.2, 43-45)

Then when I spoke to the teacher about it, she said, 'I know you're struggling' and things like that. But then I told her, that I don't struggle and that this is one of my better subjects and my grades can prove that. So, for me it was a bit, iffy to say the least. (p.2, 61-64)

4.4.8 Focused Code: Sensing unspoken cultural ties in friendships: geography, socioeconomics, culture and ethnicity

This focused code explored some of the unspoken ties that governed friendships in the view of participants. Close geographical locations, race and culture, shared experiences of living in a council estate and parents' financial background were all highlighted as factors that grouped friends together.

Ray: Well I find, to make it [friendship] strong is, well trust, you know? I say with my friends you know let's say they're from [council estate name]. Not all of my friends come from the affluent side of things. So, for example, I have this Italian friend who lives on [council estate name]. It's not one of the best estates to grow up in. So, like, that I would say struggle but not coming from the affluent, not having a [pause]. Having to work for a bit, that's more relatable to be friends with someone like him. (p.3, 142-146)

Researcher: (…) So would you say that the majority of friends do come from similar backgrounds to you or is it more of a mixture?

Ray: Majority, we are all. We all, most, most of my close friends I'd say yeah.

Researcher: And where does trust come in there?

Ray: For example, I've known Paul since like I came into [school name] since I was 4,5 before that I lived in [city name] so, it's just knowing for that long period of time, you trust them. It's been built over time you know. The trials and tribulations as they say. And yeah, trust, it's a good thing to have, you know. (p.3, 151-158)

Tashoma had a clear concept that stronger friendships were developed through geography and shared interests:

> *(…) Same with school, let's say you're from [council estate name]. You're more likely to stay together because you go home together, and you see each other more likely outside of school more than those from say [village name]. Because it's a long way to go as say, a fourteen-year-old. So, I'd say maybe distance and them common interest. So, all the footballers are together, the rugby players are together. So, I'd say common interests and distance mainly. (p.5, 179-184)*

Leo indicated that his involvement in some activities with friends was limited by his family duties:

> *I tried out for the football team, I got in but then it was like [pause] I just started to pick up my brother, that's the main thing. I was going to join a team with my friend, but [pause] I should have because everyone is like 'you're so good at football bruv, you're sick, you're sick'(…)It's hard to fit sports around getting my brother. (p.9, 305-313)*

Judah viewed time together with friends as being enhanced when pupils lived close to one another. He talked about unintentional exclusion from social events due to geography and parental financial background:

> *I think where people live is important, because you tend to find that the strongest friendship groups all live in an area, because then it's easy for them to meet up. I think because that's school, that school, I went go a private school a lot of people come from a lot of different places. So, you might be friends with someone but when you go home, you're very far away from them so, depending on where you live can make a big difference in what friendship group you fall into and how well you're in it because you could be in it and but, you're not invited everything because you're not around that kind of thing. (Judah, p.6-7, 134-141)*

> *Judah: Make them [friendships] weaker...I guess there is also kind of an underlying like financial background that is there, like people who tend to be in the same group tend to be from a similar financial background. Um, which is interesting. (Judah, p.7, 149-151)*

> *(…) because there are people who like go to golf of that kind of thing and then people who play football at goals in [city name]. It's not like anyone is not allowed to do whatever they want but who is a bit of a yeah, yeah. (Judah, p.8, 164-166)*

Judah identified both race and culture as governing factors in friendships. He highlighted that the Black and Asian friendship group had self-described themselves as the brown boys and indicated some differences between family cultures. This seemed to impact upon the inclusion of the Black and Asian pupils in culturally specific activities such as going to the pub. This informal grouping was reported to occur throughout the school year groups:

(…) we definitely had a strong white group with mainly white people though it's not just only white people, that's kind of what it was. And they were all from the villages and they have that whole pub culture and then, um you also have the 'Brown boys' is our saying in inverted commas, who mainly lived in [city name] and those kind of places and obviously didn't relate on that side of things and with parents, culture and that kind of thing are the two main kinds of groups. (p.5, Judah, 107-112)

Well for example the brown crew they wouldn't go to the pub on a Thursday afternoon with their parents and drink and all that kind of thing and it's that whole, 'oh, come to my village and we'll do this or that and we'll have a drink' and all that kind of thing. (p.4, Judah, 116-118)

(…) *It's very distinct like that. If you go down the year groups, there's always kind of like the Brown Boys. It's kind of repetitive. (p.13, Judah, 313-314)*

4.4.9 Focused Code: Making sense of nebulous friendship circles

These focused codes refer to the sense that participants made of being in-between friendship groups, on the fringe of friendship groups, or having multiple friendship groups.

Toni attempted to explain how her image as an African youngster did not fit in with the mentality of her peers:

Um, I feel like, at my sort of new school, they were sort of like ignorant to other backgrounds if you get me. So, it's kind of like, if you're not who we are, if you don't look like us, talk like us, um, we don't want you in our group and we don't respect you. So, it's like, I come from an African background, I'm short, I'm large and I have fake hair. It's like – you do not fit into our group. Just, no you don't. And I feel like they just don't respect you. (p.10, 225-227)

(…) I'm sort of that person who's like in between so I don't want to be like 'Oh I'll go to you I'll go to you'. I just hang out. (Toni p.5, 94-95)

Judah explained that football teams informally segregated by race (explored further in Category 3) and that as the only Black pupil, he was in between teams::

And then me, because I'm in between those groups I just kind of, whoever needs me [laugh]. (Judah, p.17, 387)

Judah also made sense of the way that the 'pub culture' (explored further in Category 3) amongst his peers made it challenging for him to fully integrate into the friendship group:

(…) I found myself in a lot of different friendship groups which is it's always been a bit difficult because some people don't like XYZ and, and so yeah that's just how it was. (p.5, 97-98)

(…) I don't drink personally so I could never really and my mum doesn't so, so I couldn't never properly relate to that and I kind of live in a village now but I didn't before so I never really resonated with that although they would invite me, I'd

go and have Pepsi or whatever, but um, again kind of on the fringe. (p.6, 120-123)

Tashoma and Leo talked positively about having access to a range of friendship groups:

> *I'm just with everyone (…) My main guy yeah, is like, my mate [pupil name], but like, I'm just with everyone (…) as soon as I got to know people. I was like, these people* really *want to be my friend (…) So just, friends with everyone isn't it. (Leo, p.8, 255-259)*

> *For me, I enjoyed it, I was kind of friends with everybody. I enjoyed going to school. I wouldn't wake up and think 'Oh not school again'. For me I'd say I had a better experience than most. (Tashoma, p.5, 162-165)*

> *(…) I had a particular friendship group, but at the same time, because I was often in different classes, I would just be friend with different people (…) So I would go between them really. (Tashoma, p.5, 168-169)*

Tashoma explained later in the interview, that he felt 'weird' in relation to the way his Black friendship group and his White friendship group regarded each other:

> *I felt like a normal kid. But at times, I felt a bit weird. If I was with my Black friends, they'd be like 'oh that white school you go to' and if I was with my white friends, they'd be like 'oh you're Black friends over there, this that and the other. So, sometimes I'd feel normal and the odd time I'd feel like, well cheers. (p.9, 322-326)*

4.5 Category 4 - Navigating a Black image within a white context

Physical appearance was not an initial part of the interview schedule, however, data analysis following the first two interviews highlighted this as a pertinent theme and this was pursued through theoretical sampling. The focused codes that comprised this category are presented in Figure 4.4:

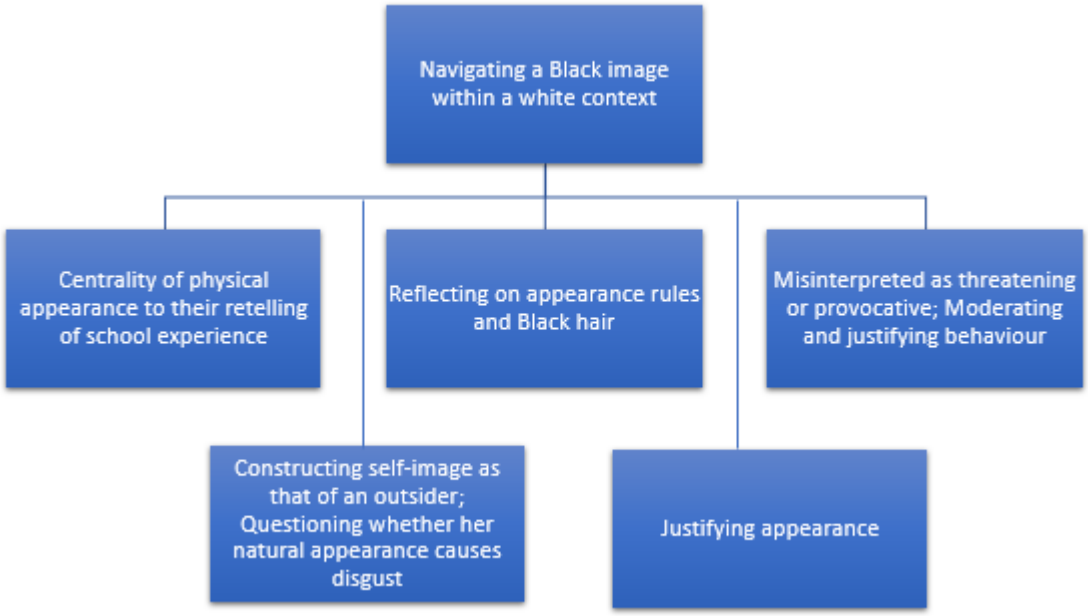


Figure 4. 4 Category 5 – Navigating a Black image within a white context

4.5.1 Focused code: Centrality of physical appearance to their retelling of school experience

This focused code illustrates views from Toni and Judah, the first two interviewees, who both wanted to 'add' perspectives about their physical appearance to the end of their interviews. Both of these accounts started a new 'path' in the dialogue and opened up a new lens on their experiences of belonging in school.

At the end of Toni's interview, she was being thanked for her participation and was about to be provided with an overview of the topics discussed prior to a debrief. She stated that she wanted to add one more thing and discussed the way that her body was perceived:

> ***Researcher: Is there anything that you want to add for now, with the topics that we've discussed or anything like that?***
>
> *Toni: Not really*
>
> ***Researcher: Thank you so much, so we've talked a little bit about your friendship groups, your –***
>
> *Toni: Oh, I have one thing. Uh, my body. Cause I'm a large person, I have large assets, and um, I remember my first few days in P.E. And I would have comments saying, 'oh my god she's got like a really big bum' and stuff like this. (p.17, 387-393)*

(…) It's just because I was stood up straight. Of course, I'm a large person, I'm going to have large this and large that. It comes with who I am. But it was sort of like why would I be doing that in a lesson? I'm just giving in a piece of paper. (Toni, p.19 402-404)

At the end of Judah's interview, he asked what the research was hoping to achieve. At the end of this explanation, he wanted to add, with some urgency, an account about his hair:

Researcher: (…) and that particular piece of research was quite useful in informing, at the time, policies around things like integration.

Judah: Sorry there is something I really need to tell you

Researcher: Go on

Judah: Haircuts is another thing in my school. Where, especially in Year 7, when you're new. You're not supposed to cut your hair lower than a three. And obviously, my hair now is not a three. And to cut my hair at three…it doesn't look good. It's not long enough to be able to be neat, so just kind of. It will look, well, nappy basically. (p.21, 476-483)

4.5.2 Focused Code: Reflecting on appearance rules and Black hair

This focused code was a pertinent part of Judah experience, as evidenced by him asking to raise this at the close of his interview. He went on to describe the appearance policy in his school, explaining that his haircut of choice, based on the texture of his natural hair, would have been classed as 'illegal'. He discussed the experiences of other Black pupils in the school, within the context of the policy about extreme haircuts:

So, this would be an illegal haircut. They would put me in isolation [pause] So that was one thing because, and that was blanket for everybody. And I feel like, I can kind of understand for people who don't have afro style hair but, if you ask any Black person really, they will say you can't cut your hair at a three. So that means African or Black hair styles that are bald, that's not allowed… or just low (…) But I would never, I would have been scared to cut my hair like this three years ago. That would have done it. (Judah, p.22, 488-493)

(…) I didn't experiment, but I did go to one of my head of years and asking just to make sure. Because I was quite scared; I didn't want to be put in isolation for a haircut. I feel like that's a bit. So, yeah, I just asked like, oh yeah, I'm going to get a haircut, I wanna get this, is that alright? She was like – don't you always cut your hair that way? – I was like, yeah, I do – so, then like, then it's fine. I feel like, maybe behind the scenes they were making allowances for me, knowing my hair is different but it wasn't a public thing like, so people would be like: 'That's not a three is it?' And I was like [shrug] So that was a rule that was a bit of a grey area. (Judah, p.22, 501-508)

(…) And I know people who have had stress about having plaits at school. Especially boys having cornrows at my school. (Judah, p.22, 495-496)

(…) there's a girl, she just left called [pupil name], and she obviously, being Black, hair styles is a big thing. I don't know of any issues she's had, she's had

her afro all the way out, she's had lots of things. I don't know if she's had any issues, but yeah, I would assume that if someone else did it, it would be an issue. Because they had like a thing about extreme haircuts. (Judah, p.22, 513-516)

4.5.3 Focused Code: Justifying appearance

This focused code highlights the way pupils reported navigating interactions about their hair and skin colour. In the following accounts, pupils were retelling their experiences of defending whatever decision they had made about their appearance by stating 'I like myself like this'. The comments made about their appearance were construed as 'sly' and 'ignorant'.

(…) And then it would be like sly questions, like 'Oh why do you have blonde hair, that's not mean to be for people with you skin colour?' And it's like 'I like this hair colour'. (Toni p.9 204-205)

But let's say with my hair for example, a day wouldn't go by without someone saying, 'you should grow an afro you know'. I would be like, I don't want to, I like my hair short. Or, 'why do you use that brush or comb' just ridiculous questions. If I said 'why do you use gel or a hairdryer' - ridiculous. Then ask, 'why is your hair curly, can I put my finger in it, can I twist it?' Or when they go get a tan, they'd be like 'I'm almost as Black as you' ' and it's like, well you're not are you. I'd say it's a lot of ignorance. (p.12, 459-464)

4.5.4 Focused Code: Construing self-image as that of an outsider; Questioning whether her natural appearance causes disgust

These focused codes refer to the way that Toni made sense of her physical image. She construed that her appearance was different and therefore caused others to make fun of her. She also questioned whether comments about the size of her lips came from a place of ignorance or from a place of disgust. The following extracts are all from Toni:

I come from an African background, I'm short, I'm large and I have fake hair. It's like you do not fit into our group. Just, no you don't'. (p.10-228-229)

(…) Like I understand because I'm that sort of different where they make fun of me as well and don't fit into what they think is like [inaudible]. (p.13, 292-293)

It was a boy, I remember said this and he was like 'oh my god, her lips are so big, she looks like she's had lip injections' and stuff like that. It's like, are you not used to seeing Black people? Is that the issue here? Or are you so up yourself that you just feel like everyone who doesn't look like me is disgusting and ugly? And I just don't feel like that was acceptable. (p.17, 396-400)

4.5.5 Focused Code: Misinterpreted as threatening or provocative; Moderating and justifying behaviour

This focused code is an exploration of the way pupils felt their actions were misinterpreted by peers or teachers. Across the accounts, pupils are advocating that they were behaving in a way that they felt was neutral or acceptable but was interpreted differently to those around them.

Researcher: What was the social side of school like then when you first joined?

Toni: Uh, for me it was very, very hard. Cause I joined, and on my first day I had rumours being spread about me. And like, people talking about me and stuff like that. So it was kind of like, they didn't know me, but they made assumptions based of what I looked like. So I like walk into a room and they'll be like 'oh my god she's rude, she's mean'. 'Cause I had like, um, blonde hair, really long blonde hair, like my braids, and then I just like walked in, confident like, cause that's the kind of person I am. And they'd be like oh she's rude, we don't want her sitting on our table. (p.5, 107-113)

And I remember one specific person – I don't remember her name, but I remember I was standing in class. I was just standing up straight giving in my piece of paper, and then she was like, 'why is she pushing out her bum so much?' and stuff like that. (Toni, p.17 393-396)

(…) They were like, 'she wants attention because she's sticking her bum out' it's with that 'she's rude'. It's that confidence that I give, sort of like standing up straight and stuff like that…I'm just standing up straight and they think 'she's trying to draw attention to herself, oh she's rude, she's giving people attitude' and stuff like that. I'm not, I'm literally just stood here. (Toni, p.17 407-412)

Then, I remember clearly, I was in Year 10 and there was a pen on the floor when I came into the class. And the bin was over there, and I passed the pen to the bin. And I sat in my chair and the teacher told me to get out. (Tashoma, p.1, 29-31)

(…) I mean I do all the work, I sit there, fairly quiet and I do work to a good standard. (Tashoma, p.1, 36-37)

Lisa: Like his friend was on the phone, they are stopped, he's not on his phone, he carries on walking. He thought his friend was stopped because he was on his phone and then he was called back and he said – What have I done? I'm not on my phone. That escalated to him now being aggressive and rude (…) he got a detention (…) I said how, what did he say, were his hands waving? Was he kissing his teeth? How was he aggressive and rude? "Well they're very big boys". This has happened so many times, but they can never tell me what he's done.

4.6 Category 5 - Transcending the need to belong through personal growth

Category 5 is constructed on the focused codes presented in Figure 4.5

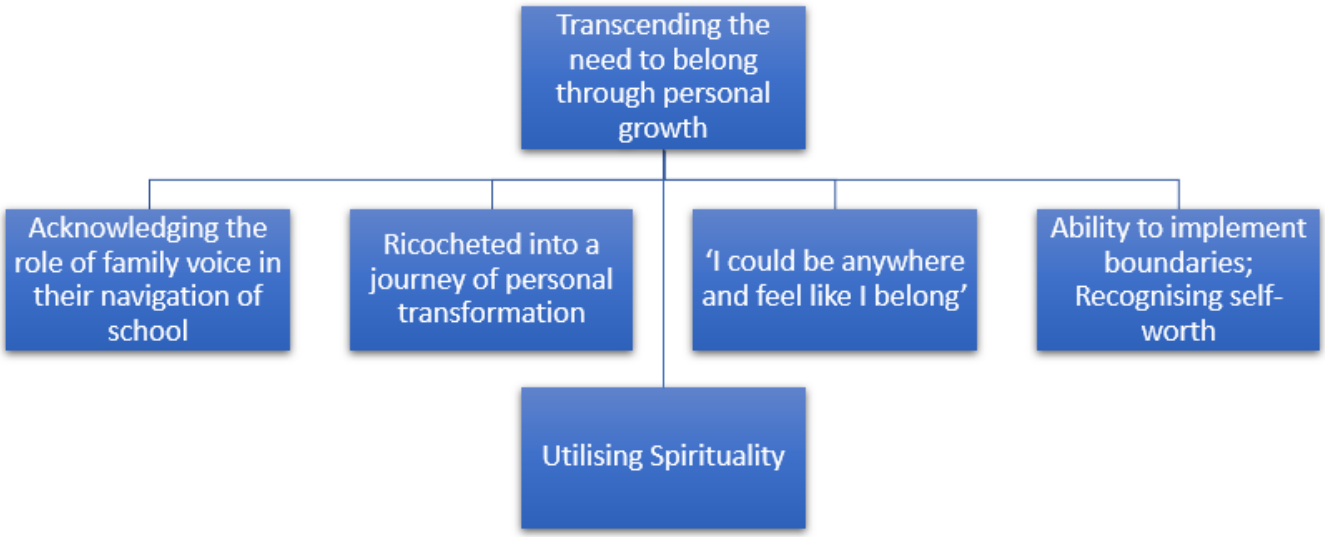


Figure 4. 5 Category 5 – Transcending the need to belong through personal growth

4.6.1 Focused code: Acknowledging the role of family voice in their navigation of school

This focused code refers to the strategies employed by the families of participants, who played a role in assisting them to change their approach to the navigation of school. Participants describe the role of dialogue at home in this navigation. Parents and grandparents encouraged young people to take accountability for their own navigation of school, rather than rely upon the system. The accounts below highlight the way that families set and managed expectations and helped children to shift their mindset.

The following perspective came from the parent interview:

> *Lisa: I always say to them, always make sure your tone of voice is level. Because you always come across. If you're Caribbean or African, you always come across as aggressive and rude even if your intentions are not. You can genuinely be asking a question.*

Ray was asked how he felt after being called the N-word, taking this to staff and feeling they did not respond:

> ***Researcher: And how did that make you feel?***
>
> *Ray: Just like, you know my Mum told me though - you just got to wait for stuff like this to happen so, it's what we have to do really. (p.7 261-262)*

Tashoma discussed the pivotal role of a conversation with his mother, upon learning about his characteristics being used to calculate his GCSE grades:

> *At first, I told my Mum because I was shocked. She told me it was true, then I had a good conversation with her. I was really young. The topic was new to me. Then if you think about it, a kid that young shouldn't have to think about being subjected to things like that. So I thought, change your mind set a little bit (…) I spoke to my Mum and she drilled it into me. (Tashoma, p.11, 422-426)*

> *(…) At the same time, my Mum said it's come to a point where you have to work twice as hard just to be the same as the man next to you who can get away with literally get away with drawing things on the board and things like that. (Tashoma, p.2, 68-70)*

> *Yeah, they laid down everything [bangs table] in detail, like, what needs to be improved, how. I don't know, it's just like. They just talked to me. Like for a long time. And it's like…I was scared. I might have been thinking it but I was like nah I'm not going to show that. You know. And they they asked me like – how do you think you're going to do this? And they were like yeah, I want to see that then. (Leo, p.13, 354-358)*

Tashoma described taking an active role in decisions made about his education. In reaction to discovering the way GCSE grades were calculated, he and his mother decided to change schools. This democratic parenting seemed to facilitate his ability to advocate for himself. He also constructed the whole school system as important in his experience:

> *Tashoma: I just thought about my GCSE's and what came next for me. If you can't get into a good college, you can't get into a good uni and from there you're quite limited (…) So I just thought about making sure I got the best grades but [previous school] wasn't the best environment, there were head teacher problems, pupil problems, staff problems. Half the school was a construction site and I just thought it wasn't the best environment for me to do that. Whereas I just thought it I get a fresh start where the head teacher has been there for a while, the Ofsted grade at the time was pretty good. I thought yeah.*

> ***Researcher: So you took quite a central role in that decision making process then?***

> *Tashoma: I'd say that and my Mum because there was a parents evening before I chose my optioned for GCSE's. And she absolutely railed me and said you have to sort yourself out. She gave the three options and I said this is the option I was going to choose. (p.13, 489-501)*

4.6.2 Focused Code: Ricocheted into a journey of personal transformation

This focused code exemplifies the way that pupils construed that they had grown in relation to their experiences of being othered and underestimated. They discussed shift in mind set and a strengthening of who they are and built their character.

Toni: Yeah. I feel like these things that happen to you are really, really character building (…)You can go so many ways, there are people who would go through depression and then they go into [inaudible] and stuff like that But I feel like for me, it's made me the person who I am. (…) And I will go through these challenges that you are putting in front of me and I will overcome because I don't really care what you have to say.

Researcher: (…) So do you feel that it has given you something?

Toni: Yeah. Major, major confidence. I feel like, I know what I want, and I know who I am. (...) I'm a child of God and I'm a strong, independent Black woman and I don't have to stand for anything (…). (p.15, 343-356)

Tashoma: (…) it always felt a bit unfair but as I got older and my mindset started to shift, I used it as fuel to kind of be like, alright I'm gonna show this teacher (…) She thinks I can't do anything; well I'm going to go and get an A and I'm going to show her that nothing can stop me really.

Researcher: And how did you end up doing in that class?

Tashoma: I did really well in that class, I'd say I was in the top two.
(…) Then I said to myself, I just have to beat these target grades, get as many A's and B's as I can (…) so I can turn around and say to my teachers and say 'you said I couldn't do it, and look what I've done'. So, I really put my head down in Year 11 and thought, no matter what, I've got to get these grades. That really drove me. (p.2, 70-76)

(…) So the mind set shift thing is when I started to push on in not just school but football and then I kind of just grew up a little bit from being a shy kid, to sort of becoming a man sort of thing. So, I just took it on the chin and just used it. (p.3 84-87)

Tashoma described feeling driven by moments where he felt like he didn't belong. The account below highlights the moment where he decided to be motivated by the people who cared about him, rather than the school:

There was a history teacher that didn't know my name. I had that teacher year 7, 8 and 9. In year 9, I was the only pupil standing up because I was putting my coat on and he goes 'could everyone sit down'; I looked around and I was the only one standing up. I was like 'Sir, it's only me standing up', he was like 'I know, sit down', I was like 'Sir, what's my name?' and the whole class were looking at me and sniggering. Then, he didn't know he had the projector on, so he was going down the register looking for my picture, he was like 'I know your name' but he was stalling. He got to my name and said [mispronounced name] and the class started erupting with laughter. I was like, 'Sir, it's Tashoma, the H is silent'. He went bright red. That's when I realised, if he doesn't know my name after all these years, if he hasn't learned my name, why does he care bout how

I do? So that's when, I thought I just have to do it for me and for the people who do care about me. (Tashoma, p.10, 376-385)

Coincidentally, that was History. My grade when I left was a C-, my target was a D, I ended up getting an A in History, because I just said, you know what I just kept thinking about him – if he couldn't learn my name I just had to do something to prove them wrong. (Tashoma, p.11, 386-388)*

It wasn't a sense of me against the world, but me and I'm going to beat as many people as I can just to show them you shouldn't judge someone based on something they have no control over. (…) So, it's just a case of, these are the cards I've been dealt with, i just have to do something with it. (Tashoma, p.12, 427-430)

A sort of hubris kicked in, a sense of arrogance. Let me show everyone I'm better than this guy. Then when it kicked in, I studied really hard, I trained really hard. I focused so I could say I'm better than him, and you put him this much higher than me, and I've smashed him. (Tashoma, p.11, 412-413)

4.6.3 Focused Code: 'I could be anywhere and feel like I belong'

Within this code, participants moved away from wanting to prove their sense of worth or belonging within the school environment and moved toward placing importance on their personal definition of growth and value.

In terms of a sense of belonging, because I'm a bit older, I don't care as much when I did when I was younger. For me, belonging is just 'Am I happy where I am? Am I happy who I'm with?' For me that's belonging. I could be anywhere and feel like I belong. As long as I feel comfortable, that's what matters. (Tashoma, p.10, 347-350)

I'd say I'm a lot more wide eyed now (…) a sense of not wanting to be put in a bad position. I've realised a lot of things. When you're young you take it day by day(…) but now, you think of the bigger picture: career, can I open savings, driving – you think about the details.(…) When you're young, you want to be cool and popular, but now I just want to be the best version of myself. (Tashoma, p.13, 478-471)

With that mentality in my head like, I had to be the best. (…) I just had to be the best. But now, I still want to be the best, but it's not all about that. It's about the person you are init.(…) I wanna be like, a role model. I wanna be like, someone you can talk to. That's who I wanna be (…) Like younger students that are like, let's say they are going around, skiving lessons, messing about all the stuff. I could be like, you don't have to be the best, just be the best person you can be. (Leo, p.12, 423-425)

I'd say it was more of an intrinsic motivation, because I wanted to say look what you've done. Rather than here's a big fat medal for me. Admittedly they weren't going to give me anything. So I did it for a good sense of pride really. And I

would say the mind set, is a bit more of a growth mind set because I just kept telling myself they don't define you. If you've put the work in, you can't feel hard done by. (Tashoma, p.11, 416-418)

4.6.4 Focused Code: Ability to implement boundaries; Recognising self-worth

These focused codes refer to the way that pupils developed an ability to implement boundaries around their interactions. Toni linked being sure in her identity to a new-found ability to implement boundaries. She reminded herself of her value, through her relationship with God and reiterated the values instilled by her parents:

(…) I just felt like, I don't know when I just said to myself – enough is enough – you're not going to change who you are because of what people are saying. (Toni, p.17 418-420)

Cause I feel like my first days I let anyone, and everyone say stuff to me. Now it's I know who I am. I'm a child of God and I'm a strong, independent Black woman and I don't have to stand for anything that [inaudible]. (Toni, p.15, 354-356)

[Now] I'm strong minded and I stand by what I say (…) I feel like, if right now, this would happen right now, I would be able to say – I'm not having that – this is who I am, this is what I stand for, my parents have raised me with these lessons that I will carry on. (Toni, p.15, 347-350)

I'd say, now, I'd try subtly to say, don't say that (...) If they carry on, I'd say it louder but at first, I'd try it subtly. (Tashoma, p.10, 345-346)

4.6.5 Focused code: Using spirituality

As well as defining herself as a child of God, Toni used prayer as part of her ability to cope with her situation at school:

My parents support, my friends support and definitely, definitely prayer. I used to just sit in my bedroom by myself and just think about all these things that were coming to me. (…).(Toni, p.18 430-431)

Those times I spent up there by myself just really thinking through really helped me. I would say 'Ok, you're a child of God, go to church, pray, just pray. (Toni, p.18, 433-435)

4.7 Category 6: Utilising the research space to express authentic voice

Category 6 is built upon the focused codes illustrated in Figure 4.6.

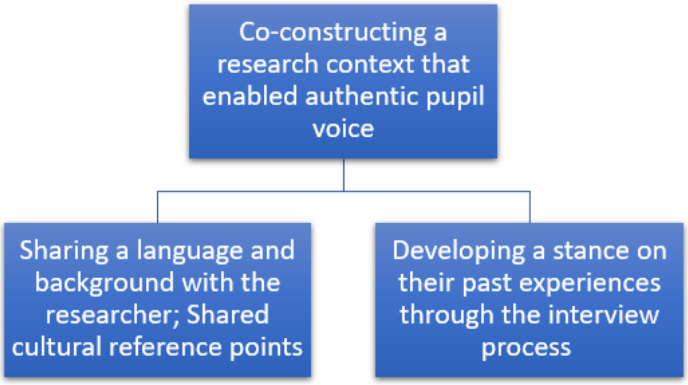


Figure 4. 6 Category 6 – Co-constructing a research context that enabled authentic pupil voice

4.7.1 Focused codes: Sharing a language and background with the researcher; Shared cultural reference points

These focused codes are comprised of interactions during the data gathering process that exemplify myself and participants sharing linguistic and cultural reference points that have particular meanings within Black culture.

> *Or just say llow it, lock it off (Tashoma, p.10, 345)*
>
> *It will look, well, nappy basically. (Judah, p.21, 482-483*

Within the interview with Ray, he also expressed feeling that his teacher didn't 'rate' him (see focused codes 4.4.7), which is an expression commonly used by young people influenced by Caribbean culture.

Within the interview with Leo, there was a sense that developing a rapport was important to the eventual flow of the interview. During our conversation, Leo used Jamaican Patwa (Creole) on a number of occasions e.g., '*hoover up and all dem ting deh'* (p5, 157).
The following exchange highlights a 'levelling' between Leo and the researcher, about a shared admiration for Caribbean food:

> *Leo: (…) like jerk chicken and rice (…) With rice and peas, yeah*
>
> ***Researcher: (…) if we're talking Caribbean food. There's just so much to choose from***

Leo: Pea soup?

Researcher: Obviously

Both: [Laughter]

Leo: That's, that's like – you have to man

Researcher: Especially when you're ill as well, do you know what I mean? But the last thing I had (…) stew chicken

Leo: Yeah (..). Ackee and Saltfish? You like Ackee and Saltfish?

Researcher: Yeah, you know what, we have a lot of Ackee and Saltfish at Christmas. *(p.1, 52 – 68)*

Within the following exchange, Ray and the researcher had some shared cultural heritage:

Ray: And basically, my Dad (…) he's from [location]

Researcher: Oh no way, my dad is from [same location]. *(p.2, 68-70)*

4.7.2 Focused Code: Developing a stance on their past experiences through the interview process

This focused code represents the way that the research space provided pupils with an opportunity to make sense of part of their school experience. The process of dialogue seemed to provide participants with the opportunity to take a position on their experiences by 'looking back'

Yeah. It's really bad now that I think about it. (Judah, p.18, 405)

(…) Now I'm thinking about it the fact that you do play White vs Browns means, you are kind of looking at people skin colour when you play. Which maybe is [inaudible] or maybe you just learn who's who. And you're just like, well he's on my team, because I'm on this team. So, I'm not really sure. (p.18, 218-22)

When I look back on it now, it's all a bit empowering. (Tashoma, p.4, 149-150)

4.8 Chapter Summary

Within this Chapter, focused codes and categories generated during analysis were presented. Each conceptual category was presented, along with the constituent focused codes.

5. Literature Review - Part 2

5.1 Introduction

Part 1 of the Literature review in Chapter 2 provided the context and background for the current study. For Part 2 of the literature review I conducted a more focused search, based around the conceptual categories presented in Chapter 4. This second literature review enabled me to 'theoretically sensitise' the grounded theory presented in Chapter 6 by exploring existing theory and research.

Grounded theory researchers are challenged to consider literature that attends to 'hidden structures', wider systemic factors and interdisciplinary research (Charmaz, 2014; Burawoy, 1991). This is argued to provide an eventual theory that is concerned with both the micro and macro elements of the area of study, giving the research greater theoretical integrity (Charmaz, 2014). As such, the following literature review visits theory and research relevant to both the individual participants and to their immediate and wider context. Due to the integrated nature of the conceptual categories, the literature reviewed is considered to be relevant to all of the conceptual categories. However, the following categories and focused codes are referred to directly within the review below, due to the directness of the links between the literature and these particular themes:

- Confronted with their identities
- Constructing their position within the context
- *Focused codes: 'feeling staff responses to race-based concerns are inadequate; Identifying passive, dismissive responses to race-based incidents; acknowledging the efforts of staff; acknowledging the role of family voice in their navigation of school'*
- Reacting through emotional reflection, resistance advocacy
- Transcending the need to belong

5.2 The impact of the political climate upon the construction of a sense of belonging

In the conceptual category *'confronted with their identities'* participants recalled overtly racist language being used towards them. In this section, the 'normalising' role that the wider societal context can have upon people's experiences of overt racism will be explored. This is thought to provide some illumination upon how the political climate might impact upon feelings of belonging in school.

Overt racial discrimination can take the form of race-fuelled violence, hate crime and name calling (Ajayi & Syed, 2014). Experiences of perceived racial or ethnic discrimination is associated with lower scores for school belonging (Faircloth & Hamm, 2005; D'Hondt, Houtte & Stevens, 2015; Bottiani, Bradshaw & Mendelson, 2016), making an examination of the context where overt racism occurs pertinent.

Where racist rhetoric is used regularly within political discourse and in the media, it may give 'license' for lay individuals to openly express racist views by relaxing the

'normative boundaries' around the acceptability of such views (Dovidio, Pearson & Penner, 2018). Trends observed internationally can provide a view of how changing normative boundaries may shift, to impact people's experiences of racial hostility. In the UK, The Institute of Race Relations associated a rise in hate crimes in Britain to the 'nativist' rhetoric of the 2016 EU referendum debate (Burnett, 2017). Others have specifically attributed a rise in xenophobic hate crime (Corcoran, Lader & Smith, 2015) to a sense of 'permission' being granted to express prejudice following the EU referendum (Cowie, Myers & Aziz, 2017). Internationally, this trend has also been observed, with researchers associating a 66% increase in recorded Islamophobic hate crimes 2014-2015 with a proposed travel ban on Muslim immigrants to the United States (Levin, 2017; Dovidio, Pearson & Penner, 2018). Within schools, incidents related to racial discrimination and immigration were reported to significantly increase within a month of the US presidential election (Southern Poverty Law Centre, 2016).

Although it is possible that improvements to the recording of racist incidents could be a factor in these increases, pupil accounts suggest that this top-down influence may also impact school experiences. Polish-born secondary school pupils in a qualitative British study cited the referendum debate as an important factor in their experience of peer-victimisation in school (Young, 2019). Participants recalled their families being accused of 'stealing jobs', being questioned about their reasons for being in the UK and being challenged by school peers about their immigration status (ibid). Similarly, in 2013, ChildLine reported a 69% increase in children experiencing racist bullying with some associating this with a growingly hostile debate around immigration (Dugan, 2014; Lander, 2015).

This literature serves to provide context upon the ways in which wider societal factors may contribute to interactions within schools and may bear relevance to the ways in that minority groups experience non-diverse settings.

5.3 Critical Race Theory and Systemic Theories

Within the focused codes '*feeling staff responses to race-based concerns are inadequate; identifying passive, dismissive responses to race-based incidents; acknowledging the efforts of staff',* participants describe feeling unsatisfied with teacher responses to race-based concerns. Critical Race Theory (CRT) is explored as a framework to deconstruct passive institutional responses to racism and can further illustrate the systemic nature of racism.

The term 'Institutional Racism' became widely used in the UK, following the findings of the Macpherson Report (1999) after the murder of Stephen Lawrence. The report described institutional racism as '*the failure of institutions to provide an appropriate or professional service to people of colour because of their colour or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping, which disadvantage minority ethnic people'* (Para. 6.34). Although originally an American theory, CRT conceptualises racism in the same way as the Macpherson report in the UK.

CRT positions racism as operating on both macro levels, through laws and policies that disproportionately affect people of colour, and on interpersonal levels through direct discrimination (Solórzano, 1997). As such, racism impacts people of colour directly, vicariously and institutionally (Ajayi & Syed, 2014; Scott, 2003).

Consistent with a social constructivist approach, CRT explores race as a social construct while examining the effects of this construct upon affected groups (Wijeyesignhe & Jackson, 2012). This is achieved through moving away from deficit explanations of racism that attribute reports of discrimination to community level factors and instead, scrutinises the systems in which racism occurs. This approach validates the lived experiences of people of colour (Doharty, 2018). Instead of positioning racism as a problem for people of colour to solve (Wong, Derthick, David, Saw & Okazaki, 2013), this perspective might help to interrogate linguistic features such as 'perceived discrimination', that locate issues of racism within the world view of the oppressed.

In alignment with the transformative paradigm, CRT is not only a theoretical framework, but a basis for activism that enables scholars to identify racism as it manifests within institutional systems (Mertens, 2010). This is made possible through the assumption that institutional practices occur within a society where racism is normalised, meaning racism is overlooked as it operates within invisible and unconscious ways (Chadderton, 2013).

The systemic conceptualisation of racism here is consistent with Bronfenbrenner's systemic theoretical perspectives (1989) which are popular within educational psychology research and practice. Both CRT and Bronfenbrenner analyse the relationship between individuals, communities and wider society. The central role of 'process' in Bronfenbrenner's work represents the relationship that a child has with their proximal environment (Renn, 2012). In order that the child develops to their full potential, their interactions must grow with complexity over time, with an appropriate level of support (ibid). This highlights a potentially rich conceptualisation of the way that different forms of racial discrimination may impact the relationship a child of colour has with their proximal environment. Both through the level of support they acquire and through the way discriminatory experiences may impact the developmental characteristics of the child, such as their level of exploration or 'healthy' risk taking.

5.3.1 Critical Race Theory as a lens to examine passive, dismissive or inactive teacher responses to racism in schools

From a CRT lens, passive responses to race-based concerns would be viewed within a wider societal context. Values such as meritocracy and equal opportunities are argued to entrench racism by decontextualizing race and ethnicity as factors that interact with schooling (Doharty, 2018; Gillborn, 2005). One of the ways this is thought to occur within education, is through colour-blind approaches to race and school policy. The Swann Report (1971) a governmental enquiry into the education of Ethnic Minority pupils, highlighted colour-blindness in the following terms:

'many of the teachers to whom we spoke on our visits were at pains to assert that they deliberately made no distinction between 'Black' pupils and others: they were 'colour-blind'. p.26

Colour-blind attitudes towards race may stem from a belief that it is wrong to judge people based on the colour of their skin, causing someone to negate the potential role of 'race' as an important part of someone's life.

Within predominantly white schools, teachers may feel ill-equipped to approach aspects of race and racism due to a lack of formal instruction and a lack of familiarity (Soyei, 2011). Some suggest that the absence of detailed input about race and racism in initial teacher training reinforces a colour-blind worldview (Lander, 2011; Lander, 2015). In Lander's 2015 study, she was invited to conduct research in a predominantly white secondary school upon the request of the headteacher, who was concerned about the number of racist incidents that had occurred within a 3-month window. Black and Asian pupils who reported racist incidents stated that their teachers took an inactive approach to their concerns and wished for stricter responses. This is a small study with limited data.

Within a US case study, the views of 5 white school principals suggested that they felt race had a low level of significance to school level factors (Caudill, 2015). Within this study, Caudill also identified what he referred to as 'deficit thinking' where achievement issues of pupils of colour was attributed to their family structure and cultural influences. Caudill also found that these views were associated with a reluctance to discuss systemic racism as potential explanation for differences in achievement.

From a psychological perspective, racial colour-blindness has been positioned as a 'normative ideology'. Normative ideologies are views about the rules of normative functioning within a given context (Syed, Santos, Yoo & Juang, 2018). These ideals often flow from underpinning legislative and constitutional messages and can become internalized by individuals within a particular context (Syed, Santos, Yoo & Juang, 2018). It could be argued that the underpinning legislative ideals for UK schools are partially set by the Equality Act (2010). This legislation replaced all equalities based legislation, including the Race Relation Act (RRA; 2000) which stated that all schools had a '*statutory duty which required them to take proactive steps to tackle racial discrimination, and promote equality of opportunity and good race relations*'. Furthermore, complementary guidance published around the same time as the RRA was specific in its focus upon the levels at which racial equality policy should be enacted: *'Public authorities... must make race equality a central part of their functions (such as planning, policy making, service delivery, regulation, inspection, enforcement and employment)'* (The Commission for Racial Equality, 2002, p.15).

Whereas the RRA outlined race as an individually important characteristic, The Equality Act (2010) positions race as a protected characteristic *alongside* gender and dis/ability. Furthermore, the specificity of managing racial discrimination within the Equality Act (2010) is less clear than it is in the previous legislation and guidance. Within the Equality Act (2010), only one example is provided of how 'ethnic minority' individuals can be directly discriminated against, using the instance of segregation (p.7); furthermore, indirect discrimination is given a broad definition which applies equally to all protected characteristics (p.10). Within the Equality Act, no specific references are made to racism. Assuming this piece of legislation does influence 'normative ideology' surrounding equality in schools, racial colour-blindness might be

a logical consequent attitude based on the lack of depth given to the topic of race and racism within the guidance.

CRT would invite us to view racial colour-blindness through the lens of structural racism. Firstly, this perspective would highlight that colour-blindness involves a level of *avoidance.* The act of avoidance requires, on some level, acknowledgement (Frankenberg, 1993). This indicates that colour-blindness is a 'mechanism' of systemic racism, rather than a natural position. As such, some scholars have opted to use terms like 'colour-evasiveness' to counter the passivity implied by 'colour-blindness' (Annamma, Jackson & Morrison, 2017). This phrase is also used where researchers are conscious to reduce ableist language.

Secondly, CRT would view colour-blindness through the lens of the potential harm it can cause on an interpersonal level. Attitudes of colour-blindness can invalidate the cultural heritage of pupils of colour (Gaine, 2005, Cline et al., 2002).

Research that highlights the importance of racial identity in the development of school belonging (see Boston & Warren, 2017) highlights that colour-blindness could have a secondary impact on belonging for pupils who feel proud of their racial heritage. Furthermore, studies have highlighted instances where Black male pupils who react to racist verbal harassment are punished excessively, where their concerns have not been heard due to colour-blind policies (e.g. Gillborn, 2015; Blair, 2001). In these cases, focus is shifted away from the racist incident and onto the Black child's aggression.

Thirdly, due to the systemic lens of CRT colour-blindness would be analysed at the level of school policy. Sociological research has explored cases of Black pupils, both nationally and internationally, who have been suspended due to their hair texture not aligning with appearance policies (Joseph-Salisbury & Connelly, 2018). At present, there is a nationwide petition with over 10,000 signatures which aims to include Black hair in the Equality Act, due to the regularity of these issues become talking points in the Black community (Dabiri, 2020).

Libbey (2007) defines school belonging as being built in part upon the belief that all pupils will be treated fairly, regardless of their characteristics. This suggests that policy level colour-blindness may interact with school belonging for minority groups.

Finally, CRT would invite us to look at the macro-level impact of colour blindness. For example, research has examined how societal level tropes about 'Blackness' enact themselves at a child/young person level. Goff et al., (2014) carried out a mixed methods study, gathering the views of adults about perception of Black male children and their white counterparts. Across laboratory, field and translational (mixed field and laboratory conditions), they found converging evidence that Black children were judged to be less childlike, that Black children were judged to have fewer of the characteristics associated with childhood and that Black children were more likely to implicitly be associated with primates. Although this is American research, research across educational spheres in England have similar findings.

Black parents report feeling that their sons are labelled as older and more aggressive than their white peers and attribute harsher disciplinary treatment in schools to these

perceptions (Maylor, 2014). Reports from pupils suggest they feel they are perceived as aggressive, anti-education and confrontational and thus engage in self-moderating behaviours to avoid these assumptions (Howarth, 2004). Three educational psychologists in a qualitative study exploring the experiences of Black Caribbean pupils in UK school exclusions specifically indicated their view that institutional racism was a factor in exclusions that were a part of their previous case work (Demie, 2019). Two educational psychologists indicated that school staff made severely negative attributions of challenging behaviour for Black Caribbean pupils due to perceiving them as more aggressive or due to attaching ideas of dysfunction to the Caribbean family. Another educational psychologist in the sample - who was white – explained that: *'Teachers and SENCos in schools will say things to me as a White person about the reasons for exclusion that they wouldn't say to a Black person'* (Demie, 2019, p.6)

Trainee teachers indicated they perceived Black pupils as physically larger and more aggressive than their white peers and suggest they may approach disciplinary procedures differently (Gazeley & Dunne, 2012).

These studies are all from small samples, so limitations can be drawn. However, similar views are found across separate stakeholders suggesting these tropes may be indicative of the way that Black children are viewed across some educational settings. When paired with colour-blindness, these perspectives of Blackness may be experienced as doubly invalidating and frustrating for Black youth.

5.4 The role of subtle racism in the construction of a sense of belonging

It has been suggested that where overt expressions of racism are more common, this serves to make more subtle forms of racism, more permissible and less worthy of investigation (Dovidio, Pearson & Penner, 2018). As such, subtle racism has received less examination within research (Rollock, 2012). Microaggressions are a form of subtle racism that were first conceptualised by Chester Pierce (1974) – an American psychiatrist – as automatic and repetitive racial 'put-downs' directed at non-White people. During the 1980's, the concept became refined and applied to the experiences of African American patients receiving psychiatric support, thus creating the concept of the 'racial microaggression' (Perez-Huber & Soloranzo, 2015; Doharty, 2018). Although microaggressions were described as innocuous and seemingly harmless, the cumulative effect of microaggressions upon the morality, health outcomes and confidence of recipients became emphasised (Pierce, 1995). The cumulative nature of microaggressions in the life of a non-white person often means that the interaction will often be perceived as harmless to the person delivering and harmful to the person receiving (Thompson, 2020).

The concept of microaggression overlaps with the concept of 'everyday racism'. Everyday racism is often referred to as common place behavioural exchanges between people of colour and white people that reinforce underlying power dynamics (Williams, 2020). Microaggressions also overlap with 'aversive racism'. Aversive racism refers to a combination of acknowledged personal beliefs about equality and egalitarianism and unconsciously stereotypical beliefs about racial minority groups (Dovidio, Pearson, & Penner, 2018). The combination of these acknowledged and

unacknowledged beliefs are thought to make addressing the topic of racism especially challenging, as this is inconsistent with beliefs about oneself as someone who believes in equality. Aversive racism is an area of study that explores the underlying mechanisms of subtle racism, whereas microaggression is the study of how these attitudes manifest in the behavioural sphere. Microaggressions are therefore the 'type' of subtle racism most closely aligned to the current study, because the current study is concerned with the way behavioural interactions were experienced by young Black people.

Sue et al., (2007) developed a widely cited taxonomy of racial microaggressions, based on an extensive review of social psychological research about aversive racism, narrative accounts of counsellors and psychological formulations of everyday racism. They conceptualised racial microaggressions as '*commonplace verbal or behavioural indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, which communicate hostile, negative racial slights and insults'* (p.278). An extract of this typology is presented in Table 5.1:

	Microinsult	Microinvalidation
Description	Unconscious comments that demean a person's heritage or racial identity.	Unconscious behaviours that exclude and nullify the feelings, experiences or thoughts of a person.
Themes:	**Pathologizing cultural styles**: Asserting that the values or norms of a racial group are abnormal. **Ascription of intelligence:** Assigning members of a racial group with a specific level of intelligence. **Assumption of Criminal status**: Danger, deviance or threat ascribed based on race.	**Alien in own land:** Depicting members of a racial group as perpetual foreigners. **Colour blindness:** Denial of the existence of racial significance. **Myth of Meritocracy:** Insistence that racial identity does not play a role in career/academic success.
Message Conveyed	"Assimilate to dominant culture" "It is unusual for people from your racial group to succeed" "You are a deviant"	"You do not belong" "Your racial experiences are not valid" "If you don't succeed, it is the fault of your community"

Table 5. 1 Adaptation of Sue et al., (2007) taxonomy of racial microaggressions

The third category of microaggression is distinct from the two presented above which were conceptualised as occurring unconsciously during interactions. Micro assaults, the third type of microaggression are characterised as conscious verbal or non-verbal

communications that are openly discriminatory. Micro assaults are communicated when a) the social context is normalising of micro assaults b) when someone who holds views of racial inferiority/superiority loses control of their emotions during an interaction (Sue et al., 2007). An example of a verbal micro assault is calling a Black person the N-word; an example of a non-verbal micro assault could be performing a monkey chant at a Black person during a football game.

The theme of belonging is highly pertinent to the study of microaggression, both in the message they convey: 'you do not belong' and in some cases, through the way that they are measured. Microaggressions are commonly studied through self-report measures (Williams, 2020), one of which - the Racial Microaggression Scale (Torres-Tardy, Anrade & Remero Diaz, 2012) directly ask participants about their experiences of belonging through statements such as 'other people ask me where I am from suggesting I don't belong'.

5.4.1 The psychological impact of subtle racism upon wellbeing

Experiences of racial microaggressions have been correlated with lower self-esteem (Nadal, Wong, Griffin, Davidoff, & Sriken, 2014) and a positive relationship has been found between the experience of racial microaggression and suicidal ideation (O'Keefe, Wingate, Hollingsworth & Tucker, 2015). Pre-existing traits such as neuroticism should be taken into account when interpreting these findings (Haidt & Lukianoff, 2018). On the other hand, it is important to consider that multiple experiences of microaggression could lead to hypervigilance during social interactions, potentially increasing the likelihood of developing qualities such as neuroticism (Kanter et al., 2017).

Studies within adolescent populations reinforce this relationship, exemplifying that experiences of microaggression have an erosive impact upon emotion regulation (Gibbons et al., 2012).

Kogan, Yu, Allen & Brody (2015) conducted research with Black adolescents in the 5-year period in the run up to adulthood. Controlling for depressive symptoms at baseline, they found that racial micro stressors (which were defined as '*being ignored, overlooked, or mistreated in ways that lead to feelings of demoralization and dehumanization'* p.899) contribute to negative racial attitudes about themselves, which increased their vulnerability to depressive symptoms in adulthood.

Within the educational sphere, Black, Asian, Latino and Native American students living within predominantly white halls of residence expressed views that microaggressions had a negative impact upon their sense of belonging at University. Findings from 11 focus groups of 81 participants highlighted experiences of verbal comments and racial jokes that were categorised as micro assault, microinvalidation or microinsult depending on the context (Harwoord, Huntt, Mendelhall & Lewis, 2012).

Within the UK, microinvalidations and microinsults were identified during an ethnographic study, exploring the experiences of Black secondary aged pupils during lessons covering aspects of Black History (Doharty, 2018). Importantly, direct instances of microaggression were characterised as symptomatic of wider institutional

racism enacted through the erasure of a holistic Black History within the National Curriculum.

Microaggression studies have been criticised heavily for their reliance upon self-report measures and lack of triangulation, leading to a mono-source bias (Lilienfield, 2017). A further criticism of microaggression research is that the concept is not well defined enough to warrant proper operationalization (Lilienfield, 2017). Researchers have countered this argument by drawing attention to the fact that this phenomenon is within its scientific infancy, and therefore requiring a positivist style of operationalisation at this stage is unrealistic (Thompson, 2020).

5.5 The role of identity development

During adolescence, many layers of identity become more salient, including racial and ethnic identity (French, Seidman, Allen & Aber, 2006). Erikson's psychosocial conceptualisation of identity development suggests adolescence is a time where one must reconcile the identities imposed from family and society and emerge having formed a healthy identity through exploration and commitment (1968). An additionally influential perspective from social psychology suggests that individuals internalize the kind of regard held for their social group (Tajfel, 1978). Racially minoritised youth may experience developmentally and ecologically demanding tasks that span from individual and group experiences of devaluation (Charles, Dinwiddie & Massey, 2004). Models of ethnic and racial identity development provide frameworks to assess how factors related to race and the experiences of the wider racial group, can interact with identity formation.

Racial identity has been described as the meaning placed upon race as a defining aspect of the self (Sellers et al., 1998). Cross (1971) developed a model of racial identity development that proposes five categories of growth experienced by Black people living within predominantly white contexts. This was one of the first psychological models to centre the experiences of Black people (Johnson & Quaye, 2017).

In the first stage of Cross's model, – *Pre-encounter* – the individual adopts normative values of the dominant racial group and is unaware of the implications of racial group membership; the second stage – *Encounter* – illustrates an acknowledgement of Blackness through a series of interactions that bring race and racism into their world view. Interactions represented at the 'encounter' stage of development could represent ones that prompt a re-evaluation of a sense of belonging.

Immersion-Emersion, the third stage, represents an emergence from a dualistic reactionary mindset to develop a 'critical consciousness' of their Black identity. In the fourth stage, the individual synthesises old and new understandings of race and culture and gains flexibility in their perspectives and ideologies on race. *Internalisation-commitment* is the final stage where, from a position of Black self-acceptance (Worrell, 2012), the individual engages in purposeful attempts to uplift the community with an understanding of the systematic levels of racism faced by the community (Johnson & Quaye, 2017).

Cross' (1971) model was criticised for presenting a simplistic and linear process of identity development (Renn, 2012). In more recent versions (see Cross & Vandiver, 2001) the authors propose that individuals can go through multiple cycles of the model within a lifetime whilst elaborating upon how socialisation practices influence racial development.

Following Cross' (1971) model, further models of racial identity development have emerged. Jackson (1976) presents a model of Black Identity Development (BID) which similarly consist of a staged approach to identity development.

In a recent revision of the BID, Jackson (2012) illustrates that in the transition from the first stage of development (Naïve), to the second stage of development (Acceptance), the child becomeS cognizant of:

- Covert and overt ideas about their racial group
- The relationship between different racial groups
- Themes of power and beauty

At the *Acceptance* stage, teenagers/young adults begin to decide how they will represent their race and resist experiences of racism. At this stage, decisions about physical appearance become pertinent. When this decision is made consciously, it is often viewed as a choice to embrace their natural hair as symbol of Afro-centricity (Asante, 1991). Transition to the following stage is a result of cumulative events that occur in the acceptance phase, defined as 'racial incidents'. These are thought to provide systematic information about their own racial group through personal experiences, community experiences and the media. These gradually form a tangible model of their social world.

Resistance, the fourth stage, is characterised by anger and rage as the individual comes to understand the complex, systemic nature of racism. Individuals can attempt to achieve passive resistance, however, this causes a level of dissonance that is not sustainable.

Following this is the *redefinition* stage, where the individual embraces their culture, and fully accepts and integrates their racial identity into their concept of self, marking a reconciliation of their identity.

Both models conceptualise race as an eventually important aspect of how Black individuals define themselves. Although both models are developed to describe Black identity development in America, UK research supports the conceptualisation of race as a central part of Black identity in adulthood. Aspinall and Song found that race was of highest salience to the identity definitions of Black adults sampled in their 2013 study.

There is a clear theoretical influence of Erikson's theory, both in terms of the sequential conceptualisation of identity development and through the notion of conflict reconciliation as the driver of development. It could be argued that these models of identity formation sit within a positivist paradigm (Johnson & Quaye, 2017). The notion that identity development is linear and singular, does not take the multiple layers of identity someone may possess.

Sue & Sue (2003) present a model of Racial and Cultural Identity Development (RCID) that is applicable to a range of racial and cultural minority individuals. This model is a non-linear matrix which culminates with a sense of identity built upon self-acceptance and cultural knowledge (Renn, 2012; West-Olatunji et al., 2007) and was developed to support therapeutic practice amongst counsellors with culturally and racially diverse client bases (Sue & Sue, 2003). Individuals' responses to interpersonal interactions can trigger shifts from one stage to another. The RCID has been used for psychological formulations in counselling to develop culturally competent counselling interventions by focusing on factors that play a specific role in resiliency for racial or cultural minority individuals (West-Olatunji et al., 2007). The model takes sociohistorical experiences (experiences of the individual's racial and cultural background) and personal experiences of oppression and social bias into account along with individual attitudes towards the self, those of the same race, other minority groups and towards the dominant racial group. This can be seen as a model that focuses upon the interaction of various different factors when assessing the coping skills and approaches of people of colour to racism.

This model of identity development may be viewed as more closely aligned with the concept of intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1991) which criticises the essentialist approach to distilling identity down to just one factor like race. For example, if someone is Black, female and disabled, they may identify with several 'out-groups', thus internalizing various negative stereotypes (Tajfel, 1978). Intersectionality encourages a view of the various ways that personal characteristics intersect to shape our view of the world (Anthias, 2008). For example, a white middle-class female may experience sexism differently than a white working-class female.

These varied perspectives on identity development provide some indication of how race, racism and multiple layers of identity may serve to impact the way someone defines themselves. From a social identity theory perspective, these definitions will come to bear upon their choice of group membership and potentially, upon their sense of belonging.

5.6 Racial Socialisation

Within the focused code '*acknowledging the role of family voice in their navigation of school',* participants explored the role of family dialogue in their expectations of themselves and their expectations of bias.

Racial or ethnic socialisation refers to the mechanisms that parents use to relay values, historical knowledge and perspectives to their children about race or ethnicity (Hughes et al., 2006). These mechanisms have been categorised into the following broad groups:

1) Ethnic and cultural socialisation messages that teach children about their cultural history, cultural values and implicit messages about the meaning of belonging to a particular group
2) Promotion of mistrust messages that warn children about negative aspects of interracial interactions, fostering mistrust

3) Preparation for bias messages that intend to equip children with tools to manage future instances of prejudice or discrimination

Preparation for bias has been argued to be used by parents to offset their perception of institutional inadequacies in tackling racism (Lander, 2015).

In a cross-cultural study, mothers from Indian, Pakistani and White British populations all reported engaging in preparation for bias messages to their children who were aged between 5-7 (Iqbal, 2014). Iqbal identified the school context as important when considering how these messages were deployed. For example, in the white population, parents used these messages when their children attended multi-cultural schools. The research also highlighted that some populations were less likely to engage in preparation for bias messages pro-actively and only used these messages in response to events. Similarly, US research has identified that some preparation for bias messages are deployed reactively, following a child's experience of a discriminatory practice (White-Johnson, Ford & Sellers, 2010).

In an intergenerational study with Black Caribbean families, researchers identified a method of 'retrospective parenting' (Franceschelli, Schoon & Evans 2017). The researchers used an in-depth case study design which analysed the experiences of 8 families and included 24 participants, including young people aged 13-19 and their parents and grandparents. Parents raised the awareness of bias through explicitly giving messages to their children about the need to work twice as hard. They further described retrospective parenting as messages given to children about individual, family and community and were aimed at providing resilience. Retrospective parenting was categorised as taking three forms:

1) Restorative – making up for missed opportunities
2) Preventative – preparing for prejudice and bias
3) Progressive – preparing for the future and avoiding their mistakes

Anderson & Stevenson (2019) further operationalise racial socialisation (RS) through describing a legacy approach to RS and a literacy approach to RS. In a legacy approach, parents communicate ideological and historical messages that are aimed at providing children with effective coping strategies. An example of this might be to describe to a Black child why they need to work twice as hard as a white child. The way this process is described in the literature has been criticised, as it fails to account for the way parents communicate the complex, process oriented and emotionally taxing coping strategies for managing previous, in-the-moment and past experiences of bias (Stevenson, 2017).

A literacy approach description is thought to be a more accurate representation of how parents use RS to enable children and young people to read, interpret and resolve racially stressful events (Stevenson, 2014):

'[The literacy approach] focuses on youth's ability to [independently] read, rehearse, recall, and successfully enact direct, anticipatory, and practiced approaches with caretakers in their efforts to navigate discrimination racial experiences (e.g., "It can feel painful when someone is treating you as racially inferior, but just remember it's based on a false myth of superiority and is meant to be destructive to your definition

*of yourself, your family, your people, and your culture, so you can choose any of the strategies we've rehearsed to reject that inferiority") (*Anderson & Stevenson, 2019 p.66)'.

The Transactional Model of Stress and Coping (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) served as a theoretical basis for the Racial Encounter Coping Appraisal and Socialization Theory (RECAST) by Stevenson (2014). RECAST represents how families support children to manage racially stressful events. Within this model, which is based on a literacy approach to RS, the family's perception of the situation is key. The child must perceive racial incident as a challenge or a threat to prompt the process of RS. Following the RS dialogue or interactions with their family, the child appraises their ability to cope with the situation. Within this conceptualisation, the role of family dialogue is positioned as crucial in the child's assessment of their own coping skills.

This model is useful when paired with the topic of belonging. For example, how might the messages transmitted during this process impact upon a child's desire to belong to their school? Within family situations that do not involve the ability to transmit historical and ideological information, for example, in the case of a Black child adopted by white parents, this model may fall short.

5.7 Insights into resistance and coping strategies

In response to themes highlighted in the category *reacting through emotional reflection, resistance and advocacy* I explored research about resistance and coping for people experiencing racially challenging encounters.

Adaptive responding refers to the way that marginalised groups respond functionally to oppressive situations (Case & Hunter, 2012). In this conceptualisation, 'coping' refers to addressing the stress, 'resistance' refers to efforts to change the stressful conditions and resilience is the quality born of engaging in these adaptive processes.

Stevenson (2014) highlights a form of coping which could lead to resistance in his conceptualisation of verbal responses to racially stressful interactions. In-the-moment 'healthy comeback line' responses can be rehearsed in anticipation of the following event. It is argued that this form of coping is an adaptive response aiming to reduce emotional harm arising from the interaction. The planned nature can also reduce the stress of anticipating and managing these situations.

Early research identified academic achievement as a form of resistance for 'ethnic minority' pupils who wished to go against negative stereotypes (Mac and Ghaill, 1988). It has been suggested that achievement is a silent form of resistance that may be preferred by some pupils, over more visible forms of resistance that could result in disproportionate discipline (Allen, 2013).

Within a UK study, Black secondary aged participants reported feeling motivated to achieve to prove wrong those who saw their community as less academically able (Abijah-Liburd, 2016). This was conceptualised as a form of 'resistance through achievement' (Portnoi & Kwong, 2015). Abijah-Liburd (2016) also found that participants transcended their challenging experiences through a range of methods including reframing adversity as an opportunity for growth.

In a study exploring the coping strategies of African American women who had reported experiences of racism and sexism, researchers found that they used internal resources, external resources and specific coping strategies. ‘Resting on faith’ was one of the internal resources used by the majority of participants who leaned into their relationship with God and spirituality as a source of support. An additional internal resource was ‘valuing oneself’ through self-affirmation. Participants reported this resource enabled them to bolster their self-image and forward their personal growth.

Of the external sources, participants were found to rely on social support from family, friends and develop bonds with those who had experienced similar experienced to them.

One of the specific coping strategies was ‘role flexing’, whereby participants modified their behaviour, acting ‘less Black’ to represent their race. This included taking a hypervigilant approach about whether they were presenting as ‘typically Black’ and ‘giving up one’s sense of self to belong to the dominant group’ P.419.

An additional coping strategy was ‘standing up and fighting’ which referred to participants who refused to change in response to the situations they faced. These participants expressed filing complaints, being vocal and not caring what people thought. Although this study was carried out within an adult population, it describes the different levels of responses that individuals may use to respond to oppressive situations. It may provide an indication of strategies transmitted to young people during racial socialisation.

5.8 Symbolic interactionism, personal growth and belonging

Participants in the current study constructed a view of their position in their context and altered this perspective in response to their experiences. Symbolic interactionism is a set of theoretical perspectives that recognise that individuals act in response to both their circumstances and their perception of their circumstances (Charmaz, 2014). As such, symbolic interactionists view individuals as capable of dynamically and creatively responding to negative experiences (Jang & LaMendola, 2007). Mead (1934) argued that subjective meaning emerges through using language to wrestle with a series of interactions. One way of altering subjective meaning is through reconstructing narratives about potentially negative events (Neimeyer, 2004). In this narrative process, individuals can externalise dominant scripts which may be disempowering, leading to profound personal growth (ibid).

It has been argued that this strategy can be used to facilitate posttraumatic growth (PTG) which refers to the positive psychological change that some people experience after a challenging life circumstance (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004). Individuals who have experienced PTG report feeling higher levels of self-acceptance, autonomy and mastery over their environment (Triplett, Tedeschi, Cann, Calhoun & Reeve, 2012). In order to access this growth, individuals will have experienced a traumatic event that causes several mechanisms, including rumination. Within PTG, these mechanisms challenge the world view of the individual, causing them to grow in response.

Racial discrimination is not included in the DSM-5 criteria for trauma – therefore it is hard to argue PTG can be experienced following experiences of race-based stress. However, researchers have argued that terms such as 'race-based trauma' which conceptualise cumulative impact of racism, should be considered within the trauma/PTG literature (Carter, 2007; Evans, Hemmings. Burkhalter & Lacy, 2016). Others have specifically argued that systems that do not acknowledge experiences of racism are experienced as traumatic for developing Black teenagers (Jernigan & Daniel, 2011). Based on these arguments, it could be fair to perceive that elements of post-trauma growth may be experienced following a series of stressful/traumatic racial school experiences.

'Dialogue' is presented as a central feature in conceptualisations of racial socialisation. Anderson & Stevenson (2019) specify that the *nature* of the dialogue is what can support young people to cope with racist encounters. A symbolic interactionist lens may encourage us to view racial socialisation as a tool that enables Black pupils to analyse their interactions, providing their experiences with new meanings (Mead, 1934). Furthermore, taking part in a research interview that enables young people to explore their experiences with race, may also provide further opportunity to reconstruct narratives around disempowering experiences (Neimeyer, 2004). Symbolic interactionism is therefore a useful lens in considering how young Black people may alter and recalibrate a sense of belonging following different forms of dialogue.

6. The Grounded Theory

6.1 Introduction

The conceptual categories presented in Chapter 4 were analysed alongside the Literature presented in Chapter 5 resulting in the development of the current grounded theory framework. Along with reviewing literature, I developed a series of visual representations of the relationships between the categories and factors highlighted within the data. Figure 6.1 provides a 'final' visual representation of the grounded theory which depicts the following categories:

- Category 1: Confronted with their identities
- Category 2: Reacting through emotional reflection, reisstance and advocacy
- Category 3: Constructing position within the context
- Category 4: Navigating Black image
- Category 5: Transcending the need to belong

The grounded theory also makes reference to the following focused codes within the depiction of the school and societal climate: '*feeling staff responses to race-based concerns are inadequate; identifying passive, dismissive responses to race-based incidents; experiencing overtly racist language'.*

The written theory infers that all categories and codes play an interconnected role in understanding the theory.

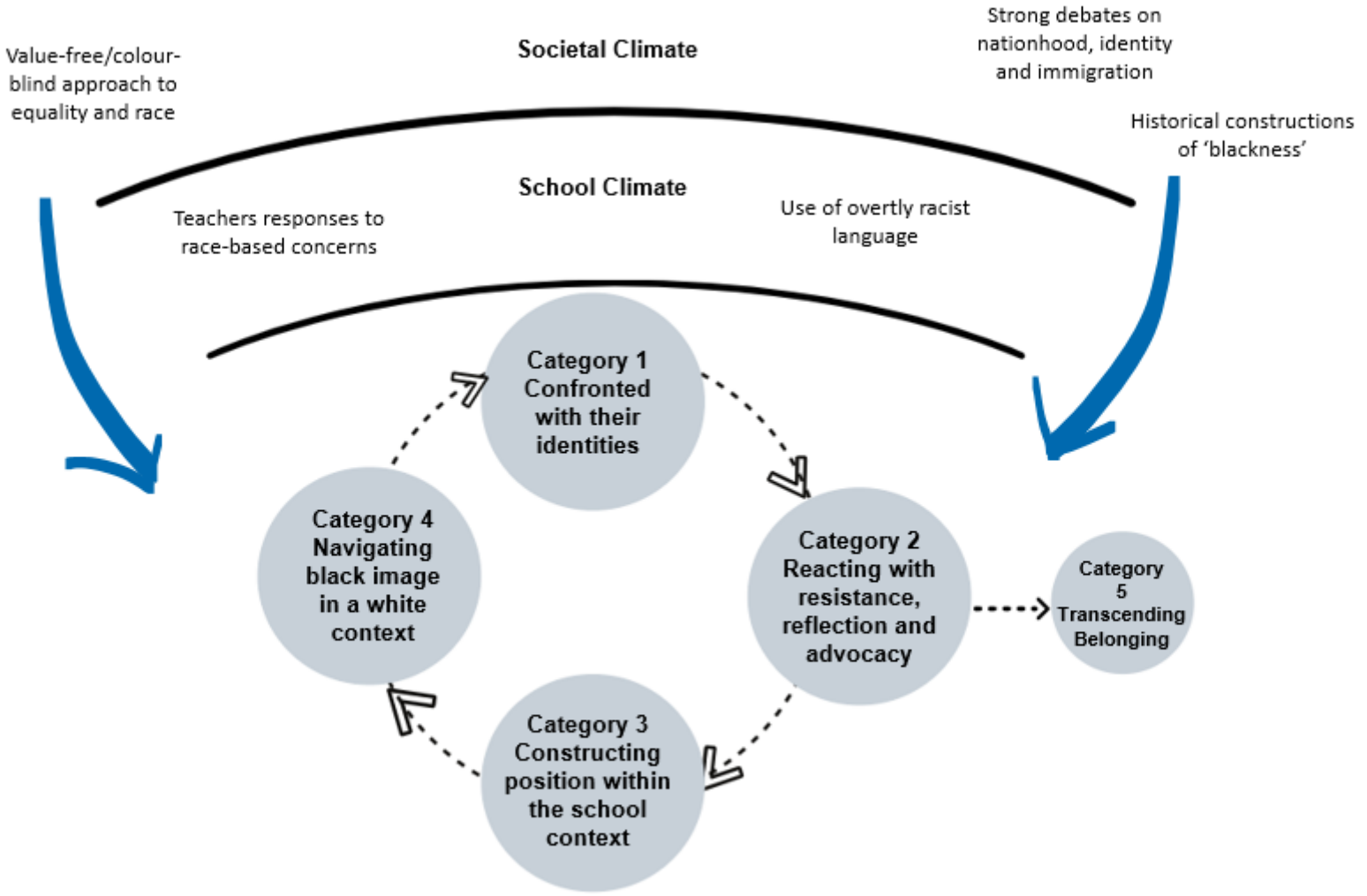


Figure 6. 1 A visual map illustrating the grounded theory of the current study

6.2 The grounded theory of the study 'Identity, Racism, Resistance and Growth: Elements central to the construction and transcendence of a sense of Belonging for young Black people in predominantly white settings'

The current theory conceptualises that young Black people who attend predominantly white schools experience belonging as a non-static, interactional process. All participants clearly communicated the fact that they saw their setting as predominantly white. However, this characteristic in itself was not conceptualised as problematic to the young people. The way that their identity was received within the context is what interacted most with the pupils' constructions of a sense of belonging.

Pupils construct and reappraise their social position within the school in reaction to interpersonal experiences of acceptance, rejection, identity validation and invalidation. The presented grounded theory conceptualises that wider societal factors have a top-down influence upon the school climate, which is instrumental in the way that Black pupils construct their sense of belonging. As such, the visual representation within figure 6.1 highlights that the conceptual categories of '*confronted with their identity', 'reacting through emotional reflection, resistance and advocacy', 'constructing their position within the school context'* and '*navigating a Black image in a white context'* feed into one another. 'Transcending belonging' is conceptualised as a part of what may happen when the experiences depicted in the cycle detract from a sense of belonging. The cyclical depiction of the categories represents that each category informs the next. The subheadings below explain how different elements within the visual representation are related to one another. As such, the headings do not include the exact titles of the categories, as much as they describe the processes at play within the theory.

6.2.1 The impact of teacher relationships upon pupils' constructions of their position within the school

Classroom relationships with teachers were a key aspect of how pupils viewed equity within the wider school. Where feelings of support are low, but feelings of being singled out are salient, this creates a clear sense of unfairness. This served to destabilise a key belonging belief, that all pupils are treated fairly (Libbey, 2004). This process is seen as contributing to the way pupils construct their position in the school, as one where they feel singled out.

6.2.2 Understanding the protective role of peer acceptance through an intersectional lens

Intersectionality theory (Crenshaw, 1991) is considered as an important framework to analyse the identity factors that may be protective over a sense of belonging. Pupils all indicated they had access to more than one friendship group. This is conceptualised as a protective factor, providing them with multiple sources of peer acceptance. The quality of relationships, including trust, shared interests, shared socio-economic background and shared experiences were highlighted as factors that strengthen friendships and peer acceptance.

Being male, able-bodied, and a member of a sports team provide further opportunities for peer acceptance. Whereas being female, Black, not involved in extra-curricular activities and having a visibly different body may have intersected to provide fewer opportunities for belonging, which may have resulted in the deep emotional impact expressed in focused code 4.3.2 *'attempting to change self to fit in'*. Furthermore, this intersectional lens can help to make sense of socio-economic factors. Where pupils needed to attend to childcare duties of younger siblings, they were unable to be involved in extracurricular events, thus potentially reducing opportunities to experience peer acceptance. Pupils also discussed a range of identity factors when describing their thoughts about why pupils gravitate towards different friendship groups.

The current theory supports the central role of peer acceptance within the construction of a sense of belonging (Migden, Theodoratou, Newbury & Leonard 2019; Bouchard & Berg, 2017) and also highlights group membership as a potential 'buffer' from experiences that challenge a sense of belonging (Craggs & Kelly, 2018).

6.2.3 The impact of the time and societal context upon overt experiences of racism in schools

Although pupils reported differing levels of access to peer acceptance, they also dealt with peer interactions that confronted their identity. Overt forms of racism, through being called the N-word, a monkey, a terrorist and an immigrant were evident. As were more subtle forms of racism through ridicule, racial jokes, and expressing disgust and surprise at the Black female form. It is conceptualised that the societal climate played a role in both the presence of these interactions and the way they were responded to by the school(s). The experiences discussed by the young people in this study took place from 2013 when the oldest participant started school, to October 2019 when the final interviews took place. Within the wider political context, there has been a range of ideological debate surrounding, immigration, national identity and belonging and the 'hostile environment' – an immigration policy that especially affected Caribbean elders. There was also the Manchester Arena Attack in May 2017.

It is conceptualised that these wider factors, along with wider societal constructions of Blackness and Black children specifically – described in section 2.4 – were influential upon the *content* of the racist comments' pupils reported. It is thought that this represents how normative ideologies in wider society can impact upon normative boundaries within social interactions (Dovidio, Pearson & Penner, 2018). This is conceptualised as the implicit influence of structural racism upon a micro system (school). This implicit influence is conceptualised to have a normalising effect upon overt forms of racism that directly attack a pupils' sense of Britishness. Rather than 'school belonging', the current theory uses just 'belonging' to account for the fact that there are a range of wider factors that may impact both feelings about school *and* national identity. The societal context is therefore seen as having a top-down influence upon the eventual transcendence of belonging for Black pupils within these contexts.

6.2.4 The impact of the societal climate upon teacher responses to racism in schools

An additional impact of the societal climate is conceptualised as influencing the way teachers can respond to racism, further impacting belonging. Pupils showed a desire

for a more nuanced and sensitive approach to concerns about race, in some cases indicating passive or dismissive responses. Taking an ecological and a CRT view, this is considered to emanate from a wider set of values within education that are value-free, colour-blind and 'equalities' focused (Gillborn, 2005). This approach might encourage teachers to view all children as the same, potentially de-skilling them in their response to racist incidents. Concerns about the level of input around race and racism available during initial teacher training is thought to play a role in these responses (Lander, 2015). Furthermore, based on pupils' vivid descriptions of the low number of Black pupils in their school environment, teachers may have lacked familiarity with handling these concerns due to low numbers of incidents of this nature. Colour-blindness may have presented a 'double-bind' to pupils who reacted to racist language and were then subsequently disciplined, despite their concerns never being acknowledged (Gillborn, 2015).

Stereotypical perceptions of Black youth, such that they are more aggressive, older than their years and less childlike (Gill et al., 2014) were also conceptualised as feeding into the school climate. The impact of these constructions of Blackness were particularly evident in Tashoma's account where he describes feeling that perceptions about his 'size and strength' negated the level of empathy provided by his teacher when he faced racism. These constructions of 'Blackness' were also felt by pupils when they thought they were being singled out, underestimated and misinterpreted as aggressive or provocative.

Black pupils are sympathetic towards the efforts of teachers and acknowledge the challenge of discussing race, but they desire clearer, stricter and more sensitive ways of handling their concerns. It is conceptualised that there is a relationship between an 'institutional silence' about racism and the existence of norms that enable racist language to be used, with this silence providing an environment where racist norms may be more deeply embedded. The way that concerns about race are responded to may also send a message to pupils about how the school values a) their sense of safety and b) the validity of their concerns. This suggests that the way racism is handled may be vital in Black pupils developing feelings of safety and belonging within school.

6.2.5 Reactions to confrontation as various functions of belonging

Young people reacted to their interpersonal experiences in a range of ways. '*Laughing it off*' in response to comments made about their race is conceptualised as a form of adaptive coping. This way of responding is thought to minimise the emotional impact of racial jokes (Stevenson, 2014). The current theory views '*laughing it off*' as a function of belonging, whereby pupils 'go along' with a certain statement to maintain their place in the group.

In-the-moment self-advocacy was another form of responding to these events. Participants would use immediate and logical response to comments made about their race or appearance. This way of responding was represented by participants as potentially giving rise to verbal conflict or tension. Therefore, self-advocacy runs the risk of compromising or damaging relationships whereas '*laughing it off*' maintains the social equilibrium.

It is conceived that subtly racist interactions – that are easier to 'laugh off' than more explicit forms or racist language – are not commonly reported to teachers. These subtle forms of racism (such as teasing or racial jokes) may have been processed as permissible in the view of pupils, again as a function of belonging to the social group. Young people often described laughing it off as something they 'used to do', highlighting that, at some point they reached a threshold and decided to implement boundaries. This process demonstrates the way that subtle forms of racism have a cumulative effect (Carter, 2007), as pupils gradually reach a point where they do not feel they can continue to accept these interactions. This idea of a 'threshold' aligns with Jackson's 2010 model of Black identity development, which suggests that Black adolescents move towards 'race consciousness' by a series of interactions that provide them with systematic information about perceptions of their race. Microaggressive interactions that routinely outline someone's racial difference are thought to send a message of 'you do not belong' (Sue et al., 2007). It is conceptualised that repeated experiences of subtle racism may be confusing for pupils who are both attempting to belong within a school context and regularly sensing that they do not.

6.2.6 The impact of navigating a 'Black' image within a white context, upon a sense of belonging

It is conceptualised that young people felt that their school contexts normalised whiteness and 'othered' Blackness in a range of ways. In some cases, their 'Blackness' was celebrated or seen as a point of curiosity. In these cases, even where the sentiment to their appearance seemed neutral, this may have served to reduce their sense of 'likeness' to others within the school community, thus challenging their sense fit and belonging (Booker, 2007).

The way young people navigated more negative interactions centred on their image as a Black person was salient to their experience of school. Category 4 exemplified interactions with peers who responded to their image. In response to these interactions, participants engaged in a form of self-affirmation by explaining to their peers that they were happy as they were (focused code*: justifying appearance*). However, in the case of Toni, the only female within the sample, this had a severe knock on effect for emotional wellbeing. Comments made about appearance of Black pupils were often related to wider societal constructions of 'Blackness'. In the case of Judah, school appearance policies were communicated, without an open consideration of how afro hair would fit into said rules. His reflections indicated that multiple Black pupils may have had experienced similar 'stresses' with their hair. The way that a young Black person experiences their physical appearance is considered to be an important aspect of how they formulate their relationship with race and then with their approach to racism (Jackson, 2010). Encounters that centre physical appearance are conceptualised to interplay with Black identity development by prompting them to advocate for their Black appearance, thus potentially strengthening their racial identity.

6.2.7 Adaptive coping as a form of transcendence

As suggested by Case & Hunter (2012), adaptive coping is comprised of resistance and resilience. Participants develop resilience first through experiencing deep

reflection, comparison and questioning, then by gradually shifting their mindsets and transcending the need to belong certain aspects of the school environment or school culture. The gradual mindset shift is a reprioritisation of how they will consider their position within the school. Some decide to stop trying to prove themselves to peers, some decide to stop attempting to change themselves, others decide that they will prove teachers wrong. It is conceptualised that pupils strengthened some aspects of belonging, such as friendship or achievement when they transcended other forms of belonging, such as belief in the school values or feeling they are treated fairly.

Within this shift pupils develop boundaries and can recognise their personal qualities. In the development of these qualities, pupils also acknowledge their own competencies and abilities to achieve and feel self-acceptance. It is conceptualised that the cycle of challenging experiences enabled pupils to move towards a form of self-actualisation.

Pupils discuss the role of their family in assisting them to reappraise their approach and mentality towards school. It is conceptualised that family dialogue may form a key role in pupils' appraisals of the approach to coping with challenging situations in school. This supports RECAST theory (Stevenson, 2014) which positions racial socialisation as a method used for increasing resilience. Pupils also acknowledged that parents engaged with proactive preparation for bias, indicating that pupils may use this to develop a sense of their likeness within school, potentially interacting with the way they construct a sense of belonging (Booker, 2007).

Pupils are seen as reconstructing a version of belonging that is based on an internal sense of affirmation and approval. Young people reconstruct their experiences through the process of dialogue, providing themselves with a new vantage point from which to understand their story.

6.3 Chapter Summary

Chapter 6 presented the grounded theory of the study. The theory positions belonging as a cyclical process where pupils construct and reconstruct their belonging based on interactions that occur in the school environment. The school climate, which is influenced by wider societal factors, is seen as a key factor in the construction of a sense of belonging.

7. Discussion

7.1 Introduction

The following discussion will consider the literature review presented in Chapter 2 in tandem with the presented grounded theory. Implications for teachers, school policy and educational psychologists are provided along with further considerations of the credibility and trustworthiness of the study. The chapter concludes with reflections upon the research journey.

7.2 Alignment with Literature Review Part 1

Gray, Hope & Matthews, (2018) argued that researchers investigating belonging with minoritised pupils should steer clear of determinism by considering the interpersonal, academic, policy-based, and wider societal factors that may be pertinent. They argue that this provides research findings with cultural validity. The presented grounded accounts for the interaction between these factors, as shown in figure 6.1 and within the presented grounded theory. Academic factors, however, were less of a focus within the current study.

The ecological perspective enabled both the macro and micro processes (Buroway 1991; Charmaz, 2014) involved in the construction of a sense of belonging for Black pupils, to come to the fore.

Research from O'Shea (2018) - who explored how migrant pupils experienced belonging - indicated that expressing denial within the research context seemed to protect pupils from the emotional impact of retelling negative experiences in school. Although denial was not highlighted within the current study, different emotional processes seemed to be at play within protecting a sense of belonging. Older pupils who were perhaps further away from their school experiences, were able to be open and critical. Whereas the youngest participant seemed to discuss negative experiences with his identity experiences within hypothetical terms (see focused code 4.4.2). It is possible that this 'hypothetical' approach to past experiences has the function of protecting a *developing* sense of belonging.

The presented grounded theory provides support for Craggs & Kelly's (2018) conceptualisation of belonging as a transactional and intersubjective process. The cyclical nature of the conceptual categories presented in figure 6.1 highlight the range of interpersonal experiences and sources of feedback that young people use to construct their version of a sense of belonging. Craggs & Kelly (2018) also presented a higher order definition of belonging: '*feeling safe to be yourself in and through relationships with others in the school setting'.* The current study indicates identifiable barriers to this feeling for Black pupils. These barriers included racist interactions and the way these were responded to. It is posited that these barriers are what caused some pupils to transcend the need to belong to specific elements of the school environment.

The historical context for Black pupils in the UK education system, highlighted in section 2.4, provides a useful backdrop for understanding the experiences explored

within the focused codes: '*being singled out; battling low expectations; identifying systemic barriers to high achievement* and *misinterpreted as threatening or provocative; moderating and justifying behaviour'.* Some of the young peoples' experiences in the current study are linked to these historical educational inequalities for Black pupils. Elements of belonging that include holistic acceptance and academic engagement may be interrupted by these experiences.

Perceptions of equity (Bottiani, Bradshaw & Mendleson, 2016), racial identity (Boston & Warren, 2017) and of likeness between pupils and the school community (Booker, 2007) were all factors that were shown to interact with belonging within the current study.

7.3 Implications

7.3.1 Implications for teachers and school policy

The current study has clear implications for professional development for teachers. The depth and breadth of the theories and experiences covered in the current study indicates that schools may benefit from bespoke modules that are relevant to both the location of the school and the individual experiences of pupils. It is likely that this bespoke approach will be more beneficial than national initiatives which may reduce the ability of schools to reflect specifically upon their individual school climate and racial context. This indicates that specialists in racial equality in schools should be called upon to work alongside senior leaders to consider their needs and to support with the implementation of school-based support. This may look, for example, like a specialist consultant in racial equality working with senior leaders to evaluate and modify policy and practices around responding the allegations of racism within school.

Furthermore, it is highly likely that there is a lack of awareness amongst teachers about the way that racism in schools can go on to impact identity development and future mental health. Therefore, ongoing teacher education which covers the psychological impact of racism in schools should be considered as a priority. Researchers have often highlighted initial teacher training as a key area when considering how to improve educational experiences for Black pupils (Tikly, Osler & Hill, 2005; Gazeley & Dunne, 2012; Lander, 2015). It is acknowledged that discussions about 'race' can cause feelings of uneasiness and in some cases defensiveness, if people with egalitarian views feel that their previous actions may be considered as 'racist' (Dovidio, Pearson & Penner, 2018). Training for teachers needs to take account of these factors. An ecological view of racism such as CRT, may help with developing an understanding of racism that does not centre the actions of individual people.

Whole-school training that explores the link between belonging and positive outcomes may incentivise school leaders to prioritise school belonging alongside other training priorities. Researchers have found that a brief intervention focused on belonging, that reframes experiences of adversity as transient is associated with academic achievement and positive health outcomes for Black University students (Walton & Cohen, 2011). Although this style of interaction may place emphasis upon the viewpoint of the child, not on modifying the system, raising awareness of these kinds

of interventions amongst school staff may enable staff to feel they can cope with matters concerning race and belonging in the first instance.

Whilst all schools should have procedures and policies for managing racist bullying, staff may feel unable to effectively intervene. School policy should account for the reasons why staff may not respond to matters concerning race and adequately set out strategies to manage these concerns. The study indicates that follow-up procedures and open, honest family communication strategies are key when pupils have experienced a racist interaction or feel they are being treated unfairly.

7.3.2 Implications for Educational Psychologists

The findings present important implications for educational psychology practice. Abijah-Liburd (2016) highlights calls over the last 35 years for educational psychologists to 'hold a mirror' up to the profession in relation to our knowledge about the impact of racism (see Desforges, Goodwin & Kerr, 1985 and Bolton & M'gadzah, 1999). More recently, in an issue of the Educational and Child Psychology journal, Williams, Weerasinghe & Hobbs (2015) asked the following of educational psychology practice:

'Where is the evidence that diversity and cultural competence is embedded in educational psychology practice beyond bilingual assessments to include our framing of the consultation model, educational outcomes, parenting practices, developmental histories and resilience, and thereby guide our formation, assessment and intervention practice?' p.7

As a profession, it is vital that we start addressing these questions to increase our capacity to provide schools with a culturally competent service that can adequately meet the needs of *all* children. This position may enable the profession to move into new areas of school improvement and strategic psychology.

The profession may benefit from an audit across training courses that specifically gathers information about the type, amount and nature of instruction that trainees are provided with in relation to matters of race and ethnicity.

The 2019 workforce survey of EPs provided useful information; however, it did not account for factors relating to race and ethnicity. Capturing this data may also provide us with a view of what 'diversity' presently looks like within the profession, adding to our understanding of where we currently are. Again, this may provide us with an overview of how the profession may be reflective of experiences such as that highlighted within this research. A diversity of experiences and perspectives is likely to help the profession to provide high-quality support to schools, proper scrutiny of policies that are oppressive and the pace required to keep up with ever changing conceptualisations of equality issues.

A national survey which analyses EPs' feelings of confidence and competence in supporting schools and families where matters of race become pertinent may also be a useful starting point.

In line with the guidance from the Division for Educational and Child Psychology (2002), members of the British Psychological Society must promote the welfare of

service users through exhibiting an awareness of how factors including race may impact educational experiences. Furthermore, standards of proficiency which regulate the work of educational psychologists' state that practitioner psychologists must show an understanding of the *impact* of 'differences' including ethnicity on the lives of service users (HCPC, 2015). This provides a further imperative to increasing knowledge within the profession about racism.

7.3.3 Implications for future research

The current research presents only one story from the collected data. However, several different research questions could be applied to the collected data and yield equally rich understandings. Future research in this area might use grounded theory to look more specifically at the methods that Black pupils use to detect a sense of acceptance and the emotional impact of this.

Research that explores race, usually uses Black or 'ethnic minority' participants, due to the normalisation of 'whiteness' in research and in wider society. This subtlety positions racism within the remit and responsibility of Black researchers, creating a further burden and inequality. What this creates is a research context where we can achieve in-depth, psychological understandings of how blackness impacts education, achievement and other areas of life, but where we are clueless about the impact of whiteness on said factors. It may be interesting to explore the way that 'whiteness' or Britishness plays a role within the way that white participants construct a sense of belonging. How does whiteness interact with 'taken-for granted' processes such as feeling safe within a range of settings? What does it mean to 'feel' white and to feel British? How does the history of the UK and the British empire contribute to whiteness? How might this layer of identity interact with the way people navigate systems of education and work? What might this tell us about the experiences of non-white people who exist within the same systems? Ethnographic models of research might provide this potential topic with the scope required to examine attitudes, customs, habits and differences within the construction of a sense of belonging.

Within the participant recruitment process, discussions with parents indicated that there were a host of 'untapped' stories, waiting to be heard. Parents discussed the dilemmas involved in wanting to provide their children with quality education whilst protecting their emotional wellbeing and racial pride. It may be useful to examine the perspectives of a range of different parents who may place different values upon the role of education with the lives of their family. For example, what might a focus group of mixed racial parents who have relocated from a deprived to an affluent area for schooling, tell us about their decision-making processes?

Many community groups and professional initiatives across the UK provide expertise in interventions that may foster a sense of school belonging. One such group – The Black Curriculum – aims to provide a sense of belonging and identity to young people across the UK by delivering multi-cultural curricula to 8-16-year olds in schools (Arday, Stennett, Kennedy & Thompson, 2020). Initiatives such as this could be implemented as part of a research project that measures belonging across racial groups, throughout the course of a diverse history curriculum.

Action research is seen as a potentially strong method for the current area of research and a plausible next step from the current study. For example, an action research project, following the current study may have been useful in eliciting the perspectives of school staff and transforming understandings of 'race' and society within a school. Furthermore, action research may provide pupils with a voice at a strategic level, by enabling them to express how their identities are represented and experienced within the school space. Research suggests that these democratic research processes may have a positive impact upon a sense of belonging (Migden, Theodoratou, Newbury & Leonard 2019). This kind of approach may triangulate pupil experiences with teacher views, providing a more coherent view of the school context. From this position of coherence, purposeful action may take place.

Within Charmaz's (2014) reflections upon her research using grounded theory, she discusses the validation she was able to provide for participants who had experienced chronic pain. Her role as a professional sociologist and researcher was thought to provide credibility to experiences of chronic pain that had been dismissed by participants family members and health professionals. It may be important to consider the role of research in providing validation and credibility to the experiences of 'marginalised' communities. Future research should take account of the ways in which the research plane may provide access to rich and meaningful stories that can go on to impact policy and practice. Symbolic Interactionism is seen as a particularly aligned perspective within this aim. This perspective positions research as a potentially emancipatory tool in enabling alternative constructions of oppressive experiences. The current theory indicates that various 'functions' may exist that limit the extent to which an individual registers the emotional pain of their experiences. If conducted ethically, hearing these voices within a research context may provide some outlet for these emotions. If the research then goes on to create change, then it can be seen as truly emancipatory.

The current research highlighted the role of family dialogues in pupils' constructions of their position within the school. Racial socialisation was a key part of understanding how 'prepared' for and aware of prejudice pupils may have been. Within the current grounded theory, these family interactions are represented as a key factor in the way that pupils approach instances of racism within school. Family interactions are thought contribute to new constructions of the self (identity) through promoting personal accountability rather than a reliance upon an equal school system. In the final model of the grounded theory, this is represented by the young person '*transcending the need to belong'*. Future research could focus specifically how psychological models of stress and coping align with young people's responses to adverse racial situations. The RECAST model provides a framework to understand how family and community experiences may interact with young people's evaluations of their ability to cope with a range of racial experiences (Stevenson, 2017). Case-study research, with an intergenerational family design (such as Franceschelli, Schoon & Evans 2017) may give rise to specific insights about messages provided to young people about race and schooling, along with young people's perspectives about their ability to cope. Qualitative data could be plotted against elements of the RECAST model to provide an insight into the ways in which families promote resilience in the face of experiences

that may challenge a sense of belonging. Furthermore, I feel that the richness of the individual accounts was somewhat lost through the process of coding, which encouraged me to pursue codes with high analytical value and high frequency. A case study approach may provide an alternative way of exploring individual accounts which does not reduce their richness.

Although the current study focused on the experiences of Black pupils, the grounded theory framework presents a view of how a minority group experiences a racially homogenous context. This basic premise can be applied to other populations. For example, research highlights the way that multiple disadvantages compound for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children throughout their education (Battaglini, Burchardt, Obolenskaya, & Vizard, 2018). Future research could use similar methodology to explore the unique macro and micro elements that interact with a sense of belonging for these populations.

Bottiani, Bradshaw & Mendleson (2016) used large samples to explore the relationship between perceptions of equity (as measured by school exclusions) and belonging across ethnicities, finding that in schools with high levels of exclusion of Black children, school belonging was lowest amongst Black populations. UK based research may also examine these relationships. This is pertinent within for pupils who have experienced long standing levels of high exclusions. Although quantitative data may not provide us with causal directionality, it may be useful to explore whether school exclusions feed into perceptions of equity and school belonging.

Goff et al., (2014) found that Black children were consistently rated as less childlike and less innocent that other populations. Within the UK, a dearth of research exists which empirically explores perceptions of Black children (aged 0-10). This may be important, because young Black men are often referred to within educational discourses, seemingly disconnected from conversations around Black infancy. The disconnect between young adulthood and early childhood may also decrease the effectiveness of interventions by taking a reductive approach to identity development. Evidence-based practice with young Black children (under 10) may benefit from research that explores the way Black children are perceived.

Focus group studies that explore the experiences of minority populations may present young people with the opportunity have their experiences validated by other young people, aligning further with the transformative paradigm. A model of participatory research is seen as particularly pertinent to take the current research further. Pupils discussing their experiences with other pupils who have had similar experiences may provide some protection from internalising negative experiences. This is pertinent particularly due to the mental health risks associated with racism presented in Chapter 5.

Finally, the current research highlighted the variable of physical appearance as a central factor within the way that pupils constructed a sense of school belonging. Interactions that centred pupils' physical appearance were celebratory, curious and negative – all positioning the pupils as different from the rest of the school community, potentially reducing their sense of 'likeness' and belonging (Booker, 2007). Future research could used mixed methods research to quantitatively explore young people's

perceptions of their self-image whilst qualitatively exploring how they experience their image within schools. The combination of these views may provide further indication of the potential relationship between experiences within schools and the way that pupils feel about themselves.

7.4 Further considerations of trustworthiness and credibility of the research

Using Charmaz (2014) framework, I will evaluate further aspects trustworthiness of the current study:

Evaluation Criteria	Outcome
Credibility	The process of memo-writing was central to the theoretical grounding of the eventual study. Examples provided in figures 3.4 and 3.6 and in Appendices 11 and 17. Processes including manual transcription, initial coding, focused coding and categorisation provided a deep sensitivity to the data. This also provided an arc spanning from the raw data to the eventual theory (see Appendix 10) Keeping a research diary alongside considering researcher positionality enabled me to maintain a healthy distance from the data.
Originality	The study provides a novel exploration of belonging with Black pupils within specific school contexts. This original contribution is explored further in section 2.1. Implications for schools and EPs are considered to provide novel and direct applications for practice and policy. Implications also present original ideas for research and practice in supporting the educational experiences of children from minoritised groups. The application of doctoral level educational psychology research to populations of Black secondary pupils adds to only a small body of research. This research is considered to provide an original perspective.
Resonance	The grounded theory paints a picture of sophisticated approaches to managing identity within a specific context. This is thought to add depth the body of research on belonging, the majority of which is quantitative. The research was shared with Black peers who had experienced navigating predominantly white contexts. Much of the conceptualised processes resonated with adults who looked back on some of their experiences.

Usefulness	The findings present direct implications for practice within schools about understanding the experience of Black pupils. It also has direct implications for school policy around responding to pupils concerns about racist language and racism. I believe the study provides the canvas for a larger piece of national research, similar to that carried out by Cline et al., 2002 who explored the experienced of 'ethnic minority' pupils in predominantly white schools nationally.

Table 7. 1 Further measures taken for research credibility and trustworthiness

7.5 Critique of the study

Although this research did highlight some challenges, it was not focused on either school exclusion or underachievement and therefore it enabled the pupils' voices and experiences to take centre stage. In addition to this, the current research positioned the findings within critical race perspectives and through ecological lenses. This was thought to provide a systemic view of the factors that played a role in pupils constructing a sense of belonging, rather than taking a within-child or within-community view of negative experiences.

The nature of institutional racism means that many people of colour feel wary about naming their experiences as 'racist', as they often feel they will be accused of having a 'chip on their shoulder' or that they are 'playing the race card' (Xasan, 2017). This serves to further silence the voices of those who have experiences anti-Black racism within education (Dei, 1997). The current study used a lens of critical race theory, naming the relevant experiences as racist and drawing upon understandings of structural racism. This is thought to provide validation for what were some deeply challenging experiences. Avoiding this terminology serves to reinforce the tendency to shy away from and therefore comply with racism.

Miller (1995) indicates that the phrasing 'grounded theory' is a misnomer and highlights criticisms from Turner (1992) who suggested the phrase 'developing a local theory'. Rather than classic examples of psychological or sociological phenomena, grounded theory studies provide localised examples of wider processes, with at least one identifiable variable (Miller, 1995; Turner, 1991; Glaser, 1978). This critique seems pertinent to the current study, which is bound by the context in which it took place. The identifiable variables in the current research seem to be the top-down influence of societal factors and the cyclical, interactional process of belonging. It may be more appropriate to consider the study as a localised examination of the constructions of belonging for Black students in white contexts.

Although grounded theory centralises the voice of the participants, Charmaz (2014) highlights the potential to revisit participants with a construction of the broad conceptual categories as a form of respondent validation. This could have provided a more participatory form of grounded theory. In terms of empowering the participants and having their experiences heard, this is a step which could have been implemented and strengthened the study's alignment with the transformative paradigm.

Originally, I considered using a mixed-methods approach similar to Booker (2007), whose participants completed both a quantitative measure of belonging and an interview about their school experiences. It was considered to be philosophically unsound to include quantitative data, potentially diluting the coherence of the transformative/social constructivist grounding. However, the addition of a quantitative measure of belonging for each participant may have provided me with a triangulated approach to the data. This may have improved the overall trustworthiness of the study. Furthermore, in Booker's (2007) study, he did not find a linear relationship between belonging and academic performance in his small sample of Black high school students. It would have been interesting to assess whether there was any observable relationship between academic performance and belonging in the current study.

The current research combined the experience of male, female, African and Caribbean young people. Combining the experiences of African and Caribbean pupils was both a practical and theoretical decision. For practical reasons, I anticipated that the low frequency of the Black populations in the area may have led to challenges with recruitment if the inclusion criteria was too narrow. Theoretically speaking, I was more interested in what it felt like to be a 'visible minority' within a predominantly white space, and therefore I was more interested in how the context interplayed with the experiences than I was with heritage. However, the data suggested that family background played a large role in participants' experiences. It may also be considered an erasure of individual experiences to combine these different backgrounds. Therefore, a limitation of the current research may have been the depth with which I was able to explore the role of cultural heritage upon the way pupils developed a sense of belonging.

7.6 Reflections on the Research process

I feel entirely privileged to have played a role in enabling the young people in this study to express their experiences of education.

Grounded theory encouraged me to take an immersive, thorough and process driven approach to handling these stories. However, I still felt like I was able to enlist the power of creativity, story-telling and problem-solving (Charmaz, 2014) in the process of conducting this research.

The research journey from start to end feels synonymous with a focused, explorative, rocky and successful voyage. Although the study is now 'complete', it equally feels as though I could pick up from almost any point of the data I gathered and begin a whole new journey of discovery. I am also reminded of the conceptualisation of grounded theory as constant a movement between order and chaos (Turner, 1992 in Miller, 1995).

One of my key concerns during the early stages of writing up my study was the potential discomfort of the reader upon hearing the stories of the young people and my chosen direction for the literature presented, which felt political. I came across the following perspective towards the end of my write up: We should ask not 'what do psychologists say about social justice?' but 'What do psychologists do for social justice?' (Howitt & Owusu-Bempah, 1994, p. 3). This enabled me to shift my focus

away from my anxieties as a researcher and towards representing the narratives of the young people I interviewed.

Then, the world entered a wider political moment towards the completion of my study. There was wide-spread coverage of the Black Lives Matter Movement, following the murder of George Floyd, and this further shifted my perception of my research. For some weeks, on social media and in the news, there was a (potentially momentary) willingness of large institutions and corporations to listen to the voices of black people who for many years have put forward strong and intelligent ways through anti-black racism. Friends and colleagues began to use language such as ‘systemic racism’ and began openly and honestly discussing their role in dismantling it. This emboldened me further, so that at the point of submitting my research, the moments of doubt and worry about the topic I had selected felt fully vindicated.

I perceive the grounded theory as a set of ‘emergent constructions’, which gives me a strong desire to further explore this area of research in the future, to deepen my understanding of the social phenomena at play.

8. Conclusion

The current study explores belonging both broadly, and in the context of schools. The study illustrates that Young Black pupils have faced a series of historical challenges in schools, including direct and indirect forms of oppression and racism that challenge a conventional sense of school belonging. Despite this, complex and resilient psychologies have emerged within Black communities, that enable some Black teenagers to transcend the 'need' to belong and instead emerge with a renewed sense of belonging to oneself, family, or community.

The grounded theory provides a roadmap in understanding some of the factors that intersect when considering how young Black people experience predominantly white settings. The ecology of the school and its ability to respond quickly and effectively to racism is a vital aspect of how young Black students relate to their schools.

The way that young Black people manage their experiences in white spaces is interwoven with the openness with which their parents discuss racism. Furthermore, coping and 'thriving' are illustrated as potential outputs of critical dialogues had within Black families. Access to this form of coping is facilitated by specific conversations had within Black homes and therefore, Black children without these resources may fair differently.

The wider political climate – Brexit, the Windrush scandal, extensive national debates about immigration – was shown to have a top-down influence upon a) the normative boundaries around expressing racist views and b) the nature of the racist interactions that Black pupils experienced.

An intersectional lens was taken to explore how specific identities (male, 'able'-bodied) may provide protection from some harsh experiences of peer-exclusion that Black girls discussed, whereas those same identities may increase the likelihood experiencing other forms of exclusion. The discussion invites key stakeholders, namely white schoolteachers, educational psychologists, and researchers to begin a life-long learning journey into understanding the ways that race, racism, and identity are unspoken factors in all areas of life and importantly, child development. Future researchers are called upon to broaden the lens and critically explore the role of 'whiteness' within identity development, to complement the knowledge generated by this study. Research in the early years is highlighted as a key area, to begin connecting experiences of black adulthood/adolescence to their developmental roots.

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Appendix 1. Email to Educational Psychology Service

Sent on 5.04.19

Hello everyone,

I hope you are all doing well.

I am starting to think about identifying and accessing participants for my thesis research, which is an exploration of the experiences of school belonging for pupils from Black backgrounds. I will be trying to recruit around 8 secondary aged participants who identify as 'Black' to undertake an interview.

I am wondering if you might have a contact in a secondary school (i.e. a SENCo, Head of Year or Head etc.) who I can get in touch with about my research, so that I can start to identify relevant populations?

Any further ideas would be most appreciated!

Many thanks,

Siya

Siya Mngaza

Trainee Educational Psychologist

Appendix 2. Emails to the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator

Sent: 30.9.19

Hi Steve,

Hope you are well an enjoyed the summer?

Before the end of term, we spoke briefly about my research project which is looking at the school experiences of school of Black secondary aged students. I think you mentioned that you had a couple of potential participants in mind.

Are there any pupils in your school who are from African, Caribbean or Black British backgrounds? If so, and if you would be willing to participate, we can discuss the next steps.

Thanks,

Siya

Siya Mngaza

Trainee Educational Psychologist

Sent 1.10.19

Hi Steve,

Great. I have attached some information about the research to this email. The first stage of my research is to conduct individual interviews with students once I have gained pupil & parental consent. The next steps would be the following:

- Please provide students with a copy of the information and consent forms attached to this email
- I would then need you to make a phone call to the parent, asking for their permission for me to get in touch with them over the phone
- I'll then call parents to ensure that they get a chance to ask questions about the study and request that they get the paperwork signed

- Then I'll conduct a 40-50 minute interview either at school or home (whatever the student and their parent prefers)
- If it's useful to you as a school, I can arrange to discuss and share the findings with SLT once I collected all data from across the local authority

Does this all sound ok to you?

Thanks,

Siya

Siya Mngaza

Trainee Educational Psychologist

Appendix 3. Parent information and consent form

Dear Parent/Carer,

I am a Trainee Educational Psychologist studying at Nottingham University for a Doctorate in Educational Psychology. As part of my course, I am conducting some research into the school experiences of ethnic minority pupils. I am hoping that this research will add to our understanding of what makes school enjoyable or challenging for pupils from different backgrounds, so that adults can support pupils to achieve their highest potential.

Information about the research

Your child has been identified as a potential participant for my research. If they agree to be involved, they will be given information about the study and will be asked to provide consent. They will be involved in a 45 minute - 1-hour interview with me in a location where they feel most comfortable, and with whom they feel most comfortable. For example, it is anticipated that the interviews will take place between the pupil and the researcher at school, however, if they prefer for this interview to take place at home or within the local community, this can be arranged, provided you give consent. It can also be arranged for the pupil to have an additional adult present if they so wish for this to be the case.

Ethical considerations

The interview will be recorded and transcribed. The recording will be stored securely, until it is transcribed and checked. It will then be destroyed. All participants need to have parental/carer consent to be involved in the study, as well as providing their own, informed consent. Any identifying information provided during the interview will be anonymised.

Participants can withdraw their consent at any point during the research process, up until the point of anonymisation, after which this will no longer be possible. If you wish to get in touch to withdraw your information from the study, please get in touch with me or my university supervisor, using the contact details at the bottom of this form. Please feel free to contact me at any point, should you have questions about the study.

Siya Mngaza

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School of Psychology

Consent Form

The University of Nottingham
UNITED KINGDOM · CHINA · MALAYSIA

Title of Project: Black and Belonging: A Grounded Theory study of the experiences of school belonging for Black secondary aged pupils.

Ethics Approval Number: S1166R

Researcher(s): Siya Mngaza; lpxsdm@nottingham.ac.uk

Supervisor(s): Nathan Lambert; lpanl@nottingham.ac.uk

- Have you read and understood the Information Sheet?
  YES/NO
- Have you had the opportunity to ask questions about the study?
  YES/NO
- Have all your questions been answered satisfactorily (if applicable)?
  YES/NO
- Do you understand that your child is free to withdraw from the study at any time and without giving a reason?
  YES/NO
- Do you understand that the interview will be audio recorded?

YES/NO

- Do you give permission for your child's interview transcripts from this study to be shared with other researchers provided the information remains anonymous?
  YES/NO

- Do you agree for _____ to take part in the study?
  YES/NO

"This study has been explained to me to my satisfaction, and I give my consent for my child to take part. I understand that I am free to withdraw at any time."

Parent signature:
Date:

Researcher signature:
Date:

Appendix 4. Participant information and consent form

Introduction

I am a Trainee Educational Psychologist studying at Nottingham University for a Doctorate in Educational Psychology. As part of my course, I am how pupils from African and Caribbean backgrounds experience 'school belonging', when they attend non-diverse schools. I am hoping that this research will add to our understanding of what makes school enjoyable and challenging for all pupils, so that adults can support pupils to achieve their highest potential.

Information about the research

If you agree to take part in the research, I will ask you some questions about your current school life. I will arrange to meet you at school or at home (wherever you feel most comfortable) so that we can talk about your life at school. I will record our interview so that I can play it back later and type up our conversation. A summary of the research will be made for your school. You can have access to if you would like to find out about the research once it has been completed.

Your rights

If you take part in my research, your parents will need to give their permission. I also need to make sure that you are happy to take part in the research. You are under no obligation to take part. You are free to withdraw at any point before or during the study and you don't need to give me a reason. If you want to withdraw from this study, you can use the contact details below. If you don't feel comfortable about answering any of the questions, this is absolutely fine. Any information that identifies

you (your name, any names you use in the conversation, the name of your school or the area that you live in) will be made anonymous when I type up the conversation. This will also be the case if the research gets published.

If you pass any information to me that makes me think you are at risk of danger, I will need to pass this on to your school or parent to make sure that you are safe.

If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact me or feel free to ask me if we meet.

Siya Mngaza

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School of Psychology

Consent Form

The University of Nottingham
UNITED KINGDOM · CHINA · MALAYSIA

Title of Project: Black and Belonging: A Grounded Theory study of the experiences of school belonging for Black secondary aged pupils.

Ethics Approval Number: S1166R

Researcher(s): Siya Mngaza; lpxsdm@nottingham.ac.uk

Supervisor(s): Nathan Lambert; lpanl@nottingham.ac.uk

- Have you read and understood the Information Sheet?
  YES/NO
- Have you had the opportunity to ask questions about the study?
  YES/NO
- Have all your questions been answered satisfactorily (if applicable)?
  YES/NO
- Do you understand that you are free to withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason?
  YES/NO

- I give permission for my interview transcript to be shared with other researchers provided that my anonymity is completely protected.
  YES/NO

- I understand that the interview will be audio recorded.
  YES/NO

- Do you agree to take part in the study?
  YES/NO

"This study has been explained to me to my satisfaction, and I agree to take part. I understand that I am free to withdraw at any time."

Signature of the Participant: Date:

I have explained the study to the above participant, and he/she has agreed to take part.

Signature of researcher: Date:

Appendix 5. Privacy Notice

GDPR: Research Participant Privacy Notice

Title of Project: Black and Belonging: A Grounded Theory study of the experiences of school belonging for Black secondary aged pupils.

Ethics Approval Number: S1166R
Researcher: Siya Mngaza
Contact email: lpxsdm@nottingham.ac.uk
Supervisor: Nathan Lambert
Contact email: lpanl@nottingham.ac.uk

Privacy information for Research Participants
If you would like to find information about your rights and the University's obligations in respect to your data, please visit:
www.nottingham.ac.uk/utilities/privacy/privacy.aspx

The reason for collecting your data
You (or your child) have agree to participate in a research project that aims to build an understanding of the experiences of school belonging within Black and ethnic minority population. The researcher is a Trainee Educational Psychologist, studying for the doctorate in Applied Educational Psychology at the University of Nottingham.

Legal basis for processing your personal data under GDPR
The legal basis for processing your personal data on this occasion is in line with GDPR Article 6(1e) “processing is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest”.

Where the University receives your personal data from
Data will be collected from you as a part of the research. The data will come from you, or from school records.

Special category personal data
We will be collecting some ‘special category personal data’, in line with GDPR Article 9(2a). We will collect, with your consent, data regarding your racial or ethnic origin.

How your data will be stored
Your data will be stored securely. All identifying information (e.g. names, school names, locations, descriptions of locations, name of the local authority) will be anonymized or omitted to protect the identity of research participants.

How long we keep your data
The University may store your data for up to 25 years. The researchers who gathered or processed the data may also store the data indefinitely and reuse it in future research.

Who we share your data with
Extracts of your data may be disclosed in published works that are posted online for use by the scientific community. Your data may also be stored indefinitely on external data repositories (e.g., the UK Data Archive) and be further processed for archiving purposes in the public interest, or for historical, scientific or statistical purposes. It may also move with the researcher who collected your data to another institution in the future.

Appendix 6. Semi-Structured Interview Schedule

Introduction:

- Describe the role of a Trainee EP, including research duties
- Explain that the pupil has the right to withdraw at any point
- Explain that interview will be recorded so it can be written up
- explain anonymity measures for all names, identifiable aspects
- Explain that you are interested in the way that children who are from Black backgrounds – African and Caribbean homes – feel a sense of belonging in their school – when I say belonging, I mean how welcome and at home you feel in school
- Explain that there are no right or wrong answers
- Check they are ok with going ahead

Factual questions

- Can you tell me a little bit about your school?
  Prompts
  - How many Year groups in each Year?
  - (If relevant) what are the buildings like?
  - Is it well known for anything?

Informational Questions

(To establish a chronology; to assess their awareness, perception of and experience of different dimensions of belonging)

- Have you been at your school since Year 7?

- Can you describe a normal school day?

  Prompts

  - How many lessons?
  - Assemblies, breaks etc?

- What are the parts of school that you enjoy the most?
  Prompts
  - Times of the day and why
  - The lessons and why
  - Are there any lessons that you feel you're quite strong in?

- Tell me what school is like for you outside of your lessons
  Prompts
  - What is the social side of school like for you?
  - Some pupils feel like they have a 'group' or friends, and some feel differently. What are friendships like for you at school?
  - [If appropriate] Can you describe your friendship group to me?
  - What makes your friendship group stronger…weaker?
  - What was the social side of school like when you first joined?

- Can we talk a bit about the staff at school now?
  Prompts
  - Can you tell me a bit about your teachers or other members of staff in your school?
  - Do you feel like you've had the opportunity to bond with anyone in the school?
  - What sort of things do they do, to make you feel supported? Who?
  - Is there anything that makes you feel unsupported?

- Are you involved in any clubs/sports or extracurricular things at your school?
  Prompts
  - How often?
  - Do you enjoy?

- Can you tell me a bit about how welcoming the school is?
  Prompts
  - What were your first few days like?
  - What sort of things happen that make you feel welcome?
  - Do you think there is anything that happens that might make someone feel unwelcome?

Reflective Questions

- Can you tell me a bit about the racial or cultural make-up of the school?
  Prompts
  - Are there pupils from a range of different backgrounds there?
  - Are your friends from a range of different backgrounds (racial, cultural)?
  - What is that like?
  - Is cultural identity important to the pupils here?
  - Is race or culture important to you?
  - Do you think that cultural identity is important to teachers?
  - Does culture play an important part in school life?

- Do you feel like pupils from a range of different backgrounds feel like they are treated fairly at your school?
  Prompts
  - What about the teachers?
  - What about the pupils?

Feeling Questions

Prompts

- Going back over the pertinent points they have brought up; how did 'x' affect you?
- How would you compare the person you were then with the person you are now?
- What were the things that helped you with X?
- What would have helped you with X?

Theoretical Sampling Question

- What is it like for pupils in terms of physical appearance here?

- Is there anything that you want to add for now?

Thank participant then summarise. Invite questions and comments. Reiterate anonymity and contact info.

Appendix 7. Proposed Interview Schedule

1.0 Can you give me some facts about your school?

- What area is the school in/what is it close to?
- Have you been in school since Year X?
- How many classes are there in your year?

2.0 What is a normal school week like for you?

- How many lessons are there in a normal day?
- When do you have assemblies?
- How long is your lunch break?

3.0 Tell me about the things you do at school that you really like

- What are the times of day that you like the most? Why?
- Which are the lessons that you really enjoy?
- Which are the lessons you feel you are good at?

4.0 Tell me what school is like for you outside of your lessons

- What is the social side of school like for you?
- [If appropriate] Can you describe your friendship group to me?
- What makes your friendship group stronger?
- What makes your friendship group weaker?
- What was the social side of school like when you first joined?

5.0 Tell me about your teachers

- Can you say anything about how they support you?
- Is there anything that makes you feel unsupported?
-

6.0 Can you tell me a bit about the cultural make up of the school?

- Is cultural identity important to the pupils here?
- Is culture important to you?
- Do you think that cultural identity is important to teachers?
- Does culture play an important part in school life?
-

7.0 Can you tell me a bit about how welcoming your school is?

- What were your first few days like?
- What sort of things happen that make you feel welcome?
- Do you think there is anything that happens that might make someone feel unwelcome?

8.0 Are you involved in any clubs in school? What about outside of school?

Appendix 8. Example of initial, line-by-line coding in Interview 1

Toni: Uh, for me it was very, very hard. 'Cause I joined, and on my first day I had rumours being spread about me. And like, people talking about me and stuff like that. So it was kind of like, they didn't know me, but they made assumptions based of what I looked like. So I like walk into a room and they'll be like 'oh my god she's rude, she's mean'. 'Cause I had like, um, blonde hair, really long blonde hair, like my braids, and then I just like walked in, confident like, cause that's the kind of person I am.And they'd be like oh she's rude, we don't want her sitting on our table. And it was like – are you saying that because you don't know me, or are you saying that because I'm different to what you're used to? Cause I've seen like new people join the school and none of them have been treated the way I've was treated. So it's like – Ok so, I feel like this is because I'm Black. Yeah. *Siya: So how long did that difficult period last for?*	Construction of a challenging start to school - social difficulties at the start of school: 'uh for me, it was very, very hard' Experiencing peer mistreatment in the first few days People making assumptions based on her looks Misunderstood Feeling her confidence is interpreted as rudeness Seeing other non-Black children joining, without problems Perceiving race as the key difference in the way she is treated

Toni: I think it was like a month. Because I remember coming to my mom sometimes and just saying, I'm tired, I want to move. But I feel like my friends were really there for me. Those four friends I was talking about, they just were just so good. And they were just like 'we love you for who you are – your hair, we love it, its amazing, what everyone else says, don't even listen to it'. *Siya: I'm really glad that you have those people. So how did you make friends with them?* *Toni: Um, I think it was my second day. So on my first day I was sort of dragged into a group. Then on my second day I was waiting outside my form room and like the friends that approached me, they were in my form as well. So they kind of just approach me, they were like you look a bit upset. And they said do you want to hang around with us. I was like yeah sure. That's just how our friendship [inaudible]* *Siya: Came about? I like the fact that they were there for you. That's good. Um, so I want to talk a little bit more about the beginning of school at this place. So you say that you started and you felt as though people interpreted your confidence as rudeness.* *Toni: Yeah*	Offloading to mother Feeling emotionally exhausted Friends as islands of peace Feeling seen by friends Appreciating those who accept her outside stereotypes Initially wanting to move schools Friends seeing her for who she is, outside of stereotypes Friends witnessing sadness Embraced by new friends

Siya: Can you tell me a bit about what the interaction was like with your teachers in that period. Were you able to chat with them about that kind of stuff? *Toni: Um, no not really. Cause, for me, I don't really like talking about my issues. I'm that person who would just deal with it by myself. But like, I had a bit of reassurance form some of the teachers. They were asking me, 'are you ok? Is everything going ok?' and I think the reason they were asking me that is because they knew I was sort of like a minority in that school. Um but my friends did encourage me to go and talk to the head of year about what was going on and stuff and she made me like write down what was happening and stuff like that and she sort of dealt with it. But I feel like the way she dealt with it didn't really help me. Cause she sort of like. We were in a lesson together with the people that were making me feel that way. She approached them in that lesson and told them. So it was kind of like they were just like staring and giving me dirty looks and stuff and I was just thinking – oh ok. Yeah. But I do appreciate her trying to help me, but it was just the way she went about it, I didn't think that was the right way to do it.*	Not wanting to be vulnerable/open with new teachers Reassured somewhat through teacher concern Viewing teacher concern through lens of her 'being a minority' Encouraged by friends Teacher response to initial isolation as 'crude' Appreciating the effort Appreciating the potential complexity around intervening Feeling that the teachers approach caused tension Feeling teacher approach was 'not right way to do it'

Siya: I hear what you're saying. So, say for example you were to start all over again and you approached the head of year again, what do you think the way she dealt with it could have looked like? *Toni: I don't really know. Because I say that there are better ways that she could have dealt with it. But I don't really know why. So that's how I like why I understand how she did it but I feel like not being in the same lesson really would have helped a bit. And just being like 'girls, like you have some certain teachers who have seen that you've been rude to this student or other students and not mentioning names – that would have helped but. I feel like there were other ways she could have done it, but I can't necessarily think.*	Unsure how teacher response to peer treatment could have been improved Feeling that a more sensitive approach would have helped

Appendix 9. Example of focused coding in Interview 1

Toni: Uh, for me it was very, very hard. 'Cause I joined, and on my first day I had rumours being spread about me. And like, people talking about me and stuff like that. So it was kind of like, they didn't know me, but they made assumptions based of what I looked like. So I like walk into a room and they'll be like 'oh my god she's rude, she's mean'. 'Cause I had like, um, blonde hair, really long blonde hair, like my braids, and then I just like walked in, confident like, cause that's the kind of person I am. And they'd be like oh she's rude, we don't want her sitting on our table. And it was like – are you saying that because you don't know me, or are you saying that because I'm different to what you're used to? Cause I've seen like new people join the school and none of them have been treated the way I've was treated. So it's like – Ok so, I feel like this is because I'm Black. Yeah. *Siya: So how long did that difficult period last for?*	Painting a picture of a toilsome early journey in school Perceiving race as the key difference in the way she is treated by peers Sensing a wilful misinterpretation of her confidence and body

Toni: I think it was like a month. Because I remember coming to my mom sometimes and just saying, I'm tired, I want to move. But I feel like my friends were really there for me. Those four friends I was talking about, they just were just so good. And they were just like 'we love you for who you are – your hair, we love it, its amazing, what everyone else says, don't even listen to it'. *Siya: I'm really glad that you have those people. So how did you make friends with them?* *Toni: Um, I think it was my second day. So on my first day I was sort of dragged into a group. Then on my second day I was waiting outside my form room and like the friends that approached me, they were in my form as well. So they kind of just approach me, they were like you look a bit upset. And they said do you want to hang around with us. I was like yeah sure. That's just how our friendship [inaudible]* *Siya: Came about? I like the fact that they were there for you. That's good. Um, so I want to talk a little bit more about the beginning of school at this place. So you say that you started and you felt as though people interpreted your confidence as rudeness.* *Toni: Yeah*	Solace in friendships Accepted for true self

Siya: Can you tell me a bit about what the interaction was like with your teachers in that period. Were you able to chat with them about that kind of stuff? *Toni: Um, no not really. Cause, for me, I don't really like talking about my issues. I'm that person who would just deal with it by myself. But like, I had a bit of reassurance form some of the teachers. They were asking me, 'are you ok? Is everything going ok?' and I think the reason they were asking me that is because they knew I was sort of like a minority in that school. Um but my friends did encourage me to go and talk to the head of year about what was going on and stuff and she made me like write down what was happening and stuff like that and she sort of dealt with it. But I feel like the way she dealt with it didn't really help me. Cause she sort of like. We were in a lesson together with the people that were making me feel that way. She approached them in that lesson and told them. So it was kind of like they were just like staring and giving me dirty looks and stuff and I was just thinking – oh ok. Yeah. But I do appreciate her trying to help me, but it was just the way she went about it, I didn't think that was the right way to do it.*	Approaching senior staff for help Acknowledging the efforts of individual teachers

Siya: I hear what you're saying. So, say for example you were to start all over again and you approached the head of year again, what do you think the way she dealt with it could have looked like? *Toni: I don't really know. Because I say that there are better ways that she could have dealt with it. But I don't really know why. So that's how I like why I understand how she did it but I feel like not being in the same lesson really would have helped a bit. And just being like 'girls, like you have some certain teachers who have seen that you've been rude to this student or other students and not mentioning names – that would have helped but. I feel like there were other ways she could have done it, but I can't necessarily think.*	Desiring a more nuanced teacher response to race-based concerns

Appendix 10. Focused codes before and after analysis, alongside conceptual categories

Focused codes from all interviews	Focused codes following analysis	Conceptual Categories
Describing mentality of dominance associated with views on immigration Experiencing racist stereotypes through questions that 'single out' Blackness Painting a picture of a toilsome early journey in school Experiencing racist language in the classroom Experiencing ignorant questions Feeling his hair and skin colour (personal appearance) used in 'ignorant' questions Race being weaponised in sports 'monkey' Logically asserting Britishness Sensing that innocent questions are veiled racist views	Interactions that ridicule and other their Black identity Asserting Britishness Experiences of overtly racist language	Confronted with their identities
Expressing shock and rejection and battling feelings of inferiority Logic as her resistant response Laughing off and justifying experiences of slave jokes Initially laughing off racist language Currently feeling exasperated and resigned to racist language Showing an ability to advocate for himself Feeling that it was unfair 'there's no need for that' Feeling like the teacher's response to him was disproportionate Feeling emotionally exhausted 'coming to my mom sometimes and just saying, I'm tired'	Attempting to change self to fit in Resistance through self-advocacy Resistance through expressing logic Laughing it off and minimising Having no one to 'back me up' Feeling 'written off' and unsupported Developing affiliation with marginalised	Reacting through emotional reflection, resistance and advocacy

Pushed to last resort behaviour Advocating for himself through addressing teachers Feeling 'sick to my stomach'	Children Comparing their school experiences with their parents' school experiences	
Seeing racial landscape as the descriptor of the school Defining the school in terms of racial demography Feeling that racial context impacts school experience Feeling that diversity is equated with more respect Feeling that the number of Black people in the context important in the experience of 'questioning' Describing homogenous context which is rejecting of multiple levels of 'difference' Accepting segregationist games as part of school life Accepting that sports teams are racially segregated Comparing current experiences to experiences of a rich context racially/culturally and experientially Feeling that the context is not diverse Thinking that a more diverse context could allow for greater self-expression Wanting an environment that embraces culturally significant symbols for pupils Feeling he has academic strengths in English and business Enjoyment and strong in English Enjoyment of academic subjects (English and Science) Knows her stuff 'that's my area' Feeling stronger in the lessons she enjoys	Clear definitions of the racial context in school Feeling that a diverse population enhances belonging Reflecting on informal segregation within school Feeling staff responses to race-based concerns are inadequate Identifying passive, dismissive responses to race-based incidents Acknowledging the efforts of staff Desiring a more nuanced teacher response to race-based concerns Desiring a more severe teacher response to race-based concerns Being singled out Battling low expectations	Constructing their position within the context and population

Understanding the importance of structure, hierarchy within school culture Feeling compromised and disappointed in relation to the school ethos Feeling like an 'inbetweener' and meeting various needs of friendship groups Sensing unspoken boundaries within friendships (family background, SES and culture) Conception of the school demography Slowly breaking into friendships/Impenetrable nature of friendship groups Viewing friendships groups as demarcated via race, geography and culture Understanding of teacher responses to issues around race Surprised that people wanted to genuinely befriend him Viewing trust as the key element in developing his new bonds in school All-rounder and inbetweener (friendship) Thinks geography and common interests as key in strong friendships Feeling compromised by the expectation he will fight for his friends Initially feeling school climate was one where he needed to defend himself fight for friends Missing extra-curricular involvement because of family demands	Identifying systemic barriers to high achievement Sensing unspoken cultural ties in friendships: geography, socioeconomics, culture and ethnicity Making sense of nebulous friendship circles	

Early feelings of apprehension and relief Feeling partially invested in by teachers Viewing self as socially skilled Feeling that a shared council estate background builds trust in friendship Feeling that weak friendships are subject of external stressors: reputation 'The best teachers are the ones I can trust, but the rest are human' Feeling hurt that his lack of GCSE options indicated low expectations Dissatisfied with standard of teaching Feeling dismissed by senior leaders Viewing flaws in the ability for teachers to respond appropriately to his experiences Acknowledging complexities around teachers intervening with segregated sports Reflections of school culture of shaming Feeling written off by a series of systemic failures Empathy with and advocacy for other BAME children Views good teachers as those who understand culture and have not lost their passion for the profession Intimidation and welcoming start to school Feeling protected and invested in by older Black children from the estate Working twice as hard (academically) Working twice as hard (morally) Damned if I do, damned if I don't Differentiated by a thin line, from Black friends who 'didn't make it		

Understanding the gravity of achieving for his whole family structure Feels that colour blindness in other Black pupils could be protective of their feelings		
Experiencing a wilful misinterpretation of her confidence and body Feeling viewed as a threat, not as a child Experiencing a weaponization of her body Actions misinterpreted as aggression Urgency around discussing school hair policy Feeling that his aesthetic did not fit the policy Feeling unsure of how to make his hairstyle fit the school policy Feeling that many Black pupils experiences 'stress' with their hairstyles Changing oneself to fit/modifying Blackness to assimilate Moderating self in relation to misinterpreted actions (making self-less threatening or thinking things all the way through)	Centrality of physical appearance to their retelling of school experience Reflecting on appearance rules and Black hair Justifying appearance Construing self-image as that of an outsider Questioning whether her natural appearance causes disgust Misinterpreted as threatening or provocative Moderating and justifying behaviour	Navigating a Black image within a white context
Constructing pillars of resistance through friends and family Mother's role in managing his expectations Mothers experience of apartheid South Africa key in his maturity	Acknowledging the role of family voice in their navigation of school Ricocheted into a journey of personal transformation	Transcending the need to belong through personal growth

Mothers experience a catalyst to shift his perspective Desire to honour his mothers experiences Sophisticated reasoning and distancing herself Filtering process 'Is this racism?' Relying on and relating with God Knowing her worth and setting boundaries appropriately 'Who I am as a result' As we grow, we no longer wish to belong Describing and relying on close knit family bonds Telling a story of transformation in his behaviour and attitude Placing emphasis on the role of his grandparents in his transformation Empowered by his cultural identity Developing an emerging sense of cultural knowledge and pride in Jamaican heritage/history Feeling that he belongs with 'everyone' Making a high-stake decision: education or community Feeling victorious and vindicated Transforming his experiences into motivation: 'prove them wrong' Comparison to peers lead to a sense hubris and motivation Lack of community/culturally homeless/frustration at lack of belonging	'I could be anywhere and feel like I belong' Ability to implement boundaries Recognising self-worth Using spirituality	

Attributes a lack of confidence along with ignorance to the way she has been treated Deep insight into the causes of this mistreatment: low confidence or ignorance Adjusting to injustice by changing mindset		
Coming to realisations about experiences through interview process Using a joint language with the researcher? Making sense of himself through building rapport Expressing caution or apprehension in sharing his truth Sharing heritage and language with the researcher Assumed language knowledge	Sharing a language and background with the researcher Shared cultural reference points Developing a stance on their past experiences through the interview process	Utilising the research space to express authentic voice

Appendix 11. Example of a Memo written during the categorisation stage

Memo – Experiencing 'othering' based on Blackness (final category name: Confronted with their identities)

By constructing this category, I am attempting to draw together codes that centralise the moments that brought my participants belonging into question. These were experiences of explicit racism through name calling and being subjected to old tropes. But the experiences were also implicit. Peers asked them questions, with very obvious answers and participants sensed that these comments weren't innocent. In the process of being asked these questions, participants question their own thoughts (particularly Toni). This links, I think, with my Memo around 'self-gaslighting' because they are experiencing something that was hurtful but because it is normalised or regular or unchallenged within the environment, makes you wonder if you are being oversensitive.

Within these experiences there was also an acceptance of some established norms within school life, such as playing segregated sports. I'm wondering if, because of the way these instances were expressed, whether they are truly aligned with this category. For example, for Toni, it was very much 'this is just how it is here'. It was the same with Judah, who later questioned the taken-for-granted nature of informally segregated sports. So actually, they talked about it with regard to this being a form of self-organisation based on ethnicity rather than an experience that highlighted them as different.

In Judah's account, the 'brown boys' was a schoolwide phenomenon. I wonder if, in schools where racist language is used in sports, this is related to attempts to organise the groups. In Judah's school there were just enough 'brown' boys to formulate a team. But perhaps in other schools, where there are fewer Black and Asian pupils, perhaps this experience is completely different. Judah percieved racist language used in sports as non-malicious, whereas Tashoma who was the only Black person on the pitch, perceived this as an attack. It is important to consider that these experiences were probably completely unique and highly contextual.

I think this is a pre-eminent category and within the write-up it will be presented first. This is because at no point during the interview schedule did I directly ask participants about racism. Yet this category provides a tangible threat to developing a sense of belonging because of the way these experiences were responded to by the school and because of the eventual growth and sophisticated identity navigation that occurred as a result.

I originally wanted to organise the focused codes within this category into 'implicit' and 'explicit' experiences of racism. But I feel like this form of categorisation is too abstract and robotic. It doesn't accurately portray the emotional depth of these experiences and allow me to build towards presenting how racism impacts belonging. Whilst I am trying to maintain a level of abstraction, I am also trying to stay grounded within the data and humanise the experiences of the young people. I feel like within the 'implicit' category, there is a level of ridicule put toward their

identity as Black people. The name-calling and immigration comments are more clearly ‘explicit’ racism that are closely followed by assertions of Britishness (Lisa and Toni).

Suspending my own thoughts was the most difficult aspect of constructing this category. I have written about that extensively it in my research diary, but actually, I think I need to reflect upon how my identity interacted the construction of this category. What happened with some of these young people was, in my view, wrong. I think that a part of me was slightly crushed when I was trying to approach the organisation of these focused codes with an appropriate level of ‘distance’. Looking back on the bulk of the categorisation process, my energy was very low because of the mental work of attempting to do something constructive with something painful, but I was also incredibly motivated to get it done. It was a strange space to be in and I wonder if something about the level of cognitive work attached to this, impacted upon the way I made sense of it.

I wonder if another TEP, from another background would make sense of these focused codes in a different way than I did. Would someone else view questions about hair, comments about immigration, jokes about Africa as neutral ‘bullying’? And would these codes be clustered in a different way? My identity as a Black british researcher gives me the context and understanding of how and why these experiences are racist. With that understanding, it would feel almost fraudulent to not be transparent about viewing this through a lens of systemic racism. I suppose that this would be similar to another researcher, with a deep understanding of an area of psychology, attempting to suspend their knowledge in the construction of categories. Why is it any different?

Appendix 12. Example of a Memo written during the Participant Recruitment stage

Memo – Parent phone calls

Following the organising with the SENCO, I've been making calls to the parents who said they were happy for me to get in touch about my research. I had one conversation in particular today and it struck me – but it was also like speaking to someone I had known for a long time.

We talked for around 45 minutes. The parent discussed feeling that her son 'has been through a few things and this process will be good to let it all out'. She said she was pleased this was happening – when I asked whether she thought he would prefer to do this at home or at school, she told me that it would be best to ask him then come back to her as 'she wanted him to have ownership and to feel free'. She then, of her own volition started to explain her own views and perspectives.

She talked about the dilemma of protecting her child's ethnic identity, by allowing him to attend a local, racially diverse school – which she described as failing, or sending him to a school where he would be one of the only Black children, but more likely to get 'good grades'.

There was a level of sacrifice involved in sending them to the predominantly white schools including catching two buses to get her child to school. But she felt that he would be set up to fail within the diverse school because of the level of deprivation and due to her awareness of the levels of exclusion of Black children at the local school.

She talked about how hard it was, as a parent to hear her son say he felt too Black for white people and not Black enough for Black people.

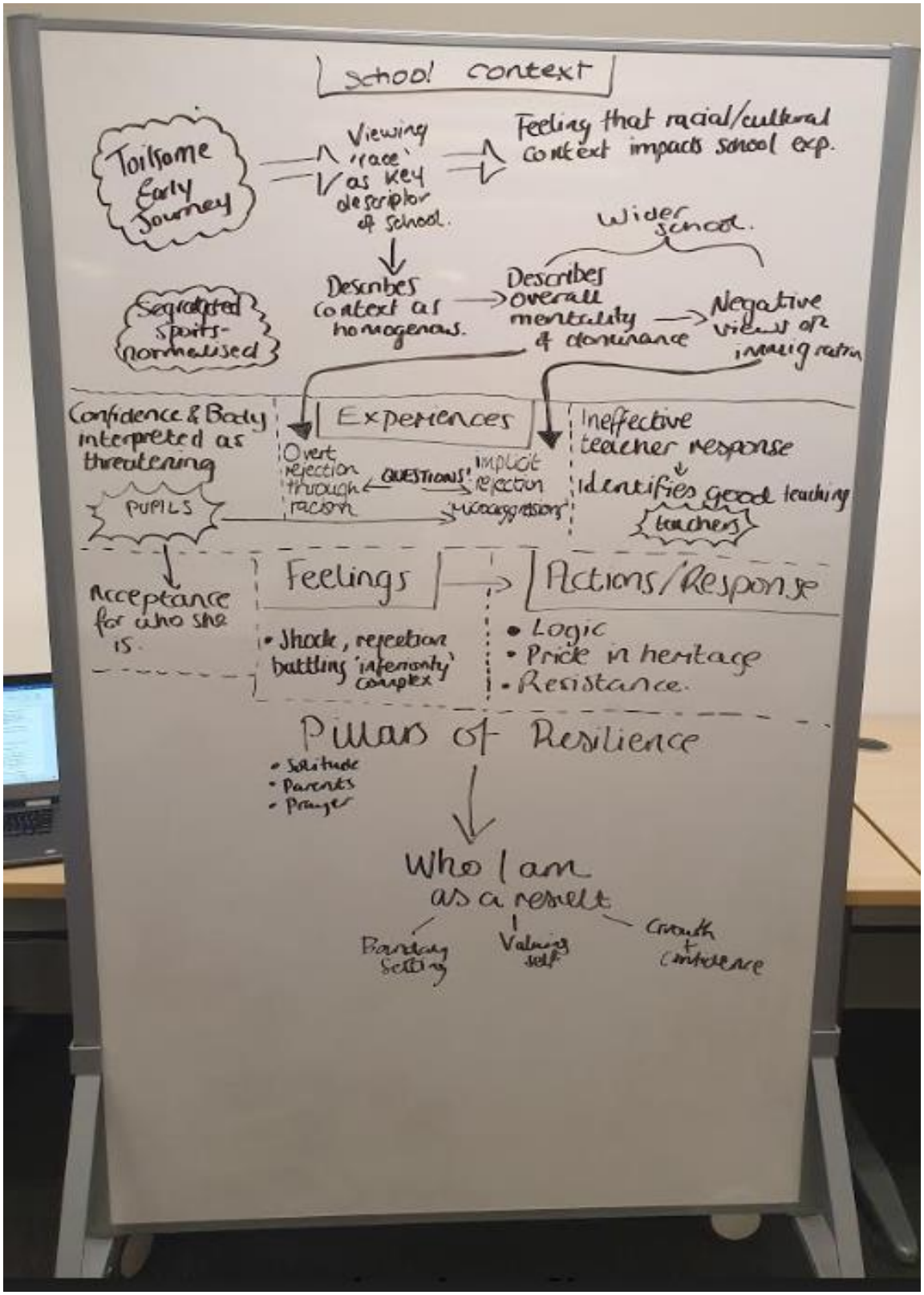
The parent discussed evaluating BBC league tables, OFSTED reports, looking for alternative jobs and other levels of deep analysis that would enable her to make the best decisions for her son.

I am considering this alongside many patterns around the education of Black children – globally. The experience of 'busing', attempts to avoid 'setting children up to fail', relocation. All of this, alongside the consideration of the young persons wellbeing.

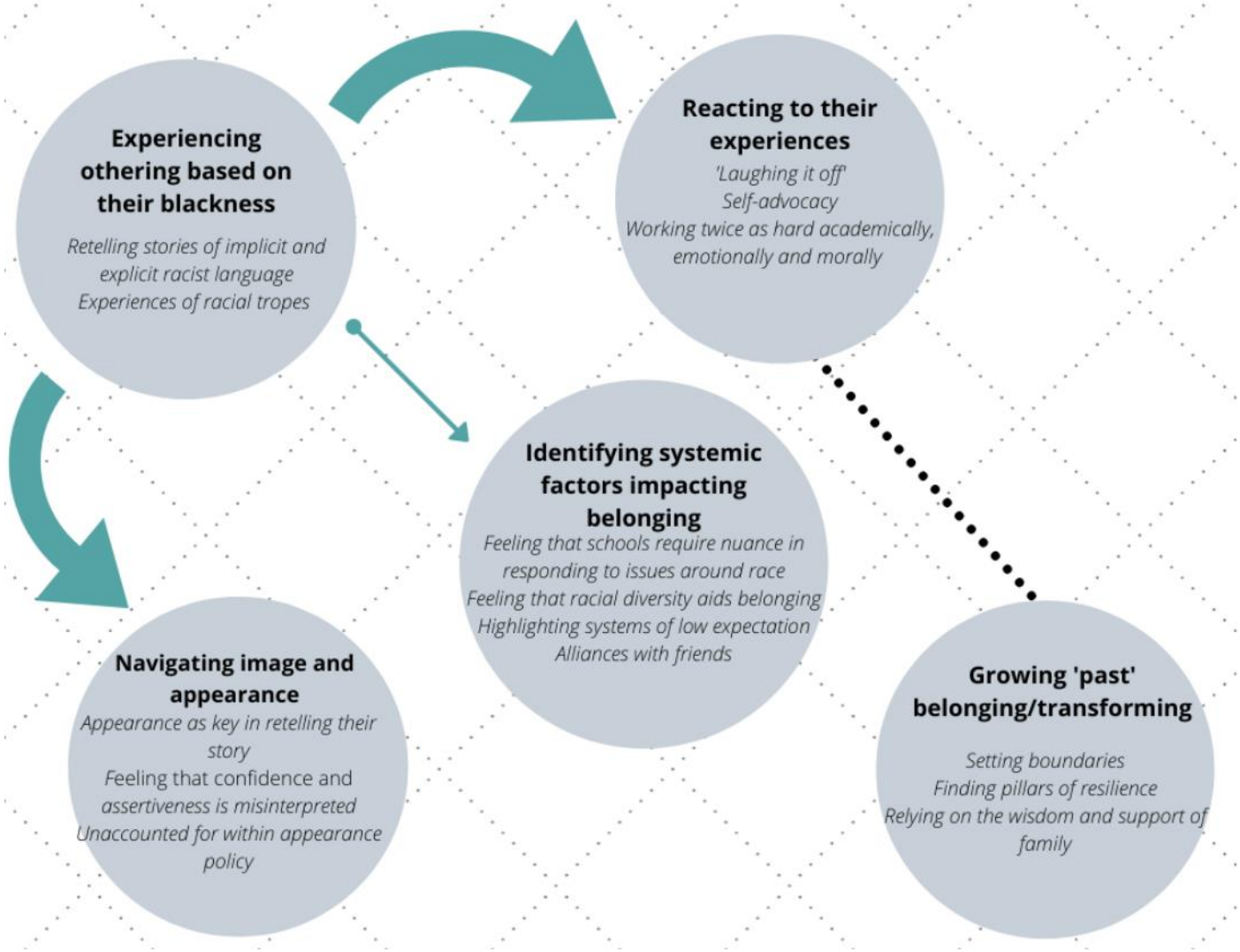
In fact, this is similar to the conversation with the parents of Toni who moved her from a highly racially diverse to a predominantly white area for similar reasons. They talked about feeling regret about their decision because of the challenges she had. It was almost felt like they wanted me to tell them that they did the right thing.

I think it will be interesting, through further data gathering to see whether the voice of the family becomes pertinent in pupils retelling of their school stories.

Appendix 13. Example of a diagram used during the coding process



Appendix 14. Example of an early diagram developed during the categorisation process



Appendix 15. Evidence of ethical approval

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SJ/tp

Ref: S1166R

Wednesday 3rd July 2019

Dear Nathan and Siya,

Ethics Committee Review

Thank you for submitting an account of your proposed research **"Black and minority ethnic pupils' experiences of school belonging."**

That proposal has now been reviewed and we are pleased to tell you it has met with the Committee's approval.

However:
Please note the following comments from our reviewers;

Reviewer One:

Approved as is.

Reviewer Two:
Minor Revisions

- Consider whether the recording of the interview needs to be kept for that long, or whether you can delete the recording once data have been transcribed and checked. I would recommend the latter.

- Please include details in relation to how participants can withdraw the consent following participation (e.g., by contacting the researcher).

- In the information sheet please inform participants that they do not have to answer any questions that they do not wish to answer.

- Please include an additional item in the consent to address the fact that they interviews will be audio recorded.

- The consent form states: "I give permission for my data from this study to be shared with other researchers provided that my anonymity is completely protected". Please specify

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what you mean by data. If this includes audio recording then such data may not be classed as anonymous. Consider replacing 'data' with interview transcripts.

Final responsibility for ethical conduct of your research rests with you or your supervisor. The Codes of Practice setting out these responsibilities have been published by the British Psychological Society and the University Research Ethics Committee. If you have any concerns whatever during the conduct of your research then you should consult those Codes of Practice. The Committee should be informed immediately should any participant complaints or adverse events arise during the study.

Independently of the Ethics Committee procedures, supervisors also have responsibilities for the risk assessment of projects as detailed in the safety pages of the University web site. Ethics Committee approval does not alter, replace, or remove those responsibilities, nor does it certify that they have been met.

Yours sincerely



Professor Stephen Jackson
Chair, Ethics Committee

Appendix 16. Parent Interview Schedule

1. How did your educational experiences inform the way you related to your child and their schooling?

2. What was your approach to keeping your child resilient?

3. What did you think about the way the school responded to experiences of your child?