Kent Academic Repository

Thomas, Dave S.P. (2022) *An investigation into the cultural sensitivity of the curriculum: Its impact on students' engagement in higher education.* Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) thesis, University of Kent,.

Downloaded from

https://kar.kent.ac.uk/94817/ The University of Kent's Academic Repository KAR

The version of record is available from

https://doi.org/10.22024/UniKent/01.02.94817

This document version

UNSPECIFIED

DOI for this version

Licence for this version

CC BY (Attribution)

Additional information

Versions of research works

Versions of Record

If this version is the version of record, it is the same as the published version available on the publisher's web site. Cite as the published version.

Author Accepted Manuscripts

If this document is identified as the Author Accepted Manuscript it is the version after peer review but before type setting, copy editing or publisher branding. Cite as Surname, Initial. (Year) 'Title of article'. To be published in *Title of Journal* , Volume and issue numbers [peer-reviewed accepted version]. Available at: DOI or URL (Accessed: date).

Enquiries

If you have questions about this document contact ResearchSupport@kent.ac.uk. Please include the URL of the record in KAR. If you believe that your, or a third party's rights have been compromised through this document please see our Take Down policy (available from https://www.kent.ac.uk/guides/kar-the-kent-academic-repository#policies).

University of Kent

An investigation into the cultural sensitivity of the curriculum: Its impact on students' engagement in higher education

by

Dave S.P. Thomas MSc, BSc Hons

A dissertation undertaken under the auspices of the Centre for the Study of Higher Education and submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of University of Kent for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Higher Education

Supervisor: Professor Kathleen M. Quinlan

Supervisory Chair: Professor Toni Williams

February 2022

Abstract

Imperatives to eliminate racial inequalities in UK higher education (HE) have led to calls for diversification of curricula. Qualitative evidence is growing about ethnic minority students' perceptions of their curricula and its impact on them. Yet, there are no specific quantitative instruments to facilitate larger-scale evaluation of curricular diversification and its impact on students. In this study, I examined the relationship between university students' perceptions of the cultural sensitivity of their curriculum and their engagement, as measured by students' interactions with their teachers and their interest in their programme of study. To do so, a new set of four Culturally Sensitive Curriculum Scales (CSCS) was conceptualised and developed, making a significant, original conceptual and methodological contribution. An ethnically diverse sample (N=262) rated the cultural sensitivity of the curriculum of their programme of study, their interactions with teachers, and their interest. Ethnic minority students (N=157) perceived their curriculum as less culturally sensitive on all four dimensions of the CSCS, reported fewer academic interactions with teachers, and had lower levels of interest than White students (N=100). Each of the four Culturally Sensitive Curriculum Scales was significantly related to academic interactions with teachers and to interest. Regression analyses showed that all dimensions of cultural sensitivity mediated effects of ethnicity on interactions with teachers. Two dimensions of cultural sensitivity (Diversity Represented and Challenge Power) mediated effects of ethnicity on interest. Therefore, ensuring curricula are diverse and critical may support minority ethnic students' engagement and, in turn, may contribute to reducing achievement gaps. Further implications are discussed.

Dedication

I express eternal gratitude for the opportunity to embark on this PhD journey, a journey that was never part of my original plans, but one that has given me a voice and a platform to speak.

> And when we speak, we are afraid, our words will not be heard, nor welcomed, but when we are silent, we are still afraid… So it is better to speak, remembering, we were never meant to survive. (Lorde 1978, pp. 31-32).

This work is dedicated to the Black, racially minoritized, socially deprived and marginalised people who have the aptitude, appetite, skills and abilities to benefit from higher education, but were never afforded the opportunity. The ones whose perspectives are often muted and/or erased. The ones who have been fighting on arrival and continue to fight for survival.

To my dear mother, Merle Doreen Thomas, YOU inspire me! You instilled in me the fundamental principles of labour, service and gratitude. It is upon these fundamental principles that I have laboured tirelessly to ensure that this work can serve students whose voices are often subdued, and educators who struggle to develop inclusive learning environments that can benefit all students, particularly the most marginalized, underserved and disenfranchised, to whom I extend sincere gratitude. To my father Henry Emmanuel Thomas, you were not here to travel on this journey with me, but I am comforted by the thought that you would have travelled with me and are extremely proud of my achievements.

The importance of my family is not to be underestimated – my A Team. To my wife Shauna, who has been on this journey from inception supporting me every step of the way and believing in me, even when I didn't believe in myself. For your love and generosity and for always being my second set of eyes, even when my errors became

invisible to me. YOU inspire me! To my children Malik and Deja, YOU both inspire me to aspire to go beyond my horizons. I see you both. I see your passion, I see your ambitions. You serve as constant reminders of why this work is important – why the struggle for a better tomorrow is worth it. To my brothers Brian and Craig and my champion sister Andrea. YOU inspire me!

Ubuntu – I am because we are!

Acknowledgements

I owe a significant debt of gratitude to my supervisor Professor Kathleen M. Quinlan. I would like to thank you for believing in me and allowing me to stand on your shoulders. I thank you for your patience in imparting your immense knowledge, your generosity in providing constructive, thorough feedback, for providing critical analysis and technical advice. Thank you for 'seeing' me. For your authenticity and for providing me with the space and time to grow. YOU inspire me!

I would also like to express my sincere appreciation and gratitude to Professor Toni Williams. YOU inspire me! You volunteered to supervise me before I could even ask. That meant and still mean a lot to me, and serves as a constant reminder of your belief in me. This thesis would not have come to fruition without your expert guidance and support.

Dr Lavinia Mitton, your critical guidance has been fundamental to my development as a researcher. From the presentation of my proposal to my submission review, your unerring and impartial support has served to promote reflection on action, reflection in action and stimulate reflection for action. YOU inspire me!

I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to the entire research community at the University of Kent's Centre for the Study of Higher Education for all your support. I was lucky to benefit from that principled space to test and share my ideas with trusted colleagues.

I would also like to acknowledge the following friends and colleagues and express my gratitude for their support, guidance and encouragement throughout my PhD journey: Dr Carlton Brown, Professor Jason Arday, Professor Robbie Shilliam, Professor Lez Henry, Professor Marcia Wilson, Professor Paul Phillips, The Late Dame Jocelyn Anita Barrow, Marika Sherwood, Professor Sir Hilary Beckles, Professor Kevin Hylton, Professor Olivette Otele, Professor Sir Geoff Palmer, Professor Jim Spickard, Professor

Heidi Mirza, Sheree Palmer, Nathan Ghann, Dr Deborah Husbands, Dr Jo Collins, Professor Jim Spickard, Dr Dina Zoe Bellugi, Annette Hayton, Dr Claire Hurley, Professor Khalilah Johnson, Dr Michelle Grue, Dr Frank Kronenberg, Justine Rush, Dr Jen Leigh, Dr Edd Pitt, Dr Julia Hope, Dr Tom Parkinson, Dr Barbara Adewumi, Mr Francis Samra, Dr Afroditi Pina, Vanisha Jassal, Dr Bridget Ngandu, Mr Phil Poole, Rayya Ghul, Jeannette Head, Dr Lindy-Ann Blaze Alfred and Dr Suhraiya Jivraj.

I would also like to acknowledge the immense contribution of Professor Reinhard Pekrun who provided valuable expert advice on instrumentation and data analysis.

Most significantly, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the students who participated in the research, without whose completion of the survey, there would be no data. Specifically, I would like to thank the members of the University of Kent African and Caribbean Society, the University of Kent Islamic Society and the Kent Caribbean Union.

Thanks to all who have contributed to the success of this project and countless others who have helped me along the way – omission of your name does not reflect the gratitude that I feel for your contribution.

Table of Contents

Introduction *1*

1.1 Aims of the Research 1

1.2 Research Questions 1

1.3 Research Origins 2

1.4 Definition of Key Terms 4

1.4.1 Race 4

1.4.2 Racism 7

1.4.3 Black 9

1.4.4 White 10

1.4.5 Whiteness 11

1.4.6 Ethnicity 12

1.4.7 BAME 13

1.5 Research Background and Context 15

1.6 Structure of the Thesis 20

Literature Review *22*

2.1 Introduction 22

2.2 Purpose and Scope 23

2.3 Major Theoretical Perspectives on Student Engagement 24

2.3.1 Behavioural Perspective 27

2.3.2 Psychological Perspective 28

2.3.3 Socio-Cultural Perspective 30

2.3.4 Holistic Perspective 32

2.4 Interaction with Teachers 34

2.4.1 Campus Climate 36

2.5 Interest for Engagement 38

2.5.1 Situational Interest ... 39

2.5.2 Individual Interest ... 42

2.6 BAME student's Experience of the HE Curriculum – the 'Experience Gap' ... 46

2.7 The Curriculum ... 54

2.7.1 Prescriptive definitions of Curriculum ... 55

2.7.2 Descriptive definitions of Curriculum ... 56

2.7.3 Types of Curricula ... 57

2.8 The Degree Awarding Gap ... 61

Conceptual Framework ... 70

3.1 Introduction ... 70

3.2 Critical Race Theory ... 70

3.3 QuantCrit ... 74

3.4 The Culturally Engaging Campus Environments Model ... 76

Key Theoretical Constructs ... 79

3.5 Culturally Sensitive Curricula ... 79

3.6 Dimensions of the Culturally Sensitive Curricula Scales (CSCS) ... 81

3.7 Interaction with teachers ... 85

3.8 Interest ... 86

Methodology ... 88

4.1 Introduction ... 88

4.2 Research Objectives and Questions ... 91

4.3 Researcher Positionality ... 92

4.4 Research Design ... 95

4.4.1 Research Philosophy ... 95

4.4.2 Positivism ... 96

4.4.3 Interpretivism ... 98
4.4.4 Pragmatist ... 99
4.4.5 Research Philosophy Underpinning This Study ... 100
4.4.6 CRT as a transformative worldview ... 101
4.5 Research Methods ... 103
4.6 Data Collection Methods ... 104
4.6.1 Online surveys ... 104
4.6.2 Face-to-face surveys ... 105
4.6.3 Sampling ... 106
4.7 Instrumentation ... 110
4.8 Data Analysis ... 112
4.9 Ethical Deliberations ... 114
4.9.1 Informed Consent ... 116
4.9.2 Non-Maleficence and Beneficence ... 116
Results ... 118
5.1 Introduction ... 118
5.2 Research Objectives and Questions ... 118
5.3 Evolution of the CSCS ... 120
5.3.1 Qualitative Piloting ... 120
5.3.2 Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) ... 121
5.3.3 Principal Component Analysis (PCA) ... 122
5.3.4 Reliability Analysis ... 135
5.3.5 Perceptions of Cultural Sensitivity ... 138
5.3.6 Academic Interactions with Teachers (AIT) ... 139
5.3.7 Correlations Among Study Variables ... 140
5.3.8 Cultural Sensitivity of Curricula and Academic Interactions with Teachers ... 141
5.3.9 Interest – Relations between study variables ... 144
Discussion ... 148

6.1 Introduction 148

6.2 Main Research Questions 150

6.3 The Key Findings of the Study 150

6.4 Conceptualising Dimensions of Culturally Sensitive Curricula 152

6.4.1 Diversity Represented 158

6.4.2 Positive Portrayals 159

6.4.3 Challenge Power 161

6.4.4 Inclusive Classroom Interactions 162

6.5 Differences Between BAME and White Student's Perceptions of the Curricula 163

6.6 Whiteness of the curriculum: Its effect on students' interaction with teachers 165

6.7 The Whiteness of the Curriculum and its Effect on Students' Interest 166

6.8 Limitations of the Research 167

6.9 Implications for Practice 170

6.9.1 Implications for Instruction 170

6.10 Implications for Research 176

6.10.1 Counter Stories in Support of Research and Evaluation 177

6.10.2 Enhancing Quality of Teaching 178

6.10.3 Developing Training for Researchers 178

6.10.4 Exploring Cultural Sensitivity of Learning Environments Beyond Curricula 179

6.10.5 Informing Interventions That Focus on Reforming Curricula. 180

6.11 Directions for Future Research 181

6.12 Original Contribution to the Field 185

6.13 Contribution to the Researcher's Personal Development 187

Conclusions 193

References 198

Appendix A – Culturally Sensitive Curricula Scale 245

Appendix B – Culturally Sensitive Curricula Scale (CSCS) Final *251*

Appendix C – Ethics Application *258*

Appendix D – Publications and Presentations *267*

List of Tables

Table 1 – Culturally Sensitive Curriculum Scale: Initial Constructs ... 84

Table 2 – Culturally Sensitive Curricula Scale Items and Constructs (Beta version) ... 124

Table 3 – Total variance explained ... 125

Table 4 – Scree plot ... 126

Table 5 – Output from Parallel Analysis (24-item solution) ... 127

Table 6 – Comparison of eigenvalues from PCA and criterion values from parallel analysis (24 item solution) ... 127

Table 7 – Pattern Matrix for 24 item solution ... 128

Table 8 – Items deleted following PCA of 24 item version ... 129

Table 9 – Total Variance Explained (19-item Solution) ... 130

Table 10 – Scree Plot (19-item solution) ... 131

Table 11 – Output from Parallel Analysis (19-item solution) ... 132

Table 12 – Comparison of eigenvalues from PCA and criterion values from parallel analysis (19 item solution) ... 133

Table 13 – Pattern and Structure Matrix for PCA with Oblimin rotation of four factor 19 item solution CSCS Items ... 133

Table 14 – Validated Culturally Sensitive Curricula Scales (with constructs) ... 135

Table 15 – Item Total Correlations for 19-Item CSCS ... 136

Table 16 - Independent Samples T-test for CSCS - Ethnicity (BAME vs White Students) ... 139

Table 17 – Pearson Product-Moment Correlations for the Study Variables ... 140

Table 18 – Effects of Ethnicity on Academic Interaction with Teachers (AIT): Mediation by Cultural Sensitivity of Curriculum ... 143

Table 19 – Effects of Ethnicity on Interest: Mediation by Cultural Sensitivity of Curriculum ... 146

List of Figures

Figure 1 – The four phases of Interest development 42

Figure 2 – Conceptual Framework 79

Figure 3 – Evolution of the Culturally Sensitive Curricula Scales 137

Figure 4 – Four Pillars of Culturally Sensitive Curricula... 137

An investigation into the cultural sensitivity of the curriculum: Its impact on students' engagement in higher education

Word count: 71,260

Introduction

> Controlling for other factors which impact on attainment, we find that ethnicity is still statistically significant in explaining attainment in HE (higher education); students from minority ethnic communities… are found to be less likely to achieve a better degree than White UK and Irish students … at all levels of attainment. The attainment gap remains the largest for Black Caribbean, Black African and Chinese students. (Broecke and Nicholls 2007, 16:19).

1.1 Aims of the Research

This thesis explores students' perceptions of the cultural sensitivity of higher education (HE) curricula. It examines students' perceptions of the cultural sensitivity of their curriculum, whether and to which extent the cultural (in)sensitivity of their curriculum poses barriers to their engagement (as indicated by two engagement variables – students' interaction with teachers on academic-related matters (AIT), and students' interest in their program of study).

1.2 Research Questions

The research questions in particular and this research project in general are of relevance to faculty, students and staff who research, teach and study in HE. It is also of importance to: senior leaders in the education sector; diversity and inclusion practitioners; in shaping educational policy; to those who are interested in curriculum development and design; and as general information to the wider society at large. The research questions that are presented here aims to fill the gaps contained within literature, advance scholarship, and as a catalyst to investigate the cultural sensitivity of curricula and the extent to which the cultural insensitivity of the HE curricula pose barriers to

students' interaction with teachers and interest in their program of study. This thesis aims to address the following questions:

a) To what extent do students perceive the curricula as culturally sensitive? Does this vary between White and racially minoritized students?
b) To what extent does the "whiteness" of the curriculum affect racially minoritized students' interaction with teachers?
c) To what extent does the "whiteness" of the curriculum affect racially minoritized students' interest in their subject during university?
d) Which aspects of culturally sensitive curricula support students' interaction with teachers?
e) Which aspects of culturally sensitive curricula support students' interest?

1.3 Research Origins

Participation in HE in the UK has grown since the 1960s. Since then, there has been a considerable amount of research exploring differential outcomes in the experiences between Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) students (Austen, 2020; Neves and Hewitt, 2021; Thomas, 2012a; Trowler, 2010;UUK, 2019) and persistent, pervasive inequalities in graduate outcomes within UK higher education institutions (Berry and Loke, 2011; Broecke and Nicholls, 2007; Connor *et al.,* 2003; Mcduff *et al.* 2018; Miller, 2016; Mountford-Zimdars *et al.,* 2017; Richardson, 2015: 2018; Singh, 2011. Consequently, the motivation behind this research emanated from my interest in the ontological and epistemological orientations of the HE curricula in the UK, and patterns of engagement by racially minoritized students who engage with these curricula. This came as a result of my desire to challenge prevailing deficit paradigms (Bloom et al., 1965) in literature and pedagogical practices, and their role in shaping the educational experiences and outcomes of racially minoritized students in UK HE. My interest also

stems from experiences and encounters in HE as a learner, educator, practitioner and a parent. I am convinced that despite the corpus of literature that suggests otherwise, racially minoritized students are capable of academic excellence and that structural inequalities and hostile environments presents impediments and barriers to them achieving academic excellence and satisfying educational experiences.

Having completed both an undergraduate and a master's degree, I previously worked as a third space professional (Whitchurch, 2015) in several student-facing and management roles in HE for over a decade. Subsequently, I have transitioned to a senior advisory role in a UK HE member-led, sector owned charity (Advance HE) that works with institutions and higher education globally to improve HE staff, students and society by addressing systemic inequalities and advancing education to meet the needs of students and society. Within these roles, I have had the privilege to interact with thousands of students from a variety of disciplines and higher education institutions (HEIs). Equally, I have collaborated and interacted with a significant number of faculty and professional services staff from a number of HEIs. Additionally, through various professional roles, interactions with faculty, students and professional services staff, I have also engaged with contemporary dialogues, discourses, policies, processes and practices in relation to student attainment and experiences in HE. Through disclosure of qualitative accounts and engagement with literature, I gleaned that there were differences in experiences between White students in UK HEIs and their counterparts from BAME backgrounds; the disparity was starkest for Black students. These understandings corroborated with institutional and sectoral data which is packaged and referred to as the 'degree awarding gap' (Advance HE, 2020a; UUK, 2019). What also became evident was that there was a consensus (particularly among BAME students and staff) that the cultural insensitivity (I also refer to this as the "whiteness" of the curriculum) of the curriculum (what is taught and how it is taught) may catalyse and sustain racialised

structural inequalities in HE, and that these structural inequalities were the main drivers of disparities in student experiences and outcomes. Most notably, I acknowledge that the majority of BAME students (particularly Black students within this cohort) were ambitious, motivated and were able to envision a better version of themselves. It also became evident that there were no race-based quantitative instruments to facilitate research on and analysis of the relationship between the cultural sensitivity of the HE curricula and key engagement variables (e.g., students' interaction with teachers and their interest in their program of study). This then became the impetus and basis for this study.

This research can be considered as a cathartic exercise grounded in the Afrocentric principles of Ma'at – Utulivu, Ukweli and Uhaki (loosely translated from Swahili to mean, 'the quest for justice, truth and harmony'). In the context of this study the research exercise is in harmony with my pursuit for social justice (particularly racial justice) and truth with the aim of enhancing the rich tapestry of knowledge in redressing structural inequalities and creating a fairer society.

1.4 Definition of Key Terms

The broad classifications used within this thesis are aligned with those used in the UK HE sector for collating, analysing and reporting student data. These categorisations are not without complexities and critique due to variations in their use, as they are often conflated, used interchangeably, or misappropriated. Therefore, in order to maintain clarity, it is important to establish clear definitions of the key terms, as used within this thesis.

1.4.1 Race

Stuart Hall describes race as "one of those major or master concepts (the masculine form is deliberate) that organize the great classificatory systems of difference that operate in

human societies. Race in this sense, is the centrepiece of hierarchical systems that produces difference” (Hall, 2017b, p. 32).

The concept of race has had a long and controversial history, with the first systematic research concerning the racial origins and classification of humankind dating back to several 16th and 17th century treatises and the establishment of chattel slavery, which resulted in the stratification of people into three major groups: European Whites, Native Americans [Indians] and Africans [negroes]. The contentious term race can be contextualised in three primary ways: 1) biologically, 2) anthropologically, and 3) historically. Race-based societies perceive designated racial groups as discrete and exclusive, defined by certain physical characteristics. For example, skin colour, hair texture, eye shape and other features. They assumed that each race has distinctive cultural behaviours and intellectual abilities linked to biology. These explanations assume that both physical features and behaviour are innate and inherited. However, race is not genetically discrete, not scientifically meaningful nor reliably measured. Therefore, biological claims that accounts for racial differences can be discredited.

Anthropologists and geneticists have concluded that humans are 99.99% alike, because there are a small amount of real genetic difference among humans (0.01%) (Littlefield et al., 1982). There are no neutral conceptualisations of race in science, nor have any of the definitions ever satisfactorily fully explained the phenomenon of race (Smedley, 1998). Race is a socially constructed category with an inclusion criterion that changes over time (Ignatiev, 1996).

Race and racism are problematic in HE and society in general and should not be used or conceptualised without an understanding of its impact in shaping the experiences of people who are racialised. Therefore, throughout this thesis, I will use the term race in a similar manner to Professor Kevin Hylton, as a starting point for a broader discussion around the impact of the racialised nature of the curriculum and environmental features

of students' program of study on their experiences and outcomes in UK HEIs. According to Professor Kevin Hylton:

> The term race is significant for me not just as a socially constructed concept but as a significant ontological truth, which is why I use it in scare quotes. What that does is to signpost that it should not be read nor used uncritically. (Hylton, 2018, p.3).

Race must be understood as a paradox. It is both everywhere and nowhere. Similar to Fine and colleagues, I recognise the dilemma of "destabilising the notion of race theoretically" while acknowledging "the lived presence of race" (Fine, Weseen and Wong, 2003: p.176). The American Tennis champion Arthur Ashe declared; "I am almost always aware of race, alert to its power as an idea, sensitive to its nuances in the world" (Ashe, 1993, p. 138). Markus (2008) conceptualises race in terms of history and power by focusing on its social, historical and cultural dimensions. She posited that race is:

> … a dynamic set of historically derived and institutionalized ideas and practices that (1) sorts people into ethnic groups according to perceived physical and behavioral human characteristics; (2) associates differential value, power, and privilege with these characteristics and establishes a social status ranking among the different groups; and (3) emerges (a) when groups are perceived to pose a threat (political, economic, or cultural) to each other's world view or way of life; and/or (b) to justify the denigration and exploitation (past, current, or future) of, and prejudice toward, other groups. (p. 654).

According to Professor Charles Mills:

> …in a racially structured polity, the only people who can find it psychologically possible to deny the centrality of race are those who are

> racially privileged, for whom race is invisible precisely because the world is structured around them, whiteness as the ground against which the figures of other races – those who, unlike us, as raced – appear. (Mills, 2014, p.76).

Throughout this thesis, my understandings of the concept race departs from narrow, nationalistic or essentialist definitions, towards an appreciation of racialised intersections (Crenshaw, 1995). I therefore recognise race as a "floating unstable fiction and fundamental, unerasable aspect of biography and social experience[s]" (Fine, Weseen and Wong, 2003; p.174), that bears profound consequences for people who are racialised. Fundamentally, it is important to note that race is the child of racism, not the father (Coates, 2015), hence race may be understood as a set of socially constructed categories constructed specifically to stratify and segregate different cultural groups.

1.4.2 Racism

If we accept that race is a set of socially constructed categories that serves to differentiate cultural groups and that race was created to legitimise racial inequality (see Racial Formations by Omi and Winant, 2002), then racism may be seen as an ideological facilitator of race (i.e., a set of beliefs that justifies or explains some predetermined or actual social contract) that promotes and/or justifies subjugation of one race in order to elevate another. According to Audrey Lorde (1992), racism may be defined as the "belief in the inherent superiority of one race over all others and thereby the right to dominance" (p. 496).

Racism may be seen to be concerned with institutional power and is shaped by political pressures. According to Essed (1991, p.44) "racism may be described as both 'structure' and 'process'". Structure, in the sense that subjugation, dominance and discrimination are reproduced through laws, rules and regulations; and process in that it is endemic and inextricably interwoven into the fabric of ever-changing economic,

political and societal conditions and may be internalised through socialisation. Professor Ibram X. Kendi in his monumental (2019) *How to be an antiracist* simply and elegantly defines racism as "a marriage of racist policies and racist ideas that produces and normalizes racial inequities" (p. 18). Racism may be manifested in what Professor Ibram X. Kendi calls a powerful collection of racist policies (i.e., written and unwritten laws, rules, procedures, processes, regulations and guidelines that govern people). Kendi posits that "racial inequity is when two or more racial groups are not standing on approximately equal footing" (p. 18). Racism should not be limited to a perpetrator perspective, as this treats "the exercise of racial power as rare and aberrational rather than as systemic and ingrained" (Delgado, 1998, p. 923) existing in both individuals and institutional/societal structures. Racism in its more subtly form may equate to "conduct or words or practices which advantage or disadvantage people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin (MacPherson, 1999, p.41). It is more damaging in its more overt form and can be enacted institutionally, as theorised in the landmark Stephen Lawrence inquiry as:

> the collective failure of an organization to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their color, culture, or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behavior which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping which disadvantage [racially minoritized] people. (Macpherson 1999, para 6.34)

Therefore, throughout this thesis, I use the term racism in a manner similar to that of Professor Ibram X. Kendi (2019). I use the term racism in relation to disparate practice(s) or outcome(s), action(s) or policy(ies), (whether deliberate or inadvertent) that produces racialised inequalities that prevents people from standing on equal footing due to their racialised status. While I acknowledge individual acts of discrimination, the term 'institutional racism/ structural racism', or racist policies (according to Professor Ibram

X. Kendi) is central to this thesis, as it enables me to consider the variety of ways in which the policies, culture, practices and praxis enacted within UK HEIs interact to shape the learning and engagement experiences of racially minoritized students.

1.4.3 Black

I use the terms 'Black' and 'Blackness' throughout this thesis in relation to a cultural stance, as opposed to a political one (Cole, 1993; Hall, 1991; Maylor, 2009; Mirza, 1997). Historically, the highly criticised British concept of 'political Blackness' stretched back from the late 1970s as an umbrella term and a politically and culturally constructed category that encompassed anyone who was not White. For example, people with a common experience of marginalisation, discrimination, and/ or those with family origins in Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and its diaspora (Maylor, 2009). Political Blackness may thus be considered a fluid identity which cannot be grounded in transcultural or transcendental categories, and evokes references to dimensions of class, gender, sexuality and ethnicity when discussed. This bears similarities to the use of the term 'Black' by Nirmal Punwar (2004) in reference to people with familial links with the African and South Asian diaspora. This thesis is not concerned with 'political Blackness.' Arguably, the term 'political Blackness' is limited in conceptualising the lived experiences and cultural nuances of people from racially minoritized groups who are most marginalised and underserved (e.g., people of African and/or Caribbean heritage).

Therefore, unlike Uvanney Maylor (2009) and Nirmal Punwar (2004), I do not use the concept of 'political Blackness' to conceptualise the experiences of 'Black' in this thesis. Rather, I use the term 'Black'[1] throughout this thesis in relation to people who would generally self-identify as having family origins as – at least in part – from Africa/or the Caribbean. Of equal importance, the term 'Black' is used within this thesis akin to its use as a descriptor for statistical purposes. In UK census categories, this would include

‘Black Caribbean’, ‘Black African’, ‘Mixed White and Black Caribbean’, and any other ‘Black’ group.

1.4.4 White

The development of the White[2] identity by Europeans promotes a perception of human difference and superiority (Bonnett, 1998). According to Bonnett (1998), historically, at the time when the racialised grouping White came into vogue, the White identity was exclusive to the British and Northern Europeans, who were the colonial powers in that era. Theodore Allen contends that an early and unsuccessful colonial revolt of servants and poor freedmen, precipitated by the Bacon’s Rebellion in 1676 served as the basis for the “invention” of the White race (Allen, 1997). Racial categories have also been developed as a philosophy among some Europeans as “a way to rationalise the conquest and brutal treatment of [indigenous] … populations, and especially the retention and perpetuation of slavery for imported Africans” (Smedley, 1998, p. 694). Since then, this conceptualisation of racialised classifications such as White has seen the maintenance of what Omi and Winant (1994) calls the *racial project.*[3] The White subject is usually identified through physical markers such as hair texture, skin colour, nose shapes, or social markers such as culture or language. Arguably, people racialised as belonging to the White group are seen as the normative racial group, undiluted in statistical classifications, according to the Office for National Statistics in the UK (Office for National Statistics, 2020), encompassing persons having their origins in Europe, North Africa and The Middle East. According to bell hooks, “the [White identity] has also become [an unspoken norm], the ruler by which everyone else is measured” (hooks, 1992, p. 97).

To become White is to be unmarked as racial ‘other’ or to lose the stigma of otherness; arguably, being White is equivalent to normalcy and respectability. Fanon (1986) commented on the non-recognition of personhood of people racialised as other, or

those assigned to minority status. According to Fanon, people who are identified as deviating from the norm often become drafted into a zone of *non-being*. Discerning, the socially constructed racialised category White from the mythical biologically constructed category White is particularly important in understanding White privilege. Although having a White identity may be articulated as a position of privilege, it is important to recognise that there are many White people who are marginalised and pathologized as not being fully White. They are not granted the full 'property' of whiteness. For example, 'White working class', or people categorised as 'White trash' or 'chav' (Hartigan, 1997; Tyler, 2008; Wray, 2006). It is also important to note that some groups, for example, Irish, Italians and Jewish immigrant groups have not always been granted the social status of 'White' (Brodkin, 1998; Ignatiev, 1996; Roediger, 2005). Subsequently, the 'White' classification is disaggregated for statistical purposes in the UK, according to the Office for National Statistics.

Therefore, throughout this thesis I will refer to 'White' as a statistical category, similar to its use in national census in the UK (Office for National Statistics, n.d.), and in European and Anglo-American educational research. Importantly, I also use White in relation to its social construction.

1.4.5 Whiteness

Whiteness can be considered as the:

> manipulated triangulation of political, economic, social and cultural capital [and]… glorification of European customs and beliefs… Whiteness has been constructed as the superior antithesis of 'Blackness' which it seeks to degrade… Despite its instability, [whiteness] functions as a place of privilege. Whiteness is imperialism of the everyday… Whiteness in the Black imagination is often a representation of terror. (Henry, 2007, pp. 55-96)

Arguably, whiteness may be perceived as a currency that prequalifies the White subject for a set of privileges (political, economic, social, cultural) across a range of contexts (McIntosh, 1992). White privilege is a system of opportunities and benefits conferred upon people simply because they are White (Delgado & Stefancic, 1997). Unacknowledged White privilege helps to maintain racism. Conducting research relating to race requires an understanding of whiteness and its status in relation to policy, politics, culture and practice. According to Turney, Law and Phillips (2002) for many HEIs, "the 'whiteness' of the institution goes unnoticed and is simply rationalized into a day-to-day perception of 'normality'" (p. 23). Whiteness can be seen as a superstructure (Thomas, 2020a) which is employed to promote/maintain social domination and subjugation; it is operationalised through White supremacy. White supremacy may be defined as:

> a political, economic and cultural system in which Whites overwhelmingly control power and material resources, conscious and unconscious ideas of white superiority and entitlement are widespread, and relations of white dominance and non-white subordination are daily re-enacted across a broad array of institutions and social settings. (Ainsley, 1989:1024).

Whiteness indicate a particular political and legal structure rooted in the ideology of White European supremacy and the global impact of colonialism. Therefore, throughout this thesis I refer to 'whiteness' in a similar manner to Frances Lee Ainsley (1989:1024) as a political stance (i.e., White supremacy).

1.4.6 Ethnicity

The term ethnicity is a socially constructed identifier which is often used to describe shared culture. It generally refers to cultural differences, practices, traditions, values and beliefs and sense of solidarity (Hutchinson & Smith, 1996; Omi & Winant, 1994). The term ethnicity is often conjoined with race and can be seen as phrases that share some

similarities in definition; it should not be confused with nationality or migration status and, like race, has been subject to historical change. This thesis is concerned with the social construction of race and ethnicity, rather than their biological construction.

Ethnicity is a multifaceted, changing phenomenon, which has been measured in various ways over time (Ignatiev, 1996; Ledesma and Calderón, 2015; Omi and Winant, 1986: 1994: 2002; Office for National Statistics, 2020; United States Census Bureau 2019). For example, children of post-war migrants to Britain may refer to themselves as 'Black British', a term which serves to identify them as having been born in Britain, of African or Caribbean descendants (Olusoga, 2017). Other people identify with the ethnic category 'African-Caribbean', which denotes people of African descent who are of Caribbean heritage. It is important to note that there are discrepancies between people's self-identified ethnic identification and those imposed on people, as in the case of the National Census (ONS, 2011). National datasets like the census are not without shortcomings, particularly in understanding how racially minoritized communities have been historically categorised and analysed, but when critically analysed, are useful in helping us to understand the changing demographics over time.

Within this thesis, I am primarily concerned with the ethnic identifiers BAME and White. I acknowledge the presence of multiple cultures and nationalities that are encapsulated within the socially constructed group BAME and the limitations of the use of this terminology. I also appreciate that this classification has been imposed on people as opposed to them identifying in that way. I use the terms BAME and White here not in a manner to perpetuate inequality, but rather for statistical purposes to illuminate inequality in line with their use by social researchers and in educational research.

1.4.7 BAME

The acronyms BAME and BME (acronyms for Black, Asian or minority ethnic and Black and minority ethnic groups) as used in the UK is often hotly contested and can be

seen as problematic because many individuals will not describe themselves using these terms, even though they are applied to them (Bunglawala, 2019; Joint Committee on Human Rights, 2020). In positioning people racialised as White as the dominant groups in society (in terms of possession of power, not statistically), the acronyms BAME or BME are commonly used in the UK to describe all ethnic minority groups (including White minorities such as, Gypsy, Roma and Irish Traveller), except the White British/English group. I recognise the limitations of and difficulties associated with social identifiers such as BAME and BME, particularly in the way that they inadvertently homogenise heterogeneous groups of people and disguise intercultural nuances and issues of super diversity (Vertovec, 2007). I also appreciate the extent to which the terms BAME/BME may perpetuate unequal power relations by positioning and categorising populations in relation to White as the unchallenged position. I acknowledge the inadequacies of the terms BAME and BME, particularly in its misuse for a collective of people facing racism and calls for non-White people globally to agree to one term (Adebisi, 2019). However, I contend that these categories can be useful in contextualising the understandings of socially defined groups, and can facilitate a more equitable approach to illuminating and redressing historical and current injustices. For example, in accounting for the amalgamation of *Pardo* (Brown) and *Preto* (Black) categories, Petrucelli (2007) argues that Brazil was better positioned to capture the experiences of individuals with similar contemporary experiences related to racism and discrimination [by unmasking] the obscure racial categories that have been hidden by dominant assertions of race neutrality and ambiguity.

I use the acronyms BAME, BME, and the terms racially minoritized and minority ethnic within this thesis according to categories used in UK HE (HESA, 2021b). Elsewhere, in other countries such as the USA and Canada, the terms ‘racially minoritized’, ‘minority ethnic’, ‘visible minorities’, or ‘people of colour’, are used in a

similar manner to describe Black, indigenous and other people of colour (BIPOC) who are racialised as non-Caucasian. Specifically, sometimes I use those social descriptors in this thesis in places where I want to show solidarity with those who are categorised 'outside of whiteness' in order to emphasise the impact of being exposed to and harmed by whiteness, racism, racialised inequality and the negative consequences of racialisation and racist action based on race thinking.

1.5 Research Background and Context

Globalisation and marketisation of education have reframed the milieu in which contemporary universities operate. Within the contemporary, neoliberal, market-driven higher education sector, inequalities in attainment and differences student experiences have become key issues for university leaders, faculty, professional services staff and students. Arguably, the structure and traditions of HE has facilitated the development and sustainment of systemic inequalities which have been woven into its architecture and socio-cultural fabric. Some commentators highlight a lack of accountability and failure to provide educational offerings, access to and development of knowledge that transcends generations, geography and social circumstances for an expanded, rather than an elite HE sector (Miller, 2016; Thomas and Arday 2021). Others bemoan the threat that marketization (uncapping of undergraduate student numbers) and subsequent diversity poses to the fundamental purposes, aims, values and ideals of authentic 'higher' education (Kant, 1798; Williams, 2016). These diverging views have stimulated discussions about whether or the extent to which universities are able to deliver public good in order to meet their corporate social responsibilities (HEFCE, n.d.; Thomas, 2018) and the presence racialised inequalities that disproportionately affect university's increasingly diverse communities.

In the midst of global protests against racial inequality sparked by the upsurge of racially motivated violence in societies (for example, the murder of George Floyd and

Breonna Taylor in 2020), and the coronavirus pandemic that has exposed inequalities that disproportionately affect members BAME groups in health, income, socio-economically and education (Blundell et al., 2021), universities have been forced to acknowledge and reconcile with systemic inequalities that prevail on campuses globally (Thomas & Arday, 2021). Prior to the pandemic, a range of inequalities in HE had become more salient. For example, underrepresentation of BAME staff at senior levels in decision-making positions (Advance HE, 2020b), hostile campus environments (Museus, 2014; UUK, 2019: 2020), the permanence of exclusive curricula (Douglas, Shockley and Toldson, 2020; Grue, 2021; Mheta, Nyangu Lungu and Govender, 2018; Peters, 2018; Thomas and Jivraj, 2020) and students' perceptions of unexplained factors that impact on their engagement and ability to achieve rewarding educational experiences (Austen, 2020; Neves & Hewitt, 2021).

A White Paper by the UK government in 2016 outlined plans to increase the number of students from BAME backgrounds entering UK universities by 20% by 2020 (Department for Business Innovation and Skills, 2016). To date, this has been achieved in part as proportionally, students from BAME backgrounds and students who identify as belonging to Black backgrounds in particular are entering UK higher education institutions year on year proportionally at a higher rate than any other demographic group (HESA, 2021b). The successes of access to UK HE for historically underrepresented and underserved groups is not reflected in their satisfaction in terms of their educational experiences (Neves & Hewitt, 2021), their academic outcomes (Advance HE, 2020a), continuation rates (Hillman, 2021), transition to graduate employment (HESA, 2021a), or transition to postgraduate studies (Williams et al., 2019). Equally, there is a severe demographic underrepresentation of professors as only approximately 155 are Black, of a total in excess of 23000; alarmingly, there are 35 female professors of Black heritage, as at March 2020 (UCU, 2020). Arguably, the

British educational system is based on the principle of meritocracy (Furlong & Cartmel, 2009), purporting a belief that the academic community evaluate and reward members on merit. Yet, some individuals consistently receive unequal outcomes in relation to others. Take for example, educational outcomes. UK HEIs are still faced with the persistent, pervasive problem of disparities in academic outcomes (i.e., the phenomenon of the 'degree awarding gap' (AKA the attainment gap)).[4] [5] Race has been proven to have a statistically significant and negative effect on educational attainment, even after controlling for the major contributing factors[6] (Broecke and Nicholls, 2007; Richardson, 2008: 2015; Singh, 2011); the picture becomes bleaker when distilled, demonstrating the greatest disparity in attainment between White and Black students (HESA, 2021b).

Obtaining a 'good degree' provides currency in the labour market, hence the degree awarding gap is detrimental to both the individual student and the economy (Bratti et al., 2005; Naylor et al., 2003). Research suggests that the causes of differences in student engagement and achievement may be due to associated factors such as the cultural insensitivity of the curriculum, students' sense of (un)belonging, culturally unengaging campus environments and students' experiences of curricula and pedagogy (Deci and Ryan, 1990; Broecke and Nicholls, 2007; Hidi and Renninger, 2006; Mountford-Zimdars *et al.,* 2015; Osterman, 2000 ; Peters, 2018; Stevenson, 2012; Thomas and Jivraj, 2020; Thomas and Arday, 2021; UUK, 2019). However, while the emphasis has been on racialised inequalities such as the degree awarding gap, it is imperative to investigate links earlier in the process. For example, whether, or the extent to which campus environments affect students' engagement, particularly students who are racialised as minorities (Museus, 2014). This provides impetus for the current study. Since the curricula is a key feature of the educational environment, I contend that the nature of the curricula affects students' engagement. Particularly, if students see themselves, their cultures, their histories and their cultural communities acknowledged,

affirmed and treated sensitively in the curricula, they may be more likely to be interested in and engaged with their studies and with their teachers.

Given the salience of positive educational outcomes, the Higher Education Policy Institute (HEPI) set out a number of policy recommendations to reduce racialised inequalities in HE (Dale-Rivas, 2019), including attending to the curriculum. The Office for Students in England, the regulatory body for all English higher education institutions have also established their priorities for the future (Dandridge, 2021), which adopts a focus on regulating quality and standards by focusing their regulatory efforts where students are most at risk (e.g., in achieving positive student outcomes and the delivery of high quality courses; and supporting access, succeeding in and progress from HE, and receiving quality academic experiences). HEIs are required to monitor and evaluate institutional directives and take requisite action in order to mitigate against and redress differential outcomes for its stakeholders (Race Relations (Amendment) Act, 2000); promote good relations between people through the Public Sector Equality Duties (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2015); and further, make reasonable adjustments to promote parity in outcomes where necessary (Equality Act, 2000, c158: c159). What is known about attainment in HE is largely based on statistical data. It is also known that structural racialised inequalities operate at varying levels (macro, meso and micro) (Mountford-Zimdars et al., 2015). There is plenty about higher education that can be improved, and as I have written elsewhere (Thomas, 2020c) universities must not let the pandemic and other inequalities overshadow racialised inequalities.

Calls to decolonise are not new. Nor have they gone uncontested whenever they have been made. This research was conducted in the shadows of public debates (some toxic, others transformational) and closed discussions about: the moral necessity and/or economic viability of decolonising universities for the betterment of student and staff experiences and advancement of equality and inclusivity; the size and scale of the

decolonising project; contestations about the meaning and constituents of decolonisation (as it relates to HE); and deliberations about how decolonisation should be enacted in practice. The need to recurate HE curricula and reform the university system is borne out of longstanding problems related to the structural/ moral integrity of universities that promote and sustain systems of institutional discrimination and racialised inequality. In its simplest form, the transformational process of decolonisation pivots on the disruption of unequal power structures that promote racialised inequality and the redistribution of power. Movements to decolonise the university as an inclusive, collaborative academic and intellectual endeavour has two sides. Firstly, they seek to critique the dominant Eurocentric academic model. For example, fighting against 'epistemic coloniality' – the production and maintenance of theories and practices that are primarily based on European traditions and ideologies that promotes and maintains inequality. Secondly, they attempt to reimagine what a more inclusive, less provincial university look like.[7] The decolonisation movement has become a home of hope for many who seek radical change in education. Largely, discourses about decolonisation and the movement to decolonise HE often invokes anxiety (Bakshi, 2021; Nagdee & Shafi, 2021) and unease among others (Long, 2008). However, decolonising the university in general and its curricula in particular "holds the potential to revamp tired courses, inspire disillusioned staff and equip students with the knowledge they need to face the modern world" (Liyanage, 2020, p. 58).

There has been a wealth of academic research, books and publications on the subject of decolonisation. Decolonisation is a multifaceted process. Meaningful engagement with decolonisation primarily warrants the reimagining curricula, optimising student engagement, addressing disparities in attainment and student experiences, honest reflection on unequal representation concurrently and promotion of culturally engaging campus environments. Engagement with multiple aspects of decolonisation is beyond the

scope of this project, due to its scale and size. Therefore, this thesis will concentrate on the reimagining curricula and its impact on student engagement as a single aspect of decolonisation. Instead of making direct reference to 'decolonising the curriculum', I will frame my assessment, analysis and reimagination of the curriculum through a cultural lens (investigating the cultural (in)sensitivity of the curriculum) as a means of opening a dialogue among different epistemic and ontological traditions. This thesis is anchored in social justice and as such, is deliberate in its intentions. It adopts a problem-solving orientation as opposed to a problem posing orientation.

The central focus of this study is to gain ontological insights into students' educational experiences as they relate to the UK HE environment. This study explores the relationship between culturally sensitive curricula and students' engagement on two measures of engagement – student's academic interaction with teachers (AIT) and individual interest in their program of study. The study interrogates all three levels of the HE infrastructure (Mountford-Zimdars et al., 2015) in order to understand the extent to which students, particularly those from BAME backgrounds perceive their curriculum as culturally insensitive, or not.

1.6 Structure of the Thesis

This thesis is divided into six chapters. Chapter 1 discusses the aims and origins of the research. It outlines the research questions and defines key concepts (as used in this research), such as race, racism and ethnicity, in establishing the research background and context. Importantly, this chapter presents the main argument upon which this thesis is based. Chapter 2 is a review of literature. It provides a synopsis of key literature relating to the HE curriculum in UK and its synergy with students' engagement and outcomes. The chapter embarks on a critical discussion of key concepts that are subsequently presented within the thesis. Chapter 3 is the conceptual framework section, which presents the central theoretical underpinnings that guides the research. The conceptual

framework that guides this research is based on an amalgamation of Critical Race Theory (hereafter referred to as CRT) and the emerging theory of interest. Chapter 4 outlines the research design, methodology and methods employed in conducting this research. It presents the philosophical underpinnings of the research as well as its epistemological and ontological orientations. Chapter 5 presents the results of the analysis of data that was collected throughout the research. Data were collected and processed in accordance with the methods outlined in Chapter 4. Chapter 6 embarks on a discussion of the analysis of the research data, before presenting an overall conclusion of the thesis. It also outlines the limitations of the research, presents suggestions for future research that may extend knowledge in relation to curricula development and student engagement, as well as highlights the researcher's original contribution to knowledge and scholarship.

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the review of research and literature in relation to the features of the educational environment in HE and the extent to which it impacts on students' educational experiences. This literature review is organised in the following way.

It begins by establishing the purpose and scope of the review, as this establishes the parameters within which this literature review is encapsulated. This research is concerned with two aspects of student engagement (students' interaction with teachers and their interest in their subject/ program of study), hence, a review of the major perspectives on student engagement follows next. There has been a longstanding association between interest, engagement and academic achievement (Hidi and Renninger, 2006; Harackiewicz *et al.,* 1997; Kahu and Nelson, 2018; Kahu, Nelson and Picton 2017; Renninger and Hidi, 2011). Therefore, a synopsis of the literature in relation to the theory of interest then follows. Discussions in UK universities (and globally) about the whiteness of the curriculum and its implications for student engagement and achievement have intensified in the recent past (Andrews, 2019; Arday, 2021; Ezaz, 2015; Kennedy, 2017; Newsinger, 2016; Mcduff *et al.,* 2018; UCL, 2017; UUK, 2019). In spite of these conversations advocating for recuration and expansion of the curriculum to embrace epistemologies and pedagogies from the global South (Thomas & Jivraj, 2020), commentators in support of the status quo have cited academic freedom as justification to maintain the curriculum in its current state, whereby accusing calls to diversify/decolonise the curriculum as 'cultural policing' (D'Ancona, 2016; Turner, 2018; Williams, 2017). With this in mind, a review the literature in relation to the contemporary understandings of the curriculum follows next. Penultimately, since

there has been an acknowledgement of a disparity in academic outcomes for students who engage in academic studies within HEIs globally, I will then examine and summarise the principal research that highlights the 'degree awarding gap'. Finally, the chapter will conclude with a summary and critique of the findings from the review of literature.

2.2 Purpose and Scope

The major objective of this study was to investigate students' perceptions of the whiteness of the curriculum and its implications on their educational experiences. The purpose of this chapter is to review literature, in order to summarise current understandings of how students' experiences are shaped through engagement with campus environments in UK HEIs (i.e., the curriculum, teachers and peers). This exploration is guided by Critical Race Methodology as a theoretical framework, because of its use as a tool to conduct and present research that illuminates and challenges structural inequalities (among others) in promoting social justice, through the articulation of the experiences and knowledges of racially minoritized groups (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). I will also draw on the emerging theory of Interest (Suzanne Hidi & Renninger, 2006), in order to gain an understanding of Interest development, in relation to its impact on students' engagement experiences and outcomes.

A considerable amount of literature has been published on the degree awarding gap (aka 'BME attainment gap'), exploring a plethora of causal factors (structural, behavioural, economic, social, political and cultural) at varying levels – macro, meso and micro. Despite this phenomenon being high on the agenda of HEIs and regulatory bodies, research findings in relation to this issue proves problematic and inconclusive, due to the complexity and multi-causal nature of this problem (Mountford-Zimdars et al., 2015; Singh, 2011). This is a 'wicked problem'[8] (Austen *et al.*, 2017: p. 1). The investigation of this problem requires a holistic approach that explores the intersections

of multiple factors that infringes upon students' engagement and overall experiences. Therefore, the first section of this literature review aims to illuminate the major perspectives in relation to student engagement.

2.3 Major Theoretical Perspectives on Student Engagement

The complex, multifaceted and widely researched construct of student engagement transcends many disciplines and theories of learning, including psychology, sociology, and cognitive development (Hamish Coates, 2007; McCormic et al., 2013). Most of the empirical work on student engagement has been conducted in the last decade, hence the meaning of the construct of student engagement has evolved over time (Kuh, 2009; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Arguably, there has also been a paucity of research on student engagement as it relates to students from racially minoritized groups. In the main, the exact nature of the construct of student engagement has provoked much debate with ambiguity in relation to its antecedents and its consequences (Kahu, 2013). In a quest to comprehend the phenomenon of student engagement, its antithesis should also be considered – 'alienation' (Mann, 2001); 'inertia, apathy, disillusionment or engagement in other pursuits' (Krause, 2005); 'poor quality engagement, superficial engagement' (Ramsden, 1992) and 'disaffection' (Skinner & Belmont, 1993). If a student is not engaged, then what are they? Engagement is seen as fundamental to the overall student learning experience and can be understood as a meta-construct, combining lines of research such as belonging, motivation and academic environment (Fredricks et al., 2004). This research is concerned with two aspects of student engagement – students' interaction with teachers on academic-related matters and students' interest in their subject/ program of study. According to Coates:

> [Student] engagement is seen to comprise salient aspects such as active and collaborative learning, participation in challenging academic

activities, formative communication with academic staff, involvement in enriching educational experiences, and feeling legitimated and supported by university learning communities. (Coates, 2007, p.122).

Historically, a sound body of literature has established robust correlations between educationally purposeful academic and non-academic activities and effective student learning and development – including satisfaction, persistence, social engagement, and academic achievement (Astin, 1984: 1993; Berger and Milem, 1999; Chickering and Gamson, 1987; Coates, 2007; Kuh, 1995; Pace, 1984; Pace, 1980; Pascarella and Terenzini, 2005; Terenzini and Pascareila, 1991). Student engagement has become the 'buzz phrase' due to its unequivocal connection with student attainment (Thomas, 2012b). Student engagement (both inside and outside the classroom) is not a unitary construct and may be seen as an umbrella term for a constellation of ideas that contextualises the quality of effort that students devote to participation in educationally effective practices; it is generally evaluated by measurable outcomes aimed at improving students' educational experience (Hu et al., 2008; Kuh et al., 2007).

As a broad construct, student engagement can be seen as a 'process and product' with its historical roots dating back to the 1930s with the seminal work by Ralph Tyler, in his exploration of the requirements of secondary school curriculum and its impact on college success. Tyler conducted 'service studies' that explored the amount of time students spent on their academic work and the implications on their learning (Merwin, 1969). Tyler's studies aimed to inform teaching and student retention at the Ohio State university. Building on the work of Ralph Tyler, Robert Pace further explored the concept of 'process and product' and his research showed that the 'quantity of effort' dedicated to the task, provides the measure of success; he emphasised the importance of measuring the quality of 'the process' (Robert Pace, 1984). Alexander Astin's (1984) developmental theory for college students posited that "the amount of physical and

psychological energy that the student devoted to the academic experience" (p.279) and the student's overall gain, was proportional to their level of involvement. Astin postulated that involvement indicated academic behaviour. Pace's college student experiences questionnaire assessed the quality of students' effort and the attainment of college-related goals (Pace, 1980: 1984). This was consistent with the work of Astin (Astin, 1984) and emphasised the importance of the role of the environment in promoting/limiting student involvement and effort. The questionnaires explored the use of college facilities, personal/interpersonal experiences at college and students' background characteristics. Tinto's concept of 'intergeneration' accounted for students' conformity with the structural rules and requirements of the institution and development of shared attitudes and beliefs of their peers and faculty (Terenzini and Pascareila, 1991; Tinto, 1975: 1993). Taken together, these seminal studies have not treated research into student engagement for racially minoritized groups in much detail. Arguably, most studies in the field of student engagement have inadvertently adopted a deficit approach to student engagement, attributing student's inability to achieve the 'product' to quality of the 'process', as opposed to the extent to which the educational environment may be culturally (dis)engaging (Museus, 2014).

Student engagement (academic and non-academic) is deemed to be empirically linked to desired outcomes, together with the quality of the institution and what institutions do to motivate students to participate in these activities (Chickering and Gamson, 1987; Coates, 2010; Kuh, 2001; 2009; Neves and Hewitt 2021; NSSE, n.d.). As such, contemporary understandings of student engagement are enhanced by four distinct theoretical perspectives: 1) the behavioural (defines engagement according to predefined areas in relation to the role of teachers, institutions and students in learning); 2) psychological (comprising a combination of behavioural, cognitive and affective components); 3) socio-cultural (impact of broader societal factors on engagement); and

4) the holistic perspective (a situated, dynamic process varying as a function of context) (Fredricks, Blumenfeld and Paris, 2004; Kahu 2013; Kinzie and Kuh, 2017; Kuh, 2009; Pascarella and Terenzini, 2005; Zepke, Leach and Butler, 2010).

2.3.1 Behavioural Perspective

The behavioural perspective broadly defines student engagement in relation students' academic integration, student satisfaction and achievement and the predefined roles of teachers and institutions in learning (Kuh, 2009). This perspective is measured and defined by a range of survey instruments (Academy, 2105; Coates, 2007: 2010; Kahu, 2013; Lou, 2015; Neves and Hewitt, 2021; NSSE, n.d.) that prioritises the behavioural aspects of student engagement over the cognitive and affective aspects, thus indicating that students gain more from their studies through greater engagement with educationally purposeful tasks. Approaches of this kind carry with them a number of limitations. For example, the validity of student responses in relation to learning gain is questionable in light of limitations in student's understanding of academic terms such as 'critical thinking.' Equally, the use of a single survey instrument across disciplines fails to capture the nuances of each discipline.

Further, the behavioural perspective fails to incorporate students' cognitive and affective processes, demonstrating an inability to capture the affective components of student engagement, thus limiting its potential for gaining a holistic understanding of student's experiences (Christie et al., 2008). Staff and students generally do not share similarities in their perceptions of student engagement. Perceptions can become 'out of phase', with students perceiving it as primarily affective, while tutors perceive it as cognitive (Solomonides & Martin, 2005). According to Solomonides and Martin (2005), in understanding student engagement, it could be argued that:

> the student concepts and descriptions are descriptions of their ideal environment and that the staff concepts and descriptions are descriptions of their ideal students. Somewhere between maybe lies the truth. (p. 5).

However, the behavioural perspective demonstrates strength in capturing the process of student engagement, such as achieving learning gain, engagement in learning communities and cultural competence. The most important of the criticisms of the behavioural perspective is that its definition of student engagement is limited and ambiguous, due to its development as a means of facilitating institutional improvement (Coates, 2010; Kuh, 2009).

Having explored the behavioural perspective of student engagement and outlining its limitations in facilitating a comprehensive understanding of student engagement, I will now move on to discuss the psychological perspective of engagement.

2.3.2 Psychological Perspective

The psychological perspective of student engagement views engagement as an internal individual psycho-social process which evolves over time and varies with intensity. Here, engagement is presumed to be malleable, amenable to environmental change and responsive to contextual features. Within the psychological perspective, engagement is believed to be multidimensional, encompassing overlapping dimensions, including behaviour, cognition, emotion and conation (will to succeed) (Kahu, 2013).

Behavioural engagement accounts for participation (academic and non-academic); cognitive engagement relates to the idea of investment (willingness to exert the effort and thoughtfulness to master difficult skills); while the emotional aspect relates to feelings and reactions (negative and positive) in relation to the environment, teachers/faculty and peers (Fredricks, Blumenfeld and Paris, 2004). Furthermore, Fredricks and colleagues (2004) asserted that the behavioural dimension of psychological engagement comprised three elements: 1) positive conduct (rule following

and adherence to classroom norms); 2) participation in academic tasks and learning (time on task, effort, persistence and asking questions); and 3) participation in school-related activities (inside and outside the classroom). Newman and colleagues asserted that cognitive engagement requires psychological investment in learning or achieving mastery; Hence students may complete work without being engaged in the topic (Newman, Wehlage and Lambor, 1992). Furthermore, Newman and colleagues believed that psychological investment in the form of cognitive engagement when viewed as a whole is not an explicitly observable characteristic, but an intrinsic effort to learn. In relation to minoritized students, it is useful to acknowledge the role of lay theories arising from adversity or success which may provide justification for them to draw inferences (negative/positive) from those experiences (Ross and Nisbett, 1991; Yeager et al., 2016). Challenges faced by students throughout their time in HE may evoke negative emotions and undermine academic achievements. These inferences have the potential to diminish motivation, promote inequality in outcomes, promote feelings of insecurity and loneliness and undermine academic success.

Emotional engagement relates to students' affective reactions elicited through interactions in the learning environment (Skinner and Belmont, 1993). Some researchers contextualise emotional engagement as identification with the learning environment – 'belonging' (Libbey, 2004); while others contextualise it in relation to reactions to the learning setting and the teacher 'interpersonal relationships' (Lee and Smith, 1995) or 'interest in the task' (Hidi and Renninger, 2006). The affective dimension also highlights the nuances between the individual's intrinsic (through own volition) and instrumental (cognitively and behaviourally) motivation (Kahu, 2013). Some theorists have also proposed 'conation' (the will to succeed) as an additional facet of emotional engagement.

Critics question the ability of the psychological perspective to provide a clear definition and differentiation between the respective dimensions (see Jimerson, Campos

and Greif, 2003). Questions have also been raised over the validity of student surveys used to measure the psychological perspective, with ambiguity in the aspects being measured (Fredricks, Blumenfeld and Paris, 2004; Jimerson, Campos and Greif, 2003). The view of student engagement as a multidimensional construct provides an opportunity to achieve holistic understandings of the student experience. The final and most important benefit of the psychological perspective is that it "does not conflate the state of being engaged with its antecedents or its consequences, a problem that is rife in other perspectives" (Kahu, 2011, p. 736).

This section has reviewed the key psychological perspectives of engagement. This encompasses behaviour, cognition and emotion. Engagement is malleable, situational and varies over time and may be seen as a transaction between an individual and their context. The following section will present a synopsis of the literature in relation to the socio-cultural perspective of engagement.

2.3.3 Socio-Cultural Perspective

The socio-cultural perspective of engagement considers the critical role and impact of the broader socio-cultural context on the student experience (Zusho, 2017). This perspective considers issues of culture, power, policy and economics (Thomas, 2002).

Culture accounts for the impact of 'institutional habitus' on contextual and personal diversity. Habitus relates to the way in which society shapes people's dispositions, capacities and/or propensities to feel, think and act. Students who arrive in HE with 'familial habitus' incongruent with the 'institutional habitus' may feel like 'fish out of water' and become disengaged (Thomas, 2002). On the contrary, students who arrive in HE with their 'familial habitus' congruent with the 'institutional habitus' may feel a greater sense of belonging, like 'fish in water,' and succeed. They do not feel the weight of the water and take the world about themselves for granted (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1989). Institutional habitus may promote social and cultural bias in favour of

the dominant group. This is particularly pertinent for racially minoritized students who often find their habitus at odds with that of their institution. More importantly, Black cultural capital is often perceived negatively and as acts of colloquialism due to the normative nature of 'whiteness' (Wallace, 2017). This also poses barriers to engagement, attainment and retention for racially minoritized students, due to challenges negotiating their identity in an environment where they are often seen as the 'other.' Lawrence (2006) contends that racially minoritized groups are often stereotyped as not possessing the necessary capital (social, cultural, academic) to conform to HE cultures. This may promote a sense of global uncertainty for racially minoritized students, who may then foster feelings of insecurity about their social bonds in the professional and academic domains (Walton and Cohen, 2007: 2011). Importantly, sense of belonging is a fundamental human need. Members of socially stigmatised and underrepresented groups are often susceptible to feelings of uncertainty in relation to belongingness; these feelings have the potential to undermine positive outcomes, achievement and motivation. Belongingness uncertainty can prove pernicious, promoting broad-based analysis by racially minoritized student. Walton and Cohen (2007) posit that as a consequence, events that "threaten one's social connectedness, although seen as minor by other individuals, can have large effects on the motivation of those contending with a threatened social identity (p. 84).

Belongingness uncertainty may also produce stereotype threat (Steele and Aronson, 1995; Steele, 1997), as racially minoritized students are not oblivious to the fact that their groups are under-represented and stigmatised. Belongingness and attainment may be part of a recursive cycle, where sub-optimal academic performance exacerbates belongingness uncertainty and vice versa (Storms and McCaul, 1976; see Walton and Cohen, 2011). Students may experience the social world in a positive way if they are confident in their belonging. Students from racialised minority groups, those

who are underserved and those who would be the first in their families to attend higher education institutions can face negative stereotypes about their intellectual ability, numeric under-representation and other group-based threats on campus (Murphy, Steele and Gross, 2007; Steele, 1997). These circumstances can lead students to worry whether they and people like them can fully belong (Walton and Cohen, 2011).

This section has explored the literature in relation to the socio-cultural perspectives on student engagement and has stated that the socio-cultural perspective on student engagement proposes a rationale as to why students may become engaged or alienated at university. It highlights the necessity for institutions to adopt a holistic approach to viewing student engagement in relation to the wider social, cultural and political factors that collaborates in the context in which student engagement takes place. In light of this, it is imperative that educational institutions adopt a more holistic approach to conceptualising the factors that promote student engagement, or barriers that promote alienation. The next section adopts a holistic approach to exploring perspective relating to student engagement.

2.3.4 Holistic Perspective

Several theorists (Fredricks, Blumenfeld and Paris, 2004; Kahu, 2013; Kahu and Nelson, 2018; Zepke and Leach, 2010) have attempted to integrate research in order to propose a holistic perspective of student engagement. The holistic perspective amalgamates a number of perspectives and influences on student engagement, such as: motivation (Dweck, 1986), self-determination, relatedness and autonomy (Ryan and Deci, 2000); relatedness or agency (Osterman, 2000; Zepke and Leach, 2010); transactional engagement, institutional and non-institutional support, active citizenship and motivation (Zepke, Leach and Butler, 2010).

A key limitation of the holistic approach lies in its categorisation, scope and definition of engagement (see Zepke, Leach and Butler, 2010) and critical influence of

the wider socio-political culture (Kahu, 2013). The holistic perspective of engagement consolidates the diverse perspectives of engagement and highlights the psychological state of being engaged by considering the factors influencing student engagement. This contextualises student engagement within the wider socio-cultural context and seeks to consolidate the diverse strands of theory and research on student engagement (Kahu, 2013). That said, Fredricks, Blumenfeld and Paris (2004) established the need for a more comprehensive understanding of student engagement that encompasses diverse perspectives.

Kahu's (2013) conceptual framework views student engagement as a "psycho-social process, influenced by institutional and personal factors and embedded within a wider social context" (p. 767). It integrates the socio-cultural, behavioural and psychological perspectives, thus permitting a more comprehensive understanding of the complex array of factors that influence student engagement. Kahu identified six central variables (antecedents and consequences) that impact on the student experience: "the social context; the structural and psycho-social influences; engagement; and the proximal and distal consequences" (p. 766). The framework adopts a broad focus and gives prominence to the wider socio-cultural influences and demonstrates how student engagement is embedded within the wider social, political and cultural discourses. Kahu's framework is useful in exploring the wider socio-cultural, socio-political and institutional influences that impact on student's learning experiences. Kahu's conceptual framework shows an appreciation for the fact that student engagement goes beyond an internal static state and is embedded in a wider socio-cultural context, influenced by wider institutional and non-institutional factors. In acknowledging students' lived reality, Kahu's conceptual framework shows parallels with CRT's and methodology in education (Ladson-Billings, 1998; Solórzano and Yosso, 2002).

This section has explored a holistic perspective on student engagement, outlining its antecedents and consequences (Kahu, 2013). The perspective facilitates a shared understanding of the process of student engagement and enables a synergy with other perspectives of engagement. The subsequent section will discuss possible impact of interest on engagement.

2.4 Interaction with Teachers

In recent years, there has been a large and increasing body of research investigating student engagement in HE (Fredricks, Blumenfeld and Paris, 2004; Kahu, 2013; Kahu, 2013; Kahu and Nelson, 2018; Kuh, 2009; Zepke and Leach, 2010; Zusho, 2017). HE researchers have been particularly interested in student engagement given its relationship to positive student outcomes (Beasley, 2021; Kahu, 2013). Research has also highlighted the value of examining both academic and non-academic engagement (Beasley, 2021). Subsequently, the corpus of HE researches pertaining to student engagement has yielded an understanding that student-teacher interaction may be considered an essential component of the university experience and a central feature of student engagement. Student-teacher interactions arguably has a great influence on students and may be a strong indicator of learning, positive student outcomes and persistence (Frings et al., 2020; Hu, 2011; Neves & Hewitt, 2021; Tinto, 1993).

The literature on student–teacher interactions is comprised of a diverse collection of studies that attempt to define these interactions. Some studies have conceptualised student-teacher interactions in terms of an aggregated set of experiences of students interacting with their teachers on academic-related matters. For example, "effort devoted to educationally purposeful activities that contribute to desired outcomes" (Hu and Kuh, 2002, p. 555); or interaction on non-academic related matters (e.g., efforts to actively connect with members of the campus community in meaningful and purposeful ways, such as extracurricular activities (Hu, 2011)[9]. Others (Cox & Orehovec, 2007) have

conceptualised engagement in terms of the context of the interactions. For example, Cox and Orehovec (2007) qualitative study that explored faculty-student interaction outside of formal classroom settings, identified five major types of student-faculty interactions.[10] Cox and Orehovec's study concluded that virtually every type of interaction between faculty and students can have positive effects. Astin (1993) found that positive student-teacher interaction had a positive effect on students' cognitive and affective development. Positive student-teacher interaction was also found to be a key indicator of student satisfaction in HE (Neves & Hewitt, 2021). Hence, "educators must actively strive for a learning environment which fosters positive working relationships, independence of thought and communication abilities" (Rowan and Neves, 2021, p. 10). Research has suggested that student-teacher interaction appears to be most valuable when it relates to academic-related matters (Pascarella and Terenzini 1991; 2005; Terenzini and Pascareila, 1991). Largely, much of the research on student-teacher interaction have focused on educational outcomes, such as, student learning, persistence, and cognitive skill development (Frings et al., 2020; Hu et al., 2008; Kim & Sax, 2017; Mayhew et al., 2016). These studies consistently demonstrate a positive link between student-teacher interactions and student outcomes. Pascarella and Terenzini's (1991: 2005) meta analyses of higher education literature identified several studies supporting the correlation between student-faculty interaction and positive student outcomes. Positive interactions with teachers have also been shown to be associated with attainment (Frings et al., 2020; Hu et al., 2008), generally in predicting outcomes for BAME students' in some settings (Lundberg & Schreiner, 2004) and specifically for Black students (Harper, 2012). However, in predominantly White institutions where teachers are disproportionately White, BAME students may face barriers in forming positive relationships with their teachers (Back, 2004; Woolf et al., 2008). Research has shown that students from racialised minority groups have negative perceptions of their campus

racial climate when compared with their White counterparts. With the increasing numbers of racially minoritized students entering HE (HESA, 2021b), focusing on students' experiences of engagement is critical for improving their postsecondary outcomes. Positive student-faculty relationships have been shown to increase sense of belonging and engagement in HE (Strayhorn, 2019) and can mitigate against a negative campus climates (Cress, 2008), particularly for racially minoritized students.

2.4.1 Campus Climate

Little is known about whether students' interactions with teachers are linked to their perceptions of campus environment. Samuel Museus' (2014) Culturally Engaging Campus Environment model presents a proposition that students' access to culturally engaging campus environments is associated with higher levels of sense of belonging and, in turn, an increased likelihood of success in HE. According to Museus, perceptions of the campus environment in HE extends beyond the physical environment and generally includes the campus climate. In the HE setting the campus climate creates "the expectational context for individual actions, for the way individuals respond to each other" (Tinto, 2012, p. 15). In HE, the campus climate generally refers to – attitudes, teaching methods and practice, theories, pedagogy and curricula, written and unwritten cues, policies, processes and behaviours (Rankin and Reason, 2008; Thomas and Quinlan, 2021: 2021a). A broad range of qualitative and quantitative empirical studies indicate that students can encounter unwelcoming university campus environments, although BAME students face hostile campus environments more frequently than their White counterparts. Sylvia Hurtado's (1992) 'The Campus Racial Climate: Contexts of Conflict' found that approximately one in four students in her research perceived considerable racial conflict on their campuses. Equally, many Black students, particularly those attending predominantly White institutions report facing toxic cultural learning environments (Harper & Hurtado, 2007a). Negative perceptions of campus

racial climate have been shown to be negatively associated with persistence and are linked to negative engagement experiences (Harper & Hurtado, 2007b). In the UK, Engagement Surveys have found that students are spending limited amounts of time engaging and building relationships with staff, as both BAME and White students reported low levels of involvement in staff-student interaction (Rowan & Neves, 2021). Ferguson and Scruton (2015) found that students from Black, Asian, and minority ethnic backgrounds reported receiving more assistance from family and peers than from teachers. This is an important finding that supports the need for lecturers and staff in HE to improve student-teacher interactions and create and sustain inclusive campus climates.

While there is a consensus that student-teacher interaction occur outside of the classroom and that these interactions are associated with positive outcomes, there is little understanding of the process by which such interactions take place, the antecedents of these interactions and students' perceptions of the interactions. Given the salience of student engagement in HE, failure to explore whether and the extent to which there is an association between the campus environment (inclusive of the campus culture) and student engagement may contribute to marginalisation of racially minoritized students and leave educators with deficit-oriented explanations for the persistent student engagement/ expereince gaps that prevail within HE. A complete exploration of the multidimensional concept of engagement is beyond the scope of this project. However, it is important to note that the HE environment is comprised of myriad features. For example, curricula, faculty and staff. Therefore, in this study, I will maintain a focus on the curricula as a key feature of the HE environment, specifically the cultural sensitivity of the HE curricula as a mediating variable. I will also focus on interaction with teachers and interest (discussed anon) as two dependent variables representing engagement, due to the importance of student-teacher interaction of positive student experiences and outcomes, and the importance of interest as a motivational variable and a psychological

state. The following section will review literature that explores the relationship between interest and engagement in HE.

2.5 Interest for Engagement

The purpose of this section is to explore the literature in relation to Interest and its implications on engagement. In proceeding, this section will consider how Interest may be seen as a stimulus to developing communities of practice, lines of practice (Azevedo, 2011) and a learning environment that promotes the achievement of positive engagement experiences for students in UK universities.

Interest plays a vital role in the maintenance of engagement (Kahu and Nelson, 2018). Interest has proved an important topic for psychologists and educators for centuries (Berlynei, 1949), and is recognised as an essential condition for learning (Hidi and Renninger 2006; Renninger and Hidi, 2011; Renninger, 1992: 2000) and subsequently, attainment. Although differences in opinion exist, there appears to be some agreement about the general conceptualisation of Interest. Hidi and Renninger (2006) conceptualised interest as both a motivational variable and psychological state, and defined interest as "the psychological state of a person while engaging with some type of content and the cognitive and affective motivational predisposition to reengage with that content over time (p. 8). Interest has been conceptualised as including both cognitive and affective components, encompassing biological roots, and is the effect of the dynamic interaction between a person, context and content (Renninger and Hidi, 2016). Optimum levels of Interest are achieved when there is equilibrium between an individual's ability, a conducive, nurturing environment and the task demands (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975; Hidi and Renninger, 2006). Without support, Interest will not develop and may diminish, regress or dissipate over time (Renninger, 2000). According to Renninger and Hidi (2016), as a psychological state Interest is grounded in an individual's physiological/neurological response to stimulus and tasks; it is characterised by

"increased attention, concentration and effort during engagement" (p. 9). As a motivational variable, Renninger and Hidi (2016) suggests that Interest encapsulates shorter-term or situational interest and longer-term or individual interest, with reengagement over time being their primary characteristic. A number of researchers have proposed that there is a correlation between situational and individual interest, with the former supporting the development of the latter (Alexander, 1997: 2004; Hidi and Anderson, 1992; Renninger, 2000). Hidi and Renninger's Four Phase Model of Interest Development provides a framework for contextualising and understanding the process of Interest development (Hidi and Renninger, 2006).

Hidi and Renninger (2006) proposes that there are four phases in the development of Interest: triggered situational, maintained situational, emerging individual and well-developed individual interest (see Figure 1). In the development of interest, environmental or self-generated support is necessary for continued engagement as without this, interest may decrease or dissipate (Renninger and Su 2012; Hidi and Renninger, 2006). In this study, I am primarily interested in measuring individual Interest and not situational Interest. Situational Interest is not particularly relevant to this study, since it can be argued that students would enter HE with some level of individual Interest, or else they would not be there – although that Interest may be stronger or weaker in different students.

2.5.1 Situational Interest

Situational Interest is an early phase of interest development that refers to the influence of an environmental stimuli (frequently positive but can also involve negative feelings) that triggers an affective reaction and focused attention (Hidi, 1990; Hidi and Renninger, 2006; Renninger, 1992: 2000). Hidi and Anderson (1992) proposed that situational interest is the appealing effect of an activity/ learning task on an individual, which involves negative or positive feelings. This may not result in sustained interest.

According to Dewey's (1902: 1913) prediction, prior experience, strength and needs, as well as the support that was provided by others and the features of available interest-related tasks and activities are key factors that determines if triggered interest is maintained. Exclusionary attitudes and behaviours by teachers (Richardson, 2008), inequalities and discriminatory attitudes (Singh, 2011), stereotype threat and racial vulnerability (Steele, 1990; Steele and Aronson, 1995), low teacher expectations of success and negative racial/cultural stereotypes (Berry and Loke, 2011; Clegg, Parr and Wan, 2003; Woolf et al., 2008) are deemed factors that impact negatively on minoritized students' sense of belonging (Dandridge et al., 2008; Goodenow 1992; Puwar, 2004) engagement (Thomas, 2012b; Trowler, 2010) and the development and maintenance of their interest.

The development of situational interest entails two stages in which interest is triggered over a short period of time (triggered situational interest) and maintained over a longer period of time (maintained situational interest) (Hidi and Renninger, 2006; Renninger and Hidi, 2011). Situational interest is motivating (Hidi and Renninger, 2006), however, in the context of student achievement, the idea of situational un-interest (Quinlan, 2018) may add value to current discourses surrounding racially minoritized students' engagement with the HE curriculum (see subsequent section which relates to the HE curriculum). This may also add to current conversations advocating for decolonisation of the HE curriculum. For example, Why is my curriculum white? and Why isn't my Professor Black? and #DecoloniseUniversityofKent (Thomas and Jivraj, 2020). In this sense, the curriculum is a key component of the environment and according to Kahu (2013) may have a structural influence on student engagement. Equally, this may also have ramifications for students' subsequent achievement, as a result of a lack of epistemic representation that reflects the students who access the curriculum in UK HEIs; this may promote racial vulnerability (Arday, 2017; Steele and

Aronson, 1995). Equally worthy of consideration in relation to racially minoritized students is the communities of practice of which they are members within their institutions (Azevedo, 2011). Lines of practice may have a positive impact on the development/maintenance of their situational Interest, through participation in co-curricular activities subsidiary to, or in fact unrelated to their course of study. The ability of institutions to create environments (proximal and/or distal) that continuously present a diverse range of (co)curricular opportunities for students may enable students to develop greater engagement and possibly through personal relevance, trigger/sustain situational Interest (Azevedo, 2011). Therefore, the role of situational Interest in stimulating racially minoritized students' engagement with the HE curricula is worthy of consideration, within the context of discourses pertaining to student achievement. The impetus for this study is to explore students' perspectives of the whiteness of their curriculum and whether or the extent to which it poses barriers to their engagement in HE. Hence, it is prudent to assume that all students enter the gates of the academy with a basic level of 'situational Interest' as a baseline, irrespective of the environmental factors that catalysed that Interest.

Phases of Interest Development			
Phase I: Triggered Situational	Phase 2: Maintained Situational	Phase 3: Emerging Individual	Phase 4: Well-Developed Individual
Definition			
• Psychological state resulting from short-term changes in cognitive and affective processing	• Psychological state that involves focused attention and persistence over extended period, and/or reoccurs and persists	• Psychological state *and* the beginning of relatively enduring predisposition to seek reengagement with particular classes of content	• Psychological state *and* a relatively enduring predisposition to reengage particular classes of content
Learner Characteristics			
• Attends to content, if only fleetingly • Needs support to engage from others and through instructional design • May experience either positive or negative feelings • May or may not be reflectively aware of the experience	• Reengages content that previously triggered attention • Is supported by others to find connections among their skills, knowledge, and prior experience • Has positive feelings • Is developing knowledge of the content • Is developing a sense of the content's value	• Is likely to independently re-engage content • Has curiosity questions that leads and seeks answers • Has positive feelings • Has stored knowledge and stored value • Is very focused on his or her own questions	• Independently reengages content • Has curiosity questions • Self-regulates easily to reframe questions and seek answers • Has positive feelings • Can persevere through frustration and challenge in order to meet goals • Recognizes others' contributions to the discipline • Actively seeks feedback

Figure 1 – The four phases of Interest development

(Source: Hidi and Renninger, 2006)

2.5.2 Individual Interest

Individual Interest is a subjective, individual experience and is considered to be the predisposition to engage with an event, object or idea, based on stored knowledge and perceived value to be had as a result of that engagement; it is nurtured by a deepening relationship between subject and content over time (Renninger, 1992: 2000). Individual Interest involves two stages – emerging individual Interest (beginning of relatively enduring predisposition to seek reengagement) and well-developed individual Interest (relatively enduring predisposition to reengage) (Suzanne Hidi & Renninger, 2006). Individual Interest is seen to be context related (linked to particular person-subject content relations) and geared towards "enjoyment of focused and continued engagement

in a task ..., the pursuit of challenge, and the desire for mastery" (Renninger 2000, p. 395).

Interest appears as a curiosity or attraction in the first instance, then evolves and becomes established as a key part of activities through long-term, self-motivated engagement in open ended practices – *lines of practice* (see Azevedo, 2011). Lines of practice entails closely interrelated activities defined by preference (elements in a person's psychology) and conditions of practice (elements in all other dimensions). It is useful to differentiate between preference and conditions of practice, because some individual Interests are likely to be based primarily on feelings, whereas other interests are more likely to be based on personal significance (Eccles et al., 1983; JS Eccles & Wigfield, 1995). Equally, task value (the importance a task holds for the individual) correlates with engagement in activities (Eccles et al., 1983). A task has a utility value if it is deemed useful for accomplishing present or future goals (Durik et al., 2014).

Utility value (usefulness) is positively associated with measures of interest and personal choices. Durik *et al.,* (2014) study tested the effects of a utility value manipulaton on interest and performance among college students and found that direct communication of utility value information may prove effective in stimulating interest in tasks; students who have low expectancies for success showed a reluctance to embrace utility value information. For racially minoritized students, motivation for engagement may be influenced by the value they have for succeeding, environmental cues that may send subliminal messages about expectations for their success, as well as their personal expectancies for success based on their perceptions of the HE environment (Wigfield, 1994). Racially minoritized students' expectancies for success may prove a predictor of their engagement behaviours, achievement performance and choice of program of study (Eccles et al., 1983). Furthermore, choosing educational content with personal relevance may be empowering through perception of value and expectancy of success; this has

been shown to improve motivation (Hulleman & Harackiewicz, 2009; Lazowski & Hulleman, 2016); this underscores the importance of a culturally engaging curricula. Importantly, utility value interventions (Durik et al., 2014; Eccles et al., 1983; Hulleman & Harackiewicz, 2009; Lazowski & Hulleman, 2016; Wigfield, 1994) generally have not been shown to adopt a race-focused approach to effecting structural changes (e.g., recurating/ reimagining curricula to make them more culturally sensitive), but rather, seemingly adopt a deficit approach in order to help students think about the usefulness and relevance of the subject (Crouch et al., 2013). However, Crouch and colleagues' (2013) study that detailed a pedagogic intervention in which a physics curriculum was revised to raise female students interest in physics as well as make it more gender-sensitive provides a framework that can be adopted in order to create more culturally sensitive curricula in HE by centring race/culture/ethnicity.

The efficacy of interest (experiencing positive affect, knowledge and value with an activity) as a predictor of future choices and probability of success, as opposed to demographic variables and prior achievement have been demonstrated in its use in interventions aimed at enabling students to find relevance of academic content to their lives (Hulleman & Harackiewicz, 2009). This has also demonstrated that repeated experience of situational interest (engagement with content) stimulates individual interest (Rotgans & Schmidt, 2018). However, envisioning success often proves difficult for students from racially minoritized backgrounds, given historical institutional racism (Lammy, 2017) and perceptions of the lack of congruence between their habitus, minority racialised status and success. Arguably, this is manifested in the current HE curriculum which is devoid of representation of diversity, and where diversity is represented, it may not be portrayed positively. Equally, experimental paradigms and ethnographic descriptions reiterates negative associations between racially minoritized status and academic attainment (Steele, 1997). These negative associations may be due

to limited occupational opportunities and representation within the higher echelons of HE, as well as access to more prestigious institutions for students from racially minoritized backgrounds (AdvanceHE, 2020a; Boliver, 2013). According to Oyserman, Terry and Bybee (2002), academic possible selves may be rooted in part in racial identity, because "when imagining what future is possible for one's self, such negative preformed group images are likely to be highly accessible, making social group membership feels like it conflicts with plausible academic possible self" (p. 189). Racially minoritized students, those who are underserved and those from lower socio-economic backgrounds face the possibility of double risk of failing to develop plausible academically focussed and oriented possible selves, due to factors such as current racialized discourses (Clegg et al., 2003), racially alienating and hostile campus environments (Harper, 2013) and a stereotype threat (Steele & Aronson, 1995). Since self-concept is not monolithic, whenever possible selves are experienced as compatible with social identity and the difficulty in achieving possible selves is normalised and identified as being differently accessible, then strategies to develop possible selves through behaviour change may prove more effective.

When exploring student engagement and outcomes, it is presumed that all students enter HE with some level of interest, despite wider socio-cultural influences on choice of university and subject of study (Codiroli, 2015; Miller, 2016; Smith, 2016). Individual interest may be self-generated or developed through repeated triggers from the environment. In accordance with Azevedo (2011) 'lines of practice', interest also emerges and is develops from bits and pieces of activities that are valued by students' within their communities of practice. This may be in the form of curricular and/or co-curricular activities. The attainment, persistence and overall learning experiences of minoritized students in HE may be optimised by structuring the curriculum in a manner to realise a synergy between student experience, students' cultures and intended

outcomes, in order to achieve a transformative aesthetic understanding (Dewey, 1980; Hidi & Renninger, 2006). Equally, in relation to the student engagement, experiences and outcomes, a deficit approach may be detrimental to the stimulation/maintenance of interest; students' ambivalence may be motivated by the feeling of a sense of powerlessness and pessimism, as in the quest to address inequalities in student outcomes, students are generally talked about, rather than with or to (Threadgold, 2012). They are at times perceived as subjects who have entered the gates of the academy as empty vessels, with cultural and social deficits, whose "blackness" and familial background is misconstrued as social and cultural deficits (Shilliam, 2017; Wallace, 2017). In this sense, deficit theories are employed, as opposed to culturally sensitive pedagogy that celebrates students' culture as the strengths and assets that they bring to HE (López, 2017).

This section has explored literature in relation to Interest and its impact on engagement. It has highlighted that interest can be triggered, maintained and developed but will dissipate if not supported. It has also highlighted four phases of interest and how *lines of practice* may facilitate the development of interest. The next section will adopt a focus on students' engagement with the HE curriculum specifically as it relates to BAME students, in order to illuminate an 'experience gap' between BAME students and their counterparts.

2.6 BAME student's Experience of the HE Curriculum – the 'Experience Gap'

Within HE, global student campaigns, for example, in Brazil (Nascimento, 2003); 'Rhodes Must Fall' at Oxford University (Rhodes Must Fall, 2018) and University of Cape Town, South Africa (Eirich et al., 2018); 'Why is my curriculum White?' at UCL (UCL, 2014); 'Why is my curriculum so White' at Keele University (Decolonise Keele Network, 2020); and Decolonise the University of Kent (Thomas & Jivraj, 2020), have questioned the dominance of Eurocentric, Western thought in the curricula and

challenged the persistent, pervasive nature of its whiteness, in advocating for a more culturally sensitive curriculum (Bhambra, Nişancioğlu and Gabrial, 2018; Peters, 2018; Thomas and Jivraj, 2020). "The monopoly and proliferation of dominant White European canons comprises much of our existing curriculum and consequently impacts adversely on BAME learners' engagement and sense of belonging" (Arday et al., 2020, p. 298). At a time when universities are paying more attention to calls to decolonise, Bhambra and colleague's (2018) in-depth and wide-ranging account of the discourse and dialogues on what it means to decolonise HE provides a critical examination of calls to 'decolonise the university' in order to challenge and undo forms of coloniality in their classrooms, curricula and campuses. While the scope and scale of racialised inequality in HE, specifically as it relates to the Eurocentric nature of the curriculum has gained global attention, the rate of change remains glacial, while the curriculum and pedagogies that pervade within HE institutions remain a site for the systemic reproduction of racism and racialised violence (Pilkington, 2013). What is not fully understood is BAME students' lived realities of negotiating higher education's male dominant, White, Eurocentric curriculum, and its impact on their engagement experiences – interaction with teachers and interest in their program of study. This section highlights BAME students experiences of engaging with their curriculum.

The pathbreaking edited collection 'Towards Decolonising the University: A kaleidoscope for empowered action' deployed a distinctive cocktail of testimony, commentary, observations and critique to produce a copious body of knowledge about the engagement experiences of BAME students in a UK university (Thomas & Jivraj, 2020). The publication encapsulated the Decolonise University of Kent Manifesto for change, which was a primary outcome of the Decolonise University of Kent Movement. The authors employed counter-storytelling (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002) as an analytical framework to illuminate and amplify a multiplicity of diverse voices, by gaining the

perspectives of eighty students from seven distinct student groups in a series of 12 café-style focus groups. They also conducted one-to-one interviews with students, teachers and staff. Students provided qualitative accounts that articulated myriad forms of inequality that impacted their experiences and outcomes in HE. For example, the interplay of ostensible and less obvious forms of identity such as: race; sexual orientation; religious belief or faith; culture, age; and/or disability. In terms of BAME students' experiences of engaging with the curriculum, students articulated a need for more inclusive curriculum, pedagogy and powerful learning experiences that transcended beyond the 'White' curriculum. Specifically, students cited the need for a gamut of globally diverse perspectives in the curriculum that addresses a range of experiences and perspectives in order to develop all students as critical and analytical thinkers. Emphasising the need for inclusion of perspectives from scholars of colour, students highlighted the limitations of their culturally insensitive curriculum and its impact in sustaining their interest. Articulating their experiences of interacting with the curriculum, a BAME student recounted: "It was literally White, male theorists all the time and it was boring because you can't relate to it…" (Thomas and Jivraj 2020, p. 22). They also highlighted the importance of representing diversity in the curriculum – "…seeing yourself represented make a big difference to engagement in academic life" (p. 26). Additionally, students also spoke about the extent to which their curriculum perpetuated racism – "the only time we look at (sic) non-white material is in relation to colonialism (slavery/anti-slavery) or extremism and the material tends to be negative as opposed to positive" (p. 22). Importantly, BAME students in this research advocated for what Achille Mbembe (2015) calls a 'pluriversity of knowledge' (i.e., a process of knowledge open to epistemic diversity), by stating "we are not trying to erase history or knowledge but enrich it (Thomas and Jivraj, 2020, p. 22). The findings from the research also spoke to the extent to which culturally insensitive curricula delimits interaction with teachers –

“they (staff) don’t know where we are coming from, so I don’t think I can talk to them” (p. 25). The Decolonise University of Kent Collective also highlighted the use of podcasts as ‘powerful pedagogy.’ Through the podcast series – ‘Stripping the White Walls’, students shared conversations that presented strategies to recurate their curriculum in order to create content that was not Eurocentric in nature. Similar to Delores Delgado Bernal (2002), the podcasts were used a means of centring students as “holders and creators of knowledge” (p. 152). Students reported that destabilising the misconception that authentic knowledge can only be created by ‘competent knowers’ (White European thinkers) for the benefit of those who can only ever be considered as being ‘incompetent to know’ (BAME students), is aligned with their perceptions of decolonising the curriculum.

The seminal research exploring the role of race in shaping the experiences of BME students at Goldsmiths University of London (‘Insider-Outsider’) sought to explore the extent to which race shaped the experiences of BME students at university by exploring four key areas: Decolonisation and representation; Racism and microaggression; Race and attainment; and Hate crime reporting and student mental health support (Akel, 2019). In terms of BME students’ experiences of engaging with their curricula, over 80% of respondents reported that their courses were predominantly representative of the White experience, achievement and work; only 27% of responders reported that they felt they were represented by their course but could not relate to their course material. Students who reported feeling represented by their course material had greater experiences and perceptions of their course overall and felt more engaged with course content. The majority of respondents (74%) believed that their course material was foregrounded in Eurocentrism. In some cases, racially minoritized students reported that they had to create their own curricular activities in order to provide access to culturally sensitive curricular content. Of note, this research highlighted that in some

cases, diversity of voices was present within their curriculum, however, those voices often adhered to a Eurocentric framework of knowledge in providing perspectives (this might be regarded as tokenistic diversity). The research also found that references to BAME authors were often made in the context of discussions about race and identity politics. This research provided a summary of the experiences of BME students at Goldsmiths College, detailing the pipeline from entry, during course and upon graduation, in concluding that race plays a central role in shaping the educational experiences of BME students at Goldsmiths University of London.

There is nascent body of research that explores students' perceptions of their reading lists and the extent to which reading lists can be considered representative of and reinforce the dominant White Eurocentric curricula (Adewumi et al., 2021; Adewumi & Mitton, 2022; Schucan Bird & Pitman, 2020; Thomas, 2022) In some instances, students have developed their own tools to broaden the range of perspectives presented on their reading lists.[11] Reading list reviews should be considered but one aspect of transforming curricula (Thomas, 2020b) and when conducted in collaboration with students can serve as a powerful strategy to harness increasingly diverse student cohorts and campus environments in broadening the tapestry of knowledge presented in the HE curricula.

Schucan Bird & Pitman (2020) study developed an applied method for auditing the authorship of reading lists in the disciplines of science and social science. In their research, Schucan Bird and Pitman explored issues of representation and decolonisation in the UK in their analysis of reading lists and found that reading lists did not represent the diversity of the student body, but instead was representative of the staff that created those resources. According to Schucan Bird and Pitman, students view the reading lists as an important instrument for learning and need to see themselves represented. Hence, Schucan Bird and Pitman concluded that recuration of reading lists represent a key aspect of decolonising the university.

Adopting a race-focused approach, Thomas (2022) engaged with theory of knowledge (De Sousa Santos, 2014; Hall and Tandon, 2017) and critical race theory (CRT) as a theoretical and methodological framework (Crenshaw, 1991; Solórzano and Yosso, 2002) to explore students' perceptions and expectations of their reading lists, in order to outline how staff-student partnerships were built through a pedagogic intervention – reading list review. Thomas engaged a sample of 15 students from a range of racialised backgrounds in two focus groups, in order to gain their perspectives of engaging with the curriculum from the perspective of a learner. In developing a deeper understanding of whether, or the extent to which reading lists perpetuate whiteness in maintaining structural advantage, epistemic privilege and hegemony, the research sought to understand the extent to which the demographic representation of authors that were presented on the reading lists may be associated with (dis)engagement from the reading lists by students. Respondents reported that their reading lists were predominantly White and that the permanence of whiteness of the reading lists promoted epistemic racism. According to Ramón Grosfoguel (2013), epistemic racism may be considered to be "the inferiority of all knowledges coming from human beings that are classified as non-Western" (p. 77). There was a collective feeling among respondents that it was inevitable that the majority of authors on their reading lists would be White men. Respondents also reported that diverse authors were present in some instances on their reading lists, however on those occasions, authors from racially minoritized backgrounds were assigned a diminished standing (Hylton, 2018b). Importantly, respondents highlighted how the absence of diverse perspectives in their curriculum could be construed as epistemic injustice and send subliminal messages that may trigger stereotype threat and erode psychological safety in catalysing an imposter phenomenon (Clance & Imes, 1978). Respondents highlighted the importance of considering intersectionality when curating the curriculum and reading lists as a means of triggering and sustaining

students' interest and subsequently, engagement – "…I find that a paper that is written by a woman who is working- class and talks about things from her perspective [would be more engaging and] I would be more likely to read her work… [but] sometimes it is not as clear cut as that. There's almost a bias sometimes in the way some authors address some issues. For example, some authors would rather talk about issues relating to 'class' than race. Even when they talk about race it is always from a male perspective" (pp. 18-19). Thomas concluded that the findings of his research highlighted disparities in ways in which BAME and White students experience the curriculum and could serve as a 'call to action' to neutralise dominant epistemologies that promote and maintain ethnocentrism.

Adewumi and colleagues' (2021) research that analysed a cross-disciplinary, collaborative and student-led approach to developing a change process for diversifying reading lists found that increasingly BAME students are questioning and challenging systemic inequalities that affect their learning and sense of belonging as a result of their experiences of engaging with their curriculum. Chronicling the findings from two pilot studies that explored the reading lists in social sciences and humanities, and through desk-based reviews, interviews with staff and focus groups with students, Adewumi and colleagues developed a process (Diversity Mark) and toolkit which could be useful in constructing culturally relevant reading lists. University of Kent's Diversity Mark is a movement that aims to stimulate a conversation between students, staff and faculty in order to explore ways of addressing the Eurocentric curricula in order to prompt curricular changes that may positively influence disparities in degrees awarded between BAME and White students. Adewumi and colleagues gained insight into the engagement experiences of 26 students through a series of small focus groups. Similar to students in Thomas' (2022) research, students reported that in identifying the authors presented on their reading lists, they generally assumed that they were predominantly White, male and European. Respondents also highlighted the importance of having diverse perspectives in

their curriculum in order to provide opportunities for them to learn about notable authors from BAME backgrounds. Students also reported that the Black authors were included on their reading lists/ in their courses only when there was a specific focus on race. This finding corroborates with those outlined in Sofia Akel (2019) research that highlights the racialised nature of the BAME student's experiences of engaging with their curricula. A key finding in Adewumi and colleagues' research was that BAME students were aware of a lack of diverse perspectives in their reading lists – "the silencing of their voices in the curriculum" (p. 11) – and its impact on their identity as learners and their future possible selves as graduates – "I do feel like certain fields are really gendered or racialised. I think it wouldn't put me off doing the subject, but might make me think, would they listen to me?" (p. 22). The research also found that there is an increasing socio-political awareness amongst students that may be fuelling increasing demands for a more culturally sensitive curriculum in order to enhance their educational experiences.

Adewumi and Mitton (2022) conducted focus groups with 16 undergraduate, BAME students who study on social science courses, in order to gain their perceptions of their reading list in a reading list review. Students reported an awareness that topics related to gender, sexuality, class and social status prominently featured in their seminars, with little attention to topics such as, race or ethnicity. According to students, the reduced status afforded to matters relating to race and/or ethnicity incorrectly suggested that the society was 'post racial' and subsequently, race and ethnicity was of little significance. Similar to students who formed the Decolonise University of Kent Collective (Thomas & Jivraj, 2020) students in Adewumi and Mitton's research also expressed an appetite for a decolonised curriculum as a means of broadening their perspectives and worldviews – "I don't want to learn about oppression in a framework that is still oppressing. I want to learn about it in a framework that liberates my brain" (p. 62).

The Centre for Transforming Access and Student Outcomes in Higher Education (TASO) established partnership with University of Kent and University of Leicester to research the impact of curriculum reform on the degree awarding gap between BAME and White students. The TASO-funded project at the University of Kent[12] evaluated the impact of the curricula reform program on the degree awarding gap between BAME and White students. The Diversity Mark initiative (aforementioned) is an initiative that aims to prompt curricula changes by diversifying reading lists so that they include authors from BAME backgrounds within the formal curriculum (Thomas & Adewumi, 2019); [13] and the Decolonise the Curriculum Toolkit at University of Leicester – a toolkit that provides a set of practical guidelines aimed at making teaching practice more inclusive and curricula more responsive and relevant to the student body. At the time of writing this literature review, the evaluation report for the TASO-funded projects at Leicester University and University of Kent were not published.

This section has explored BAME students experiences of engaging with the HE curriculum. It has highlighted differences in the ways that BAME students experience the curriculum as opposed to their White peers in exposing an 'Experience Gap'. The next section will explore perspectives of the curriculum and the extent to which its 'whiteness' may negatively impact on students' experiences of engaging with their curriculum in shaping their engagement.

2.7 The Curriculum

The HE curriculum may be seen as a pedagogic vehicle that facilitates growth, development and an encounter with knowledge in order to effect change through a process of knowing and becoming (Barnett, 2009). According to Hackman (2005), a lack of ahistorical information leaves students with limited understandings of the political, social and economic forces and patterns that create and sustain the oppressive social dynamics of their curricula and institutions of learning. According to Donald Schön:

> Like other organizations, educational institutions have epistemologies. They hold conceptions of what counts as legitimate knowledge and how you know what you claim to know. These theories of knowledge need not be consciously espoused by individuals, for they are built into institutional structures and practices. (Schön, 1995, p. 27).

The concept of curriculum conjures myriad definitions and meanings; they can be described as descriptive, prescriptive, or both.

2.7.1 Prescriptive definitions of Curriculum

> Prescriptive [curriculum] definitions provide us with what 'ought' to happen, and they more often than not take the form of a plan, an intended program, or some kind of expert opinion about what needs to take place in the course of study. (Ellis, 2004, p.4).

An understanding of the prescriptive and descriptive definitions of the curriculum offered by leading scholars in the field adds value to discussions aimed at understanding the nature and diversity of curriculum.

John Dewey (1902) defined curriculum as a "continuous reconstruction, moving from the [learner's] present experience out into that represented by the organised bodies of truth that we call studies… [These] studies are themselves experience(s) – they are that of the race [to be ran]" (pp. 11-12). Ralph Tyler (1957) developed on Dewey's thoughts in positing that the curriculum is encapsulated in "all the learning experiences planned and directed by the school to attain its educational goals" (p. 79). Further, the Indiana Department of Education (2010) suggested that curriculum means, the planned interaction of pupils with instructional content, materials, resources and processes for evaluating the attainment of educational objectives. Here, prescriptive definitions of curriculum broadly speak to a longitudinal approach to achieving and developing on learning experiences through interaction with environmental features.

2.7.2 Descriptive definitions of Curriculum

Descriptive curriculum explains how curricula "benefits or harms all individuals it touches" (Glatthorn *et al.,* 2019, p. 27). For example, Caswell and Campbell (1935) proposed that curriculum represents all the experiences [learners] have under the guidance of teachers. Here, this speak to academic and non-academic experiences. Furthermore, Ragan (1960) posited that curriculum is all the experiences of the [learner] for which the [learning establishment] accepts responsibility. In this sense, there is an emphasis on whether, and the extent to which curriculum 'harms' learners. However, Ebert, Ebert and Bentley (2013), in addressing the direct benefits to students, explained that curriculum is "only that part of the plan that directly affects students. Anything in the plan that does not reach the student constitutes an educational wish, but not curriculum" (p. 2).

The variations in definitions of prescriptive and descriptive curriculum are illustrated here in their breadth and emphasis. Given the definitions presented, I contend that an amalgamation of prescriptive and descriptive definitions of curriculum would represent a holistic definition that would facilitate operational distinctions by educators. Glatthorn and colleagues proposes the following definition of curriculum:

> The curriculum is a set of plans made for guiding learning in [institutions of learning], usually represented in retrievable documents of several levels of generality, and the actualization of those plans in the classroom, as experienced by the learners and as recorded by an observer; those experiences take place in a learning environment that also influences what is learned. (p. 27).

According to Glatthorn and colleagues, there is an implicit relationship between an environment that impinges on learning, curricula and instruction (which is considered

to be the central aspect of the curriculum). Therefore, educators should consider curricula as the total learning experience for students.

2.7.3 Types of Curricula

The word curriculum (as defined from early Latin origins) literally means 'to run a course.' The curriculum is comprised of the knowledge and skills that students are to learn by conscious and unconscious socialisation, through "norms, values, and belief systems [which are] embedded in the curriculum, the [university] and classroom life; [these are] imparted to students through daily routines, curricular content, and social relationships" (Margolis, 2001, p.6).

Arguably, Goddard (1979) was among the first to suggest key curricula distinctions in determining that there were five forms of curricula. For example, the ideological curriculum (a curriculum of ideas which is constructed by scholars and teachers and intended to reflect funded knowledge); the formal curriculum (approved by the state and is representative of society's interest); the perceived curriculum (what others think the curriculum to be); the operational curriculum (the observed curriculum that is delivered in classrooms); and the experiential curriculum (as experienced by learners).

Subsequently, Glatthorn and colleagues (2019) presented five less cumbersome classifications: the *recommended curriculum* (that which is endorsed by individual scholars, professional association and reform commissions); the *written curriculum* (intended to ensure that educational goals and systems are well managed, outlining goals to be accomplished and specific objectives to be mastered); the *supported curriculum* (as reflected in and shaped by the resources allocated to support and deliver it); the *taught curriculum* (the curriculum that is delivered and seen in action as the teacher teaches); the *tested curriculum* (the set of learned knowledge and skills that that are assessed in teacher-planned classrooms); and the *learned curriculum* (is used here to denote all the changes in values, perceptions, and behaviour that occur as a result of school

experiences. As such, it includes what the student understands, learns, and retains from both the intentional curriculum and the hidden curriculum). The first four aspects of curricula proposed by Glatthorn and colleagues represent the *intended curriculum*.

2.7.3.1 The *formal curriculum.* (also see Glatthorn *et* al (2019) written curriculum) is that which is officially recognised. It is public, available to all those who ask for it and is meant to be explicit (Portelli, 1993). The *formal* curriculum constitutes instruction and guidance of a teacher, in and around classroom activities that are provided by the lecturer/teacher within a collection of singularly taught subjects and syllabi, in an academic setting (Grant, 2008; Jackson, 1992). These activities encompass the learning, teaching and assessment practices, including but not limited to course design and pedagogic practices (Barnett, 2009; Dandridge *et al.,* 2008).

2.7.3.2 The informal curriculum represents. a predominantly ad hoc, unscripted learning and teaching that takes place between students and faculty (Hafferty, 1998). The informal curriculum in HE consists of the things that students learn through the everyday experiences of attending university, rather than conscious, deliberate educational objectives of the institution (often found in lesson plans, course syllabi, courses of study and other public documents). Specifically, it consists of the implicit messages transmitted on a daily basis about socially derived and socially legitimated conceptions of what constitutes valid knowledge 'proper' behaviour, acceptable levels of understanding, social evaluation and differential power (Jackson, 1985). The informal curriculum arguably has its origins in cultural reproduction and consensus theories of schooling that advocates the exposure to considerable elements of socialisation that doesn't form part of the curricular content (Jay, 2003). These are "the norms, values and belief systems embedded in the curriculum, the school and classroom life, imparted to students through daily routines curricular content and social relationships" (Margolis 2001, p.6). For racially minoritized students in the UK university milieu, healthy

staff/student relationships are enacted through the informal curriculum, and may be a means of stimulating interest and promoting student engagement. Further, Hackman (2005) posited that social justice education acknowledges systems of power and privilege that motivates social inequality. Hackman also advocates for the critical examination of oppression on institutional, cultural and individual levels, in the advancement of social change and stated that "factual [educational] information must not merely reproduce dominant, hegemonic ideologies but instead represent a range of ideas and information that go beyond those usually presented in mainstream media or educational materials" (p. 105). In relation to students from racially minoritized backgrounds in HE, research cited the curriculum as an institutional factor that perpetuates disparities in attainment (Berry and Loke, 2011; Dandridge *et al.,* 2008; Singh, 2011).

2.7.3.3 The *learned* curriculum refers to. what students learn in practice. What students learn is indicated by achievement of learning outcomes, and quantified by assessment scores. This study acknowledges the variations between what is prescribed to be taught, what is delivered and what is learned (Glatthorn et al., 2019). Primarily. This study is concerned with the *learned* curriculum, specifically as it relates to the *perceived* aspects of the *learned* curriculum – students' perspectives of how they experience the curriculum. From a CRT perspective, this is important because it enables me to understand the extent to which whiteness is normalised in promoting and sustaining epistemic injustice that shapes the educational experiences of racially minoritized students in postsecondary education (Fricker, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1995b). Epistemic injustice relates to "distributive unfairness in respect of epistemic goods such as education or information" (Fricker, 2010, p.1).

Previously, Glatthorn and colleagues (2001) identified the *excluded curriculum* as one of eight sources of curricula. Simply put, the *excluded curriculum* is what has been left out. Although this conceptualisation of curricula predates Glatthorn and

colleague's later classifications proposed in 2019, I contend that in the context of this study, the *excluded curriculum* is significant. For example, UK history curricula often cite the trans-Atlantic slave trade as a key element of Black history, as opposed to the Sphinx of Giza, built by Khafre (nephew of Khufu, ruler of the Fourth Dynasty in Egypt in approximately 2613 BC) which is recorded as the earliest known colossal structure anywhere on earth (Hornung, 1999). While the trans-Atlantic slave trade centres *whiteness,* dismemberment of great African kingdoms, degradation, subjugation and the dehumanization of people of African heritage, an illumination of the Sphinx of Giza centres the impressive African history of engineering, architecture, medicine, theology, geometry and organized systems of government that predates colonialism.

Arguably, the HE curriculum is perceived as a hegemonic device. Some commentators believe that the relationship between the historical, political, cultural and social positioning of the curricula warrants acknowledgement (Dandridge *et al.,* 2008; Mountford-Zimdars *et al.,* 2015; Shilliam, 2016: 2017a). It is believed that the curriculum should endeavour to promote academic curiosity, epistemic integrity and academic freedom (Fairbanks, 2015; Gabriel, 2017; Lawton, 2018; Newsinger, 2016; Richardson, 2015).

Conceptualisation of curricula as it relates to this study is specifically concerned with its content and how it is taught. As mentioned here, conceptualisations of curriculum are situated within the *formal curriculum,* the *excluded curriculum* and the *learned curriculum* (or *perceived curriculum*) – this includes what is experienced by students. For example, tacit understandings which are transmitted subliminally through recurrent practices and interactions. I use the term *perceived curriculum* here to highlight possible discrepancies between the intended learning outcomes and students' subjective understandings of what was/is being taught. Within the context of this thesis, it is important to acknowledge calls to decolonise the curriculum in postsecondary education,

where racially minoritized students perceive the curriculum as being predominantly "White" (Meda, 2020; Rhodes Must Fall, 2018; Swain, 2019; Thomas and Jivraj, 2020).

Therefore, this study is concerned with understanding how the curriculum is experienced or perceived by students (particularly racially minoritized students), rather than measuring what students have learned. It seeks to understand the 'descriptive' nature of the curricula – how it 'benefits or harms individuals it touches' (Glatthorn et al., 2019). Returning to Goddard's (1979) conceptualisation of curriculum briefly, this thesis sheds light on the *perceived curriculum* and the *experienced curriculum* in order to gain insight into the learning experiences of learners in a UK HEI. The thesis illuminates discrepancies between what Glatthorn and colleagues call the *intended curriculum* and *learned curriculum,* in order to shed light on the *excluded curriculum*.

This section has provided a synopsis of literature in order to obtain an understanding of the curriculum. The subsequent section will present the main conclusions in relation to the phenomenon of the degree awarding gap in UK HEI.

2.8 The Degree Awarding Gap

An exploration of educational outcomes as it relates to achievement. Attainment is beyond the scope of this project. However, I thought it fit to engage with key literature relating to the phenomenon of the 'degree awarding gap' as a means of providing additional contextual understandings of structural inequalities that causes and sustains differences in educational experiences and outcomes between BAME students and their White peers. Research suggests that there is a dearth in institution-wide interventions aimed at achieving cultural change, in redressing the degree awarding gap (Mcduff et al., 2018; Mountford-Zimdars et al., 2015). This section draws on headline findings from research into the degree awarding gap (Broecke and Nicholls, 2007; Berry and Loke, 2011; Dandridge et al., 2008; Equality Challenge Unit, 2008; Mountford-Zimdars et al., 2015; Richardson, 2008; Singh, 2011). What follows serves to compliment the

subsequent sections, and will explore literature in relation to the phenomenon of the 'degree awarding gap'.

The first serious discussion and analysis of the degree awarding gap emerged with a large-scale cohort analysis, based on records of 65,000 students from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) data of entrants to HE in 2002-03 (Broecke & Nicholls, 2007). This proved a catalyst for future exploration of the phenomenon of the 'degree awarding gap' in UK universities. The researchers analysed data to include English-domiciled undergraduates who successfully completed their degrees in academic year 2004/05. The researchers acknowledged race as a social construct and explored how race, along with other social, demographic and historical characteristics intersect to promote inequality in educational outcomes. For example, ethnicity, subject area studied, prior attainment, type of level 3 qualification, index of multiple deprivation (IMD)[14], gender, disability, age, institution attended and term-time accommodation. While IMD models relative depravation, it is important to acknowledge that these data may be misleading, as students' homes may lie in a deprived area, but they may not necessarily be deprived. The researchers did not control for term time working/living and English as a second language. In addition to its seminal findings, the research highlighted disparities in attainment in relation to gender – with the exception of First-Class Degrees, where females were more likely to obtain a higher degree classification than male students. The most significant finding that emerged from the research was that race was found to have a negative impact on attainment for racially minoritized students, when controlling for all other social and demographic factors.

Subsequently, Dandridge *et al.* (2008) reported the research and development outcomes in a project commissioned by the Higher Education Academy and the Equality Challenge Unit (now AdvanceHE), between 2007 and 2008. The research focused on sector-wide understandings of teaching, learning and assessment activities/issues; impact

of policy drivers in addressing differentials in attainment; and perceptions of the degree awarding gap by staff and students. The researchers utilised policy guidelines (Race Relations Act, 1976 (as amended by the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000; Gender Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2006 (Superseded by the Equality Act, 2010)) as frameworks to explore practical strategies to address differentials in attainment in relation to ethnicity and gender. The findings and recommendations of this research suggested that there needed to be institutional buy-in in order to address differentials in attainment and translate policy and strategy into practice, while recognising the salience of wider factors such as intersectionality and multiple discrimination that promote differentials in attainment. The researchers recommended that practical strategies to explore the impact of policy drivers and academic staff's perception of the degree awarding gap should be evaluated. For example, learning, teaching and assessment practices need to be aligned with equality legislation. Additionally, the researchers recommended that the data capture, planning and analysis from various sources should be amalgamated in order to include complementary data sources, thus supporting research on degree awarding gaps. Based on the research findings, Dandridge and colleagues hypothesised that a student deficit model is often used as a barometer to account for attainment variations.

Richardson's (2008) review of literature (Connor et al., 1996; Elias and Jones, 2006; Leslie, 2005; Naylor and Smith, 2004; Owen et al., 2000) explored associations between degree attainment, ethnicity and gender. Richardson concluded that societal structures have an impact on the aspirations and attainment of BAME students. This is of importance in the exploration of the degree awarding gap in light of educators'/teachers' systematically lower subjective expectations for least-advantaged students, despite their objective academic performance (Gillborn, 2008; Gillies and Robinson, 2012; Richardson, 2008; Rollock, 2007; Tikly et al., 2006). Another important finding was that

BME students were more likely to encounter exclusionary attitudes and behaviours by teachers. The study highlighted intersectional variations in attainment in relation to gender and age, within the BME group. Richardson recommended additional research into the impact of ethnicity on attainment.

The Higher Education Academy and Equality Challenge Unit‘s (now Advance HE) summit programme involved 15 institutional teams (Berry & Loke, 2011) that collaborated to address issues of ethnicity and degree attainment differentials. The summit offered an opportunity for practitioners and academics to share ideas and initiatives on how to support HEIs to achieve and better their degree attainment for BME students. The programme provided support through a series of institution-based activities. Participating institutions acknowledged the presence of a degree awarding gap through prior analysis of statistical data. All but three institutions had a degree awarding gap in excess of the national average (a total of 46.5% points between the institution with the lowest and highest gap). The institutions were motivated to address differentials in attainment due to institutional drivers such as legislation and sectoral opportunity drivers (league tables, national student satisfaction (NSS), institutional identity/ vision. The participating institutions cited structural, organisational, cultural, financial and contextual challenges and barriers to addressing variations in degree attainment. For example, low percentage of BME staff, lack of identification of locus of change or ownership of the agenda, and non-inclusivity of the curriculum. Additionally, a lack of resourcing, and ethical dilemmas in relation to telling students/staff about the degree awarding gap (for fear of causing self-replicating behaviours and avoiding a blame culture). Institutions reported complexity in designing initiatives to address the degree awarding gap, due to the fact that BME students were not a homogeneous group. Berry and Loke (2011) presented recommendations to inform future practice in relation to initiatives to address the degree awarding gap. For example, conducting an internal audit; identifying levers

for change; incorporating ethnicity attainment within current institutional strategies/policies; engaging alumni bodies and staff networks as agents of change; improving BME student learning experience; building knowledge through data collection; designing initiatives to address curriculum design; conducting curriculum reviews in order to enhance learning outcomes for BME students; and developing initiatives to change institutional culture and behaviour in relation to perceptions held of BME students. The research concluded that addressing the degree awarding gap is unlikely to be achieved by 'quick fix' solutions. Rather, mainstreaming sustainable engagement with action by engaging stakeholders to 'champion the cause'. Equally, embedding change may be achieved by developing collaborative cross-sector relationships, where practice can be trialled, monitored, evaluated and shared across the sector.

A synthesis of research evidence relating to UK domiciled BME students' participation in HE provided a synopsis of the increasing body of literature in relation to differentials in attainment (Singh, 2011). The primary aim of the synthesis was to "provide a bedrock of evidence from which a range of policies and practice[s] could be developed" (p.8). Singh's synthesis focussed on research relating to practice in England, since it was identified that there was a dearth of evidence in relation to BME students' success and participation at that point in time. The research highlighted implications for key stakeholder groups and practical applications for addressing inequalities faced by BME students at all stages of their student journey. These inequalities included broad patterns of discrimination and exclusion in relation to student success. The synthesis highlighted the measures of success currently employed in empirical research (participation, retention, degree attainment and graduate employability), and the degree awarding gap in relation to these measures. The literature showed that prior academic preparedness and social integration at university may enhance student persistence.

Further, strategies recommended to mitigate against these barriers centred on developing student's sense of belonging, wellbeing and self-esteem. Recommendations for improvement of the institutional culture included improving the social and racial campus climate through the development of a greater awareness of equality and diversity of academic and support staff. Research within the synthesis warned against directly targeting and labelling BME students, as this may promote negative racial/cultural stereotypes. Singh concluded that BME students' experience in HE was less than satisfactory due to wider institutional factors, such as lack of support, deficiencies in the curriculum and isolation (due to lack of cultural diversity). The role of the curriculum in perpetuating disparities in attainment for BME students was articulated. Most notable, the synthesis highlighted a Race Equality Toolkit (Universities Scotland, 2010) as a tool to assist academics in aligning and implementing race equality into institutional activities and processes. Singh concluded that disparities "in attainment [were] associated with a range of personal, cultural, institutional and structural factors… overlaid with instances of direct and indirect racism" (p. 37).

A report commissioned by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) explored reasons for differential student outcomes in HE and evaluated steps taken by a number of institutions to reduce the degree awarding gaps (Mountford-Zimdars et al., 2015). The report aimed to collate, critically review and evaluate existing evidence, as well as develop a consensus of causes of attainment and approaches to addressing the degree awarding gap. The report focused on three student groups: BME students, disabled students and students from lower socio-economic backgrounds. The research explored themes of retention, attainment, progression to further studies and progression to graduate employment. The researchers acknowledged that wider societal inequalities may have an impact on students' performance in HE and hypothesised that four possible factors, underpinned by influences at varying levels may be the cause of

differential outcomes for different student groups. For example: at the macro level – national context of learning in HE and the socio-historical and cultural structures; the meso level – curricula and learning; and micro level – relationships between staff and students, social-cultural and economic capital, and psychosocial and identity factors. Mountford-Zimdars and colleagues found that willingness by HEIs to address the issue of differential attainment has seen them depart from a defensive posture in purely data driven approach to operationalising action research. These findings corroborated previous research on attainment differentials (Berry and Loke, 2011; Singh, 2011), in that "the least-advantaged students achieve lower rates of attainment and progression even after controlling for other influencing factors" (p.1). In this sense, differentials are examined with respect to: achieving a degree; achieving a good degree; or achieving a degree and progressing to graduate employment or further studies.

The first dedicated report which explores the enduring problem of ethnicity awarding gaps in UK higher education in detail across individual and course level characteristics concluded that that drivers of inequalities in degrees awarded to students cannot be easily disentangled from those related to racialised inequality and those related to other societal and educational inequalities (Codiroli Mcmaster, 2021). According to Codiroli Mcmaster (2021) "the main issues in HE relating to ethnicity awarding gaps are not students' ethnicity but the structures and systems within HE that privilege whiteness" (p. 4). Chief among its findings was the fact that in academic year 2019/20 87.1% of White qualifiers received a 'good degree' compared with 77.2% of BAME qualifiers – representing a degree awarding gap of 9.9 percentage points. Specifically, the gap between Black and White qualifiers was 18.6 percentage points. Russell group universities had the smallest awarding gaps (4.4%), with Million Plus universities reporting the largest gaps (15%). Notably, between 2018/19 and 2019/20 (during the COVID-19 pandemic), the largest decrease in the White/BAME awarding gap was

recorded – falling by 3.4 percentage points. Using logic regression analysis, the researcher tested whether awarding gaps remained when controlling for individual and institutional characteristics. The findings from the logic regression analysis demonstrated that while controlling for individual characteristics explains a large proportion of the degree awarding gaps, a large gap remains unexplained. When individual and institutional characteristics as well as prior attainment was considered, the awarding gap remained pronounced for Black African (7.2 percentage points) and Black Caribbean (6.5 percentage points), compared to White students. The report also concluded that awarding gaps are present in all non-White groups, and that the size of awarding gaps differ across different courses, disciplines and institutions.

Together, these studies outline that there is a persistent, pervasive problem of inequalities in academic attainment (manifested in degrees awarded) between White and BAME students in UK HE. The problem is starker between White and Black students. In the main, research into the degree awarding gap (Berry and Loke, 2011; Codiroli Mcmaster, 2021; Dandridge *et al.,* 2008; Equality Challenge Unit 2008; Mcduff *et al.,* 2018; Mountford-Zimdars *et al.,* 2015; Richardson, 2008; Singh, 2011) unanimously acknowledge that broad patterns of institutional racism and individual acts of discrimination may be endemic in the UK HE environment. There is a consensus that there needs to be a greater sectoral understanding of factors that may influence degree attainment and the extent to which this impacts on students' overall experiences, because even when controlling for all mediating factors, ethnicity proves to have a statistically negative effect on degree attainment, subsequently promoting sub-optimal outcomes, particularly for the least-advantaged students. The review of literature in relation to the primary known factors influencing the degree awarding gap highlighted the curriculum as a primary obstacle that impedes optimal attainment in HE for racially minoritized

students. Thus, the degree awarding gap, is in part, a product the social relations and structures within the environments which students operate.

This chapter has provided background and context as it relates to key operations, features and discourses within the HE milieu. The chapter has provided insight into the major theoretical perspectives relating to student engagement, specifically exploring the relationship between the emerging theory of interest and engagement, BAME students' experiences of engaging with the HE curricula, theoretical underpinnings of curricula and discourses relating to the degree awarding gap. The literature suggest that Interest is essential for the maintenance and development of engagement. Interest is conceptualised as both a motivational variable and a psychological state and includes both cognitive and affective components. This study is concerned with the whiteness of the curriculum and the extent to which it impacts on student engagement. In the context of this study, curriculum is conceptualised as what is taught and how it is taught. Hence this chapter reviewed key literature that explores the theoretical aspects of curricula as well as the typology of curricula. The chapter also explored literature that investigated the degree awarding gap. The findings from this review of literature suggest that race has a statistically significant negative effect on educational experiences of BAME students UK HEIs. It is important to note that this is not the singular causal factor. The greatest disparity in attainment exists between Black and White students. Professor John Richardson deduced that the degree awarding gap is correlational rather than causal in nature – "ethnicity per se' is almost certainly not the effective variable influencing students' academic attainment" (Richardson, 2018: 98). The next chapter presents the conceptual framework which explicates the theoretical underpinnings of this research.

Conceptual Framework

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the conceptual framework that guides this research. In conducting the investigations outlined within this thesis, there was purposive recourse to philosophies, theories, theoretical frameworks and approaches. This chapter reports on the central theoretical underpinnings that are applied throughout this thesis.

Conceptually, this thesis aims to explore students' perceptions of the cultural (in)sensitivity of the curriculum and its impact on their engagement – as indicated by students' interaction(s) with teachers and their interest in their subject. The key concepts in this thesis are cultural (in)sensitivity of the curriculum (the 'whiteness' of the curriculum), interaction with teaching staff, and student's individual interest. These concepts are useful in developing an analytical framework (figure 1) for understanding racially minoritized students' experiences of engagement with the curriculum and environmental factors (e.g., teaching staff and peers) on university campuses. I use an amalgam of CRT (Ladson-Billings and Tate, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Matsuda *et al.,* 1993) and the developmental/educational theory of interest (Hidi and Renninger 2006; Renninger and Hidi 2016) within this thesis to centre the experiences of traditionally marginalised and underserved students (i.e., students from BAME backgrounds) that often remain on the periphery of educational research, or discredited in some instances.

3.2 Critical Race Theory

Critical Race Theory (CRT) was created as a critique of the slow progress of racial reform within the United States legal arena. CRT is a theoretical framework that seeks to establish an understanding of the relationship between racism (systemic/institutional) and power (Ladson-Billings, 1998; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Accordingly, racism is

not limited to individual acts; it is systemic, structural and multileveled. In accounting for the hegemonic 'whiteness' of the curriculum, CRT contends that racism is enmeshed within the curriculum, where there is an assumption of 'whiteness' as the norm – the barometer by which all else is judged. Gloria Ladson-Billings posits that this may have a negative impact on minority ethnic people as their experiences may be 'muted and erased', leading to "distortions, omissions, and stereotypes" that are often invisible to White people (1998, p.8). This was illuminated in the previous chapter, where I reviewed the primary research that explores racially minoritized students' dissatisfaction with the curriculum and its effects on racially minoritized students. These factors may serve to promote epistemic injustice – distributive unfairness in the way that the curriculum is presented (Fricker, 2010).

As applied to this study, I would expect my independent variables (dimensions of a culturally sensitive curricula, i.e., Diversity Present; Accurate Portrayals; Multiple perspectives; Challenge Power; Connecting Learning and Action; Inclusive Learning Environment; and Instructor Cultural Competence) to influence my dependent variables (interaction with teachers and interest), because a more culturally sensitive curricula may be associated with more positive engagement experiences for racially minoritized students in HE.

Solórzano and Yosso (2002) delineated five goals of CRT as an education research methodology: "1) the intercentricity of race and racism with other forms of subordination, 2) the challenge to dominant ideology, 3) the commitment to social justice, 4) the centrality of experiential knowledge, and 5) the transdisciplinary perspective" (pp. 25-26). In this thesis, I am focusing primarily on the second, third, fourth and fifth goals outlined here. I will discuss how I have addressed each of these goals in the methodology chapter.

In order to merge the goal of understanding, interrogating and unsettling institutional/systemic racism with the goal of shaping praxis, critical race scholars have proposed several key tenets as a means of aiding the analytical use of the CRT framework. The tenets of CRT are underscored by the social justice imperative of combatting racism and redressing structural inequalities. These tenets are:

a) the use of counternarratives or counter-storytelling to decentre majoritarian narratives (Richard Delgado & Stefancic, 1998)
b) acknowledgement of racism as a permanent feature of society (Bell, 1980: 1990: 2004)
c) whiteness as property (e.g., rights of possession, use and disposition (Harris, 1993)
d) a critique of the colour-blind ideology, meritocracy and importance of interest convergence (Bell, 1980)
e) intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989)
f) a critique of liberalism (Crenshaw, 1995: 1988)

In addition to the environmental factors that promote/maintain structural inequality, CRT supports the examination of *race*-focused (e.g., racial stratification and racial identity) and *race*-reimagined (e.g., interest, achievement motivation etc.) constructs and their impact on promoting inequality (DeCuir-Gunby & Schutz, 2014). “Utilising a *race*-focused approach involves placing racial constructs at the centre of analysis, making it the focus of the research rather than simply playing a cursory or non-existent role” (p. 248). The use of *race-reimaged* constructs involves “viewing a traditional construct through a socio-culturally relevant lens” (p. 248).

Within this thesis, I am concerned with the *race-focused* ethnic categories White and an amalgamation of ethnic minority categories, such as, Black, Asian or minority

ethnic categories. (I discuss this in greater detail in subsequent sections within this chapter). I am also concerned with the *race-reimagined* curricula and its effect on its dependent variables (e.g., interaction with teachers and interest). Specifically, within this thesis, I reconceptualise racially influenced sociocultural perspectives (e.g. history, context, multiple identities, etc.) in order to explore whether, or the extent to which the whiteness of the curriculum impacts on racially minoritized students' educational experiences. Conceptually, the examination of *race-focused* and *race-reimagined* issues can only be realised by the development of new tools and lines of inquiry into engagement and achievement among racially diverse student populations in postsecondary education.

CRT also facilitates an analysis and understanding of whether, or the extent to which there may be incongruence between students' cultural meaning-making system and the cultural information that is contained within their curriculum. CRT accounts for the racial and cultural realities that can contribute to inaccurate assumptions that racial and cultural bias create. These inaccurate assumptions shape institutional environments, policies, programs and practices. Furthermore, these biases may impact negatively on the experiences of racially minoritized students in postsecondary education.

CRT challenges the apartheid of knowledge that is present in academic research (Bernal & Villalpando, 2002). An apartheid of knowledge is considered to be epistemic racism that limits the range of possible epistemologies considered legitimate within the mainstream educational research. By epistemologies, I mean how we come to know things and the frames of reference that we use to theorise and rationalise these understandings. I use the word epistemologies to mean "the theor[ies] of knowledge" in a similar manner to Proudfoot and Lacey (2010, p.118).

Throughout this thesis, I do not adopt a problem-posing-orientation to my use of CRT, but rather, I explicitly adopt a problem-solving-orientation to my use of CRT. In

other words, my intention here is to move beyond a critique of the whiteness of the curriculum in postsecondary education, towards an analysis of students' perceptions of the curriculum and the development of a tool that can be used as a framework to develop a more culturally sensitive curriculum. These perceptions illuminate how we can connect the principles of CRT to the emerging theory of interest to advance a new conversation about what it means to develop a culturally sensitive curriculum that will improve students' interaction with teachers and increase their interest. A problem-solving-orientation also enables me to give voice to students of colour who are calling for the decolonisation of higher education (Douglas, Shockley and Toldson 2020; Peters 2018).

Critical race conscious scholars and researchers opposing race inequality have applied the principles of CRT to guide the interpretation and use of quantitative data, especially in the field of education (Annamma et al., 2013; Covarrubias and Velez, 2013; Garcia, López and Vélez, 2018; Sullivan, 2007; Sullivan, Larke and Webb-Hasan, 2010). In keeping with this tradition, David Gillborn and colleagues have applied the tenets of CRT to generate QuantCrit as a toolkit to support critical understandings and insights whenever quantitative data are encountered in policy, practice or research (Gillborn et al., 2018). CRT and QuantCrit are broad philosophical principles. Similar to David Gillborn and colleagues' use of QuantCrit, I utilise QuantCrit as a framework throughout this thesis in an integrated manner to explore the extent to which the curriculum is culturally sensitive, as well as its impact on shaping the experience of racially minoritized students in postsecondary education.

3.3 QuantCrit

Numbers play a key role in how inequality is shaped, legitimized, and protected. Data are not objective. Rather, they are shaped by the socio-political context within which they arise, and by the people who cultivate them (Said, 1978; Zuberi, 2001). Additionally, "…numbers never 'speak for themselves'….the numbers are given voice largely by the

theoretical underpinnings upon which they rest" (Covarrubias and Velez, 2013, p. 270). Within education, statistics are frequently mobilized to disguise, obscure, and even to further legitimize inequities and maintain a discriminatory status quo, specifically those that affect racially minoritized students (Garcia et al., 2018; Gillborn et al., 2018). Therefore, applying CRT understandings and insights whenever ostensibly 'neutral', 'objective' quantitative data are derived and framed may situate these data within a historical and social context and illuminate patterns of discrimination and disadvantage (Zuberi, 2001). A QuantCrit approach is used throughout this thesis to (de)centre racial and cultural contexts in order to understand the factors related to the content of the curricula, how it is taught, and how it is perceived by students. Within education, a QuantCrit approach serves to decentre deficit paradigms and methodologies that underestimate the influence of a culturally sensitive environment as the bedrock of student achievement (Covarrubias & Velez, 2013; Gillborn et al., 2018). Deficit methodologies and paradigms often employ statistical data to justify arguments that frame minority ethnic students' identity and abilities in a narrative of deficiency. These narratives attribute students' lack of persistence, lack of engagement, and under-attainment to misalignment between their commitment to their goals and institution, and their inability to integrate into academic sub-systems and institutional environments (for example, Vincent Tinto's model of student departure (Tinto, 1975:1993)). I depart from typical deficit-oriented quantitative approaches in favour of a more holistic approach, by using QuantCrit throughout this thesis not in a manner to enable me to achieve objectivity, or to remain unbiased. Rather, I use QuantCrit in order to enable me to foreground my positionality in connection to the research. This enables me to contextualise my findings and analyses in relation to broader socio-historical and socio-cultural theories and paradigms that account for the formation and preservation of structural inequalities (Atkinson et al., 2018; Gillborn, 2010). I am cognisant of the

potential of reproducing the same problematic ends that I endeavour to address and will outline how I account for potential biases within the methodology chapter.

As a framework, QuantCrit can be applied to interrogating, analysing and presenting statistical data by operationalising its core principles. These principles are summarised as follows:

a) the centrality of racism
b) numbers are not neutral
c) categories are neither 'natural' nor given: for race read 'racism'
d) voice and insight: data cannot 'speak for itself'
e) using numbers for social justice

Throughout this thesis, the aforementioned tenets of CRT are used in an integrated manner in order to support the responsible use of statistics to promote social justice and meet egalitarian ends. CRT is also used to facilitate an analysis and understanding of the factors that may promote inequalities in student outcomes (e.g., differentials in academic outcomes (gaps in degrees awarded); differences in interaction with teaching staff; interest; and experiences of engagement with the curriculum) for racially minoritized students in postsecondary education. These social justice imperatives and egalitarian ends can only be achieved in culturally engaging campus environments.

3.4 The Culturally Engaging Campus Environments Model

Museus' (2014) Culturally Engaging Campus Environments (CECE) Model is consistent with the tenets of CRT. Museus's model underscores the influence of institutional environments in shaping the experiences and outcomes of racially minoritized students. The model accounts for the influence of external factors (i.e., financial influences, employment influences and family influences) that shape individual influences (i.e., sense of belonging and academic dispositions such as motivation, intent to persist etc.) in

predicting success among racially diverse students in postsecondary education. The CECE model proposes that, "the degree to which culturally engaging campus environments exist at a particular postsecondary institution is positively associated with more positive individual factors [such as: students' sense of belonging] and ultimately greater success" (Museus, 2014, p. 207). According to Museus students who "encounter more culturally engaging campus environments are more likely to exhibit greater sense of belonging, have more positive academic dispositions and higher levels of academic performance, and be more likely to persist to graduation" (p.210). The CECE model outlines the conditions that are necessary for students to thrive and the extent to which those environments positively affect attainment. Museus (2014) proposes that there are nine indicators of culturally engaging campus environments that reflect the diverse needs of racially minoritized students and facilitate their success. These are:

a) cultural familiarity
b) culturally relevant knowledge
c) cultural community service
d) opportunities for meaningful cross-cultural engagement
e) collectivist cultural orientations
f) culturally validating environments
g) humanised educational environments
h) proactive philosophies
i) availability of holistic support

My conceptualisation of the dimensions of a culturally sensitive curriculum (figure 1) are aligned with three of Museus's nine indicators within his conceptualisation of a culturally engaging campus environment (such as, culturally relevant knowledge, cross-cultural engagement; and culturally validating environment). However, unlike Museus, who highlights the campus environment broadly and delineated nine features of

a culturally engaging campus environment, I am focusing on one feature – the curriculum.

In keeping with the traditions of CRT, Museus (2014) espouses that the absence of culturally engaging campus environments and the permanence of whiteness (Applebaum, 2010) may promote *cultural dissonance* – incongruence between minority ethnic students' cultural meaning-making and paradigms, and the cultural information that they encounter in educational environments (Museus & Quaye, 2009). The absence of positive cultural references may serve to further exacerbate cultural dissonance and promote cultural misalignment and belonging uncertainty (Osterman, 2000; Walton & Cohen, 2007). In regards to my study, I contend that students who encounter a more culturally sensitive curriculum are more likely to report more interaction with teaching staff and greater interest in their subject; this may lead to better educational experiences and greater achievement.

In relation to the conceptual positioning of this thesis, the CECE model is beneficial, as it highlights nine environmental considerations when exploring the broader contextual factors that influence the experiences of racially minoritized students in postsecondary education. Museus' conceptualisation of a culturally engaging campus environment helps me to shift to a pragmatic focus on one particular context of higher education (the curriculum) to identify the factors worthy of investigation there. However, there are limitations in Museus' model as he focuses on the campus environment, but does not adopt a critical race and historical approach in accounting for the positioning of the culturally engaging campus environment, and specific aspects of the curriculum within a wider institutionally racist landscape. Extending Museus's conceptualisation of a culturally engaging campus environment, I adopt a race-reimagined approach by situating my conceptualisation of culturally sensitive curricula within a broader sociocultural/ socio-historical context that has created an institutionally racist

environment that guides the development of the culture, policies and practices in postsecondary education.

Key Theoretical Constructs

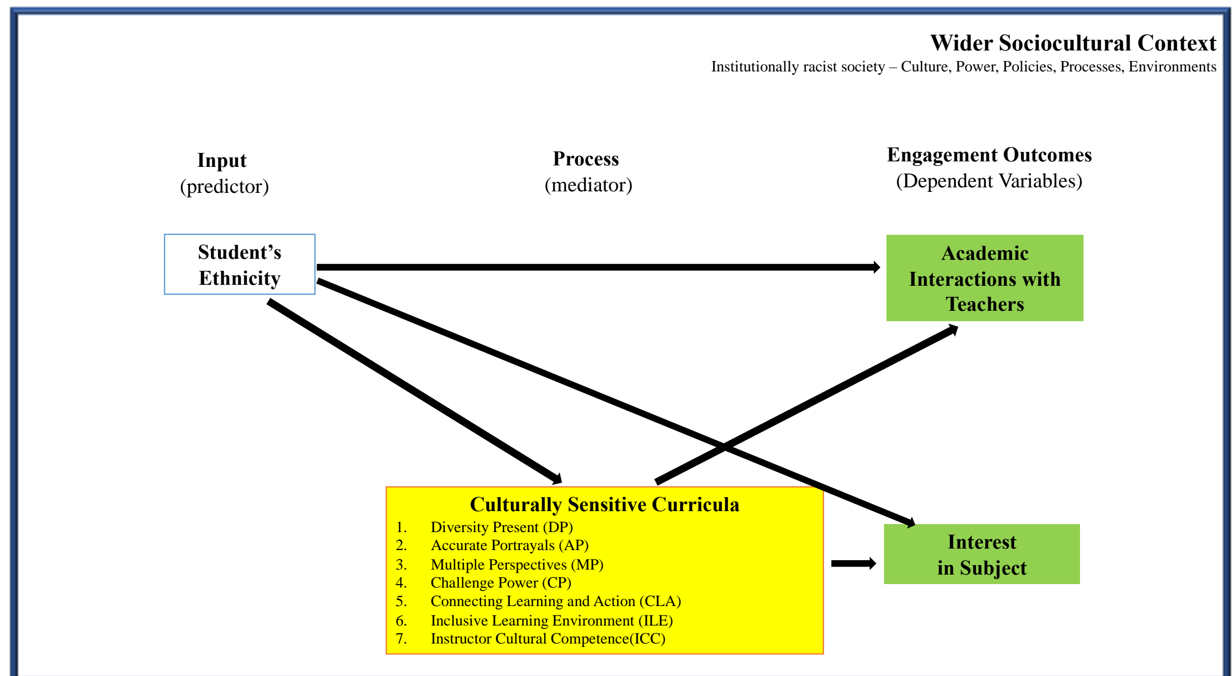

Figure 2 – Conceptual Framework

3.5 Culturally Sensitive Curricula

Multicultural education is conceptualised as a more effective means of teaching increasingly diverse student cohorts. Multicultural education may be delineated into two broad strands: *Culturally Responsive Teaching* – teaching practice (Gay, 2000: 2002) and *Culturally Relevant Pedagogy* – teacher paradigm (Ladson-Billings, 1997; Ladson-Billings 1995b: 2014). These strands are underscored by the philosophy of the classroom as a site for social change through the deliverance of social justice education.

My conceptualisation of a culturally sensitive curricula embodies the concept of multicultural education, builds on Museus (2014) CECE model, and is also based on frameworks of culturally responsive education, culturally responsive classroom climate, culturally relevant pedagogy, assessment of collegiate campus climate and culturally

responsive teaching (Bryan-Gooden, Hester and Peoples, 2019; Gay, 2000; Holgate 2016; Ladson-Billings, 1995b; USC Race Equity Centre, n.d.).

Bryan-Gooden, Hester and Peoples (2019) Culturally Responsive Scorecard proposes seven aspects of a culturally responsive education: teaching, pedagogy, curriculum, theories, attitudes, practices, and instruction materials. Among these, pedagogy and curriculum were seen as the most important components. Building on Bryan-Gooden and colleague's constructs of culturally responsive education, the content of the curriculum and how it is taught will have great implications on the cultural sensitivity of the curriculum.

Holgate (2016) culturally responsive classroom climate scale, posits that a culturally relevant classroom is one where students and instructors are challenged to broaden their paradigms beyond their individual beliefs and presumptions. Holgate argues that students' perceptions of the classroom environment has implications for achievement and engagement.

Gloria Ladson-Billings proposed a further step for effective pedagogical practice in the form of a culturally relevant pedagogy. Ladson-Billings (1995b) theorised that culturally relevant pedagogy "not only addresses student achievement but also helps students to accept and affirm their cultural identity while developing critical perspectives that challenge inequalities that schools (and other institutions) perpetuate" (p. 469).
A culturally sensitive curriculum is one in which attitudes, teaching methods and practice, teaching materials, curriculum, and theories relate to students' cultures, histories, cultural characteristics, identities, and contexts. A culturally sensitive curriculum represents diversity positively, challenges power structures and engages students in inclusive classroom interactions. A culturally sensitive curricula presents opportunities for learners to identify with positive references (see Wei, 2007), which will, in turn, enable them to continue to develop expertise and abilities. These newly

developed expertise and abilities may reinforce feelings of self-efficacy and interest as well as a sense of agency (Lent et al., 1994). Variations in the understandings of the curriculum highlights the necessity for a curricula that respects all people (including those from diverse backgrounds) and appreciates knowledge from all communities and cultures as legitimate knowledge (contrary to the notion of an 'apartheid of knowledge'). An apartheid of knowledge in this context relates to the climate of separation between what is considered 'legitimate' knowledge and 'illegitimate' knowledge in academia (see Bernal and Villalpando (2002); and Villapano and Bernal (2002)). A culturally sensitive curricula has been suggested as a means of reducing attainment disparities in UK higher education (Dandridge *et al.,* 2008; Gabriel, 2017; Hockings, 2010; Museus, 2014; Mountford-Zimdars *et al.,* 2015:2017; Universities UK, 2020). Both interactions with teachers and students' interest in their subject can be seen as measures of students' engagement with their studies. When students perceive the curriculum as more culturally sensitive, I expect that they will be likely to report more frequent and quality interactions with teachers and to report greater interest in the subject. Both of these measures have been shown in other studies as reviewed in the literature review, to be associated with increased engagement.

3.6 Dimensions of the Culturally Sensitive Curricula Scales (CSCS)

Given the importance of a culturally sensitive curricula in postsecondary education, it is essential to have a measurement tool to assess whether, or the extent to which students perceive the curricula as culturally sensitive. The CSCS provides a tool that can promote social change by advocating teaching from a social justice perspective; it assesses the extent to which the curriculum empowers students to think critically, challenge power structures and appreciate cultural, social and demographic differences.

The CSCS builds on three main frameworks (Bryan-Gooden et al., 2019; Holgate, 2016; Gloria Ladson-Billings, 1995b) to initially propose seven dimensions of a

culturally sensitive curriculum (see Figure 2). The Challenge Power (CP) construct, in particular, goes beyond the previous frameworks to uniquely focus on the extent to which curricula stimulate the development of critical consciousness to challenge hegemonic cultural norms and power structures. The initial 34 items (see Table 1) were adapted from items and questions developed by Bryan-Gooden, Hester and Peoples (2019) and Holgate (2016), with additional items related to power drawn from readings of CRT (Bell, 1980: 1992; Crenshaw, 1991; Dixon, 2014; Gillborn, Warmington and Demack, 2018; Hill Collins, 1986; Hiraldo 2010; Hylton, 2011; Ladson Billings and Tate, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1997: 1998; Ledesma and Calderón, 2015); Solórzano and Yosso, 2002) .

Inspired by Bryan-Gooden, Hester and Peoples' (2019) previously validated questionnaire, I hypothesised that there are seven dimensions to a culturally sensitive curricula (Table.1): *Diversity Represented*, *Accurate Portrayals, Multiple Perspectives, Challenge Power, Connecting Learning and Action, Inclusive Learning Environment, Instructor Cultural Competence*.

Sub-scale	Number of Items	Construct description and numbered items
Diversity is present (DP)	5	**Focuses on how people from diverse backgrounds are referenced within the curriculum** 1 The curriculum features people from diverse backgrounds. 2 The curriculum references different ethnic and cultural traditions, languages, religions and/or clothing 3 Diverse ethnicities and nationalities are portrayed 4 Diverse family structures (i.e. single parents, adopted or fostered children, same-sex parents, other relatives living with family, etc.) are portrayed 5 Differently-abled people are represented
Accurate portrayals (AP)	10	**Focuses on the assumptions, perceptions and considerations of people from diverse backgrounds that may distort how they are considered by society** 6 People of diverse ethnicities are represented as researchers or professionals, not just as participants in research, clients, consumers, customers, etc. 7 When social problems (e.g. crime, violence) are presented, people of colour are usually considered the problem 8 When interpersonal conflicts are presented, people of colour are usually considered the problem 9 Social situations and problems are situated within a social context rather than seen as individual problems only 10 When people of colour have problems, white people are usually presented as being able to solve those problems 11 Non-dominant populations and their strengths and assets are highlighted 12 People like me are usually assumed to have low family wealth, low educational attainment and/or low income 13 People like me are usually assumed to be competent and successful 14 People like me are represented stereotypically, or presented as foreign or exotic 15 When people like me are represented, it is in terms of their strengths, talents or knowledge, rather than their perceived flaws or deficiencies
Multiple Perspectives (MP)	6	**Concentrate on the breadth of perspectives and knowledge systems that are represented in the curriculum and recognised as authentic knowledge** 16 The curriculum respects that different cultures may have different understandings, skills and/or philosophies 17 The curriculum presents different points of view on the topic, especially points of view from marginalised people/communities 18 The curriculum addresses problems that are of concern to marginalised people/communities 19 The curriculum includes knowledge that is relevant to people like me 20 The curriculum addresses problems that are relevant to people like me 21 The curriculum includes perspectives from people like me
Challenge power (CP)	3	**Focus on the curriculum's ability to provoke critical thought in challenging ideologies** 22 The curriculum raises critical questions about power and/or privilege that are usually taken for granted 23 The curriculum encourages students to challenge existing power structures in society

		24 The curriculum encourages students to critique unearned privilege
Connecting learning and action	3	**Focuses on empowering students to act against inequality, promote equity through connection with social, political and environmental concerns** 25 The curriculum encourages students to connect learning to social, political or environmental concerns 26 The curriculum encourages students to take actions that fight inequity or promote equity 27 When I engage in experiential learning activities, I am guided to accept cultural differences and adjust my communication appropriately
Inclusive learning environment (ILE)	3	**Focuses on the development of a learning environment accepting of cultural differences and respectful of different perspectives** 28 My instructors make an effort to pronounce everyone's name correctly 29 My instructors encourage students to be mindful of other students' perspectives 30 My instructors encourage students to respect other students' perspectives
Instructor cultural competence (ICC)	4	**Focuses on the instructor's understanding, interest and appreciation for cultural differences** 31 I feel comfortable responding when my instructor asks questions 32 My instructors provide examples which relate to my cultural background 33 My instructors seem to understand my culture 34 My instructors show interest in my cultural background

Table 1 – Culturally Sensitive Curriculum Scale: Initial Constructs

Diversity Represented refers to the extent to which the experiences and perspectives of minority ethnic people and people from diverse backgrounds are represented and referenced within the curriculum (Bryan-Gooden, Hester & Peoples, 2019).

Accurate Portrayals focuses on the assumptions, perceptions and considerations of people from diverse backgrounds that may distort how they are considered by society.

Multiple Perspectives is concerned with the breadth of perspectives and knowledge systems that are represented in the curriculum and recognised as authentic knowledge.

Challenge Power focusses on the curriculum's ability to enable students to develop critical consciousness and socio-political awareness to challenge dominant ideologies (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995).

Connecting Learning and Action focuses on empowering students to act against inequality and promote equity through connection with social, political and environmental concerns.

Inclusive classroom interactions focus on the development of a learning environment accepting of cultural differences and respectful of different perspectives (Holgate, 2016) perspectives.

Instructor Cultural Competence focuses on the instructor's understanding, interest and appreciation for cultural differences.

Taken together, the absence of these components within the curriculum may have negative implications on students' interaction with teachers.

3.7 Interaction with teachers

Interactions with teachers can be seen as a measure of students' engagement with their studies in postsecondary education (Ashwin, 2009; Zusho, 2017). When students perceive the curriculum as more culturally sensitive, they may be more likely to report more interactions with teachers (Lundberg & Schreiner, 2004). This has been shown in other studies to be associated with attainment (Frings et al., 2020). This thesis is primarily concerned with students' interaction with teachers on academic-related matters, with a secondary focus on students' interaction with teachers on non-academic matters. As used here, academic interaction with teachers refers to interaction between students and teachers on academic matters related to their program of study or major (e.g., "Communicated with teaching staff about the content of my course outside of taught sessions"). Non-academic interaction with teachers relates to communication between students and teachers on pastoral or non-academic matters (e.g., "Communicated with teaching staff about my personal development"). In relation to the phenomenon under consideration, the absence of quality interactions with teachers promote ethnic minority students' feelings of alienation, marginalization, and micro- invalidation (Arday,

Belluigi, & Thomas, 2020; Harper, 2013; Harper, Smit, & Davis, 2018; Meda, 2020; Museus, 2014; UUK, 2019). This is likely to affect BAME students' interest in their subject.

3.8 Interest

Interest is a motivational variable that promotes the development of a psychological state of engaging, or predisposition to engage with "particular classes of objects, events or ideas over time" (Hidi and Renninger, 2006, p. 112). Interest involves person-environment interactions, and having a physiological/neurological basis connected to reward circuitry (Hidi & Renninger, 2006; Renninger & Hidi, 2011). Interest is both a psychological state and motivational factor that can be used to predict educational success (Harackiewicz et al., 2016) – including academic progression and performance. As previously mentioned in Chapter 2, there are two types of interest discussed in educational literature– *situational interest* and *individual interest*.

Situational interest is the affective reaction and focused attention which is triggered by environmental stimuli in the moment; this may or may not persist over time (Hidi, 1990; Hidi and Anderson, 1992; Schiefele, Krapp and Winteler, 1992). Situational interest supports the development of individual interest (Hidi & Anderson, 1992).

Individual interest refers to the immediate psychological state and predisposition to reengage with a particular content over time, once this predisposition has been activated (Renninger, 2000). Individual interest has been shown to have a positive impact on effort, persistence and academic achievement (Schiefele et al., 1992). Particular situations trigger interest, which when supported (environmentally) can develop and be sustained over time. This thesis is concerned with individual interest – the extent to which the "whiteness" of the curriculum impacts on students' interaction with teachers in triggering and sustaining individual interest and subsequently, positive engagement experiences.

There are four phases of Interest development (see Hidi and Renninger, 2006):

a) triggered Situational Interest
b) maintained Situational Interest
c) emerging Individual Interest
d) well-developed Individual Interest

These four phases of Interest are developed cumulatively and sequentially. Progress through the four phases of Interest requires a supportive environment (for example, Culturally Engaging Campus Environments (Museus, 2014) – culturally sensitive curricula represents a key aspect if the campus environment). Without support (environmental and/or human), interest development may dissipate, become dormant, or relapse to a previous state (Renninger, 2000). As previously mentioned, this thesis is chiefly concerned with students' individual interest (not situational interest), and specifically the extent to which each component of the CSCS mediates between ethnicity and interest. Consistent with previous research (Quinlan, 2019), I expect that BAME students will report lower interest in their program of study than White students.

This chapter has presented and discussed the conceptual underpinnings, theoretical and philosophical frameworks that are applicable to this thesis. Consistent with a quantitative methodology, the ontological assumption in this thesis is interpretivist, and the epistemological stance is one that considers knowledge as subjective, personal and unique. This chapter has discussed CRT (its core principles, specifically *QuantCrit*) and the emerging theory of interest as central to the conceptual framework for this thesis. The following chapter extends these considerations by discussing the research design and methodology.

Methodology

> Ontological assumptions give rise to epistemological assumptions; these in turn give rise to methodological considerations; and these in turn give rise to instrumentation and data collection. Indeed, added to ontology and epistemology is axiology. This moves us beyond regarding the research methods as simply a technical exercise and concerned with understanding the world; this is informed by how we view the world. In what we take understanding to be and what we see as the purpose understanding, and what is deemed valuable. (Hitchcock and Hughes 1989, p.21).

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the research design and methodology. It serves as the philosophical underpinning for the research. Throughout, I will provide justification for the analytical and investigative paths adopted.

As described in Chapter 1, the purpose of this research was to explore and apply a series of principles (Gillborn et al., 2018) in order to guide a race-conscious investigation into the relationship between the cultural insensitivity of the curriculum (whiteness of the curriculum) and students' engagement (as related to two key measures of engagement – interaction with teachers and interest in subject). Guided by the defining characteristics of CRT (Delgado and Stefanic, 2017; Ladson Billings and Tate, 1995; Matsuda *et al.,* 1993; Taylor, Gillborn and Ladson-Billings, 2016), the developmental/ educational theory of interest (Hidi and Renninger, 2006; Renninger and Hidi, 2016), the conceptual framework outlined in Chapter 3, and the theoretical constructs of reviewed literature (outlined in Chapter 2), I developed a set of Culturally Sensitive Curricula Scales (CSCS) in order to gain students' perspectives on whether, or the extent to which the cultural (in)sensitivity of the curriculum impact on their

engagement. I then developed two instruments to investigate students' perceptions of their interaction with teachers (Interaction with Teachers Scales). The Interaction with Teachers Scale contained two sub-scales (academic interaction with teachers Scale (AITS) and non-Academic interaction with teachers scale (non-AITS). Then, I utilised Quinlan's (2019) previously validated individual interest scale (α.88) and the Interaction with Teachers Scales to validate the new set of culturally sensitive curricula scales with interaction with teachers and interest. This enabled me to investigate the relationship between culturally sensitive curricula, students' interaction with teachers, and their subject interest. This chapter presents justification as to why a race-conscious, quantitative strategy of enquiry was deemed most appropriate and a non-experimental design in the form of a survey questionnaire the most effective instrument to utilise in order to undertake the aforementioned enquiry.

Within this thesis, I espouse a transformative philosophical position. A transformative worldview holds that the research embodies an action agenda for reform that may "change the lives of the participants, [and] the institutions in which individuals work or live" (Creswell, 2009, p.27). As it relates to my study, this aligns with a race-focused/ reimagined approach (DeCuir-Gunby & Schutz, 2014) and the tradition of CRT. According to Creswell (2009), the transformative world view focuses on the needs of groups of individuals that may be marginalized or disenfranchised in society. This world view holds that specific issues need to be addressed that "speak to important social issues of the day, issues such as empowerment, inequality, oppression etc" (p.27). This transformative worldview has shaped my approach to the research, because similar to Derrick Bell (1995), I believe in the promotion of social justice in education, where traditionally excluded perspectives can disrupt majoritarian discourses in order to harness collective wisdom as a means of promoting all-inclusiveness. As Audrey Lorde (1984, p.28) puts it:

> Those of us who stand outside the circle of this society's definition of acceptable [people]; those of us who have been forged in the crucibles of difference... know that survival is not an academic skill. It is learning how to stand alone, unpopular and sometimes reviled, and how to make common cause with those others identified as outside the structures in order to define and seek a world in which we can all flourish. It is learning how to take our differences and make them strengths. For the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house.

I accept the challenge of others that have gone before me (e.g., Bell, 1995; and Hill Collins, 1986) to forge new tools, while recognising that the master's house may never be fully dismantled. In keeping with this tradition, the set of CSCS that are developed here supports a transformative philosophy, adopts a social justice orientation to research, and is bequeathed as a set of tools to measure the extent of the cultural (in)sensitivity of the curricula, in order to create a more culturally sensitive curricula that impacts positively on students' interaction with teachers, their interest and educational experiences.

Michael Crotty's (2005) contention of the researcher's considerations when designing research is acknowledged in this thesis. Crotty presents four questions:

a) What theoretical perspective lies behind the methodology in question?
b) What epistemology informs the theoretical perspective?
c) What methodology governs the choice of methods?
d) What methods are proposed for use?

Within this chapter, I will utilise the questions posed by Crotty (2005) as a framework in an integrated manner in order to illuminate and justify my research design and methodology. After a brief recap of the research objectives and questions, I will cover the following topics: researcher's positionality, research design, research

philosophy, research methodology, research methods (reflection on the research methods chosen and rationale for choice of methods) and ethical deliberations.

4.2 Research Objectives and Questions

The major objective of this research is to investigate whether, or the extent to which the cultural (in)sensitivity of the curriculum negatively impacts racially minoritized students' interaction with teachers and interest in their subject, in shaping their educational experiences in postsecondary education. To realise the objectives of the research, I reiterate, the following questions that will be addressed:

a) To what extent do students perceive the curricula as culturally sensitive? Does this vary between White and racially minoritized students?
b) To what extent does the "whiteness" of the curriculum affect racially minoritized students' interaction with teachers?
c) To what extent does the whiteness of the curriculum affect racially minoritized students' interest in their subject during university?
d) Which aspects of culturally sensitive curricula support students' interaction with teachers?
e) Which aspects of culturally sensitive curricula support students' interest?

Positionality "reflects the position that the researcher has chosen to adopt within a given research study" (Savin-Baden and Major 2013, p. 71). Some aspects of positionality are culturally ascribed, or generally considered to be fixed, while others are contextual and subjective. Hence, it is imperative not to make assumptions about a researcher's positionality. Therefore, the following section explicates my positionality as the researcher in order to provide clarity as it relates to my world-view, ontological and epistemological positions.

4.3 Researcher Positionality

Racialised inequality has been a pervasive feature of education that creates a culture that disproportionately affect people of colour and (un)wittingly affords privilege to people racialised as White. Within the last decade alone, there has been a considerable amount of research and commentary interrogating the complexities and ongoing challenges of reducing inequalities in degrees awarded within postsecondary education (Berry and Loke, 2011; Higher Education Statistical Agency, 2020; Miller, 2016; Mountford-Zimdars *et al.,* 2015; Richardson, 2018; Singh, 2011; UUK, 2019) and the whiteness of its Anglo-American/ Eurocentric curriculum (Harper, Smit and Davis, 2018; Meda, 2020; UCL, 2017). Accordingly, there have also been calls from faculty, staff and students to recurate the curriculum as a means of reconciling with its imperialist/ colonial past, redressing the structural inequalities that it propagates and reimagining a contemporary curriculum representative of the people who it proposes to serve (Arday, 2020; Arday, Belluigi and Thomas, 2020; Hussain 2015; Meda, 2020; Mirza, 2018; Peters, 2018; Rhodes Must Fall, 2018; Thomas and Jivraj, 2020).

My positionality as a Black man, who was born in a former English colony and socialised in the 'metropole' has led me to be partial to social justice and particularly advocating for the marginalised and oppressed. This has steered me to pursue a career as a professional Occupational Therapist (with a specialism in Occupational Science)[15], adopting a social justice orientation to practice, and accordingly, work to address racial injustice. Similar to others who precede me (such as: Arthur Ashe (1993) and Stuart Hall (2017), I reside in a liminal space and appreciate that the daily lived experiences of socially constructed racialised injustice and racialised realities is an ontological truth, where race is a paradox. Similar to Fine and colleagues (2003, p.176) I acknowledge the dilemma of "destabilising the notion of race theoretically" while recognising "the lived presence of race". My positionality provides cultural competence and enables me to

adopt a race-focused approach to analysing, interpreting and validating the quantitative data gathered from the participants within this study.

I have been employed as a third space professional (Whitchurch, 2015) in postsecondary education for just over a decade, primarily in employment positions relating to student engagement and student achievement. This has afforded me the privilege of interacting with thousands of students from a variety of demographic backgrounds, disciplines and institutions. Equally, I have collaborated and interacted with a significant number of faculty and professional services staff from a number of institutions across the United Kingdom, United States, the Caribbean, South Africa, Canada and Europe. These interactions have enabled me to engage with contemporary dialogues, discourses, policies, processes and pedagogies that has illuminated racialised inequalities in postsecondary education. I have also had experiences and personal encounters with systemic/ epistemic racism while working and studying in postsecondary education. These experiences, encounters, interactions and engagements with faculty, professional staff and students largely centred around the topics of: (1) curriculum and pedagogy (e.g., what is omitted, what is taught and how it is taught); (2) teaching and learning (interaction with teachers and teachers' attitudes); (3) campus environment (e.g., representation, sense of (un)belonging and racial microaggressions) and (4) policies and processes (e.g., policies relating to the promotion of race equality (including penalising perpetrators of racialised violence) and processes to report incidences of racial discrimination and harassment).

Specifically, among persons with whom I have interacted in the past decade in HE, there was a consensus (particularly among racially minoritized students and staff) that the curriculum (its content and how it is taught) and structural inequalities were the main drivers of disparities in student engagement, achievement and educational experiences. Most notably, contrary to deficit paradigms in relation to racially

minoritized students (Gillborn, 2010; Smit, 2012; UUK, 2019), I noticed that on entering their institutions, most students expressed interest in their program of study (major), were ambitious, motivated and were able to envision a better version of themselves. It also became evident that there was a dearth of quantitative studies and instruments that investigated, or facilitates an analysis of the whiteness of the curriculum and its impact on BAME students' interaction with teaching staff and interest in their subject. I noted that this was an area that needed attention, as it would enable me to cross ontological and epistemological boundaries and occupy a theorising space in contributing to the creation of decolonising methodologies (Datta, 2018; Smith, 2012). In this tradition, I juxtapose my academic training with my lived experiences to theorise and make meaning of the social phenomena of racialised inequality in HE. As Gloria Anzaldua (1990) puts it:

> Theory, then is a set of knowledges. Some of these knowledges have been kept from us – entry into some professions and academia denied us. Because we are not allowed to enter discourse, because we are disqualified and excluded from it, because what oases for theory these days is forbidden territory for us, it is vital that we occupy theorizing spaces… By bringing in our own approaches and methodologies, we transform that theorizing space. (p. xxv, emphasis original).

These experiences, interactions and insights have underscored my motivation to embark on this research. For me, this research can be considered as a cathartic exercise grounded in the Afrocentric principles of Ma'at – *Utulivu, Ukweli* and *Uhaki* (loosely translated from Swahili to mean, 'the quest for justice, truth and harmony'). Embarking on this study signals my commitment and intention to pursue social justice and truth with the aim of redressing structural inequalities and reimagining a culturally sensitive curriculum as a means of redressing epistemic power imbalances and improving the educational experiences for racially minoritized students in postsecondary education.

This study underscores my commitment to the quest for justice, truth and harmony in HE and society as a whole. In the words of Abraham Lincoln:

> Commitment is what transforms promise into reality. It is the words that speaks boldly of your intentions. And the actions that speaks louder than words. It is the making of time when there is none. Coming through time after time, year after year. Commitment is the stuff character is made of, the power to change the face of things. It is the daily triumph of integrity over skepticism. (Abraham Lincoln, cited in Harvey and Vendura 2007).

This section has established my positionality. The next section will outline the research design and methodology.

4.4 Research Design

This section reports on the research design and methodology employed to operationalise the research. Before discussing the epistemological and ontological orientations, as well as the methodology that governs the choice of methods employed throughout the study, I will present the philosophical underpinnings that undergirds this thesis.

4.4.1 Research Philosophy

> Whether we are aware of it or not, we always bring certain beliefs and philosophical assumptions to our research… The difficulty lies first in becoming aware of these assumptions and beliefs and second in deciding whether we will actively incorporate them into our studies. (Creswell 2013, p.15).

According to (Quinlan, 2011), all research projects are underpinned by the philosophical position of the researcher; this should run as a golden thread throughout all stages of the research. Hence, there is an inter-relationship between the theoretical stance adopted by the researcher, the methodology and methods employed, and the researcher's

view of the epistemology (Crotty, 1998). Broadly speaking, the choice of research methodology is influenced by the theoretical perspectives adopted and the researcher's epistemological stance; this in turn influences the researcher's choice of methods (Gray, 2018). According to Crotty (2005), our assumptions of how we view the world are based on the nature of reality (ontology) and our assumptions of how knowledge is acquired/ created (epistemology). Therefore, it is imperative for the researcher to comprehend the worldview that informs their research.

Approaches to methodology in research have been informed by academic discourses and paradigms. A paradigm is "a way of looking at or researching phenomena, a worldview, a view of what counts as accepted or correct scientific knowledge or way of working" (Kuh, 1962, p.23). Paradigms are not mutually exclusive. The nature and purpose(s) of the research may be clarified and organised by drawing on a singular or combination of paradigms. There are two principal social science paradigms which have directed approaches to educational research in recent past (positivist and interpretive) (Cohen et al., 2018; Crotty, 2005; Gray, 2018).

4.4.2 Positivism

Positivism has been associated with the nineteenth century French Philosopher Auguste Comte, who was the first thinker to use the word *positivism* for a philosophical position (Beck, 1979). The positivist philosophy contends that genuine knowledge is founded on a sensory experience, such as knowledge emanating from scientific methods and this knowledge should be restricted to the mental, physical and natural worlds (Sarantakos, 2005). A positivist approach turns to observation and reason by generating laws and theories that can be investigated empirically in order to account for behaviour. In establishing the general doctrine of positivism, Comte posited that there "is" an "objective" reality that "can" be known and that "all genuine knowledge is based on sense experience and can only be advanced by observation or experiment" (Cohen,

Manion and Morrison, 2011, p.7). Further, Comte asserted that where the knowledge is gained from objective, discernible and measurable data all other knowledge should be rejected (Cohen et al., 2018; Gray, 2018). When a researcher chooses to adopt a positivist epistemological paradigm, they operate within a paradigm where the view of the world is seen to be external to the researcher.

A major criticism of the positivist approach is its inability to account for the multifaceted and dynamic nature of human behaviour over time with the use of rigid social laws. Williams and May (1996) also highlighted the limitations in the claims to 'objectivity' by positivists, by explaining that positivists fail to acknowledge that science goes beyond producing theoretical explanations on the basis of what can be observed (i.e., mathematical formulations, atomic particles, black holes etc.). These limitations were supported by Popper (1968), who suggest that no theory can ever be proved simply by multiple observations, since only one instant that refute the theory would demonstrate it as false. In the context of the phenomenon under investigation within this thesis, the use of positivism would not prove beneficial.

The aim of this study is to investigate students' perspectives of the impact of the cultural (in)sensitivity of the curriculum on their engagement. In exploring the phenomenon under consideration, the use of a positivist approach is in opposition to the race-focused and CRT approach employed as guiding conceptual underpinnings of this thesis. Specifically, in line with the tenets of CRT and traditions of QuantCrit, data are not objective (Gillborn et al., 2018), hence the adoption of a positivist approach supports a deficit approach by centring whiteness and maintaining hegemony. This consideration led to the search for an alternate paradigm in order to aid my understandings of the phenomenon under consideration.

4.4.3 Interpretivism

Interpretivism is an anti-positivist stance. Crotty (1998) asserts that interpretivism looks for "culturally derived and historically situated interpretations of the social life-world" (p.67). Interpretivism is aligned with constructivism in terms of epistemology. According to Pring (2015) interpretivism espouses the view that:

> the world consists of ideas, i.e., a social construction, and that researchers are part of the world that they are researching, the meanings are negotiated between participants (including the researcher), that an objective test of truth is replaced by a consensus theory of truth, that ideas of the world do not exist independently of those who hold them (i.e., require a redefinition of 'objective' and 'subjective'), that multiple realities exist and that what is being researched is context-specific. (pp. 65-66).

Interpretivism accords with qualitative research, where subjectivity occupies a central place in the research process, which is operationalized using verbal, rather than statistical analysis. The two paradigms (positivism and interpretivism) sets out a false dualism that should be rejected. These dualisms should be rejected on the basis that they artificially compel the researcher to choose between traditions, and they misrepresent the world as either a social construction, or being independent of the researcher. Pring argues that humans can be both the 'subject' and 'object' of research, and as such, the research should be situated in context, with an appreciation for the complex and complicated nature of the world, rather than adopting a priori either a qualitative or quantitative view of the world.

This section explored the position of interpretivism. In exploring the phenomenon under consideration through a race-focused lens, an interpretivist approach presents a dichotomy which nullifies a holistic approach to viewing the phenomenon under consideration by setting out a false dualism. Hence, I deem an interpretivist approach as

a singular approach to this research inadequate. The subsequent section explores the philosophical position of the pragmatist. The pragmatist departs from the either/ or choices proposed within the two previous philosophical positions (positivist/ interpretivist).

4.4.4 Pragmatist

Mixed methods research has multiple allegiances. For example, quantitative approaches are rooted in positivism, post-positivism and the scientific paradigm; qualitative methods may be rooted in the interpretive paradigm; Transformative approaches may be attracted to critical theory (Cohen et al., 2018). The principle of pragmatism appreciates the fact that the world is not exclusively quantitative or qualitative, but rather, a mixed world (Creswell, 2009). Mixed methods research amalgamates qualitative and quantitative data in a single study in order to provide a deeper, richer understanding by harnessing the strengths of each approach in promoting an understanding that a singular approach on its own would not provide (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Mixed methods research is not about data types but rather can be applied to all stages of the research (e.g., paradigms, ontologies, epistemologies, research questions and design, instrumentation, sampling, validity, data collection, etc.). Mixed methods research offers a more holistic understanding of the phenomena under investigation thereby increasing the credibility of the research results. In addressing 'fitness for purpose' Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2018) proposes that researchers can ask questions relating to "what is to be gained/ lost by looking/not looking at the world in mixed ways? What does the research approaches (objectivity, subjectivity, scientifically, qualitatively or quantitatively) tell us, and "what is it about the research that requires mixed methods research?" (p. 33).

4.4.5 Research Philosophy Underpinning This Study

Positivism and interpretivism can be regarded as paradigms that present "incomplete accounts of social behaviour when they neglect the political and ideological contexts of educational research" (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018, p.51). Therefore, the philosophical assumptions of the transformative worldview guide this research. A transformative worldview focuses on the needs of groups and individuals in society that may be marginalised, disenfranchised or underserved. It arose during the 1980s and 1990s from individuals who felt that:

> the positivist assumptions imposed structural laws and theories that did not fit marginalized individuals' issues of power and social justice, discrimination and oppression that needed to be addressed. [Additionally, critical theorists felt that a] constructivist stance did not go far enough in advocating for an action agenda to help marginalized peoples. (Creswell and Creswell, 2018, p.9).

There is no uniform body of literature that characterises a transformative worldview, however, its protagonists include critical theorists and social justice advocates. According to Mertens (2010), researchers adopting a transformative worldview need to ensure that their research is transformational in confronting and speaking to social issues of the day (such as, inequality, oppression and domination, and in this context, the whiteness of the curriculum). Mertens posited that the researcher should conduct the research in a manner so as not to perpetuate inequalities by further marginalising the participants of the inquiry. Transformative research should advance an agenda for change. In relation to this thesis, CRT is fundamental to my conceptual framework and commensurate with the transformational worldview (see Chapter 3).

4.4.6 CRT as a transformative worldview

As was mentioned in the previous chapter, Solórzano and Yosso (2002) delineated five goals of CRT as an education research methodology: "1) [illuminating] the intercentricity of race and racism with other forms of subordination, 2) [posing] challenges to dominant ideology, 3) the commitment to social justice, 4) the centrality of experiential knowledge, and 5) the transdisciplinary perspective" (pp. 25-26). This section discusses how my research is consistent with each of these principles.

In accounting for the *intercentricity of race and racism* (Bell, 1980: 1990: 2004), I contend that whiteness is enmeshed in the curriculum as a permanent feature. This whiteness undermines cultural sensitivity and promotes racialised modes of exclusion by way of its philosophical underpinnings and pedagogy. Racism therefore is not amenable to statistical enquiry. I assert that the resultant effect of the '*whiteness of the curriculum'* is racialised educational inequality, which is illuminated in the *perceived curriculum*. I use racism throughout this research not to depict individual acts of discrimination or harassment, but rather, to account for racist policies (Kendi, 2019).[16] My analysis is conducted in agreement with (Crawford *et al.,* 2019, p.126) "in the absence of a critical race-conscious perspective, quantitative analyses tend to remake and legitimate existing race inequalities." The conceptualisation of the project, that is, questioning the whiteness of the curriculum and designing a tool to facilitate this process is reflective of a challenge to the *dominant ideology if whiteness.*

In solidarity with a *commitment to social justice* (Creswell and Creswell, 2018; Garcia, López and Vélez, 2018; Hackman, 2005; Bell, 2007), I reject the notion that quantitative research is politically neutral. I adopt a race-focused approach (DeCuir-Gunby & Schutz, 2014) to analysing, contextualising and illuminating how racism is historically rooted in the curriculum (by way of the *whiteness of the curriculum*) and the extent to which these racisms impact negatively on students' educational experiences in

postsecondary education. Guided by a transformative worldview, I depart from employing a 'problem-posing' construction of educational inequality, towards a race re-imagined approach. This enables me to employ a race-re-imagined conceptual framework in order to develop a set of scales that assess the cultural (in)sensitivity of the curriculum as a means of redressing educational inequality.

The centrality of *experiential knowledge* is in keeping with the traditions of CRT (DeCuir-Gunby et al., 2019; Ladson-Billings, 1998) and is realised throughout this research in two specific ways.

Firstly, I deliberately oversampled BAME students in order to honour their experiences and perspectives and amplify their voices. Specifically, I sought the perspectives of students in their second year and beyond because they had experience of the curriculum and were more likely to be at a developmental stage to critically examine that curriculum. The intention here was to move beyond a critique of the *whiteness of the curriculum* towards a race-focused analysis of students' perceptions of the *whiteness of the curriculum* by using a validated, statistical instrument, that would also advance conversations in the field of education about what it means to have a culturally sensitive curriculum and why it matters. This amplifies the voices of racially marginalised students who have critiques about the *whiteness* of their curriculum, and further support calls to decolonise the curriculum (Decolonise Keele Network, 2020; Hussain, 2015; Peters, 2018).

Secondly, in recognising that data cannot 'speak for itself', nor is ever objective, because they are open to interpretation, I used my own *experiential knowledge* (see *Researcher Positionality* section 4.3) and contemporary understandings of theories, research and literature relating to educational research to shape the development of the items of the CSCS. The items of the CSCS conceptualise (re-imagine) the curricula as well as operationalise it. I also utilised my experiences and understandings to foreground

the research insights by adopting a race-conscious analysis of the research data. As part of that process, I applied a set of related CRT principles (QuantCrit (Gillborn et al., 2018)) in order to decentre majoritarian narratives (Richard Delgado & Stefancic, 1998) and mitigate against some of the problems that may arise when statistics are used in research relating to race equity, social justice and education.

This research is transdisciplinary (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002) because it crosses epistemological and disciplinary boundaries (Bernal & Villalpando, 2002; Hylton, 2011; Ladson-Billings, 2000; Omi & Winant, 1994; West, 1993). In the tradition of CRT, the transformative worldview that guides this thesis theoretically borrows from multiple traditions, methodologies and research methods.

This section has explained the philosophy that underpins this research. The following section will outline the research methods and approaches.

4.5 Research Methods

When collecting information for research purposes, convention offers three choice of approaches: quantitative approach, qualitative approach and a mixed methods approach (Cohen et al., 2018; David & Sutton, 2011). The primary purpose of the study was to empirically evaluate whether, or to what extent the cultural (in)sensitivity of the curriculum affects racially minoritized students' engagement (interaction with teachers and subject interest) in shaping their educational experiences in postsecondary education. In order to meet the aims and objectives of this study, I opted to adopt a transformative philosophical position, guided by a quantitative research approach. A quantitative research approach enabled me to answer questions about the relationship between my dependent variables (interaction with teachers and interest) and independent variables (dimensions of the culturally sensitive curricula (see Chapter 3)), in order to construct and validate a set of culturally sensitive curricula scales that can be used to assess, reflect on and improve the cultural sensitivity of the curricula in postsecondary education. This

was deemed necessary because there are currently no quantitative instruments available that assess the cultural sensitivity of the curriculum (specifically in terms of its content(s) and how it is taught). The study adopted a cross-sectional design.

4.6 Data Collection Methods

Within this research, survey questionnaires were used as the primary data collection medium. The survey questionnaires were administered in paper-based format and online, using the Bristol Online Survey package. This multi-modal approach was used in order to increase the probability of participants completing the survey.

4.6.1 Online surveys

As a methodology, online surveys for research is evolving. Survey authoring software packages such as Bristol Online Survey have made the administration, data collection and initial analysis of survey data faster and more efficient. A key strength of the online approach was that the use of this medium enabled me to access a greater number of participants from a range of disciplines across different geographical areas in a more pragmatic manner. Equally, the survey could be easily distributed on different platforms. For example, WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, LinkedIn and electronically by email. Participants were able to complete the survey at their convenience. Furthermore, administering the surveys online enabled me to access the responses in real time and store these data in a password protected file. Most importantly, administering the survey online enabled me to adopt a more pragmatic use of research time.

There are a number of limitations associated with administering the survey questionnaires online. It is prudent that these limitations are identified and the necessary steps taken to mitigate against the difficulties that they present. The primary limitation associated with administering a survey online is the absence of the researcher. The researcher's absence delimits the potential of providing clarity in the event that the

research participants have questions regarding any aspect of the research, the researcher. This was a fundamental consideration in the development of the CSCS which used qualitative field testing in order to create a Beta version of the CSCS (as outlined in the Instrumentation section below). Additionally, while the nature of online surveys enables the researcher to distribute the survey on a variety of platforms, the survey could go viral. In the case of sensitive research, this could potentially have implications in terms of confidentiality. The research within this thesis is not sensitive. Another limitation of online surveys is that a participant may repeatedly submit the same response; this may skew the results and introduce bias. As it relates to this research, the possibility of a respondent submitting the same results have been considered during the survey design and the necessary controls implemented to negate that possibility.

4.6.2 Face-to-face surveys

Administering survey questionnaires in paper-based format in person is probably the most popular and oldest form of data collection method for research purposes. I contend that the primary advantage of administering survey questionnaires face-to-face is the presence of the researcher, because this makes it easier for survey participants to seek and obtain clarity for the items on the questionnaire. In terms of this research, my identity as a Black man proved advantageous in soliciting participation from racially minoritized students due to the assumption of shared experiences of marginalisation in the academy. Some racially minoritized participants (particularly Black, Caribbean students) were pleasantly surprised to learn that I was completing doctoral studies, due to the dearth of Black doctoral students (particularly of Caribbean heritage) at my institution. This also served as a method of recruitment, as some students completed the questionnaire as a show of solidarity.

The limitations of administering questionnaires face-to-face should be considered as part of the research process. Administering survey questionnaires face-to-face often

proves time consuming, particularly travelling to different locations to recruit and administer the surveys. In the context of this research, I acknowledge that participants may not have been afforded sufficient time consider their participation in the research and complete the survey for various reasons (e.g., participants were often recruited in transit; academic staff ring-fenced a prescribed amount of time to assist the researcher to canvass responses; participants had other pre-arranged activities etc.). This may have implications for the quality of survey responses, as well as the response rate. The primary limitation of completing survey questionnaires face-to-face in paper-based format is that the data will need to be inputted into an electronic medium to facilitate analysis. Data entry can prove a tedious, time consuming exercise. In addition to the pragmatic considerations here, this also introduces the possibility of data input errors.

4.6.3 Sampling

Data were collected from 262 students in a research and teaching intensive public university in the South of England. I started collecting data in September 2019 and completed data collection in January 2020, prior to the disruption of face-to-face teaching due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Initially, registered students were identified as potential research participants in the population using the university's Student Data System (SDS) as a sampling frame. A sampling frame is a list, or other device used to define a researcher's population of interest (Lewis-Beck et al., 2004). My sampling frame focused on undergraduate (UG) students who studied in the second year and beyond, through to postgraduate taught (PGT) studies (but not postgraduate researchers (PGR)). I also adopted a specific focus on students who studied on programs taught in the faculties of social sciences, arts and humanities, rather than quantitative disciplines taught in the faculty of science (e.g., Mathematics, Economics, Biosciences and Physical Sciences). The rationale behind this was that the curriculum in science-related disciplines are normally constructed and assessed in a different manner (i.e., through laboratory

experiments and statistical/objective measures) as opposed to those in the Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities. Furthermore, it is generally considered more difficult to diversify the curricula of 'hard' science subjects due to its philosophical underpinnings and paradigms (Fildes et al., 2021). I theorise that scientists may be more likely to struggle to understand the CSCS items and the extent to which they relate to their subject. Larger numbers of students from racially minoritized backgrounds study in social sciences, arts and humanities disciplines and this also provided justification for choosing to sample participants from those disciplines.

The study did not involve stratification. A convenience sampling method was used, whereby respondents were chosen based on convenience or availability. For example, some participants were chosen from those who gathered in communal areas, while others were chosen from students who attended student-led social events. Prospective participants were contacted via email, social media (i.e., WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter etc.) and face-to-face, inviting them to complete the survey questionnaire. There was an oversampling of BAME students because the study adopts a race-focused approach to exploring the phenomenon under consideration, as aforementioned.

Students were approached at various sites (e.g., libraries, cafés, student common rooms and dining halls, etc.) and 11 classes (i.e., in the fields of Law, Social Work, English, History and Psychology etc.) across the university's campuses, at different times of day and different days of the week. Students were also recruited through student societies (i.e., at events and gatherings hosted by the Afro-Caribbean Student Society and Islamic Student Society, as well as the Students' Union), inviting them to participate in the research. Babbie (2015) refers to the above sampling process as multistage sampling, or clustering.

In addition, academics were consulted and asked to provide prescribed time for students to complete the survey either at the beginning, or at the end of their lectures/seminars. I was also invited by one academic to deliver 4 seminars on CRT, as part of their module; this opportunity successfully enabled me to solicit research participants. I was also invited by module convenors to deliver a ten-minute presentation about my PhD research to students who study on the MA in Advanced Child Protection course and to third-year undergraduate students who study on the Social Work program. Students were then asked to complete the survey at the end of the presentations. While raising my research sample by asking academics to visit their classes was successful in some instances, it proved unsuccessful in most instances. For example, requests to visit classes in the School of Law were all denied, with the exception of one academic who teaches a module that adopts a dynamic approach in enabling students to develop the socio-political awareness to challenge power (i.e., Race, Religion and Law). In terms of email requests to academics seeking permission to ask their students to complete the surveys in their classes, this approach proved only moderately successful as the majority of my email requests went unanswered.

The survey (Appendix B) was administered in paper-based format or online via Bristol Online Survey (BOS). Seventy five percent (n=195) of participants completed the survey on paper, while the remaining twenty five percent (n=67) of participants completed the survey online via BOS. Potential participants were told that the study aimed to explore “the extent to which your curriculum is culturally sensitive (or not)” in order to explore how the curriculum can be changed to better engage students from racially diverse backgrounds. No monetary incentive was provided. The survey was administered individually in all cases and typically took participants no more than fifteen minutes to complete. The study was approved by the ethics committee of my University department (Appendix C).

In terms of sample size determination, I aimed to achieve as large a sample size as possible in order to enable me to validate the set of culturally sensitive curricula scales. Sample size determination for psychometric validation is rarely ever justified as a priori; there are no absolute rules for the sample size needed to validate a questionnaire, given the type of questionnaire used (Osborne & Costello, 2004). Guidelines for the respondent-to-item ratio range from 5:1 (i.e., fifty respondents for a 10-item questionnaire; in terms of the CSCS 170 respondents (i.e., 34x5=170)) (Gorusch, 1983), 10:1 (Nunnally, 1978), to 15:1 (Pedhazur, 1997). Alternately, it is suggested that in establishing validity of respondent-to-item ratio, sizes of 50 should be considered as very poor, 100 as poor, 200 as fair, 300 as good and 1000 and over as excellent (Comfrey & Lee, 1992). Following this advice, one would aim for a minimum of 300 responses. On the whole, it is recommended that investigators achieve as large a sample size as possible, as sample size determination should be based on the researcher's analysis plans (Fowler, 2008). Having reviewed this literature, observed standards presented in published work, and consulted experienced scale developers, my aim was to achieve at least 250 responses.

Data were obtained from 262 students (73 males, 27.9% and 189 females, 72.1%). Approximately ninety two percent were UGs (n = 242) and 8% PGTs (n = 20). Eighty eight percent of participants (n = 231) were UK residents paying home fees, twelve percent (n = 31) were students paying overseas fees. The majority of the participants studied programs in the Faculty of Social Sciences (63%, n = 165) and Humanities (23%, n = 62). The remaining participants (14%, n = 35) studied on programs in the faculty of Science. Participants from the faculty of social sciences were primarily enrolled on Law, Social Work, Business, Sociology or Social Policy programs. Participants from the faculty of humanities were primarily enrolled on Religious Studies, History or English and American Literature programs. Sixty percent (n = 157) identified

as belonging to a BAME background, thirty eight percent (n = 100) identified as White, and two percent (n = 5) did not identify. When disaggregated, 32% of all students (n = 84) identified as belonging to a Black or Black British African background; 6% (n = 15) identified as Black or Black British Caribbean; 5% (n = 14) identified as belonging to an Asian or Asian British background.

4.7 Instrumentation

Upon completion of a literature review, an *Alpha* version of the CSCS questionnaire containing 30 items was developed. Semi-structured interviews were undertaken to determine whether and the extent to which the contents of the proposed draft questionnaire were clear and understandable. The process of initially validating the CSCS involved cognitive interviews with 40 participants (approximately 30 students and 10 members of staff). Upon completion of the initial interviews, a *Beta* version was developed.

Thirty students across two campuses of the same mid-ranked UK university from a diverse range of demographic backgrounds were interviewed (face-to-face) as part of the initial consultation process; among this cohort, students studied on a range of programs (e.g., Law, Psychology, Business, Social work, English, History) in the faculties of humanities and social sciences. Twenty academics and practitioners (e.g., Equality and Diversity practitioners, curriculum developers, academics, PhD students and postdoctoral researchers) were also consulted by email, in person or by social media. Participants were provided with a stable *Beta* version of the CSCS questionnaire (containing 30 items – Appendix A) and explicitly asked their opinions of its content, contextual applicability, and relevance, in order to find out whether the questionnaire would elicit response errors (e.g., whether the questions would generate the answers that I intended (Beatty & Wills, 2007; Conrad et al., 1999; Drennan, 2003)), lexical errors (e.g., overestimation of respondent's knowledge and contextual understanding of the

vocabulary used (Dillman, 2000)), inclusion/exclusion problems (e.g., difficulty understanding the scope of the question (e.g., module of study or program of study)) and computational problems (e.g., providing answers that do not fall into any category (Conrad et al., 1999)). Notes from all meetings were logged in my research diary. Upon completion of the piloting phase, all recommendations were analyzed and key themes identified. The common themes that were identified were grouped, and reported here. Participants were explicitly asked to provide concrete examples that could be used to refine the items. Consultation was also sought from a senior researcher with expertise in scale development, who checked the items for clarity of formulation and other technical issues that should be considered in scale development.

Taking these perspectives into account, the *Beta* version of the CSCS was revised and a set of CSCS was developed (Appendices 1 and 2) that reflected changes made from the Beta version to the revised version used in the study. The revised 34 items representing 7 variables is shown in Table 1. This version was then trialled with 262 students who study on programs in the faculties of social sciences and humanities, as will be described in Chapter 5.

A survey questionnaire using Likert Scales was used to gather students' perceptions of the cultural (in)sensitivity of the curriculum (through the CSCS), students' interaction with their teachers (through the interaction with teachers scale), and students' interest (through Quinlan's 2019 interest scale).

First, participants rated 34 items on a on a 4-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree to 4=strongly agree) to assess the cultural sensitivity of the curriculum (see Table 1 and Appendix B). The set of culturally sensitive curricula scales builds on three frameworks (Bryan-Gooden et al., 2019; Ladson-Billings, 1995b; Holgate, 2016) to initially propose seven dimensions of cultural sensitivity (see Figure. 1).

Second, two interaction with teachers scales (Academic Interaction with Teachers scale (AITS) and non-Academic Interaction with Teachers scale (non-AITS)) were used to assess students' interaction with their teachers on a 4-point Likert scale (1=never to 4=very often). The reliability of both scales was good (AITS 6 items: α= .86; and non-AITS 5 items; α= .80). The AITS captured students' academic interaction (e.g., "Communicated with teaching staff about assignments outside of taught sessions") and the non-AITS captured other kinds of interactions with teachers (e.g. "Communicated with teaching staff about my personal development").

Third, Quinlan's (2019) previously validated 11-item individual interest scale was used to assess interest. Participants responded to the items on a 5-point Likert scale (1-strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree) in relation to their program of study. The reliability of the scale was good (α=.88); the scale was consistent with Renninger and Hidi (2020) definition of individual interest by capturing emotional interest in the field (e.g., "I am curious about this field in general"), knowledge (e.g., "I am quite good in this field"), and frequent, independent and voluntary engagement (e.g., "Regularly, I find myself thinking about ideas from lectures in this field when I'm doing other things").

4.8 Data Analysis

Four steps were followed during the analysis of data:

a) identifying the factor structure of the CSCS through the use of exploratory factor analysis in order to identify the number of factors that would be retained for further investigation
b) cross-validating the analysis using confirmatory factor analysis
c) estimating each dimension of the CSCS internal consistency reliability coefficients (Cronbach's alphas)

d) significance testing (Independent-samples t-test) in order to determine the effect of ethnicity on the CSCS, and correlation analyses (Pearson product-moment correlation analyses), in order to examine the relationships between ethnicity and aspects of the curriculum.

In order to provide further validity evidence, the CSCS was also validated with interaction with teachers (ITSA/ non-AITS) and with interest. As part of this process, a further three steps were followed:

a) independent-samples t-test were performed to determine the effect of ethnicity on interest, and the effect of ethnicity on Interaction with Teachers for BAME and White students
b) a Pearson product-moment correlation analysis was performed in order to identify the relationship between aspects of a culturally sensitive curriculum (as measured by the CSCS), Interaction with Teaching Staff (as measured by the Interaction with Teaching Staff scales (ITSA/ non-AITS) and interest (as measured by a previously validated interest Scale (11 items, $\alpha = 0.861$) (Quinlan, 2019)
c) hierarchical multiple regression analyses were performed using SPSS to assess mediation in line with the step by step approach laid out by Baron and Kenny (1986) and Field (2018). After controlling for ethnicity, mediation analyses were performed to explore the extent to which: (a) each dimension of the CSCS predicted interaction with teachers (ITSA/ non-AITS), and (b) each dimension of the CSCS predicted interest.

4.9 Ethical Deliberations

According to Walliman (2006), "the value of research depends as much on its ethical veracity as on the novelty of its discoveries" (p.147). Research ethics are a set of moral principles and actions that shapes and guides the research process (dissemination of research findings and the archiving, future use, sharing and linking of data) from the inception of the research, to its completion.[17] Walliman (2006) outlines a set of considerations that researchers should address when planning research:

a) research should aim to maximise benefit for individuals and society and minimise risk and harm
b) the rights and dignity of individuals and groups should be respected
c) wherever possible, participation should be voluntary and appropriately informed
d) research should be conducted with integrity and transparency
e) lines of responsibility and accountability should be clearly defined
f) independence of research should be maintained and where conflicts of interest cannot be avoided they should be made explicit.

Ethics are often considered problematic and potentially contentious (David & Sutton, 2011). Since this is educational research, I chose to follow the guidelines from the British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2018), in addition to those of Walliman (2006). I also sought and gained ethical approval from The University of Kent's Centre for the Study of Higher Education Research Ethics Committee (see Appendix C).

As part of the process of applying for ethical approval, I contemplated and accounted for the fact that the research would extend over a four-year period. Within that period, I would be conducting a pilot study in order to establish a baseline for subsequent

studies that would form the basis of my thesis, and subsequently disseminate my research findings periodically in a variety of settings (e.g., conferences, seminars, briefings, etc.). I also appreciated that discussions and enquiries relating to race, ethnicity and culture often provoke tension for both the researcher and the research participants (Universities UK, 2020). Therefore, as part of my application for ethical approval, I considered the ethical dilemma of the cost/benefits ratio. Simply put, this requires the researcher to consider and achieve a balance between the potential social benefits to be achieved from the research versus the cost to the individuals taking part in the research. I considered the costs and benefits within the context of my personal and professional values and those of the society in which I am researching. Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias (1992) purports that the process of balancing benefits against possible costs is often a difficult and subjective one. Within this process of 'balancing', the researcher must demonstrate how the research process (research purposes, contents, methods, reporting and outcomes) observe the ethical principles and practices. Furthermore, in considering ethical issues in research, Seedhouse (1998) proposes that there are four layers of ethical decision making:

a) external (e.g., legislation, codes of practice)
b) consequential (consequences for individuals and groups)
c) deontological (one's duty to do, irrespective of consequences and how decisions about this are reached, as opposed to the consequences of these actions)
d) individual (the fundamental rationale of respect for individual freedom and autonomy)

In relation to this thesis, there were a number of fundamental ethical deliberations and sources of tension that warranted consideration. For example, informed consent, non-maleficence and beneficence.

4.9.1 Informed Consent

According to Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias (1992) informed consent is the cornerstone of ethical behaviour and is of particular importance if research participants are going to be exposed to stress, pain or invasion of privacy. It forms the basis of a contractual relationship between the researcher and the research participants. Informed consent is commensurate with the research participant's right to freedom and self-determination – allowing individuals to weigh up the risks and benefits of being involved in a research and the autonomy to decide whether they should participate (Walliman, 2006). Participants were not given inducements to participate in my research. In terms of my research, there was the potential for psychological stress to racially minoritized students due to the phenomenon under investigation; there was also the potential of invasion of privacy. These risks were considered and the relevant measures implemented to mitigate against these risks (see Appendix C). In conducting the research, I was explicit about the aims, objectives and implications of the research and ensured that participants did not feel coerced or pressurised into participating. These aims and objectives were clearly outlined in writing as part of the information sheet that accompanied the survey questionnaire (see Appendix B). The information sheet also contained a consent form in order to facilitate the provision of informed consent by participants. Participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the research if they so desired. I also ensured that participants were cognisant that their responses would not attract ramifications.

4.9.2 Non-Maleficence and Beneficence

Where research is ethically sensitive, the researcher must account for the effects of the research on participants by ensuring that the research is conducted in a non-maleficent and beneficent manner. Aronson and Carlsmith (1969) conveyed non-maleficence (as a general principle, to do no harm) and beneficence, (establishing the benefits the research

brings, and to whom) as two sets of related values held by society. Non-maleficence moves beyond the cost/benefit analysis towards the need to avoid doing moral harm to participants, while beneficence reinforces the need for the researcher to be clear about the benefits of the research to the participants (e.g. "you may benefit from the opportunity to reflect on your overall learning and teaching experience") and the wider community (e.g., "aggregated analyses will be shared with other members of the School and University to inform the development of the services that we provide at the University"), not just for the researcher. This research was conducted in an ethical manner, so as not to harm the participants. It endeavors to bring educational and social benefits to students and faculty in postsecondary education, which in tour may lead to the development of a more culturally sensitive curriculum, improved student interaction with teachers, improvement in student interest and greater overall educational experiences. This chapter has outlined the research design and methodology that guides this research. The following chapter will present the analyses and findings from the development and initial validation of the CSCS, the validation of the CSCS with interaction with teachers (ITSA/ non-AITS) and the validation of the CSCS with interest.

Results

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the data analysis. Data were collected and processed in accordance with the methods outlined in Chapter 4. The data analysis comprised of Principal Component Analysis, Descriptive statistics and t-tests, and Regression Analysis with Mediation Analysis. The commercially available statistical software package SPSS 25 was used to perform the data analysis.

5.2 Research Objectives and Questions

The major objective of this research was to investigate whether, and the extent to which the whiteness of the curriculum negatively impacts students' interaction with teachers and subject interest – key elements of their educational experiences in postsecondary education. To realise the objectives of the research, I first developed and tested the reliability of a new set of scales which allowed me to measure the cultural sensitivity of the curricula. Then, to validate those scales and address substantive educational issues, the following questions were addressed:

a) To what extent do students perceive the curricula as culturally sensitive? Does this vary between White and racially minoritized students?
b) To what extent does the 'whiteness' of the curriculum affect racially minoritized students' interaction with teachers?
c) To what extent does the whiteness of the curriculum affect racially minoritized students' interest in their subject during university?
d) Which aspects of culturally sensitive curricula support students' interaction with teachers?
e) Which aspects of culturally sensitive curricula support students' interest?

In order to answer the above questions, it was necessary to first establish what the components of a culturally sensitive curricula are. First, I hypothesized that curricula are culturally sensitive if they are able to realize seven key objectives (Diversity Present; Accurate Portrayals; Multiple Perspectives; Challenge Power; Connecting Learning and Action; Inclusive Learning Environment; and Instructor Cultural Competence) (see Chapter 3) (**Hypothesis 1**).

Next, I sought to ascertain the extent to which there are similarities/differences in the way students experience and perceive the curriculum – specifically, the extent to which they perceive the curriculum as culturally sensitive, and the extent to which there are differences between BAME and White students' perceptions. I expected to find that BAME students would be less likely to report a culturally sensitive curricula than White students on all dimensions of cultural sensitivity (**Hypothesis 2**).

Then, in relation to the extent to which the whiteness of the curriculum affects racially minoritized students' interaction with teachers during university, I expected to find that BAME students would report fewer interaction with teachers (**Hypothesis 3**). Specifically, I explored the extent to which cultural sensitivity of the curricula explained the differences between BAME and White students' interaction with teachers. I expected to find that all dimensions of the CSCS would mediate between ethnicity and interaction with teachers (**Hypothesis 4**).

Furthermore, in relation to the aspects of the curriculum that supports students' interest, I predicted that BAME students would report lower interest in their program of study than White students (**Hypothesis 5**).

Finally, I explored whether cultural sensitivity of the curricula explained differences between BAME and White students' interest in the subject. I expected all dimensions of the CSCS to mediate between ethnicity and interest (**Hypothesis 6**).

5.3 Evolution of the CSCS

In what follows, first, I will describe the evolution of the CSCS, then I will present the set of four culturally sensitive curricula scales.

5.3.1 Qualitative Piloting

As described in Chapter 4, upon completion of the literature review, I developed an *Alpha version* of the CSCS questionnaire which contained 30 items (see Appendix A). These 30 items were subject to a period of piloting. Throughout the piloting phase, semi-structured interviews were undertaken with a sample of approximately 40 students who were representative of the target sample, and 10 educators, in order to identify overall problems with the questionnaire. Participants who engaged in the pretesting phase reported several lexical problems relating to unclear or ambiguous wording (Conrad et al., 1999). For example, participants reported that the interchangeable use of the words 'non-dominant populations', 'people of color', people like me' and the acronym BAME were problematic. Specifically, educators from the discipline of psychology interpreted the use of the word 'diverse' as broadly relating to neurodiversity, as opposed to racial or cultural diversity. In relation to inclusion/exclusion problems, students expressed the need for clarity around the use of the word 'curriculum' – in terms of the specific aspects of the curriculum to which the questions related (e.g., taught, learnt, prescribed or perceived (see Glatthorn, Carr and Harris 2001), while some educators queried whether the questions related to the curriculum or the curricula (i.e., to their module specifically, or to the programme of study in general). Students and educators also sought clarification about the ten 'like me' items (see Table 2), as to who was included in the 'like me' cohort. In terms of computational problems, students and teachers reported that the four-point Likert scale needed to be expanded to include a midpoint 'Neither Agree

nor Disagree' and 'Not Applicable' in order enable students to indicate where the question did not relate to their programme of study.

Data from the pretesting process was used to inform the development of a *Beta* version of the CSCS questionnaire containing 34 items, (Appendix A), exploring 7 dimensions of cultural sensitivity (see Chapter 3). The final version of the questionnaire was administered to 262 university students who study on programs in the faculties of humanities and social sciences. Data from the final questionnaire was subject to an Exploratory Factor Analysis using SPSS 25 as part of the scale validation process. SPSS 25 Software does not offer the facility to conduct a Confirmatory Factor Analysis.

5.3.2 Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)

Turning now to the validation of the Beta version of the CSCS questionnaire, an EFA with principal components extraction was performed. An exploratory factor analysis offered a means of exploring interrelationships among the set of variables (Pallant, 2016). An oblique rotation method was used to identify the items that loaded highest onto particular factors; the results offered justification for further analysis.

Prior to performing PCA, the suitability of data for factor analysis was assessed. Inspection of the correlation matrix revealed the presence of several coefficients of 0.3 and above. The KMO measure of sampling accuracy and Bartlett's test of sphericity were examined to determine appropriateness of factor analysis. The Bartlett's test of sphericity value was statistically significant (BTS value = 3564.95, $p<.000$), supporting the factorability of the correlation matrix (Bartlett, 1954).

Similarly, the KMO Measure of Sampling Adequacy of 0.888 was substantial, exceeding the recommended value of .6 (Kaiser & Rice, 1974). According to Tabachnik and Fidell (2007) the results provided justification that it was appropriate to perform a factor analysis.

5.3.3 Principal Component Analysis (PCA)

The ten 'like Me' items (Table 2) were removed from this phase of the analysis as they were questions specifically intended to relate to students of colour. Initially, the 'like me' items were included in the questionnaire, in order to gain nuanced understandings of racially minoritized student's perspectives of the extent to which the curriculum promotes/perpetuates racial socialisation, racialised stereotypes and microaggressions (Allen & Webber, 2019; Harper, 2013). Research suggest that Black students are most disproportionately affected by the whiteness of the curriculum (Frings, Gleibs and Ridley 2020; Mcduff *et al.* 2018; UUK 2019). Therefore, I hypothesised that the inclusion of the 'like me' items would enable me to capture racially minoritized student's lived experiences of the *whiteness* of the curriculum – specifically, the extent to which the curriculum shapes Black students' engagement with their program of study on our two primary measures of engagement. On further investigation, I found that the 'like me' items were not suitable. For example, respondents cited inclusion/exclusion problems in the cognitive interviews, whereby they interpreted 'like me' through myriad indices of diversity, as opposed to intersectionally (Crenshaw, 1991) with a race-based focus (DeCuir-Gunby & Schutz, 2014). Therefore, the ten 'like me' items were not subject to a PCA, and were excluded from all further analyses.

Hypothesised Sub-scale	Construct Description and Original Item Number
Diversity is present (DP)	**Focuses on how people from diverse backgrounds are referenced within the curriculum** 1 The curriculum features people from diverse backgrounds. 2 The curriculum references different ethnic and cultural traditions, languages, religions and/or clothing 3 Diverse ethnicities and nationalities are portrayed 4 Diverse family structures (i.e. single parents, adopted or fostered children, same-sex parents, other relatives living with family, etc.) are portrayed 5 Differently-abled people are represented
Accurate portrayals (AP)	**Focuses on the assumptions, perceptions and considerations of people from diverse backgrounds that may distort how they are considered by society** 6 People of diverse ethnicities are represented as researchers or professionals, not just as participants in research, clients, consumers, customers, etc. 7* When social problems (e.g. crime, violence) are presented, people of colour are usually considered the problem 8* When interpersonal conflicts are presented, people of colour are usually considered the problem 9 Social situations and problems are situated within a social context rather than seen as individual problems only 10* When people of colour have problems, white people are usually presented as being able to solve those problems 11 Non-dominant populations and their strengths and assets are highlighted 12+ People like me are usually assumed to have low family wealth, low educational attainment and/or low income 13+ People like me are usually assumed to be competent and successful 14+ People like me are represented stereotypically, or presented as foreign or exotic 15+ When people like me are represented, it is in terms of their strengths, talents or knowledge, rather than their perceived flaws or deficiencies
Multiple Perspectives (MP)	**Concentrate on the breadth of perspectives and knowledge systems that are represented in the curriculum and recognised as authentic knowledge** 16 The curriculum respects that different cultures may have different understandings, skills and/or philosophies 17 The curriculum presents different points of view on the topic, especially points of view from marginalised people/communities 18 The curriculum addresses problems that are of concern to marginalised people/communities 19+ The curriculum includes knowledge that is relevant to people like me 20+ The curriculum addresses problems that are relevant to people like me 21+ The curriculum includes perspectives from people like me
Challenge power (CP)	**Focus on the curriculum's ability to provoke critical thought in challenging ideologies** 22 The curriculum raises critical questions about power and/or privilege that are usually taken for granted 23 The curriculum encourages students to challenge existing power structures in society 24 The curriculum encourages students to critique unearned privilege
Connecting learning and action	**Focuses on empowering students to act against inequality, promote equity through connection with social, political and environmental concerns** 25 The curriculum encourages students to connect learning to social, political or environmental concerns

	26 The curriculum encourages students to take actions that fight inequity or promote equity 27 When I engage in experiential learning activities, I am guided to accept cultural differences and adjust my communication appropriately
Inclusive learning environment (ILE)	**Focuses on the development of a learning environment accepting of cultural differences and respectful of different perspectives** 28 My instructors make an effort to pronounce everyone's name correctly 29 My instructors encourage students to be mindful of other students' perspectives 30 My instructors encourage students to respect other students' perspectives
Instructor cultural competence (ICC)	**Focuses on the instructor's understanding, interest and appreciation for cultural differences.** 31 I feel comfortable responding when my instructor asks questions 32+ My instructors provide examples which relate to my cultural background 33+ My instructors seem to understand my culture 34+ My instructors show interest in my cultural background

*Item reversed

+ "Like me" items not included in the PCA and subsequent analyses

Table 2 – Culturally Sensitive Curricula Scale Items and Constructs (Beta version)

On removal of the ten 'like me' items, 24 items remained. Three items were reversed because they were negatively worded statements (MP2, MP3, MP5). All remaining 24 items of the CSCS were subjected to PCA using SPSS version 25. The PCA revealed the presence of five components that recorded eigenvalues greater than 1, explaining 33.77%, 8.05%, 7.17%, 5.94% and 4.50% of the variance respectively (Table 3). These five components explained a total of 59.45% of the variance. Components 1, 2, 3 and 4 explained or captures much more of the variance than the remaining components.

Component	Initial Eigenvalues Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings Total
1	8.10	33.77	33.77	8.10	33.77	33.77	6.25
2	1.93	8.05	41.83	1.93	8.05	41.83	3.81
3	1.72	7.17	49.00	1.72	7.17	49.00	2.55
4	1.42	5.94	54.95	1.42	5.94	54.95	5.73
5	1.08	4.50	59.45				
6	0.95	3.98	63.43				
7	0.87	3.62	67.06				
8	0.78	3.27	70.33				
9	0.74	3.12	73.45				
10	0.72	3.02	76.47				
11	0.66	2.78	79.26				
12	0.63	2.63	81.89				
13	0.57	2.40	84.29				
14	0.53	2.21	86.51				
15	0.49	2.04	88.55				
16	0.47	1.97	90.53				
17	0.39	1.64	92.17				
18	0.36	1.50	93.67				
19	0.34	1.43	95.11				
20	0.29	1.23	96.34				
21	0.26	1.11	97.46				
22	0.22	0.95	98.41				
23	0.20	0.84	99.25				
24	0.17	0.74	100.00				

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Table 3 – Total variance explained

An inspection of the scree plot (Table 4) revealed a clear break after the second component. However, results of Parallel Analysis (Watkins, 2000)(Table 5) showed four components with eigenvalues exceeding the corresponding criterion values for randomly generated data matrix of the same size (24 variables x 262 respondents). Therefore, the decision was taken to retain four factors for further investigation (Table 6).

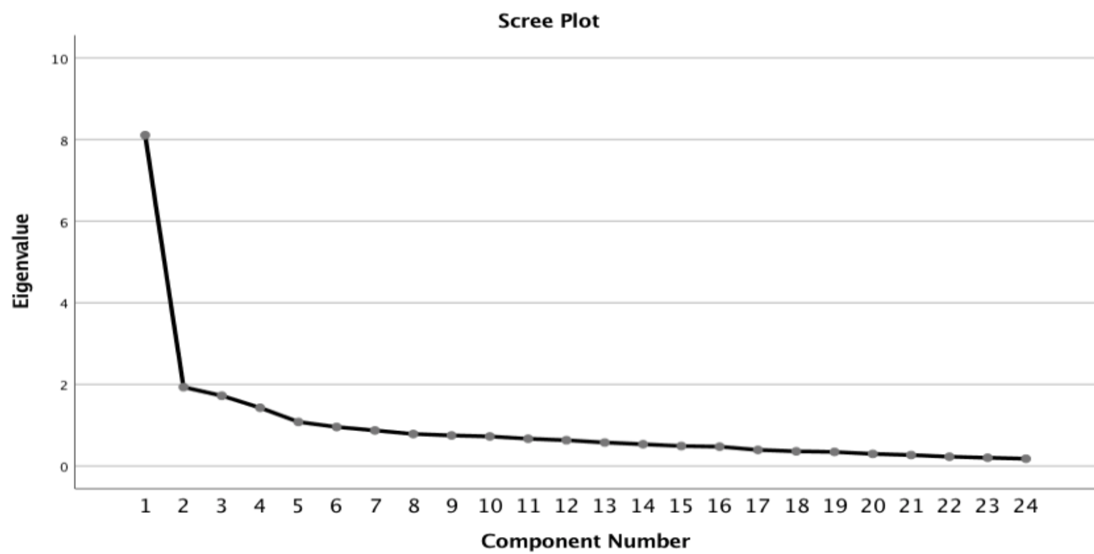

Table 4 – Scree plot

Number of variables: 24

Number of subjects: 262

Number of replications: 100

Eigenvalue #	Random Eigenvalue	Standard Dev
1	1.60	0.06
2	1.49	0.04
3	1.41	0.03
4	1.35	0.02
5	1.30	0.02
6	1.24	0.02
7	1.20	0.02
8	1.15	0.02
9	1.11	0.02
10	1.06	0.02
11	1.03	0.02
12	0.99	0.02
13	0.95	0.02
14	0.91	0.02
15	0.87	0.01
16	0.84	0.01
17	0.80	0.02
18	0.77	0.02
19	0.73	0.02
20	0.70	0.02
21	0.66	0.02
22	0.62	0.02
23	0.58	0.02
24	0.53	0.02

Table 5 – Output from Parallel Analysis (24-item solution)

Monte Carlo PCA for Parallel Analysis [computer software] Watkins (2000)

Component number	**Actual eigenvalue from PCA**	**Criterion value from Parallel analysis**	**Decision**
1	8.106	1.600	accept
2	1.934	1.497	accept
3	1.722	1.419	accept
4	1.428	1.357	accept
5	1.080	1.303	reject
6	0.956	1.248	reject

Table 6 – Comparison of eigenvalues from PCA and criterion values from parallel analysis (24 item solution)

The Pattern Matrix for the 24-item solution (Table 7) revealed 5 items that proved difficult to interpret (both in the qualitative and quantitative analyses). These items extended over two components, were too general, and/or were conceptually ambiguous. After careful investigation of the contents, the five items (items 9, 11, 17, 27 and 31) were deleted for various reasons as described in Table 8. The remaining 19 items were subject to an EFA with principal components extraction.

Original item	**Pattern Coefficients Component**				
	1	2	3	4	5
23	.812				
25	.810				
24	.803				
22	.778				
26	.602				
18	.509				.338
17	.435				.335
11					.375
16					
8*		.848			
7*		.836			
10*		.693			
1		-.473		.437	
29			-.928		
30			-.870		
28			-.682		
31			-.581		
27			-.476		
5				.880	
4				.656	
6				.557	
3				.447	.347
2		-.357		.376	.338
9					.841

*item reversed

Table 7 – Pattern Matrix for 24 item solution

Original Construct	Original Question	Item	Reason for Deletion
AP	9	Social situations and problems are situated within a social context rather than seen as individual problems only.	Too general.
AP	11	Non-dominant populations and their strengths and assets are highlighted.	Too Ambiguous
MP	17	The curriculum presents different points of view on the topic, especially points of view from marginalised people/communities	Too general
CLA	27	When I engage in experiential learning activities, I am guided to accept cultural differences and adjust my communication appropriately.	Extends over two components. This may be because of the presence of multiple ideas in the same question. In this case, Multiple Perspectives is combined with Inclusive Learning Environment. Loaded on two components.
ICC	31	I feel comfortable responding when my instructor asks questions.	This may be the result of the merging of two concepts in the same question. In this case, elements of Diversity is Present are conflated with Inclusive Learning Environment to inaccurately portray Instructor Cultural Competence.

Table 8 – Items deleted following PCA of 24 item version

The PCA for the 19-item solution revealed the presence of four components that recorded eigenvalues greater than 1, explaining 41.14%, 8.53%, 7.82% and 6.94% of the variance respectively (Table 9). These four components explained a total of 64.44% of the variance.

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total
1	7.817	41.141	41.141	7.817	41.141	41.141	6.048
2	1.622	8.535	49.676	1.622	8.535	49.676	4.927
3	1.485	7.817	57.493	1.485	7.817	57.493	4.036
4	1.320	6.948	64.440	1.320	6.948	64.440	4.229
5	0.917	4.826	69.266				
6	0.699	3.679	72.945				
7	0.654	3.444	76.389				
8	0.641	3.373	79.763				
9	0.536	2.823	82.586				
10	0.491	2.584	85.170				
11	0.452	2.378	87.549				
12	0.442	2.324	89.872				
13	0.400	2.103	91.976				
14	0.360	1.896	93.871				
15	0.296	1.560	95.431				
16	0.261	1.374	96.806				
17	0.220	1.159	97.965				
18	0.201	1.058	99.022				
19	0.186	0.978	100.000				

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Table 9 – Total Variance Explained (19-item Solution)

An inspection of the scree plot for the 19-item solution (Table 10) revealed a clear break after the second component. However, results of Parallel Analysis (Watkins, 2000)(Table 10) showed four components with eigenvalues exceeding the corresponding criterion values for randomly generated data matrix of the same size (24 variables with 262 respondents). Therefore, the decision was taken to retain four factors for further investigation (Table 11).

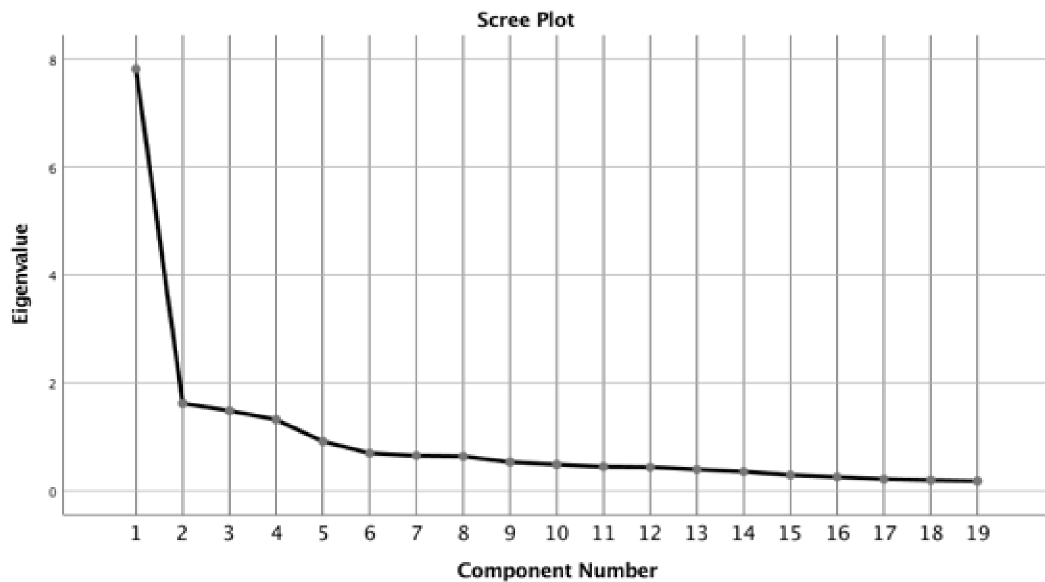

Table 10 – Scree Plot (19-item solution)

Number of variables: 19		
Number of subjects: 262		
Number of replications: 100		
Eigenvalue #	Random Eigenvalue	Standard Dev
1	1.51	0.05
2	1.40	0.03
3	1.33	0.02
4	1.27	0.03
5	1.21	0.02
6	1.16	0.02
7	1.11	0.02
8	1.07	0.02
9	1.02	0.02
10	0.97	0.02
11	0.93	0.02
12	0.89	0.02
13	0.85	0.02
14	0.81	0.02
15	0.77	0.02
16	0.72	0.02
17	0.68	0.02
18	0.64	0.02
19	0.58	0.02

Monte Carlo PCA for Parallel Analysis [computer software]

Watkins (2000)

Table 11 – Output from Parallel Analysis (19-item solution)

Component number	Actual eigenvalue from PCA	Criterion value from Parallel analysis	Decision
1	7.817	1.516	accept
2	1.622	1.402	accept
3	1.485	1.334	accept
4	1.320	1.274	accept
5	0.917	1.217	reject
6	0.699	1.162	reject

Table 12 – Comparison of eigenvalues from PCA and criterion values from parallel analysis (19 item solution)

The reliability of the scale improved following the exclusion of the five items outlined in Table 7. This improvement is demonstrated in Table 12 that outlines the PCA and PCA (Table 13) for the 19-item solution.

	Pattern Coefficients			
Original	Component			
Item	1	2	3	4
24	.824			
22	.823			
25	.821			
23	.797			
26	.587			
18	.615			
16		-.335		
5		-.854		
4		-.622		
6		-.616		
3		-.606		
1		-.565		
2		-.525		
7*			.854	
8*			.846	
10*			.685	
29				.929
30				.900
28				.715

*item reversed

Table 13 – Pattern and Structure Matrix for PCA with Oblimin rotation of four factor 19 item solution CSCS Items

Analysis of data from this pilot study informed the formation of the final CSCS (Table 14), with 19 items on four dimensions. The next section moves on to report the results of the reliability analysis of the set of four CSCS.

Scale	Original Item	New Item #s Items	Construct Description
Diversity Represented (DR)	**1**	**DR1 The curriculum features people from diverse backgrounds.**	**focuses on how people from diverse backgrounds are referenced within the curriculum.**
	2	**DR2 The curriculum references different ethnic and cultural traditions, languages, religions and/or clothing.**	
	3	**DR3 Diverse ethnicities and nationalities are portrayed**	
	4	**DR4 Diverse family structures (i.e. single parents, adopted or fostered children, same-sex parents, other relatives living with family, etc.) are portrayed.**	
	5	**DR5 Differently-abled people are represented.**	
	6	**DR6 People of diverse ethnicities are represented as researchers or professionals, not just as participants in research, clients, consumers, customers, etc.**	
	16	**DR7 The curriculum respects that different cultures may have different understandings, skills and/or philosophies.**	
	18	**DR8 The curriculum addresses problems that are of concern to marginalized people/communities.**	
Positive Portrayals (PP)	**7**	**PP1 When social problems (e.g. crime, violence) are presented, people of colour are usually considered the problem. (R)**	**focuses on redressing the assumptions, perceptions and considerations of people from diverse backgrounds that may distort how they are considered by society**
	8	**PP2 When interpersonal conflicts are presented, people of colour are usually considered the problem. (R)**	
	10	**PP3 When people of colour have problems, white people are usually presented as being able to solve those problems. (R)**	
Challenge Power (CP)	**22**	**CP1 The curriculum raises critical questions about power and/or privilege that are usually taken for granted.**	**focus on the curriculum's ability to provoke critical thought and challenge dominant ideologies**
	23	**CP2 The curriculum encourages students to challenge existing power structures in society.**	

	24	**CP3 The curriculum encourages students to critique unearned privilege.**	
	25	**CP4 The curriculum encourages students to connect learning to social, political or environmental concerns.**	
	26	**CP5 The curriculum encourages students to take actions that fight inequity or promote equity.**	
Inclusive Classroom Interactions (ICI)	**28**	**ICI1 My instructors make an effort to pronounce everyone's name correctly.**	**focuses on the development of a learning environment accepting of cultural differences and respectful of different perspectives**
	29	**ICI2 My instructors encourage students to be mindful of other students' perspectives.**	
	30	**ICI3 My instructors encourage students to respect other students' perspectives.**	

*R original item reversed

Table 14 – Validated Culturally Sensitive Curricula Scales (with constructs)

5.3.4 Reliability Analysis

This section assesses the internal consistency of each scale; in this case, demonstrated by the Cronbach's coefficient alpha. Different levels of reliability are required, depending on the purpose and nature of the scale. Nunnally (1978) recommends a minimum level of .7 to demonstrate internal consistency. Individually, each scale exceeded this level, showing good internal consistency (Table 15) with Diversity Represented (8 items; α= .87); Positive Portrayals (3 items; α= .81); Challenge Power (5 items; α= .88); Inclusive Classroom Interactions (3 items; α= .83). Furthermore, all items in each dimension reported item total correlations higher than 0.50. (Table 15). I initially hypothesised that a culturally sensitive curricula encompasses 7 dimensions of cultural sensitivity (see Figure 1). Instead, these results indicate that the set of four CSCS contains 19-item, exploring 4 dimensions of cultural sensitivity, with each scale demonstrating good internal consistency. These results suggest that ***Hypothesis 1*** **can be rejected**.

CSCS Item – Total Statistics						
	Item	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Diversity Represented	DR1	18.88	21.586	.667	.509	.854
Mean = 21.75	DR2	19.04	21.195	.700	.610	.850
Variance = 27.893	DR3	19.03	21.137	.738	.644	.847
SD = 5.281	DR4	19.11	22.205	.552	.393	.866
α = 0.87	DR5	19.37	22.165	.576	.452	.864
	DR6	18.96	21.146	.655	.453	.855
	DR7	18.82	22.471	.565	.358	.865
	DR8	19.04	22.028	.600	.410	.861
Positive Portrayals	PP1*	5.01	2.991	.684	.506	.677
Mean = 7.56	PP2*	5.11	2.676	.708	.529	.648
Variance = 6.256	PP3*	5.00	3.522	.541	.294	.820
SD = 2.501						
α = 0.81						
Challenge Power	CP1	11.26	10.386	.710	.549	.863
Mean = 14.16	CP2	11.24	9.797	.792	.639	.843
Variance =15.728	CP3	11.54	10.268	.725	.532	.860
SD =3.96	CP4	11.11	10.654	.732	.541	.859
α = 0.88	CP5	11.47	10.673	.657	.468	.875
Inclusive Classroom Interactions	ICI1	6.53	2.414	.575	.332	.887
Mean = 9.69	ICI2	6.48	2.308	.746	.651	.705
Variance = 4.951	ICI3	6.38	2.442	.763	.658	.699
SD = 2.225						
α = 0.83						

**R original item reversed*

Table 15 – Item Total Correlations for 19-Item CSCS

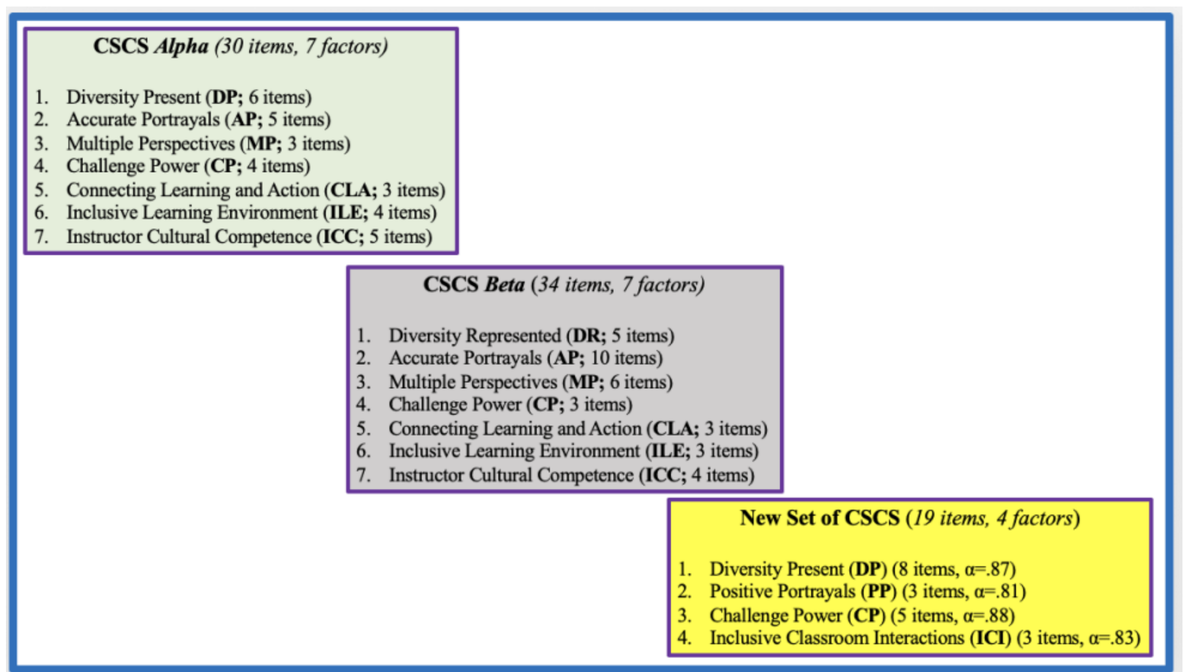

Figure 3 – Evolution of the Culturally Sensitive Curricula Scales

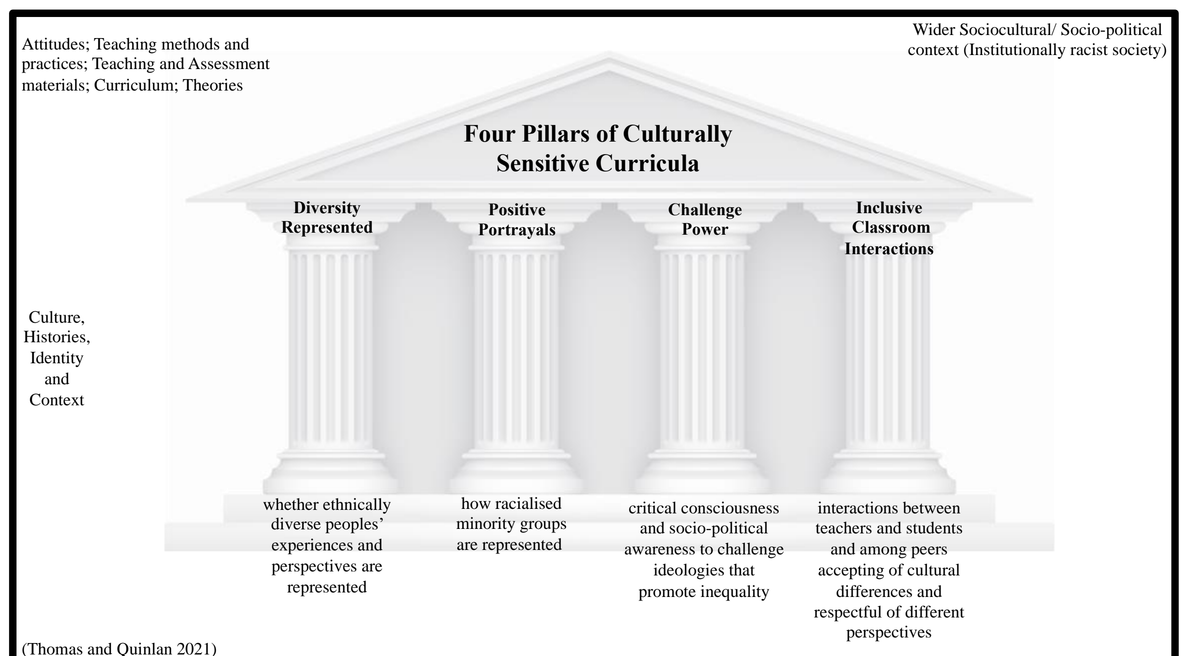

Figure 4 – Four Pillars of Culturally Sensitive Curricula

Turning now to the empirical evidence on students' perceptions of the cultural sensitivity of their curriculum, the next section is concerned with testing the validity of the set of CSCS. Specifically, I am interested in testing the content validity and construct validity – the extent to which individual items represent the construct being measured and covers the full range of construct (Field, 2018).

5.3.5 Perceptions of Cultural Sensitivity

Turning now to construct validity, this section outlines the results of T-tests which were used to analyse the relationship between ethnicity and each dimension of the CSCS. In this research, the test of construct validity is incomplete because there was no similar scales upon which to benchmark the CSCS, in order to test the full range of its constructs. Therefore, I tested whether the CSCS matched with other constructs (interest and interactions with teachers) that I contend are theoretically related. Additionally, testing the construct validity of the CSCS was partially done in the qualitative pilot testing.

The average scores between BAME and White students were compared in order to understand the extent to which there are similarities/differences in the way students experience the curriculum in terms of their perceptions of its cultural sensitivity. It can be seen from the data in Table 16 that CSCS mean scores were significantly lower for BAME students than White students on all four CSCS scales. An effect is significant if the *p-value* is less than .05 (Field, 2018). Each subscale also reported medium to large effect sizes (d=.66, 1.08, .68, .97). According to Cohen (1988) large or small effect are represented by d=.2 (small); .5 (medium); and .8 (large) respectively. **Confirming *Hypothesis 2***, BAME students perceived the curriculum as less culturally sensitive than White students on all measures of cultural sensitivity.

Sub Scale	BAME Mean	White Mean	BAME SD	White SD	MD	t	Cohen's d
Diversity Represented (DR)	2.66	3.10	0.74	0.53	-0.44	-5.58***	0.66
Positive Portrayals (PP)	2.20	2.96	0.73	0.66	-0.76	-8.29***	1.08
Challenge Power (CP)	2.74	3.27	0.87	0.63	-0.53	-5.29***	0.67
Inclusive Classroom Interactions (ICI)	3.01	3.68	0.78	0.48	-0.66	-8.38***	0.97
Academic Interaction with Teachers (AIT)	2.95	3.25	0.63	0.65	-0.29	-3.55***	0.455
Non-Academic Interaction with Teachers (non-AIT)	2.50	2.61	0.56	0.69	-0.11	-1.32	0.17
Interest	3.59	3.93	0.59	0.50	-0.34	-4.76***	0.61

***p<.001; **p < .01 (2-tailed); *p<.05

MD=differences in means between BAME and White students

Table 16 - Independent Samples T-test for CSCS - Ethnicity (BAME vs White Students)

This section has outlined the results of t-tests which were used to analyse students' perceptions of the cultural sensitivity of the curriculum. The next section will present the findings of students' perspectives of their interaction with teachers (which encompassed academic (AIT) and non-academic interaction (non-AIT)).

5.3.6 Academic Interactions with Teachers (AIT)

If we turn now to the results of t-test demonstrating students' perspectives of their interaction with teachers, there were no significant differences between BAME and White students on non-academic interactions with teachers (non-AIT). For both BAME and White students, the means for non-AIT were relatively low, suggesting these

interactions may not be very common in the research setting. As there was no ethnicity effect, I will not expound on those findings here, nor pursue an inquiry into non-AIT in the regression analyses that follow. I will also report the results of t-tests on interest in a subsequent section. Returning to AIT, **confirming *Hypothesis 3***, BAME students reported significantly fewer academic interactions with their teachers (M=2.95, SD=.64), than White students (M=3.25, SD=.65); t(-3.56), p<.001) (Table 15).

5.3.7 Correlations Among Study Variables

Following the t-tests which was used to explore the differences in mean scores between participants, a Pearson product-moment correlation analysis was performed in order to investigate and describe the strength and direction of the linear relationship between the study variables. Preliminary analyses were performed to ensure there was no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity and homoscedascity. The results of the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient demonstrated that there was a significant positive correlation between the four dimensions of the CSCS and the two engagement outcomes (AIT and interest) (Table 17).

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	Ethnicity	1						
2	Diversity Represented	.306**	1					
3	Positive Portrayals	.446**	.459**	1				
4	Challenge Power	.306**	.574**	.417**	1			
5	Inclusive Classroom Interactions	.381**	.372**	.332**	.450**	1		
6	Academic Interaction with Teachers	.217**	.187**	.217**	.228**	.248**	1	
7	Interest	.305**	.214**	.223**	.226**	.207**	.330**	1

** p < .01 (2-tailed)

Table 17 – Pearson Product-Moment Correlations for the Study Variables

It was necessary to conduct multiple regression in order to explore the interrelationship among the study variables (e.g., between ethnicity and each dimension

of the CSCS; between ethnicity and interest; and between ethnicity and AIT). Specifically, I used multiple regression to understand whether, or the extent to which my study variables (i.e., ethnicity and the dimensions of the CSCS) predicted AIT and interest. Multiple regression allowed me to control for the influence of ethnicity. Given the multicollinearity between the four dimensions of the mediator (the set of CSCS), I conducted separate mediation analyses for each dimension of the CSCS and for each of the two dependent variables (Table 18; Table 19) Multicollinearity exists when there is a strong correlation between two or more predictors (Field, 2018), as I found with my variables. Research (Field, 2018) suggest that it is important to avoid extreme multicollinearity (variables that are either highly correlated, or perfectly correlated) as it can distort findings of regression analyses. In what follows, I will report on the mediation analyses with AIT, before reporting on the mediation analysis with interest.

5.3.8 Cultural Sensitivity of Curricula and Academic Interactions with Teachers

To investigate whether and which aspects of cultural sensitivity of the curricula explained BAME students' lower academic interactions with teachers, I conducted mediation analyses on each of the CSCS scales. As mentioned above, given the correlations between the CSCS scales (Table 17), I conducted separate analyses (Table 18). In each analysis, ethnicity significantly predicted interactions with teachers (β=.217, p=<.001) (Figure 4).

a) **Diversity Represented**. Ethnicity significantly predicted students' perceptions of Diversity Represented (β=.306, p<.001). Diversity Represented also significantly predicted AIT (β= .133, p < .05). In Model 3, the effect of ethnicity on AIT was reduced after including Diversity Represented in the model (β=.176, p < .001). The indirect effect was significant (z=.05, p=<.05)

b) **Positive Portrayals**. Ethnicity significantly predicted Positive Portrayals, (*β*=.446, *p*=<.001). Positive Portrayals also significantly predicted academic interaction with teachers (*β*=.150, *p*=<.01). In Model 3, the effect of ethnicity on academic interaction with teachers was reduced after including Positive Portrayals in the model (*β*=.150, *p* < .01). Again, the indirect effect was significant (*z*=.06, *p*=<.01).

c) **Challenge Power**. Ethnicity significantly predicted Challenge Power, (β=.306, p=<.001). Challenging Power also made a statistically significant contribution in predicting interaction with teachers (β=.178, p<.01). In Model 3, the effect of ethnicity on academic interaction with teachers was reduced after including Challenge Power in the model (β=.162, p < .01). Challenge Power had a significant indirect effect mediating ethnicity and interest (z=.05, p=<.01).

d) **Inclusive Classroom Interactions.** Ethnicity was also shown to significantly predict Inclusive Classroom Interaction, (*β*=.381, p=<.001). Inclusive Classroom Interactions made a statistically significant contribution to predicting academic interaction with teachers (*β*=.194, *p*=<.01). In Model 3, the effect of ethnicity on academic interaction with teachers was reduced after adding Inclusive Classroom Interactions in the model (*β*=.143, p=<.01). The indirect effect was significant (*z*=.07, *p*=<.01).

Taken together, these results demonstrate that each component of the CSCS mediated the relationship between ethnicity and interaction with teachers, **confirming *Hypothesis 4***. The next section will investigate whether and which aspects of cultural sensitivity of the curricula explained students' interest.

	Model 1 (dv: AIT)				Model 2 (dv: CSCS Mediator)				Model 3 (dv: AIT)			
	B (SE)	β	t	95% CI for b	*B* (SE)	β	t	95% CI for b	*B* (SE)	β	t	95% CI for b
Diversity Represented as a Mediator												
Constant	2.69 (0.11)		23.47 ***	[2.44; 2.91]	2.267 (0.11)		19.16***	[2.03; 2.50]	2.40 (0.17)		13.60***	[2.06; 2.75]
Ethnicity	0.27 (0.07)	0.21	3.58 ***	[0.12; 0.42]	0.40 (0.07)	0.30	5.18***	[0.25; 0.55]	0.22 (.079)	0.17	2.78***	[0.06; 0.37]
Diversity Represented									0.12 (0.06)	0.13	2.10*	[0.01; 0.24]
R^2	0.04				0.09				0.06			
Positive Portrayals as a Mediator												
Constant	2.691 (0.11)		23.47 ***	[2.44; 2.91]	1.564 (0.12)		12.15***	[1.31;1.81]	2.496 (.147)		16.95***	[2.20;2.785]
Ethnicity	0.27 (0.07)	0.21	3.58 ***	[0.12; 0.42]	0.66 (0.08)	0.44	7.85***	[0.50; 0.83]	0.18 (.086)	0.15	2.18**	[9.01; 0.35]
Positive Portrayals									0.12 (0.05)	0.15	2.17**	[0.01; 0.23]
R^2	0.04				0.19				0.06			
Challenge Power as a Mediator												
Constant	2.69 (0.11)		23.47 ***	[2.40; 2.91]	2.27 (0.14)		16.20***	[1.99; 2.55]	2.36 (0.16)		14.76***	[2.052; 2.68]
Ethnicity	0.27 (0.07)	0.21	3.58 ***	[0.12; 0.42]	0.47 (0.09)	0.30	5.17***	[0.29; 0.66]	0.20 (0.07)	0.16	2.58**	[0.04; 0.35]
Challenge Power									0.14 (0.05)	0.17	2.84**	[0.04; 0.24]
R^2	.047				.093				.076			
Inclusive Classroom Interactions as a Mediator												
Constant	2.69 (0.11)		23.47 ***	[3.05; 3.45]	2.50 (0.12)		20.24***	[2.26; 2.74]	2.26 (0.18)		12.49***	[1.90; 2.62]
Ethnicity	0.27 (0.07)	0.21	3.58 ***	[0.21; 0.46]	0.54 (0.08)	0.38	6.64***	[0.38; 0.70]	0.17 (0.08)	0.14	2.21**	[0.02; 0.33]
Inclusive Classroom Interactions									0.17 (0.05)	0.19	3.00**	[0.05; 0.28]
R^2	0.04				0.14				0.07			

Table 18 – Effects of Ethnicity on Academic Interaction with Teachers (AIT): Mediation by Cultural Sensitivity of Curriculum

5.3.9 Interest – Relations between study variables

Turning now to the relationship between ethnicity, culturally sensitive curricula and interest, I initially performed t-tests in order to compare mean scores between BAME and White students on interest. BAME students reported lower mean scores (M=3.592, SD=.599), than White students (M=3.935, SD=.500); t(-4.766, p<.001) (Table 15), highlighting the presence of an *interest gap*. Subsequently, I performed regression analysis in order to predict the effect of the CSCS on interest. Mediation analyses was used to investigate whether and which aspects of cultural sensitivity of the curricula explained BAME students' lower interest. The results of the mediation analyses are presented in Table 18. I conducted separate mediation analyses on each of the CSCS scales (Table 18) to avoid problems of multicollinearity. In each analysis, ethnicity significantly predicted interest (β=.305, p <.001).

a) **Diversity Represented.** Ethnicity significantly predicted perceptions of Diversity Represented (β=.306, p<.001). Diversity Represented also significantly predicted interest (β= .133, p < .05). In Model 3, the effect of ethnicity on interest was reduced after including Diversity Represented in the model (β=.265, p < .001). The indirect effect was significant (z=.04, p=<.001).
b) **Positive Portrayals**. Ethnicity also significantly predicted Positive Portrayals, (β=.446, p=<.001). However, Positive Portrayals did not make a statistically significant contribution to predicting interest.
c) **Challenge Power**. Ethnicity significantly predicted Challenge Power, (β=.306, p=<.001). Challenging Power also made a statistically significant contribution in predicting interest, (β=.146, p<.01). The relationship between Ethnicity and interest is stronger in model 1 (β=.305) than in model 3,

(β=.261). Challenge Power had a significant indirect effect mediating ethnicity and interest (z=.04, p=<.01).

d) **Inclusive Classroom Interactions**. Ethnicity was also shown to significantly predict Inclusive Classroom Interaction, (β=.381, p=<.001). However, Inclusive Classroom interactions did not make a statistically significant contribution to predicting interest.

	Model 1 (dv: Interest)				Model 2 (dv: CSCS Mediator)				Model 3 (dv: Interest)			
	B (SE)	B	t	95% CI for b	*B* (SE)	β	t	95% CI for b	*B* (SE)	β	t	95% CI for b
Diversity Represented as a Mediator												
Constant	3.25 (0.09)		32.77 ***	[3.05;3.45]	2.26 (0.11)		19.16***	[2.03;2.50]	1.75 (0.26)		6.58***	[1.22; 2.22]
Ethnicity	0.33 (0.06)	0.30	5.17 ***	[0.21;0.46]	0.40 (0.07)	0.30	5.18***	[0.25;0.55]	0.35 (0.08)	0.26	4.30***	[0.19; 0.51]
Diversity Represented									0.15 (0.07)	0.13	2.15*	[0.10; 0.30]
R^2	0.09				0.09				0.11			
Positive Portrayals as a Mediator												
Constant	3.25 (0.10)		32.77 ***	[3.06; 3.45]	1.564 (0.13)		12.15***	[1.31; 1.82]	3.13 (0.13)		25.34***	[2.93; 3.42]
Ethnicity	0.34 (0.06)	0.30	5.17 ***	[0.21; 0.46]	0.66 (0.08)	0.44	7.85***	[0.50; 0.83]	0.28 (0.07)	0.25	3.62***	[0.12; 0.40]
Positive Portrayals									0.08 (0.05)	0.10	1.68	[-0.01;0.18]
R^2	0.09				0.19				0.09			
Challenge Power as a Mediator												
Constant	3.25 (0.10)		32.77 ***	[3.06; 3.45]	2.275 (0.14)		16.20***	[1.99;2.551]	3.019 (.140)		21.637***	[2.74; 3.29]
Ethnicity	0.33 (0.06)	0.30	5.17 ***	0[.21; 0.46]	0.48 (0.09)	0.30	5.17***	[0.29;.662]	.289 (.068)	.261	4.242***	[0.15; 0.42]
Challenge Power									.103 (.043)	.146	2.379**	[0.02; 0.19]
R^2	0.09				0.09				0.11			
Inclusive Classroom Interactions as a Mediator												
Constant	3.25 (0.10)		32.77 ***	[3.06; 3.45]	2.50 (0.12)		20.24***	[2.26; 2.75]	3.04 (0.16)		19.18***	[2.73; 3.36]
Ethnicity	0.34 (0.06)	0.30	5.17 ***	[0.21; 0.47]	0.54 (0.08)	0.38	6.64***	[0.38; 0.70]	0.29 (0.07)	0.26	4.16***	[0.15; 0.43]
Inclusive Classroom Interactions									0.08 (0.05)	0.10	1.67	[-0.01; 0.18]
R^2	0.09				0.14					0.10		

Table 19 – Effects of Ethnicity on Interest: Mediation by Cultural Sensitivity of Curriculum

Partially supporting *Hypothesis 6*, taken together, these results show that the Diversity Represented (DR) and Challenging Power components of the CSCS each mediated the relationship between ethnicity and interest, while the other two components of the CSCS did not.

This chapter has presented the findings of a quantitative approach adopted for this study. Initially, this chapter accounted for the genealogy of the set of culturally sensitive curricula scales (Figure 3). Quantitative data was derived from 262 returned questionnaires. Overall, these results indicate that there are four dimensions that constitute a culturally sensitive curriculum: Diversity Represented; Positive Portrayals; Challenge Power; and inclusive Classroom Interactions. Additionally, BAME students perceived their curriculum as less culturally sensitive than their White peers on all four dimensions of cultural sensitivity (Figure 4). Equally, BAME students reported significantly fewer interactions with their teachers than White students. These findings indicate that the whiteness of the curriculum negatively affects BAME students' interaction with their teachers during university. When controlling for ethnicity, two dimensions of culturally sensitive curriculum, namely Diversity Represented and Challenge Power, were shown to significantly predict interest (see Model 3 in Table 19). Taken together, these findings demonstrate that there are differences in students' perceptions of the cultural sensitivity of the curriculum between BAME and White students. In summary, these results show that the cultural insensitivity (whiteness) of the curriculum negatively impacts on BAME student's educational experiences in higher education. The next chapter moves on to discuss the findings of the research in the light of their implications on educational praxis.

Discussion

6.1 Introduction

A thorny issue of concern is the nexus between race and educational inequalities in HE (Bhambra et al., 2018; Thomas & Arday, 2021; Universities UK, 2020). Students' perception of the whiteness of their curriculum (the extent to which the curriculum is culturally (in)sensitive) and the potential barriers that its cultural insensitivity poses to student engagement (indicated by students' interaction with teachers on academic-related matters and interest in their major subject of study) is the pretext for this research. In order to define and understand the relationship between curricula and student's engagement, I conceptualised, developed and validated a set of Culturally Sensitive Curricula Scales (see Chapters 3, 4 and 5) that can be used to assess, reflect on and improve the cultural sensitivity of the HE curricula (Thomas & Quinlan, 2021b).

Several lines of enquiry and hypotheses were considered during the conceptualisation and development of this research. This study uses those lines of enquiry (research questions) and hypotheses to investigate the extent to which the cultural insensitivity of the curriculum impacts negatively on student engagement in HE. I contend that the whiteness of the curriculum renders it culturally insensitive. A culturally sensitive curriculum is one in which attitudes, teaching methods and practice, teaching materials and theories relate to, respects and affirms students' diverse cultures, histories, identities and contexts. Prior studies have aimed to assess the overall racial climate on university campuses (National Institute for Transformation and Equity, n.d.; USC Race Equity Centre, n.d.) as well as gain student's perspectives on their experiences of engagement in HE broadly (Neves & Hewitt, 2021; Office for Students, 2021). Other studies have highlighted the importance of culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995b), culturally responsive education (Bryan-Gooden et al., 2019)

and culturally responsive classroom climate (Holgate, 2016). However, to date, I have not identified any race-focused instrument that has been developed and validated specifically to measures students' perceptions of the cultural sensitivity of their curriculum (i.e., its content and how it is taught). In the context of my study, I explored two engagement variables – interaction with teachers (AIT and non-AIT), and interest in subject (individual interest).

This chapter analyses and discusses the major findings in relation to the research questions and hypotheses outlined within this thesis. Adopting a QuantCrit approach (see Chapter 3), this chapter discusses the results from the empirical research outlined within this thesis in relation to theories, literature, and the researcher's experiences and positionality. The chapter is outlined in the following way. Section 6.2 briefly restates the research questions. Section 6.3 presents the key findings of the study. Initially, I hypothesized that a culturally sensitive curricula encompasses seven dimensions of cultural sensitivity (see Chapter 4). Conceptually and statistically, therefore, Section 6.4 explains how the conceptualization of the CSCS shifted from seven dimensions as originally hypothesized to 4 dimensions upon analysis of the research data. Drawing on theories, literature, current discourses in HE relating to decolonizing/diversifying the curricula, as well as my positionality as a researcher from a racially minoritized background, and the findings from the analysis of data relating to the research, questions are then discussed in greater detail in turn within this section. Section 6.5 elaborates on the differences between BAME and White students' perceptions of the curricula. Section 6.6 discusses the research findings relating to the whiteness of the curriculum and its effect on students' interaction with teachers. Section 6.7 discusses the whiteness of the curriculum and its effect on students' interest in their subject. Considering the research findings, Section 6.8 outlines the primary limitations of this study that need to be acknowledged. Sections 6.9 and 6.10 outlines the implications for research and practice

respectively. Section 6.11 suggests directions for future research. Section 6.12 explicitly outlines my original contribution to the field, while Section 6.13 articulates the contributions of engagement in this doctoral journey to my personal and professional development. The chapter concludes with a final summary of the research outlined in this thesis in section 6.14.

6.2 Main Research Questions

This sections restates the principal research questions that guides this study, as well as the hypotheses that guided the analysis of the research findings in response to the research questions. The five research questions that are discussed and addressed in the subsequent sections are denoted below.

a) To what extent do students perceive the curricula as culturally sensitive? Does this vary between White and racially minoritized students?
b) To what extent does the 'whiteness' of the curriculum affect racially minoritized students' interaction with teachers?
c) To what extent does the 'whiteness' of the curriculum affect racially minoritized students' interest in their subject during university?
d) Which aspects of culturally sensitive curricula support students' interaction with teachers?
e) Which aspects of culturally sensitive curricula support students' interest?

6.3 The Key Findings of the Study

A Culturally Sensitive Curricula Scale (CSCS) with four dimensions was developed as a result of a literature review, dialogues with students and educators for content validation and a study with a sample of 262 diverse university students (see Chapter 4). The 19-item CSCS was found to measure four dimensions of cultural sensitivity:

a) Diversity Represented (DR) – (Items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8)

b) Positive Portrayals (PP) – (Items 7, 8, 9)

c) Challenge Power (CP) – (Items 22, 23, 24, 25, 26)

d) Inclusive Classroom Interaction (ICI) – (Items 28, 29, 30)

Factor analytic evidence indicated that all pattern coefficients were high, indicating a significant contribution of each item to the corresponding subscale. The study also found that racially minoritized students perceived their curriculum as less culturally sensitive than their White peers on all four CSCS dimensions. They reported fewer academic interaction with their teachers, and significantly lower interest in their programme of study than their White peers (see chapter 5). Ethnicity was found to significantly predict AIT. That is, when students find the curriculum more culturally sensitive, they would be more likely to report greater interaction with their teachers. I also found that two components of the CSCS (Diversity Represented and Challenge Power) partially explained the presence of an *interest gap* between BAME and White students.

Taken together, the findings of this study are consistent with the literature outlined in Chapter 2 and provides empirical support for qualitative concerns raised by students globally (particularly from racially minoritized backgrounds) in various 'MustFall' and 'Decolonise' movements (e.g., #WhyisMyCurriculumSoWhite, #RhodesMustFall, and #LiberateMyCurriculum) and decades of qualitative and quantitative research that catalogues students experiences of engagement with the HE curriculum (Arday, Belluigi and Thomas, 2020; Asante, 2012; Eirich *et al.,* 2018; Harper, 2013; Harper, Smit and Davis, 2018; Henriques and Abusouk, 2018; Meda, 2020; Peters, 2018; Timm and Andersen, 2019; Thomas and Jivraj, 2020), due to the negative impact of the whiteness of the curriculum on them (Douglas, Shockley & Toldson, 2020; Peters, 2018; Thomas & Jivraj, 2020). Several authors (Andrews, 2019;

Gabriel, 2017; Jay, 2003; Warmington, 2019) have noted that efforts to decolonise the curriculum have been widely caricatured and derided as vulgarizing and relativizing academic enquiry (Williams, 2016), yet this study shows that even if that was the case, there is an association between ethnicity and the ways in which students perceive and experience their curricula.

6.4 Conceptualising Dimensions of Culturally Sensitive Curricula

Initially, I hypothesized that curricula are culturally sensitive if they are able to meet seven key objectives (see Chapter 3). The current study found that a culturally sensitive curricula encompasses four key dimensions as described below (also see Chapter 5). This section explains how the conceptualization of the CSCS shifted from seven dimensions as originally hypothesized to 4 dimensions upon analysis of the research data.

Firstly, as previously mentioned (see Chapter 5), upon completion of a literature review (see Chapter 2), and analysis of frameworks of culturally responsive pedagogy (Bryan-Gooden et al., 2019; Holgate, 2016; Ladson-Billings, 1995b), drawing on my experiences of curricula and student engagement in HE, and in discussions with an expert in curricula development in a mid-table university in England, 7 dimensions of culturally sensitive education were proposed (see Chapter 3), and an *Alpha* version of the CSCS was developed (see Appendix A).

After deciding on seven dimensions, an initial item pool was generated and developed. The item pool contained 30 items on a four-point rating scale. Likert scale is most commonly used in social science research in order to assess attitudes, opinions and beliefs (McCoach & Madura, 2013). The dimensions were conceptualised based on literature and current discourses that illuminate the presence of structural inequalities in HE (see Chapter 2), as well as qualitative evidence and my experiences of engagement with curricula in HE. Appendix A outlines each sub-scale, and provides a description of the concept that underpins their construct and the items that form each construct. For

instance, the ‘Decolonizing Power and Privilege’ dimension was conceptualised to explore the extent to which power and privilege promote a form of hegemony that instigates and sustains systemic educational inequalities (Arday, 2018; Meda, 2020; Mignolo, 2007; Nagdee & Shafi, 2021; Thomas & Arday, 2021). The ‘Centring for Multiple Perspectives’ dimension relates to the extent to which a range of concepts are explored within the curriculum (Mountford-Zimdars et al., 2017). I was cautious about the degree of rating that I would use to identify the strength of student’s perceptions. I was mindful that how I interpreted students’ perceptions of their ‘strength of perceptions’ would be important in order to establish the reliability of the research findings. I was also mindful that data do not speak for themselves. Hence, I utilised my experiences and intersectional positionality as a researcher from a racially minoritized background, along with a QuantCrit approach to analysing the data, in order to interpret students’ perceptions of the cultural sensitivity of their curricula.

The *Alpha* version of the CSCS contained 30 items that explored 7 dimensions of cultural sensitivity (see Appendix A). Students responded to each item on a four-point Likert scale ranging from ‘strongly disagree’ to ‘strongly agree’. The 30 items were arranged so that the individual items of the seven dimensions were scattered randomly.

For the purpose of validation, the *Alpha* version of the CSCS was subject to qualitative testing with students (n=40) and educators (n=10). Participants were explicitly asked to provide concrete examples that may be used to refine the items. Consultation was also sought from a senior researcher with expertise in scale development, for clarity in relation to the formulation of the scales and other technical issues that should be considered in scale development.

Secondly, taking the perspectives of students and educators into account, data from the pretesting phase informed the development of the item pool that increased from 30 to 34 items. The data also informed the revision of the *Alpha* version of the CSCS and

the development of a *Beta* version of the CSCS. The *Beta* version contained 34 items (including 10 'like me' items (see Chapter 3)) that explored 7 dimensions of cultural sensitivity. Conceptually, two of the original constructs remained unchanged; several items were also either removed or revised (see Appendix B). For example, the 'Diversity Present' construct was revised to 'Diversity Represented', in order to capture how diversity was represented, as opposed to the presence/absence of diversity in the curriculum. Additionally, the 'Decolonising Power and Privilege' construct was also revised to 'Challenge Power', in order to account for the curriculum's ability to enable learners to develop the socio-political awareness and critical consciousness to challenge power and dominant ideologies. The 'Catering for Multiple Perspectives' construct was reworded ('Multiple Perspectives'), because the word 'Catering' suggests that multiple perspectives should be accommodated, as opposed to embedding diverse perspectives and knowledge systems within the curriculum to stand on equal footing with other knowledges as authentic knowledge. The construct 'Inclusiveness' was reconceptualised to 'Inclusive Learning Environment' to account for culturally sensitive curricula as a key feature of culturally engaging campus environments (Museus, 2014). The 'Cultural Competence' dimension was revised to focus specifically on the instructor's understanding, interest and appreciation for cultural differences, as opposed to the curriculum's ability to enable learners to develop cultural competence.

The *Beta* version of the CSCS was administered to 262 students (157 BAME; 100 White) enrolled in a mid-table English university (approximately 37% BAME undergraduate students), the majority of whom studied on degrees on advanced humanities and social sciences programs. I deliberately oversampled BAME students in order to amplify their voices. Undergraduate students were also deliberately oversampled (N=242) because their curriculum may be more prescribed, as opposed to postgraduate research students, whose curriculum may be more organic (Glatthorn et al., 2001).

Thirdly, Exploratory Factor Analysis and Principal Component Analysis (PCA) of the *Beta* version of the CSCS questionnaire was conducted. The 10 'like me' items that were initially included to gain nuanced understandings of racially minoritized students' perspectives of the *whiteness* curriculum were removed and not subject to a PCA because they proved unsuitable for a number of reasons. For instance, the 'like me' items were deemed ambiguous and could be interpreted in a variety of ways, shifting the focus away from culture and cultural sensitivity. Subsequently, I concluded that the 'like me' items were unsuitable because they were found to contain response and lexical errors (Beatty and Wills, 2007; Conrad, Blair and Tracy, 1999; Dillman, 2000; Drennan, 2003). Specifically, the sample was comprised of respondents from a range of demographic and cultural backgrounds, hence, items such as: "The curriculum includes knowledge that is relevant to people like me" and "The curriculum addresses problems that are relevant to people like me" were not able to generate the answers that I intended due to ambiguity in relation to respondent's contextualization of 'like me'. For example, all students may perceive that the knowledge that is included in the curriculum is relevant to people 'like them' from a professional perspective, as opposed to a socio-historic or cultural perspective. Additionally, this study is anchored in CRT, which postulates that racism is ingrained as a central feature within the fabric of society, shaping the daily lived experiences of people from racially minoritized backgrounds (Bell, 1992:1995). However, I realised that one must observe great caution when hypothesising that the problems that are relevant to people of colour are similar, as such generalisations perpetuate racist stereotypes by homogenising groups of people and not acknowledging the myriad intergroup nuances (Allen and Webber, 2019; Smit, 2012; Woolf *et al.,* 2008). The 'like me' items also contained inclusion/exclusion problems that posed difficulty to answering the question due to lack of clarity in relation to the scope of the questions. For instance, "People like me are usually assumed to have low family

wealth, low educational attainment and/or low income”. Reference to ‘like me’ in that statement could be understood to relate to any of the range of socio-demographic characteristics, unprotected personality characteristics, such as shyness, or their intersections. The 10 ‘like me’ items were subsequently excluded from all further analyses.

Fourthly, upon removal of the 10 ‘like me’ items, the remaining 24 items were subject to a PCA. Five components recorded eigen values greater than 1, explaining a total of 59.45% of the variance. These results corroborated with that of the Parallel Analysis, which showed four components with eigen values exceeding the criterion values for randomly generated matrix of the same size. Hence the decision was taken to retain four factors.

Fifthly, the Pattern Matrix for the 24-item solution revealed that items loaded highest on four components. Some items extended over two components (Table 7), mainly because of the presence of multiple ideas in the same question, the merging of two or more concepts in a single question, or because the item were too general in the concept that it explored. The remaining 19 items were subject to a PCA.

Finally, following the PCA of the 19 items, the decision was taken to retain 4 factors for further investigation. The items were subject to further investigation because they recorded eigenvalues greater than 1 (totalling 64.44% of the variance) (Table 9), as well as eigenvalues exceeding the criterion for randomly generated matrix of the same size. All items had pattern coefficients higher than 0.5, which was suggested to be satisfactory by Stevens (2002). The items loaded neatly on 4 dimensions. The four-factor model was found to measure four separate dimensions, that when amalgamated constitutes the Culturally Sensitive Curricula Scales.

Throughout the process of reducing the scales from seven dimensions to four, I realised that the scales were associated, yet conceptually different. For example, the

ways in which people from diverse backgrounds are referenced in the curriculum is of primary significance, however the extent to which diversity is positively portrayed also matters, as it may affirm minority ethnic students' cultures and their histories (Harper et al., 2018). Critical thinking is a key graduate outcome, hence the curriculum's ability to provoke critical thought and empower students to develop critical consciousness by challenging power and social injustices is also of great importance. The development of inclusive learning environments that embraces cultural differences and respects myriad perspectives also matter significantly. Therefore, collectively, the CSCS utilises the constructs of CRT (and its adjunct QuantCrit) as a conceptual framework in order to unveil how discursive hegemonic practices reinforce culturally insensitive curricula, that promote educational inequality.

A number of the 7 revised dimensions were amalgamated to form a single dimension in constructing the final version of the CSCS (see Appendix B). I concede that I may have been too granular in my approach to conceptualising the CSCS and in creating the items initially. Hence, I may have and inadvertently created broader conceptualisations in order to accommodate items that unbeknown to me at the time, combined two or more related concepts (see Appendix A). Upon analysis of data from the *Beta* version of the CSCS, I realised that I may have been oblivious to connections between items that were conceptually related, hence there was no requirement to introduce new constructs to capture those concepts. Therefore, I reduced the 7 dimensions to 4 dimensions upon analysing the data because I found that some items were related conceptually. For example, items within the 'Diversity Present' dimension (items 1 to 5); the 'Accurate Portrayals' (item 6); and 'Multiple Perspectives' (items 16 and 18) dimensions were conceptually related and were amalgamated to form the 'Diversity Represented' dimension of the final CSCS. Items within the 'Accurate Portrayals' dimension (items 7, 8 and 9) were conceptually related and amalgamated to

form the ‘Positive Portrayals’ dimension. Items within the ‘Challenge Power’ (items 22, 23 and 24), and ‘Connecting Learning and Action’ (items 25 and 26) dimensions were amalgamated to form the ‘Challenge Power’ dimension of the final CSCS. Finally, items within the ‘Inclusive Learning Environment’ (items 28, 29, 30) dimension were amalgamated to form the ‘Inclusive Classroom Interactions’ dimension of the final CSCS. Initially, I hypothesised that a culturally sensitive curricula is comprised of 7 components. The validation of data from the study outlined in this thesis (see Chapter 5) provides empirical support for a four-component conceptualisation of a culturally sensitive curricula.

This section has outlined how the CSCS that were hypothesised to have 7 dimensions shifted to 4 dimension upon analysis of the survey data. The next section will discuss each dimension in greater detail and highlight how the items within each scale captured the essence of that scale.

6.4.1 Diversity Represented

The first dimension of the CSCS (Diversity Represented) focuses on how people from diverse backgrounds are referenced in the curriculum. This goes beyond binary representations of diversity (Black or White) and centres race in acknowledging the intersectional nuances along all indices of diversity (e.g., social economic classifications, the range of protected characteristics outlined in the Equality Act (2010) as well as different cultural traditions, languages and religions). The Diversity Represented dimension captures the extent to which the curriculum is representative of global perspectives, ontologies, epistemologies and traditions (Hackman, 2005a; Ladson-Billings, 1997; Leask, 2014), (e.g., “The curriculum references different ethnic and cultural traditions, languages, religions and/or clothing”) and the manner in which they are represented (e.g., “People of diverse ethnicities are represented as researchers or professionals, not just as participants in research, clients, consumers, customers etc”).

The extent to which students (particularly racially minoritized students) feel emotionally interested, curious, inquisitive and their desire to pursue their interest in their subject or learn more about it may be dependent on the extent to which diversity is present. Interest is instrumental in learning, and is a precursor to motivation (Renninger, 2000) and achievement (Murayama et al., 2013). Interest develops through interaction with others and the environment (Hulleman et al., 2010; Schiefele et al., 1992). Interest is neither static, nor something a person is born with (notwithstanding predisposition to develop individual interest) (Renninger & Hidi, 2016). The presence of diversity in the curriculum may be perceived as an antecedent to cognitive activation and learning behaviours that may promote greater interest in the subject (Quinlan, 2018, 2019; Renninger & Su, 2012). Therefore, it is incumbent on educators to create culturally engaging learning environments conducive to the development and sustainment of interest (Museus, 2014).

6.4.2 Positive Portrayals

The second dimension of the CSCS (Positive Portrayals) focuses on redressing assumptions, perceptions and stereotypes of people from diverse backgrounds that may distort how they are considered by society. A purpose of CRT is to adopt a race-focused approach to questioning the social constructions and assumptions of race and racialised status, particularly concerning whiteness. The Positive Portrayal dimension of the CSCS explicitly relates to the presence or absence of implicit/explicit bias and the extent to which these vices are enmeshed in the curriculum epistemologically (Asante, 2012; Bernal & Villalpando, 2002; Hylton, 2011; Omi & Winant, 1994), methodologically (Datta, 2018; Garcia et al., 2018; Gillborn et al., 2018; Smith, 2012), ontologically (Grosfoguel, 2013) or pedologically (Gabriel, 2017; Ladson-Billings, 1992; Lynn, 1999; Wei, 2007) through deficit perceptions of racially minoritized people in the academy (Shilliam, 2017). Items in this dimension were negatively worded, but were later

reversed for the purposes of data analysis. The implications of negatively worded items in construction of the CSCS will be discussed anon in the 'Limitations' section of this chapter.

The Positive Portrayal dimension captures the extent to which diversity is represented positively (Bell, 2007) (e.g., "When social problems (e.g., crime and violence) are presented, people of colour are usually considered the problem" and "When inter-personal conflicts are presented, people of colour are usually considered the problem") or negatively as lacking agency, being vulnerable, or "needing to be saved"[18] (Hughey, 2012; Murphy & Harris, 2017) (e.g., "When people of colour have problems, White people are usually presented as being able to solve those problems"). The Positive Portrayals dimension of the CSCS illuminates the ways in which people from racially minoritized groups are portrayed, in order to highlight and redress stereotypes and negative perceptions of people of colour in the curriculum through the development of a culturally sensitive curricula and culturally responsive/ responsible teaching, (Gay, 2000: 2010: 2013). Negative portrayals of people from racially minoritized backgrounds in the curriculum has been proven to promote a stereotype threat[19] (Steele & Aronson, 1995) for BAME students (Thomas & Jivraj, 2020; Thomas, 2012a). Negative portrayals of people of colour in the curriculum may also promote a stereotype threat, which in turn may negatively affect crucial intra/interpersonal outcomes for racially minoritized students (e.g., interaction with their teachers) (Allen, 2019; Harper, 2013; Kahu, Nelson and Picton 2017), as well as cognitive outcomes (e.g. subject interest) (Ainley et al., 2002; Azevedo, 2011). When racially minoritized students become aware that their stigmatised status may be relevant in a particular context, they may become hyper-vigilant and sensitive to environmental cues relevant to potential prejudice and/or discrimination (Murphy et al., 2007). In turn, this may have detrimental effects on their identity (Walton & Cohen, 2007) and sense of belonging (Strayhorn, 2012; Thomas,

2020a). Stereotype threat have also been shown to depress performance (Allen & Webber, 2019; Walton & Cohen, 2011; Woolf et al., 2008). Identity safety is an antidote to the threat of being stereotyped.[20] The Positive Portrayals dimension of the CSCS focuses educators' attention on the development of a culturally sensitive curricula that has the potential to promote identity safety (Howansky, Maimon and Sanchez, 2021).

6.4.3 Challenge Power

The third dimension of the CSCS (Challenge Power) focuses on the curriculum's ability to provoke critical thought as well as the development of learner's socio-political awareness to challenge dominant ideologies and associations between power and hegemony (Thomas & Arday, 2021) that maintains systemic inequality (Bell, 1992; McIntosh, 1992). For example, the university is a primary arena where political debate and contestations about what constitutes 'legitimate' knowledge and who is authorised to produce 'legitimate' knowledge rages (Grosfoguel, 2012: 2013). Consistent with a central claim of CRT that the curriculum is normatively White (Ladson-Billings, 1998), these contestations and provocations highlight the "subordination and marginalisation of cultural norms, values and knowledge" of non-European and Anglo-American people (Bernal and Villalpando, 2002, p. 169). The CSCS poses questions that stimulates an analysis of the extent to which the curriculum remains normatively White, through the dominance of Anglo-American and Eurocentric epistemology/ontology that is believed to be superior in producing 'legitimate' knowledge, in contrast to 'illegitimate' knowledge produced by all other epistemological perspectives and traditions (Bernal & Villalpando, 2002). Items in the Challenge Power dimension of the CSCS are consistent with counter hegemonic philosophies and practices (Bell, 2007; Rabaka, 2010; Thomas and Arday, 2021) by capturing unearned privilege (McIntosh, 1992), and tapping cognitive incongruity, which also stimulates interest (e.g., "The curriculum raises questions about power and/or privilege that are usually taken for granted"), aiding the

development of socio-political awareness (Bonilla-Silva, 2014; Mills, 2007: 2014) (e.g., "The curriculum encourages students to connect learning to social, political or environmental concerns") and by promoting social justice (Hackman, 2005a; Shilliam, 2019) (e.g., "The curriculum encourages students to take actions that fight inequity to promote equity"). The critiques of whiteness, power and privilege (Fine et al., 1997) serves as a useful point of inquisition and dialogue to interrogate systemic racialised inequalities in order to develop more culturally sensitive curricula.

The Challenge Power dimension was constructed from an amalgamation of two separate scales (Decolonisation, Power and Privilege, and Connecting Learning to Real Life Actions) in the initial conceptualisation of the CSCS. Combining these dimensions made sense theoretically, because they are consistent with CRT, in that they both challenge traditional claims to objectivity, meritocracy, colour-blindness, race neutrality and equal opportunity, as well as the camouflage of the self-interest, power and privilege of dominant groups (Caldmore, 1992). Racism is 'normal' not aberrant nor rare: deeply ingrained in the fabric of society (Ledesma & Calderón, 2015). Importantly, the Challenge Power dimension calls for a challenge to dominant ideologies insofar that it pays attention to the roles and forms (individual and institutional) that race and systemic racism play in governing power relations and hegemonic structures in support of whiteness (historically and contemporarily) (Bell, 1992: 1995).

6.4.4 Inclusive Classroom Interactions

The fourth dimension of the CSCS (Inclusive Classroom Interactions) focuses on the development of a learning environment that appreciates and respects diverging perspectives and cultural differences. In terms of redressing educational inequalities, the CSCS broadly supports Samuel Museus' (2014) conceptualisation of a culturally engaging campus environment, to the extent where the curriculum in its entirety would be more culturally engaging if it promoted and provided culturally relevant education

(Aronson & Laughter, 2016; Ladson-Billings, 1995b). Sample items in this dimension captures inclusive pedagogical practices as they occur in classroom interactions between students and teachers (Freire, 1970; Gay, 2013; López, 2017) (e.g., "My instructors make an effort to pronounce everyone's name correctly"), and promote interaction and practices to promote an inclusive experience among students (Arday et al., 2020; Dalhouse University, n.d.; Fuentes et al., 2021; Grue, 2021; Thomas, 2021) (e.g., "My instructors encourage students to respect other students' perspectives"). Consistent with Hidi and Renninger's (2006) four phase model of interest, interest is dynamic and develops in relation to a person's interaction(s) with their environment. There is mounting evidence that inclusive interactions may contribute to interest development (Azevedo, 2011; Hidi & Harackiewicz, 2000). Person-environment interaction(s) may foster connection with 'hooks' that enable them to continue to self-trigger and sustain involvement. Culturally sensitive curricula provide a diverse range of 'hooks' (see Chapter 5) that may promote inclusive classroom interactions.

This section **disproved Hypothesis 1** by explaining how the conceptualization of the CSCS shifted from 7 dimensions as originally hypothesized to 4 dimensions upon analysis of the research data. Returning to the research questions, the next section provides a detailed discussion and interpretation of the findings of the analysis of data in relation to students' overall perception of the cultural sensitivity of the curriculum.

6.5 Differences Between BAME and White Student's Perceptions of the Curricula

The first research question sought to assess the extent to which students perceive the curricula as culturally sensitive, as well as the extent to which there may be variations in perceptions between White and racially minoritized students. I expected to find that BAME students would be less likely to report a culturally sensitive curricula than White students on all four dimensions of cultural sensitivity *Hypothesis 2*.

Hypothesis 2 was confirmed. BAME students perceived the curricula as less culturally sensitive than White students on all four dimensions of the CSCS. For instance, whether diversity was present in the curriculum, whether people of colour were positively portrayed, whether or not the curriculum encouraged students to challenge power and the extent to which classroom interactions were inclusive. This finding is consistent with a principal CRT claim that race and racism are endemic, permanent and central features of society, and not a marginal factor in defining and explaining individual experiences of people of colour (Bell, 1995; Solorzano, 1997). Similarly, the finding corroborates with CRT analysis of educational inequality as a feature of the curriculum. These inequalities are espoused through a colour blind ideology embedded within the formal curriculum (Glatthorn et al., 2001) and the permanence of whiteness as a feature of the learned curriculum (Bell, 1992; Bonilla-Silva, 2014; Ladson Billings & Tate, 1995). This finding is also consistent with the CRT's challenge to the normative whiteness of the curriculum, which is manifested in its Eurocentric epistemology, ontology, philosophical and methodological approaches and pedagogy (Hall & Tandon, 2017; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Shilliam, 2015; Smith, 2012). The extent to which discourses and classroom interactions influence and sustain racialised relationships in HE has been the subject of much research (Gillborn, 2008; Ladson-Billings, 1995b). The findings presented here suggest that racialised relationships can be mitigated by more inclusive classroom interactions. For example, the creation of learning environments that are conducive to the development of cultural competence (Cross, 1989) through cultural exchanges and cross-cultural interactions.[21] Using quantitative methods and QuantCrit (Garcia et al., 2018; Gillborn et al., 2018) as an analytical framework, these findings provide further empirical support for BAME students' reports of educational inequality, built on environmental and institutional cultures that maintain inequality, and the whiteness of curricula (Arday et al., 2020; Harper, 2013; Harper et al., 2018; Meda,

2020; Shilliam, 2019; Thomas & Jivraj, 2020). These findings have important implications for developing culturally sensitive curricula (see "The Black Curriculum" (Arday, 2021)), methodologies and teaching practices, which I will elaborate on further in section 6.10 below on practical implications.

The next section explicates the findings of data related to interaction with teachers, by exploring the link between ethnicity, cultural sensitivity of the curricula and interaction with teachers.

6.6 Whiteness of the curriculum: Its effect on students' interaction with teachers

The second research question explored the extent to which the 'whiteness' of the curriculum affects racially minoritized students' interaction with teachers. A secondary question sought to identify which aspects of culturally sensitive curricula support students' interaction with teachers. I expected to find that BAME students would report fewer interactions with teachers *Hypothesis 3* and that all dimensions of the CSCS would mediate between ethnicity and interaction with teachers *Hypothesis 4*.

Hypothesis 3 was confirmed, in that BAME students reported significantly fewer interactions with their teachers. This finding was partially explained by the cultural insensitivity of the curriculum. An important implication of this finding is that when students experience the curriculum as culturally sensitive, they may report more interaction with their teachers. This finding is consistent with the findings of UK engagement surveys that are used as statistical tools to enable understanding of students' engagement experiences (Neves & Hewitt, 2021; Office for Students, 2021). Section 6.10 provides a discussion on the implications of this finding.

I conducted mediation analysis to investigate whether and which dimensions of the CSCS explained BAME student's lower interaction with teachers. *Hypothesis 4* was confirmed. All four dimensions of the CSCS were contributory factors in explaining BAME students' infrequent interactions with teachers. This finding is consistent with

extant research that underscores the importance of cultures and practices that validate and affirm histories, cultural backgrounds, identities, knowledge and experiences as a means of fostering greater interactions and engagement with teachers (Ladson-Billings, 1995; López, 2017; National Institute for Transformation and Equity, n.d.). The findings are also supported by Lundberg and Schreiner's (2004) study that found relationships with teachers to be a stronger predictor of learning than student background. Interaction with teachers have been found to be a strong predictor of learning for a number of reasons. For example, in order to enable teachers to convey affirmatory expectations to students about their ability to succeed (Dweck, 1986; Gay, 2002 ; Harper, 2013; Harper, Smit and Davis, 2018; Rowe, 2008), to support students in developing positive self-fulfilling prophecies (Tauber, 1997), and to enable students to strengthen their critical thinking skills – e.g., "teaching them how to think" (Light, 2001, p.117). This finding has important implications for developing more culturally sensitive curricula (as outlined anon in section 6.10).

The next section expounds on the findings of data related to students' interest in their subject, by exploring the link between ethnicity, cultural sensitivity of the curricula and interest.

6.7 The Whiteness of the Curriculum and its Effect on Students' Interest

The third research question investigated the extent to which the whiteness of the curriculum affects racially minoritized students' interest in their subject during university. A secondary line of investigation sought to understand which aspects of culturally sensitive curricula support students' interest. Similar to (Quinlan, 2019), I predicted that BAME students would have lower interest in their program of study than White students *Hypothesis 5*. I expected all dimensions of the CSCS to mediate between ethnicity and interest *Hypothesis 6*.

Hypothesis 5 was confirmed. BAME students reported lower interest in their program of study than White students. This finding is consistent with previous findings (Quinlan, 2019) and was partially explained by the cultural (in)sensitivity of the curriculum. Making curriculum more culturally sensitive has been shown to have a positive effect on the interest and achievement of students from racially minoritized backgrounds (Renninger and Hidi, 2020), as well as extend utility value interventions. The data reported in this study supports previous research (Crouch et al., 2013) that suggest that engaging students' interest by ensuring that course content contributes relevance utility and meaning may support students with low initial interest to develop interest.

Hypothesis 6 was not confirmed. The lack of confirmation was partially explained by students' perceptions of the cultural (in)sensitivity of their curriculum, particularly the lack of representation of diversity and its failures to challenge hegemonic power structures that promote systemic inequalities. This finding is consistent with Harper and Quaye's (2007) postulation that shifting the focus from racial/ethnic minority students to faculty may account for and developing culturally inclusive practices and pedagogy, which I will elaborate further in section 6.10 below on practical implications. During the course of this study, several limitations were encountered. The next section will outline the limitations of this study.

6.8 Limitations of the Research

There are several limitations in this study that need to be acknowledged. I contend that these limitations should not detract from the overall findings and significance of the results. The strength of this research was the conceptual framework (i.e., the study was guided by an amalgam of Critical Race Theory (with a QuantCrit approach) and the emerging theory of interest). The study used primary data and the data collection was cross-sectional as opposed to longitudinal. However, there were limitations.

Firstly, there was a deliberate oversampling of BAME students. This oversampling was necessary since the literature concerning student attainment in postsecondary education suggest that BAME students experience the curriculum as being culturally insensitive (Frings, Gleibs and Ridley, 2020; Mountford-Zimdars *et al.,* 2015; Thomas and Arday, 2021; UUK, 2019). Therefore, it was necessary to validate those findings in this study empirically in order to facilitate generalizability of results. While the oversampling of BAME students may be perceived as a strength of this study, the scope of the study prevented a granular interrogation of the samples in order to unveil intersectional inequalities (Crenshaw, 1995). For example, disaggregation in terms of race (did Black students interpret the curriculum as more culturally sensitive than Asian students?) or in terms of gender (e.g., did female students experience the curriculum in a different way as opposed to male students?), or intersectionally (e.g., did Black Male students have different experience of the curriculum than Black female students?). However, I appreciate that a larger sample size would be required in order to conduct that level of analysis. This is an approach that should be considered in conducting future iterations of this research (as highlighted in section 6.10).

Secondly, another limitation was that I was not able to disaggregate the data by program of study. This limitation presents a further question as to whether the results might have been skewed by program of study if that approach was taken. For example, if most of the cohort that was oversampled (Black students) studied on one program (such as Law), while the majority of White students studied on another program (such as English). Since these groups of students would be studying on programs in different disciplines, they would be responding to different curricula. Removing program of study as a confounding variable is recommended in future studies.

Thirdly, the Positive Portrayal scale contained negatively worded questions. These items were reversed for the purposed of data analysis. The negatively worded

questions in this scale may produce data that contains response and lexical errors (Beatty and Wills, 2007; Conrad, Blair and Tracy, 1999; Dillman, 2000; Drennan, 2003), as they may be considered ambiguous by respondents. This shortcoming should be addressed in order to improve the reliability and validity of the scale.

Fourthly, as previously mentioned (see Section 4.6.3), I was invited by module convenors to deliver a ten-minute presentation about my PhD research to students who study on the MA in Advanced Child Protection course and to third-year undergraduate students who study on the Social Work program. Upon completion of the presentation, students were asked to complete the CSCS survey. While this approach proved fruitful in recruiting participants, it can be argued that this mode of recruitment presents limitations in that there may be a risk that gaining detailed insight into the study may influence responses of participants.

Finally, this study focused primarily on students who study of programs in the social sciences and humanities. There is a growing body of evidence that highlights the extent to which the curricula in science, technology engineering and mathematics (STEM) disciplines may be culturally (in)sensitive (Codiroli, 2015; Dancy et al., 2020)(Karodia, 2020). A long held school of thought postulates that re-curating STEM curricula to make them more culturally sensitive may prove challenging because of the belief that STEM subjects are objective and neutral, requiring more technical, or problem-solving skills (Bhambra et al., 2018).

Building on the scholarship of Gloria Ladson-Billings and Geneva Gay (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1995b), Peoples and colleagues' (2021) Culturally Responsive-Sustaining STEAM Curriculum Scorecard provides a tool to assess the extent to which the science, technology, engineering, arts and medicine (STEAM) curricula are culturally responsive. This tool is intended for use for pre-university (K-12) curricula. However, this scorecard could provide a framework to inform the redevelopment of the CSCS for

use with STEM disciplines. Appreciating the inter-disciplinary nuances, a redesigned CSCS that orientates STEM within a wider, global body of knowledge that accounts for diverse perspectives, the contexts in which they emerge and how these perspectives are represented could be administered in individual disciplines.

6.9 Implications for Practice

Teachers and administrators need resources to facilitate review, analysis and reimagination of HE curricula, given increased attention to racialised inequalities in HE globally. This study is the first to investigate the association between culturally sensitive curricula (on four dimensions of cultural sensitivity (see Chapter 5)) and student engagement (on two measures of engagement – interaction with teachers and subject interest). The CSCS are intended to stimulate a race-focused analysis of curricula and promote action for redressing inequalities within curricula that affect students' interaction with teachers and their interest. Despite the need for further validation of the CSCS with larger samples in different settings and disciplines, the set of CSCS is a promising tool that has implications for both instruction and research in HE.

6.9.1 Implications for Instruction

Teachers in HE can use the CSCS to gain an understanding of what culturally sensitive curricula are and their importance to students. From an instructional perspective, the CSCS may be beneficial for teachers and students in the process of curricula revision; the development of activities and strategies to redress racialised inequalities; in support of endeavours to decolonise curricula; in enhancing graduate attributes and employability; in support of the widening participation agenda; and in supporting the continuous professional development of teaching staff.

6.9.1.1 Curricula Revision. In the process of revising their curricula or conducting subject reviews, teachers and course delivery teams can use the CSCS to assess the content of their curricula and how it is taught on four dimensions of cultural sensitivity (herewith). For instance, instructors and course teams can use the 19 survey items (see Table 1) individually as action items to enhance their curricula. Teachers could ask their students to rate the items, then compare students' ratings with their own self-assessment. Interpretation of the results could serve as a means of quality assurance, as well as facilitate the formulation of evidence-based actions to modify and/or reform their curricula. Some existing reflective processes used in curricula reform focus on reviewing reading lists or syllabi (Adewumi and Mitton, 2021; Borkin, 2021; Schucan Bird and Pitman, 2020; Thomas, 2021). Such reviews are often limited to conversations and investigations that highlight the scarcity of BAME authors in the curriculum (for example, the presence/absence of diversity (allied to the Diversity Represented component of the CSCS)), and suggest increasing representation as a means of curricula reform. Unfortunately, while reading lists may be reformed by reading list reviews, this may not go far enough to effect structural/ systemic changes; broader curricula may remain unscathed, thus maintaining structural inequalities (e.g., a culturally insensitive curriculum and exclusive practices that compromise inclusive interactions). My conceptualisation of culturally sensitive education suggests that attention also needs to be paid to the other three areas of culturally sensitive curricula (i.e., Positive Portrayals, Challenge Power and Inclusive Classroom Interactions). Undoubtedly, the presence of diversity in the curriculum is important, as it allows students to see themselves reflected in the curriculum. However, the extent to which diversity is positively portrayed also matters insofar as it may promote identity safety (Steele & Cohn-Vargas, 2013), affirm minority ethnic students (Harper et al., 2018) and enable them to see their histories and culture recognised and portrayed positively. Helping students to develop critical

consciousness and socio-political awareness to challenge hegemonic power structures and social injustices is also particularly important to promoting students' interest.

Kingston University's Inclusive Curriculum Framework is another reflective processes that is currently used in UK HE (Kingston University London, n.d.). This framework is intended to promote a universal approach to course design in order to improve the learning experiences of students. The inclusive curriculum framework "recognises not only that diversity should be accommodated in the curriculum but the curriculum must develop and build the diversity skills of students and staff" (Ross *et al.* 2018, p. 112). However, while the approach proposed by Kingston University advocates the creation of a curriculum in which students can see themselves reflected (similar to the Diversity Represented component of the CSCS), and one that equips students to work in a global and diverse world (similar to the Inclusive Classroom Interactions component of the CSCS), it broadly departs from a race-focused approach, unlike the CSCS. While a universal approach to course design is important in order to make curricula more accessible, my conceptualisation of culturally sensitive education advocates for a holistic, race-focused approach to the creation and maintenance of an inclusive educational environment that focuses specifically on culturally sensitive curricula (Museus, 2014). Use of the CSCS to support curricula reforms may assist teachers and administrators in creating an educational environment that promotes non-discriminatory attitudes, inclusive teaching methods, practice and materials and a curricula that recognises, respects and affirms students' diverse histories, cultures, identities and contexts.

6.9.1.2 Development of Activities and Strategies to Redress Racialized Inequalities.

From a student perspective, culturally sensitive curricula benefits students in that it centres race and ethnicity, and foregrounds social justice in order to illuminate and aid the development of activities and strategies to redress inequalities (Mountford-Zimdars

et al., 2017; Turner, 2018; Universities UK, 2020; UUK, 2019). Visions of social justice are of particular importance to racially minoritized students who are often muted or erased from the curriculum. I contend that when racially minoritized students see instances of social justice in their curricula and see opportunities to achieve greater social justice, they may be inspired. Visions of social justice may also serve to 'level the playing field' by developing students' subject interest (Renninger & Hidi, 2020). For example, as part of a culturally sensitive curriculum, a teacher may infuse novel, surprising tasks involving students working with others in order to develop students' interest in group work (this is reflective of the Inclusive Classroom Interaction component of the CSCS). This approach may enable students to develop and deepen their subject interest (Renninger & Hidi, 2020). When learners have a developing interest, they may be more likely to seek information and interact with their teachers.

6.9.1.3 Decolonizing Curricula. The CSCS provides a framework to decolonize curricula and decentre whiteness that is enmeshed in the curriculum, by highlighting the fact that the mere presence of people of colour in curricula (the diversity represented component) is not enough if power structures prevail. True decolonisation is unsettling and warrants an analysis of the colonial matrix of power (aligned with the challenge power component of the CSCS) (Hall & Tandon, 2017; Tuck & Yang, 2012), in order to examine who is represented and how they are represented (the positive portrayal aspect of the CSCS). Authentic decolonisation requires decolonization of both the researcher and research (Datta, 2018) in order to produce curricula that is reflective of myriad epistemologies, methodologies and ontologies (De Sousa Santos, 2014; Garcia et al., 2018; Smith, 2012). One that advances social justice. Making curricula more culturally sensitive is one aspect of the process of decolonisation. There are many ways to make curricula more culturally sensitive. For instance, demonstrating flexibility around assessments to enable students to connect to their own histories and cultures, and

encouraging students to interact with diverse peers respectfully; utilising a broader range of case examples that positively reflect diversity in class discussions and; diversifying images used in lectures and course material (Fuentes, Zelaya and Madsen, 2021; Gabriel, 2017; Raycroft and Flynn, 2020). Enhancing Graduate Attributes and Employability. In terms of graduate outcomes and employability, culturally sensitive curricula may be beneficial to all students, in that curricular changes will enhance students' engagement (see Chapter 5) and contribute to the growth and development of culturally competent graduates who are equipped and inspired to contribute to social improvement. Employers are looking for culturally competent staff who are able to contribute to nurturing diverse talent and creating climates where all employees can thrive. Employers have now discovered the costs associated with failures to engage diverse employees in workplaces (Accenture, 2020). In increasingly diverse societies globally, culturally competent graduates may be equipped with the skills and abilities to embrace the multiple perspectives, appreciate the value that diverse people bring, and understand how to participate in and sustain inclusive interactions. Subsequently, more culturally competent graduates will be able to make more meaningful contributions to organisations by enabling them to meet their corporate social responsibilities (Thomas, 2018), as well as play an active role in the development and maintenance of a just and fair society.

In this study, students' all dimensions of culturally sensitive curricula predicted students' interaction with teachers. Similarly, the diversity represented and challenge power dimensions of cultural sensitivity predicted students' interest. Making curricula more culturally sensitive may benefit all students. Although this departs from the primary aim of this study (to assess and enhance curricula so that it benefits racially minoritized students), culturally sensitive curricula that benefits all students may inadvertently benefit racially minoritized students – suggesting an interest convergence. Coined by Derek Bell (1980), interest convergence is a fundamental principle of CRT

that suggests that dominant groups are only motivated to support/effect change that meets the needs of marginalised groups if the changes also benefits them.

6.9.1.4 Widening Participation Agenda. The widening participation agenda has been in place in UK higher education for decades. Widening participation schemes attempt to address discrepancies in access and progression in HE and improve graduate outcomes and employability for students from disadvantaged backgrounds, lower income households and under-represented groups (UK Government, 2020). Widening participation comes with responsibilities to develop campus environments conducive to equitable outcomes for students. This study shows that curricula is one aspect of campus environments that may be exclusionary for students who have been identified as belonging to 'widening participation' cohorts and from racially minoritized backgrounds (Arday, Belluigi and Thomas, 2020; Grue 2021; Mcduff *et al.,* 2018; Mountford-Zimdars *et al.,* 2015). Educational participation yields benefit for society as a whole. However, while the 'Widening Participation' agenda aims to redress the historical underrepresentation of some social groups in HE (e.g., students identified as coming from socially deprived backgrounds but identified as having the potential to benefit from HE), there has been a lack of focus on student experiences once they have gained entry to HE and specifically, pedagogical approaches and the nature of the curriculum which might be marginalising to some students from these underrepresented groups (Burke, 2017). This raises key questions in relation to widening access and participation, as these groups are historically underrepresented in HE, and similarly in the curriculum. Similar to Shaun Harper who called on researchers and teachers to accept individual and collective responsibility for complex educational and social problems (Harper, 2021), I contend that the CSCS offers a framework to widen access and guide the re-curation of curricula to make them more culturally sensitive. Culturally sensitive curricula will

enable all students to see themselves, their histories and cultures affirmed, and the problems of their cultural communities acknowledged and addressed appropriately.

6.9.1.5 Supporting Continuous Professional Development (CPD) for Teaching Staff. It is critical that professional development for teachers and researchers in HE fosters and supports the development of their cultural competence. It is necessary to rethink how teachers are trained and supported to effectively integrate race-focused approaches into their practice. For example, the 19 items within the set of CSCS may be used to inform training and activities as part of their continuous professional development. The use of the set of scales to enhance CPD activities offers scope to develop teachers' cultural competence and in turn, shape their practices and support them in playing their part in "fostering good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it" (Equality Act, 2010, sec. 149).

6.10 Implications for Research

In the absence of race-focused (DeCuir-Gunby & Schutz, 2014) quantitative instruments to facilitate curricular diversification and assess their impact on students, the findings from this study has important implications for research. The research findings provide support for the conceptual premise that culturally sensitive curricula improve students' interaction with teachers and their subject interest. From a research standpoint, the CSCS can be used in several ways. For example, in order to enable the development of counter stories that may disrupt majoritarian discourses in research and evaluation, to aid development of survey instruments that explore/assess quality of teaching, in the developing training materials for researchers, in order to explore cultural sensitivity of learning environments beyond curricula, and to inform interventions that focus on reforming curricula.

6.10.1 Counter Stories in Support of Research and Evaluation

People involved in research and evaluation "should engage in critical self-reflection to avoid perpetuating racist narratives through data" (Cross 2018, p. 268). I contend that this includes embracing quantitative methodologies and frameworks such as QuantCrit (Garcia et al., 2018; Gillborn et al., 2018) that seek to amplify counter storytelling as an anti-racist approach. There is compelling evidence from geneticists and biologists that race is not biologically but socially constructed (Bell, 1992; DeCuir-Gunby & Schutz, 2014; Omi & Winant, 2002; Smedley & Smedley, 2005). Once constructed, race serves to normalise the sorting of people (implicitly/explicitly) into hierarchies, which privileges some people at the expense of others, specifically due to the absence/ presence of power. Subsequently, racial inequalities have become a normal feature in societies globally in general, and HE, which is a microcosm of these societies.

Counter storytelling is one way of socially deconstructing race and racialised hierarchies. Traditionally, the use of counter stories suggest the presentation of qualitative accounts to illuminate the stories of marginalized and underrepresented groups, and using these stories and experiences to challenge dominant narratives (Matsuda et al., 1993; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002), or in some cases, add to the tapestry of narratives and discourses. Similar to the manner in which counter stories may be used qualitatively to challenge and redress disparate discourses (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002), researchers may also use quantitative data in a race-focused, critical way (QuantCrit) to construct stories to challenge and redress dominant narratives and enhance current discourses. For example, the CSCS is a race-focused quantitative instrument that can be used by researchers to gain students' perspectives of the *whiteness* of their curriculum, specifically, whether, or the extent to which their curricula are culturally sensitive, as well as their perspectives of other structural inequalities in the academy. Although the CSCS is a quantitative instrument, using the data from the questionnaires to construct a

story is possible because conceptually, the instrument is anchored in CRT (and specifically QuantCrit). According to Woodfield and colleagues (2015, p. 88), institutional research relates to a "broad set of activities that collect, transform, analyse and use data to generate evidence to support institutional planning , policy formation, quality enhancements and decision making". Data relating to counter stories from the CSCS can be used to inform quality enhancements and decision-making as it relates to curricula development.

6.10.2 Enhancing Quality of Teaching

The role played by teachers have been cited as one of the most important factors in determining the overall student experience (Neves & Hewitt, 2021). Researchers can use the CSCS as a framework to facilitate an understanding of the extent to which curricula reform and pedagogical approaches improve students' learning experiences in terms of their interaction with teachers. For example, the CSCS survey items may be used to enhance survey instruments that explore and assess quality of teaching, in terms of teaching staff characteristic (see AdvanceHE's Student Academic Experience Survey (Neves & Hewitt, 2021)).

6.10.3 Developing Training for Researchers

Although the set of CSCS were constructed specifically to assess, reflect on and improve the cultural sensitivity of curricula, they may also be used as a framework to aid the development of training materials to promote cultural competence for academic and professional services staff in HE. Cultural competence relates is the ability to understand and interact effectively with people from a range of cultures. The four dimensions of the CSCS may provide a proxy for understanding what cultural sensitivity is, why it matters and how those understandings contribute to the development of cultural competence (Pace, 1984; Purnell, 2000). Additionally, despite progress in 'Western' research training

in recent decades, many researchers receive insufficient culturally appropriate research training for conducting research with people from racially minoritized communities (Datta, 2018). Minority ethnic researchers (Tuck & Yang, 2012) have voiced concerns over methods of 'Western' research, citing a need for a significant process of decolonisation in order to incorporate lessons learnt from racially minoritized researchers and communities. The development of culturally appropriate methods and epistemological positions that honours, respects and cares for the communities with which researchers conduct research should not be underestimated (Wilson, 2008). Therefore, I contend that similar to suggested use of the CSCS to evaluate curricula in HE, it can also be used to evaluate researcher training, particularly in the social sciences. This approach benefits both the researcher and participants in the researcher's research. For example, researchers exploring the cultural sensitivity of curricula could use the CSCS to frame research design and guide the development of research questions, instrumentation data collection and analysis, while adhering to the QuantCrit framework (Garcia et al., 2018).

6.10.4 Exploring Cultural Sensitivity of Learning Environments Beyond Curricula

The dimensions of the CSCS may also be used as a framework to explore the cultural sensitivity of the learning environments beyond the HE curricula. Humans have a need for relatedness and an attachment with meaningful others (e.g., a sense of belonging to the university in which they study and relatedness to their teachers and support staff) (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Yet, that need is often influenced by socio-historical contextual factors such as the impact of race and racialised inequality. Therefore, the extent to which diversity is present among teachers and support staff, and how diversity in portrayed intersectionally (Kimberlie Crenshaw, 1991) in terms of representation in decision-making positions matter. The presence of teachers and support staff from

diverse backgrounds in decision-making positions may empower students to challenge taken-for-granted power structures that poses barriers to their engagement.

6.10.5 Informing Interventions That Focus on Reforming Curricula.

Researchers can also use the CSCS to inform and evaluate interventions that focus on reforming curricula to make them more diverse, inclusive and culturally sensitive (Borkin, 2021; Thomas, 2020: 2021). For example, when reviewing reading lists, the CSCS can be used to assess the extent to which the contents of reading lists are conceptually and intersectionally diverse on all four dimensions of cultural sensitivity. Researchers can use the CSCS as a framework to guide reading list reviews because it facilitates a race-focused, QuantCrit (Garcia et al., 2018; Gillborn et al., 2018) analysis that goes beyond quantitatively accounting for the number of authors from diverse backgrounds (body count) that are represented on reading lists, (i.e., representing diversity), towards a critical analysis of how positively diversity is portrayed (see 'Black and British' (Olusoga, 2017); 'When we ruled' (Walker, 2011); and 'The destruction of Black civilization' (Williams, 1987)). Accurate and positive portrayals of diversity may enable all students to develop an appreciation for diverse cultures, histories and traditions, as well as an awareness of social-historical, political and contextual factors that promote racialised inequalities and hegemony. In turn, researchers maybe able to account for what is muted, erased or excluded from reading lists. There are myriad ways of making curricula more culturally sensitive. Essentially, educators should ensure that research and practice is informed by a critical understanding of the relationship between racialised status and power, because racism operates through and between many of these factors simultaneously.

This research explored students' perspectives of the extent to which the cultural insensitivity of the curriculum impacts on their engagement. Several questions still

remain unanswered at present. Therefore, the next section will outline directions for future research.

6.11 Directions for Future Research

This study initially aimed to conceptualise, develop and validate a new set of culturally sensitive curriculum scales for use in assessing students' experiences of engaging with HE curricula. This study focused on exploring associations between culturally sensitive curricula, ethnicity and engagement on two measures of engagement (interaction with teachers, and interest). There is abundant room for further progress in determining the extent to which culturally sensitive curricula may improve student engagement and subsequent attainment. The scales that are developed here are not intended for use as a barometer to gauge student satisfaction, nor assist in achieving mobility in league tables, as their use in that manner may promote a tokenistic, or performative approach to developing and subsequently providing a more culturally sensitive curriculum. Adopting an intersectional race-focused approach (Crenshaw, 1991; DeCuir-Gunby & Schutz, 2014), correlational studies can be conducted to investigate the relationship between culturally sensitive curricula and engagement (interaction with teachers and interest) and other demographic variables, such as gender or social class. I recommend that further studies considering those variables in other settings and disciplines should be undertaken. Those investigation could add value to educational research exploring the widening participation agenda.

In this study, I focused on programs that are taught on advanced humanities and social sciences courses. The items have not been systematically tested in other disciplines. For example, science, technology, engineering and medicine (STEM). Thus, cross-sectional studies in a wider range of subjects with other disciplines represents a useful next step.

This study utilised a cross-sectional design. Cross-sectional studies have limitations regarding the temporal ordering of variables and causal influence. This is particularly relevant to this study: not only may a culturally insensitive curricula cause students to interact less well with their teachers and have reduced levels of subject interest, but sub-optimal interaction with teachers and reduced subject interest may cause students to perceive and report culturally insensitive curricula. Therefore, it is crucial to fill the gap in literature by evaluating the longitudinal associations between culturally sensitive curricula and student engagement, so to better understand its causal direction.

This study adopted a focus on students' overall programmes. In future investigations, the CSCS may also be a useful tool at the module level in order to promote reflection on what is taught in the module and how it is taught. Teachers could also use the scales as a framework to assess the impact of curricular changes.

In the present study, data were collected from senior students (second-year and beyond), who I hypothesised have developed the critical faculties to provide meaningful analysis of their curricula. It is not clear whether the scales would be useful for use with first-year students, whose may not have developed the critical faculties to assess the extent to which their curricula is culturally sensitive. In further studies, the use of the scales with first-year students in the latter part of the academic year could be a useful next step.

Persistent racial equality gaps disproportionately affect students from racially minoritized backgrounds in UK HE. Racialised inequalities in HE is an ethical and social justice concern. Degree awarding gaps have been described as "the great unspoken shame of UK Higher Education" (Ross et al., 2018, p. 109). The causes of the degree awarding gaps are multi-causal and complex (Mountford-Zimdars et al., 2015). Research have tended to underestimate the influence of non-cognitive factors (e.g., interest) on academic attainment. However, existing theory suggests that there is an association

between interest and achievement (Jansen et al., 2016; Schiefele et al., 1992). This study did not investigate the association between interaction with teachers and attainment because of its cross-sectional nature, nor did it investigate the association between interest and attainment. Therefore, more intensive and systematic investigation of the association between interest, academic interaction with teachers and culturally sensitive curricula and their impact in predicting attainment (in relation to ethnicity and other demographic variables) opens new possibilities for future research.

In the present study, data were collected from 262 students who study in a predominately White university (approximately 38% BAME undergraduate students), on advanced humanities and social sciences courses at a single point in time. This study could be replicated longitudinally with a larger and more diverse sample of students in other disciplines and settings as well as other geographical areas (e.g., the Caribbean, North America, Brazil, Australia and the United States of America). Students' perceptions of the cultural sensitivity of their curricula could also be studied longitudinally throughout their training on programs that have used the CSCS to effect curricula reform in order to understand how students' perceptions change (or not) over time in response to curricula changes. Data could also be analysed at a more granular level and desegregated of more diverse subgroups of students.

In a review of key themes and developments in research into cognitive aspects of survey methods (CASM) Norbert Schwarz (2007) espoused that the cognitive and communicative processes underlying survey responding possesses several interrelated tasks, any of which might result in inaccurate reporting. Within the context of this research, Schwarz's proposition provides a framework to explore and reflect on the shortcomings of the use of a quantitative paradigm in order to explore students' perceptions of whether or the extent to which the cultural insensitivity of their curriculum poses barriers to their engagement in HE. In the first instance, when

completing the questionnaire, it was important for respondents to interpret the questions in order to comprehend their meaning. Arguably, this survey could be considered challenging due to the sensitive nature of matters relating to race/culture/ethnicity. Hence, completing the questionnaire may engender cognitive/memory burden, as respondents did not have an opportunity to expound on the answers to their questions; instead, respondents had to select a suitable choice from a Likert Scale. Due to the nature of the questions contained within the survey questionnaire and the limitations of a quantitative approach in that it delimits the opportunity to showcase qualitative examples of practice to accompany the Likert Scales, there was a possibility in answering the questions, that participants may retrieve a previously formed judgement from memory, or they may form a judgement on the spot, based on estimation or inference (Menon, 1994). When completing the questionnaires, participants formatted their judgement in combining separate pieces of information to form a response; in some instances, respondents may have edited their response before communicating it, due to the sensitivity of the question, influences of social desirability and situational accuracy. According to Schwarz (2007), the nature of the research instrument and the context in which the instrument is administered has a profound effect on the tasks associated with arriving at a response. In this research, the impersonal nature of a quantitative paradigm may have inadvertently treated participants as subjects of research, or participants in research, as opposed to participants in co-creating knowledge, with no opportunity to engage in dialogue in order to provide nuanced responses to aid contextual understandings of their educational experience(s). In this sense, a key limitation of the quantitative paradigm used in this research is that it is in opposition to the CRT tradition of storytelling (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002), which is often used in empirical research pertaining to race, ethnicity and/or culture in providing powerful narratives as qualitative data to complement quantitative data. However, in spite of the limitations associated

with the quantitative paradigm, I chose to depart from the commonly utilised qualitative paradigm that is when conducting research relating to race/ethnicity/ culture, in favour of a quantitative approach because primarily, this study aimed to adopt a race-focused approach in employing analytic methods in order to conceptualise, develop and validate a new set of culturally sensitive curriculum scales for use in assessing students' experiences of engaging with HE curricula. Qualitative data has proven to be a powerful instrument to illuminate racialised inequality, particularly by way of counter-storytelling (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). The primary purpose of storytelling is to "reveal the contingency, partiality, and self-serving quality of the stories on which we have been relying to order our world" (Delgado, 2016, p. 334) – in this instance, HE curricula. Critics argue that storytelling "plays upon emotions, instead of reason and therefore, it can convince people to adopt a position without giving them doctrinal basis [facts] for it" (Litowiz, 2016, p. 303). However, there is a lack of recognition that "majoritarian tools of analysis, themselves are only stories, which will only produce versions lacking in typicality, rigor, generalizability and truth" (Delgado, 2016, p. 338). Fully appreciating the qualitative paradigm, I specifically chose to adopt a quantitative paradigm to guide this research because existing sector-wide surveys and instruments do not illuminate BAME student experience gaps; hence, there are no instruments designed to adopt a race-focused approach to gather students' perceptions of the cultural sensitivity of the HE curricula. It is my hope that despite its limitations, the new set of culturally sensitive curricula scales will make a conceptual and methodological contribution by providing a practical tool to gather students' perceptions of the cultural sensitivity of their curricula, as well as support curricula development.

6.12 Original Contribution to the Field

In reviewing the literature (see Chapter 2), no instruments were found that adopt a race-focused approach to assessing the extent to which HE curricula are culturally sensitive.

In light of the persistence and permanence of racialised inequalities in HE that have been proven to influence the results of degrees awarded (Mountford-Zimdars et al., 2015; Richardson, 2018), particularly in UK HE, and the increasingly diverse student population (AdvanceHE, 2020a; UUK, 2019), the conceptualisation, validation and production of a scale that facilitates the assessment of students' perceptions of with curricula on two key dimensions of student engagement (AIT and interest) may help in designing strategies and initiatives to redress some of the structural inequalities that contribute to disparities in student outcomes in HE. Therefore, the development and validation of new measurement scales (the CSCS) to assess cultural sensitivity of HE curricula makes significant and important conceptual and methodological contributions, enabling further research on culturally engaging campus environments (Museus, 2014) conducive of equity and social justice in education. For example,

a) Conceptualizing what culturally sensitive curricula are
b) Understandings of associations between cultural sensitivity of curricula and interaction with teachers
c) Understandings of cultural sensitivity of curricula on subject interest
d) Development of a scale to assess students' perceptions of interaction with teachers (Interaction with Teachers scale)

Notably, version 3 of the CSCS is now being used sector-wide among six higher education institutions in the UK, under the auspices of the Network for Evaluating and Researching University Participating Interventions (NERUPI). NERUPI is a praxis-based network of 70 higher education organisations working together to create a new approaches to evaluating the impact of widening participation interventions.

6.13 Contribution to the Researcher's Personal Development

This doctorate has been the longest and most rewarding process of learning and development that I have embarked on to date. Embarking on the PhD journey has enabled me to experience exponential growth and development in my research skills, presentation, communication and networking skills. These areas of growth have led to me developing a stronger professional profile and professional network beyond the environs of my institution, as well as academic contributions and personal development in a number of areas. I also learned about the process of research through writing research papers and presenting research findings for various audiences nationally and internationally (see examples of three research papers and a full list of presentations at Appendix D). These accomplishments along with others have enabled me to gain nomination for and awarded as a finalist the prestigious K Patricia Cross Award 2022. As a result of me being awarded as a finalist, I subsequently gained induction into the American Association of Colleges and universities Future Leaders Society 2022.

This learning journey has also enhanced my appreciation for and understanding of the complexities and nuances involved in the research process. This was achieved through various stages of the research. For example, design, data collection, data analysis, and discussion of the results. Engagement in the research process also stimulated a change in my philosophical and conceptual orientations.

Throughout this period of study, my philosophical orientations and paradigms in relation to the interplay between race, ethnicity and culture and their implications on students' engagement in HE, and particularly the higher education curricula, have been significantly reshaped. Specifically, in relation to students' perception of the cultural sensitivity of their curricula. This was achieved throughout the construction of my thesis as well as the preparation of several publications and delivery of conference presentations and contribution to panel discussions that stemmed from my thesis (see

above). The knowledge, skill development has also enabled me to collaborate with fellow academic colleagues to co-edit three books that explores inequalities in higher education (see Appendix D).

My experiences of education in Britain caused me to question whether and the extent to which curricula could be culturally sensitive. The absences of cultural references in all curricula in which I had engaged throughout my academic journey had negative and damaging implications on my ability to construct an academic identity. At this point, I can disclose that I have undertaken most qualifications that are made available in secondary and postsecondary education in the UK. For example, Advanced Level (A-Level) examinations; National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Levels 2-5; Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) Levels 4-7; Undergraduate Degree (Bachelor of Sciences); and Master's Degree. I was troubled by the cultural insensitivity of the curriculum in all of these curricula and desperate to understand the perspectives of others who had engaged with those curricula in general and specifically that of postsecondary education. This quest for closure also served as an inspiration for this study. A quest to make visible what, by some educators had been made invisible, and in some cases dismissed that which they did not understand, or were not prepared to deal with. I knew from the start that the findings of this study may be difficult to accept for some people, and that detractors may proceed immediately to my methodology, rather than my results and/or discussion chapters. I am not pre-empting that outcome, because that too is part of a continuous struggle.

From inception, this study has been about many struggles that pervade and invade all that I do, all that I am, and all that I possibly may become. I perceive this PhD as a means of partially reconciling with an ongoing conflict between identity, belonging and epistemic power relations. Arguably, the most influential and accomplished theorist on

race and identity – Stuart Hall – drew upon post-racial, structural ideas of contingent identity. According to (Hall, 1990):

> Identity is not transparent nor unproblematic as you think. Perhaps instead of thinking of identity as an already accomplished fact… we should think, instead, of identity as a 'production', which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside, representation. (p. 222).

I acknowledge that the 'I' who writes here is under construction. I also acknowledge that what I say is in context, positioned. Similar to Stuart Hall, I was born and spent my childhood and adolescence in a working-class family in Jamaica. I have lived all my adult life in England, in the shadow of the Black diaspora. I write against the background of a lifetime – 'in the belly of the beast.' If my writing seems preoccupied with narratives of displacement, it is worth remembering that the heart has its reasons. That said, my focus has been on identification rather than identity *per se*.

My journey has been influenced by the struggles of people racialised as minorities in HE (although they represent a global majority statistically), anti-racist struggles, by CRT and black feminist struggles and struggles of disadvantaged people who have the potential and aptitude to benefit from higher education, but may not have had the opportunity. I was able to draw on the corpus of critical theorists, practitioners and activists who sought to use their work to involve participants as active participants, not as objects of research, and to use the findings of their work and efforts to effect transformational change. Ultimately, embarking on this PhD journey has shaped my identity as a socially responsible researcher, and advocate for social justice.

The development of my identity as a socially responsible researcher has been contingent upon the unfolding relationships and interactions between personal and academic subjectivities that I believe are two separate but entwined forms of

consciousness. A type of consciousness that sees me standing as an outsider within the academy (I have written about that previously. See Thomas, 2020a), seeing myself as a doctoral researcher within the academy but feeling like an outsider fighting to get in. As Du Bois (1903) aptly puts it, I was always "looking at myself through the eyes of others" always feeling a twoness, – a social justice activist, a doctoral researcher: "two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideas in one body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder" (pp. 10-11). What I am describing here is what W.E.B Du Bois described as *double consciousness*, which for me mediates between academic assimilation or moral diversity, origin and destination, or between what Paul Gilroy (1993) calls 'roots' and 'routes'. What after all was I? Was I a researcher, or was I a social justice advocate? Could I be both? Was I an imposter?

My experiences in education was the inspiration for this study. Paradoxically, these experiences also promoted pervasive psychological feelings of intellectual fraudulence – commonly called an imposter phenomenon (Clance & Imes, 1978). As previously mentioned (see Positionality Statement in Chapter 4), I am an immigrant from Jamaica who previously studied at Advanced Level (A-Level) in secondary education and undergraduate level at the University of Technology in Jamaica. As previously mentioned, since arriving in the UK, I have completed every major program of study in the British education system. For example, NVQ, BTEC, undergraduate degree, Master's degree, and now PhD. Despite evidence of ongoing success, throughout the PhD journey, I found myself attributing these successes to luck and other external factors. These imposter feelings were compounded as I was not taught by a single lecturer that looked like me until my Master's studies, where I was taught by a Black, Nigerian, male lecturer. Neither did I see representations of myself in the curriculum, and when they were, the portrayal was negative, or derogatory. Furthermore, Black lecturers and PhD students were severely underrepresented in the institution where I completed my doctoral

studies. Hence, I considered myself an imposter, one who was undeserving of his place on the program and desperate not to be found out as a fraud. One who always had to prove his worth beyond all reasonable doubt.

There have been many moments where I felt totally inadequate, out of my depth and lacked confidence in my ability. There were also many times when I felt totally inept at developing coherent academic arguments that other researchers could comprehend. There were also times when I just could not understand the academic journals, having read each of them at least thrice. I was evolving, and as I evolved, so did my ability to articulate my understanding of the issues that I explored.

Initially, during the research process, I was hesitant to publicise the fact that I was doing a PhD and was also somewhat apprehensive about whether this would be received positively by colleagues. I was concerned about whether I was able to satisfy the subjectivities of a social justice advocate and promoting diversity and inclusion. As one colleague reminded me 'advocating for a culturally sensitive curricula is not the same as decolonizing the curriculum… what you are promoting is not radical enough' But was I radical enough? Did I want to be? I was later to come to the understanding that culturally sensitive curricula were indeed not decolonizing, but rather a subset of decolonising. I was also able to reconcile the fact that I was NOT radical in THAT sense, and as Professor Kevin Hylton reassured me, "being radical is not a one lane highway."

This PhD journey has ultimately enabled me to conclude that there is no requirement for me to abandon my double self, rather, to merge my double self into a better and truer self – one that doesn't deny my history and experiences but seeks to build on them. For me, accepting this contradiction that arises from double consciousness means affirming a permanent tension that I now neither seek to assimilate into academic subjectivities nor separate from my authentic self, but rather to aspire to achieve a proud hyphenated identity (the hyphenated identity is a term that implies a dual

identity. Specifically, in my case, that of a researcher-social justice advocate). I was evolving and had evolved. I now understand that living in these two worlds at once enables me to see what others are blind to. And through 'second sight', in the context of this PhD, I employ this 'second sight' in order to construct a story from quantitative data that articulates students' perspectives of the cultural sensitivity of their curricula and the extent to which its *whiteness* impact on their engagement. I now understand that my 'roots' were fundamental to the 'route' that I had chosen to travel along my PhD journey and that those 'roots' formed an integral part of my positionality as a researcher. I also understand that there is no requirement for me to stand 'outside' of this research, but rather accept my positionality as a unique strength and account for the biases that that positionality may bring, while standing 'in' my research. Like Linda Tuhiwai. Smith (2012) and others, I am researching 'with' the community, as opposed to 'on' the community.

Contrary to Clance and Imes' (1978) research that posited that 'imposters' generally fall into one of two groups with respect to family history, I propose that there may be a third category – the implications of engagement in an environment that transmits negative, subliminal cues that may serve to 'gaslight'[22] the experiences of underrepresented and/or marginalised groups. I accept that the development of feelings of an imposter may be a feature of the doctoral journey throughout the process of evolving. I also accept that my 'roots and route' to doctoral studies is one that should be embraced and is a feature of my identity that sets me apart from my contemporaries. My academic achievements throughout the past four years have been a testament to my dogged spirit, diligence, aptitude and ability to respond positively to expert guidance and supervision by my supervisors. I am not an outsider. I am doing, being and becoming an academic. I am not an imposter. I do belong! Most of all, I have earned the right to be an insider.

Conclusions

Critical race theorists are often criticised for failing to use data systematically to develop more nuanced understandings of racial dynamics, instead, relying on descriptive narratives of personal experiences and other qualitative accounts (Obasogie, 2013).This empirical study utilised quantitative methods to addresses shortcomings in scholarship in the field of curricula development and student engagement in HE, offering new insight into student engagement for racially minoritized students. Building on previous research (Bryan-Gooden et al., 2019; Holgate, 2016; Ladson-Billings, 1995b) that underscores the importance of culturally responsive education, this study conceptualised, developed and validated a set of culturally sensitive curricula scales to be used in assessing students' perceptions of the cultural sensitivity of the curriculum. A culturally sensitive curriculum is one in which attitudes, teaching methods and practice, teaching materials and theories relate to, respects and affirms students' diverse cultures, histories, identities and contexts. The findings of this study refines previous research (Museus, 2014) suggesting that culturally engaging campus environments may improve engagement and promote success among racially diverse student populations.

This thesis foregrounds the CSCS as one framework that can be used to illuminate and elevate counter stories (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Extensive literature review and research on scales exploring similar constructs (Bryan-Gooden et al., 2019; Holgate, 2016; Ladson-Billings, 1995b), discussions with curricular experts as well as my experiences of engaging with the HE curriculum and students initially informed the development of an initial item pool with 30 items on a four-point rating scale. Utilising the initial item pool to construct an *Alpha* version of the CSCS that contained 30 items on 7 dimensions of cultural sensitivity, it was necessary to validate the scales. The *Alpha* version of the scales was piloted qualitatively with a group of 40 students and 10 educators. I contend that this step was an integral part of the process in order to obtain

content validity. The *Alpha* version of the CSCS was also reviewed by an expert in scale development as well as an expert in curriculum development. Upon content validation, the item pool was further developed to 34 items. The initial piloting of the scale proved beneficial in the development of new conceptual insights that contributed to the development of a *Beta* version of the CSCS that contained 34 items, exploring 7 dimensions of cultural sensitivity.

The CSCS was administered to a racially diverse sample of students (*N*=262; 189 Female; 73 Male; 157 BAME; 100 White), majority of whom (92%, *N*=242) were undergraduates who study on programs in the social sciences (63%) or humanities (23%) in a diverse institution (37% BAME undergraduates) participated in this study. Participants rated 25 items on a 4-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree to 4=strongly agree) in relation to the cultural sensitivity of their curriculum. Participants also rated 6 newly developed items on a 4-point Likert scale (1=*never* to 4=*very often*) in relation to their academic interaction with teaching staff, as well as Quinlan's (2019)11-item Individual Interest Scale on a 5-point Likert scale (1=*strongly* disagree to 5=*strongly* agree) which was used to assess interest (see Chapter 5).

The original survey contained 10 "Like Me" items that were removed upon reflection because they were deemed to be uninterpretable. The remaining 24 items were subject to a Principal Component Analysis using SPSS version 25. The PCA supported the use of 19 items to measure four separate dimensions of cultural sensitivity:

a) *Diversity Represented* – which focuses on how people from diverse backgrounds are referenced within the curriculum
b) *Positive Portrayals* – which focuses on redressing assumption, perceptions and considerations of people from diverse backgrounds that may distort how they are considered by society

c) *Challenge Power* – this dimension focuses on the curriculum's ability to provoke critical thought and challenge dominant ideologies that may promote systemic inequalities

d) *Inclusive Classroom Interactions* – focuses on the development of a learning environment accepting of cultural differences and respectful of different perspectives

The research aimed to assess students' overall perception of the cultural sensitivity of their curriculum, as well as explore the link between ethnicity, cultural sensitivity of the curricula, and interaction with teachers; and repeated this analysis with interest as the outcome variable.

In terms of the research findings (see Chapter 5), BAME students experienced their curricula as less culturally sensitive than White students on all four dimensions of cultural sensitivity. BAME students reported fewer academic interactions with their teachers than White students. Additionally, ethnicity significantly predicted interactions with teachers; each component of the CSCS mediated the relationship between ethnicity and interaction with teachers. In relation to interest, all dimensions of cultural sensitivity were associated with higher interest, however, BAME students reported significantly lower interest in their program of study than White students. Further, the Diversity Represented and Challenging Power dimensions of the CSCS each mediated the relationship between ethnicity and interest.

The findings of this study are subject to at least three limitations. First, this study did not investigate the relationship between culturally sensitive curricula and attainment. Second, the generalizability of the findings is subject to limitations because the study only focused on advanced humanities and social science students. Third, the sample size was moderate This limitation means that the findings need to be interpreted cautiously.

Future research should investigate the relationship between culturally sensitive curricula and other key student outcomes. Additionally, the use of larger samples in other settings and disciplines may enable more granular analysis and desegregation of more diverse subgroups of students.

This study has extended previous studies by providing a novel approach to understanding students' perceptions of their curricula. The research has subsequently provided an empirically underpinned framework which other researchers can utilise and test in other settings to extend and enhance other theories and methodologies relating to educational inequality. This study makes an original contribution to research that investigates educational inequality, particularly as it relates to understanding racially minoritized students' perceptions of their curricula and its impact on their engagement. The research makes a significant and important conceptual and methodological contribution, enabling further research on culturally engaging campus environments (Museus, 2014) that are conducive of equity and social justice in education. The research conceptualises what culturally sensitive curricula are, and proposes a novel understanding of why culturally sensitive education matter to students (particularly racially minoritized students). To date, there are no race-focused instruments or methodology to assess the cultural sensitivity of the curriculum. Therefore, by developing and validating new measurement scales (the CSCS) to assesses cultural sensitivity of HE curricula, I am making a significant and important contribution to educational research.

> It is the act of resistance itself that is our triumph… small and simple decisions to resist domination, added and multiplied can create significant momentum: It is the refusal to remain silent in itself that gives strength and empowerment in a society determined to cling to established habits of regression. (Taylor 2016, p. 9).

End Notes

1. The term ‘Black’ is capitalised throughout this thesis in alignment with capitalisation of other racialised identifiers (i.e., White, Asian, Latinx) and in relation to its use when describing people and cultures of African origin/heritage (including Caribbean) as a means of conveying shared identity, communities or histories. This differs from the use of a lower-case b when used to describe colour, such as a box of crayons (see https://www.diversitystyleguide.com/).
2. The term ‘White’ is used throughout this thesis and when describing people and is capitalised throughout this thesis. It is intended to emphasise the presence of Whiteness as a racialised identity in situating this racialised category among other historically and socially constructed racialised identities. The term is also capitalised for intellectual clarity and equality along with other racialised identifiers such as Black, Brown, Asian and Latinx in order to neutralise its hypervisibility.
3. A racial project is “simultaneously an interpretation, representation or explanation of racial dynamics, and an effort to reorganise and redistribute resources along particular racial lines” (Omi and Winant 1994, p. 56)
4. Within UK higher education research and discourses, the term ‘attainment gap’ is commonly used. However, in order to avoid the use of deficit theories, I use the phrase ‘awarding gap.’ The use of this language deliberately repositions the responsibility and accountability for disparities in degrees awarded towards the institution, rather than the students from racially minoritized groups who are disproportionately affected.
5. Difference in the proportion of UK domiciled White students receiving a degree classification of First (1) or Upper Second-Class degree classification compared with the proportion of UK domiciled BME students.
6. Prior attainment, subject of study, age, gender, disability, deprivation, type of HE institution attended, type of level 3 qualifications, mode of study, term-time accommodation and ethnicity (Broecke & Nicholls, 2007).
7. For a more expansive and detailed exposition of decolonisation, see (Bhambra, Nişancioğlu and Gabrial 2018; Decolonise Keele Network 2020; Liyanage 2020; and Thomas and Jivraj 2020).
8. A wicked problem is one for which each attempt to create a solution changes the understanding of the problem. Wicked problems cannot be solved in a traditional linear fashion, because the problem definition evolves as new possible solutions are considered and/or implemented. The term was originally coined by Horst Rittel (http://www.cognexus.org/id42.htm)
9. According to Cox and Orehovec (2007), five types of student-teacher interactions are: Disengagement, Incidental Contact, Functional Interaction, Personal Interaction, and Mentoring. Disengagement relates to “faculty and students not interacting outside of the classroom setting” (p. 19); Incidental Contact relates to “unintended contact between staff and students” (p. 20); Functional Interaction relates to “interaction that occurs for a specific intentionally-related purpose” (p. 20); Personal Interaction relates to “purposeful interaction which revolves around the personal interest of a faculty member and/or student; and Mentoring, which relates to direct assistance with career and professional development, emotional and psychological support, and role modelling” (p. 21).
10. (see Alternative Reading List Project https://thealternativereadinglistproject.wordpress.com/)
11. https://taso.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/TASO_research_protocol_race_equality_gaps_FINAL.pdf
12. https://blogs.kent.ac.uk/diversitymarktoolkit/
13. Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) is ‘an overall measure of multiple deprivation experienced by people living in an area and is calculated for every … or neighbourhood, in England. Every such neighbourhood in England is ranked according to its level of deprivation relative to other areas’ (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2015).
14. Occupational Science is a field of study that is concerned with investigating humans’ activities, how they interact with their environments and how these interactions shape the health and wellbeing of communities and individuals.
15. According to Ibrahim X. Kendi, a racist policy is any measure that produces or sustains racial inequity between racial groups
16. https://esrc.ukri.org/funding/guidance-for-applicants/research-ethics/
17. The trope “White Saviour” represents inter-racial interactions that promote White supremacist messages of helpless subjects in need of benevolence; the White saviour is a pervasive narrative that unnecessarily complicates the depictions of race relations between people racialised as White and communities of colour (Hughey, 2012).
18. Stereotype threat is the fear or anxiety of confirming a negative stereotype about one’s social group
19. Identity safe classrooms are those in which teachers strive to ensure that students feel that their social identity is an asset rather than a barrier to success in the classroom, and that they are welcomed, supported, and valued whatever their background (Steele and Cohn-Vargas, 2013).
20. According to Cross (1989), cultural competence may be described as “a set of congruent behaviours and attitudes that … come together in a system [to enable them] to work effectively in cross-cultural situations.”
21. Gaslighting is the act of undermining the reality of a person (or group of people) by creating an environment that causes them to turn against their cognition, their emotions and who they are fundamentally as a people.

References

Accenture. (2020). *Getting to equal 2020: The hidden value of cultural markers*. https://www.accenture.com/us-en/about/inclusion-diversity/_acnmedia/Thought-Leadership-Assets/PDF-2/Accenture-Getting-To-Equal-2020-Research-Report.pdf

Adebisi, F. I. (2019). The only accurate part of "BAME" is the "and." *African Skies*. https://folukeafrica.com/the-only-acceptable-part-of-bame-is-the-and/

Adewumi, B., Bailey, L., Mires-Richards, E., Quinlan, K. M., Ageyman, E., Alabi, A., Jeyasingh, M., Kondau-Mensah, C., Laviniere, W., Mighton, P., Shortridge, T., Thomas, D. S., & Wassamba-Wabelua, N. (2021). Cross-disciplinary, collaborative and student-led: developing a change process for diversifying reading lists. *London Review of Education*, *20*(1), 1–17. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.14324/LRE.20.1.01

Adewumi, B., & Mitton, L. (2022). Diversifying the social policy curriculum: A collaborative approach. *Social Policy and Society*, *21*(1), 54–64. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1474746421000506

Advance HE. (2020a). *Equality + higher education: Students statistical report*. https://s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/assets.creode.advancehe-document-manager/documents/advance-he/2020-08 AdvHE stats_report_students_FINAL_12mb_1603451622.pdf?X-Amz-Content-Sha256=UNSIGNED-PAYLOAD&X-Amz-Algorithm=AWS4-HMAC-SHA256&X-Amz-Credential=AKIATYAY

Advance HE. (2020b). *Equality + Higher Education: Students statistical report*. https://s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/assets.creode.advancehe-document-manager/documents/advance-he/2020-08 AdvHE stats_report_students_FINAL_12mb_1603451622.pdf?X-Amz-Content-Sha256=UNSIGNED-PAYLOAD&X-Amz-Algorithm=AWS4-HMAC-

SHA256&X-Amz-Credential=AKIATYAY

Ainley, M., Hidi, S., & Berndorff, D. (2002). Interest, learning, and the psychological processes that mediate their relationship. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *94*, 546–561.

Akel, S. (2019). *Insider-Outsider: The role of race in shaping the expereinces of Black and minority ethnic students*.

Allen, J., & Webber, M. (2019). Stereotypes of Minorities and Education. In Ratuva S (Ed.), *The Palgrave Handbook of Ethnicity*. Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-0242-8_107-1

Allen, T. W. (1997). *The Invention of the White Race* (2nd ed.). Verso.

Andrews, K. (2019). Blackness, Empire and migration: How Black Studies transforms the curriculum. *Anti-Racist Learning and Teaching Inn Britich Geography*, *52*(4). https://doi.org/10.1111/area.12528

Annamma, S. A., Connor, D., & Ferri, B. (2013). Dis/ability Critical Race Studies (DisCrit): Theorizing at the Intersections of Race and Dis/ability. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, *16*(1), 1–31.

Ansley, F. L. (1989). Stirring the ashes: Race, class and the future of civil rights scholarship. *Cornell Law Review*, *74*(6), 993–1077. https://scholarship.law.cornell.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3431&context=clr

Anzaldua, G. (1990). *Haciendo caras/ making face, making soul: Creative and critical perspectives by women of color*. Aunt Lute.

Applebaum, B. (2010). Race, critical race theory and whiteness. *International Encyclopedia of Education*, 36–43. https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-08-044894-7.00541-8

Arday, J. (2018). Dismantling power and privilege through reflexivity: negotiating normative Whiteness, the Eurocentric curriculum and racial micro-aggressions

within the Academy. *Whiteness and Education*, *3*(2), 141–161. https://doi.org/10.1080/23793406.2019.1574211

Arday, J. (2021). *The Black curriculum: Black British history in the national curriculum: Report 2021*. https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5f5507a237cea057c5f57741/t/5fc10c7abc819f1cf4fd0eeb/1606487169011/TBC+2021++Report.pdf

Arday, J, Belluigi, D. Z., & Thomas, D. (2020). Attempting to break the chain: reimaging inclusive pedagogy and decolonising the curriculum within the academy. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*. https://doi.org/10.1080/00131857.2020.1773257

Aronson, B., & Laughter, J. (2016). The theory and practice of culturally relevant education a synthesis of research across content areas. *Review of Educational Research*, *86*(1), 163–206. https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654315582066

Aronson, E., & Carlsmith, J. (1969). Experimentation in social psychology. In G. Lindzey & E. Aronson (Eds.), *The handbook f social psychology* (Volume 2, pp. 1–79). Addison-Wesley.

Asante, M. K. (2012). Reconstituting Curricula in African Universities: in Search of an Afrocentric Design. In C. Alvares & S. Saleem Faruqi (Eds.), *Decolonising The University: The Emerging Quest for Non-Eurocentric Paradigms* (pp. 33–47). Penerbit Universiti Sains Malaysia.

Ashe, A. (1993). *Days of grace*. Alfred A. Knopf.

Ashwin, P. (2009). *Analysing teaching-learning interactions in higher education: accounting for structure and agency*. Continuum.

Astin, A. (1993). *What matters in college: Four critical years revisited*. Josey-Bass.

Astin, A. W. (1984). Student involvement: A developmental theory for higher education. *Journal of College Student Development*, *40*(5), 518–529.

https://doi.org/10.1016/0263-

Atkinson, H., Bardgett, S., Budd, A., Finn, M., Kissane, C., Qureshi, S., Saha, J., & Siblon, J. (2018). *Race , Ethnicity & Equality in UK History : A Report and Resource for Change*. 122.

Austen, L. (2020). The amplification of student voices via institutional research and evaluation. In L. T & Y. El Hakim (Eds.), *A Handbook of Student Engagement: Theory into Practice*. Taylor Francis.

Azevedo, F. S. (2011). Lines of practice: A practice-centered theory of interest relationships. *Cognition and Instruction*, *29*(2), 147–184. https://doi.org/10.1080/07370008.2011.556834

Babbie, E. (2015). *The practice of social research*. Wadsworth/Thomson.

Back, L. (2004). Ivory Towers? The Academy and Racism. In I. Law, D. Phillips, & L. Turney (Eds.), *Institutional Racism in Higher Education* (pp. 1–6). Trentham Books.

Bakshi, S. (2021). Towards the unmasking of canons: Decolonising the study of literature. In D. S.P Thomas & J. Arday (Eds.), *Doing equity and diversity for success in higher education: Redressing structural inequalities in the academy* (pp. 117–126). Palgrave Macmillan.

Barnett, R. (2009). Knowing and becoming in the higher education curriculum. *Studies in Higher Education*, *34*(4), 429–440. https://doi.org/10.1080/03075070902771978

Baron, R., & Kenny, D. (1986). The Moderator-Mediator Variable Distinction in Social Psychological Research: Conceptual, Strategic, and Statistical Considerations. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *51*(6), 1173–1182. https://www.sesp.org/files/The Moderator-Baron.pdf

Bartlett, M. (1954). A note on the multiplying factors for vatious chi square approximations. *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, *16*, 296–298.

Beasley, S. T. (2021). Student-faculty interactions and psychosociocultural influences as predictors of engagement among Black college students. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education*, *14*(2), 240–251.

Beatty, P. C., & Wills, G. B. (2007). Research synthesis: The practice of cognitive interviewing. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, *71*(2), 287–311.

Beck, R. (1979). *Handbook of social philosophy*. Macmillan.

Bell, D. (1980). Brown vs. Board of Education and the Interest Convergence Principle. *Harvard Law Review*, *93*, 518–533.

Bell, D. (1992). *Faces at the bottom of the well*. Basic Books.

Bell, D. (1995). Who's afraid of critical race theory. *University of Illinois Law Review*, *4*, 893–920.

Bell, D. (2004). *Silent covenants: Brown v. Board of Education and the unfulfilled hopes for racial reform*. Oxford University Press.

Bell, L. (2007). Theoretical foundations for social justice education. In P. Adams, A., Bell, L.A., & Griffin (Ed.), *Teaching for diversity and social justice* (p. 3). Routledge.

Berger, J. B., & Milem, J. F. (1999). The role of student involvement and perceptions of integration in a causal model of student persistence. *Research in Higher Education*, *40*(6), 641–664. https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1018708813711

Bernal, D. D. (2002). Critical Race Theory, Latino Critical Theory and Critical Race-Gendered Epistemologies: Recognising students of color as holders and creators of knowledge. *Qualitative Enquiry*, *8*(1).

Bernal, D. D., & Villalpando, O. (2002). An Apartheid of Knowledge in Academia : The Struggle Over the " Legitimate " Knowledge of Faculty of Color. *Equity and Excellence in Education*, *35*(2), 169–180. https://doi.org/10.1080/713845282

Berry, J., & Loke, G. (2011). Improving the degree attainment of Black and minority

ethnic students: investigating practice. *Equality Challenge Unit and The Higher Education Academy Research Report*, 83.

Bhambra, G., Nişancioğlu, K., & Gabrial (Eds.). (2018). *Decolonising the university*. Pluto Press.

Bloom, B., Davis, A., & Hess, R. (1965). *Compensatory education for cultural deprivation*. Holt.

Blundell, R., Cribb, J., McNally, S., Warwick, R., & Xu, X. (2021). *Inequalities in education, skills, and incomes in the UK: The implications of the COVID-19 pandemic*. Institute of Fiscal Studies.

Boliver, V. (2013). How fair is access to more prestegious universities. *British Journal of Sociology*, *2*(64), 344–364.

Bonilla-Silva, E. (2014). *Racism without racists: Colour-blind racism and the persistence of the racial inequalities in America*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Bonnett, A. (1998). Who was white? The disappearance of non-European white identities and the formation of European racial whiteness. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, *21*(6), 1029–1055. https://doi.org/10.1080/014198798808565651

Borkin, H. (2021). Unconscious bias literature review: bias in the curriculum: A literature review assessing the prevalence of bias in curriculum design, content and delivery, and assessing ‘what works?’ in eliminating, or reducing, bias. *Advance HE*. https://s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/assets.creode.advancehe-document-manager/documents/advance-he/AdvHE_Unconcious Bias Literature Review - Bias in the Curriculum_1611919127.pdf?X-Amz-Content-Sha256=UNSIGNED-PAYLOAD&X-Amz-Algorithm=AWS4-HMAC-SHA256&X-Amz-C

British Educational Research Association [BERA]. (2018). *Ethical guidelines for educational research* (4th ed.).

Brodkin, K. (1998). *How Jews Became White Folks and What That Says about Race in*

America. Rutgers University Press.

Broecke, S., & Nicholls, T. (2007). *Ethnicity and degree attainment*. 1–24. https://doi.org/10.1037/e615492007-001

Bryan-Gooden, J., Hester, M., & Peoples, L. (2019). *Culturally responsive curriculum scorecard*. Metropolitan Centre for Research on Equity and the Transformation of Schools, New York University.

Bunglawala, Z. (2019). *Please, don't call me BAME or BME!* Civil Servive. Civilservice.blog.gov.uk

Burke, P. J. (2017). Access to and widening participation in higher education. *Encyclopedia of INternational Higher Education Systems and Institutions*.

Caldmore, J. (1992). Critical Race Theory, Archie Shepp, and fire music:Securing an authentic intellectual life in a multicultural world. *Southern California Law Review*, *65*(1), 2129–2231.

Caswell, H., & Campbell, D. (1935). *Curriculum development*. American Book Company.

Chickering, A., & Gamson, Z. (1987). Seven principles for good practice in undergraduate education. *American Association of Higher Education Bulletin*, *39*(7), 3–7.

Christie, H., Tett, L., Cree, E., Hounsell, J., & Mccune, V. (2008). A real roller coaster of confidence and emotions: Learning to be a university student. *Studies in Higher Education 2*, *33*, 567–581.

Clance, P. R., & Imes, S. A. (1978). The imposter phenomenon in high achieving women: Dynamics and therapeutic intervention. *Psychotherapy: Theory, Research and Practice*, *15*(3).

Clegg, S., Parr, S., & Wan, S. (2003). Racialising Discourses in Higher Education. *Teaching in Higher Education*, *8*(2), 155–168.

https://doi.org/10.1080/1356251032000052410

Coates, H. (2010). Development of the Australian Survey of Student Engagement (AUSSE). Higher Education. *The International Journal of Higher Educationand Educational Planning*, *60*(1), 1–17.

Coates, Hamish. (2007). A model of online and general campus-based student engagement. *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*, *32*(2), 121–141. https://doi.org/10.1080/02602930600801878

Coates, T. N. (2015). *Between the world and me*. The Text Publishing Company.

Codiroli-Mcmaster, N. (2021). *Ethnicity awarding gaps in UK higher education in 2019/20*.

Codiroli, N. (2015). Inequalities in students ' choice of STEM subjects: An exploration of intersectional relationships. *CLS Working Paper*, *September*.

Cohen, J. (1988). *Statistical power analysis for the behavioural sciences* (2nd ed.). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Inc.

Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2018). *Research methods in education* (8th ed.). Routledge.

Cole, M. (1993). `Black and Ethnic Minority' or `Asian, Black and Other Minority Ethnic': A Further Note on Nomenclature. In *Sociology* (Vol. 27, Issue 4, pp. 671–673). https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038593027004007

Comfrey, A., & Lee, H. (1992). *A first course in factor analysis*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Inc.

Conrad, F., Blair, J., & Tracy, E. (1999). Verbal reports are data! A theoretical approach to cognitive interviews. *Proceedings of the Federal Committee on Statistical Methodology Research Conference, Tuesday B Sessions*, 11–20.

Cooke, N. A. (2018). Creating Mirrors and Doors in the Curriculum: Diversifying and Re-Envisioning the MLS. In J. Percell, L. C. Sarin, P. T. Jaeger, & J. C. Bertot

(Eds.), *Re-envisioning the MLS: Perspectives on the Future of Library and Information Science Education* (Vol. 44B, pp. 27–48). Emerald Publishing Limited. https://doi.org/10.1108/S0065-28302018000044B003

Covarrubias, A., & Velez, V. (2013). Critical race quantitative intersectionality: An anti-racist research paradigm that refuses to “let the numbers speak for themselves". In Marvin Lynn & A. Dixson (Eds.), *Handbook of Critical Race Theory in Education* (pp. 270–285). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203155721

Cox, B. E., & Orehovec, E. (2007). Faculty-student interaction outside the classroom: A typology from a residential college. *Review of Higher Education*, *30*(4), 343–362.

Crawford, C. E., Demack, S., Gillborn, D., & Warmington, P. (2019). Using numbers for social justice. In J. T. DeCuir-Gunby, V. Chapman, & P. A. Schutz (Eds.), *Understanding critical race methods and methodologies: Lessons from the field* (pp. 125–137). Routledge.

Crenshaw, K. (1989). Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics. *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, *1989*(1). https://chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1052&context=uclf

Crenshaw, K. (1995). Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics and violence against women of color. In K Crenshaw, N. Gotanda, G. Peller, & K. Thomas (Eds.), *Critical race theory: The key writings that informed the movement* (pp. 357–383). New Press.

Crenshaw, Kimberlie. (1988). Race, reform, and retrenchment: Transformation and legitimation in anti-discrimination law. *Harvard Law Review*, *101*, 101, 1331–1387.

Crenshaw, Kimberlie. (1991). Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics and violence against women of color. *Stanford Law Review*, *43*(6), 1241–1299.

http://ec.msvu.ca:8080/xmlui/bitstream/handle/10587/942/Crenshaw_article.pdf?sequence=1

Cress, C. (2008). Creating inclusive learning communities: The role ofstudent–faculty relationships in mitigating negative campus climate. *Learning Inquiry*, *2*, 95–111.

Creswell, J. C. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative, qunatitative and mixed methods approaches* (2nd ed.). Sage Publications.

Creswell, J., & Plano Clark, V. (2011). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research* (2nd ed.). Sage.

Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches* (4th ed.). Sage.

Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). *Research design:Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches* (5th ed.). Sage.

Cross, R. (2018). Commentary: Can Critical Race Theory Enhance the Field of Public Health? A Student's Perspective. *Ethnicity and Disease*, *28*(1), 267–270.

Cross, T. L. (1989). *Towards a Culturally Competent System of Care: A Monograph on Effective Services for Minority Children Who Are Severely Emotionally Disturbed.* Georgetown University Child Development Center.

Crotty, M. (1998). *The foundations of social research: Meaning and perspectives in the research process*. Sage.

Crotty, M. (2005). *The foundations of social research*. Sage Publications.

Crouch, C. H., Wisittanawat, P., Ming, C., & Renninger, A. K. (2013). Initial Interest, Goals, and Changes in CLASS Scores in Introductory Physics for Life Sciences. *2013 Physics Education Research Conference*. https://doi.org/10.1119/perc.2013.pr.014

D'Ancona, M. (2016). "Must Rhodes Fall?" *New York Times*.

Dale-Rivas, H. (2019). *Report 120 The white elephant in the room: ideas for reducing*

racial inequalities in higher education. https://www.hepi.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/The-white-elephant-in-the-room-ideas-for-reducing-racial-inequalities-in-higher-education.pdf

Dalhouse University. (n.d.). *Guidelines for creating and maintaining an inclusive classroom*. https://cdn.dal.ca/content/dam/dalhousie/pdf/dept/clt/First_Year/Guidelines_for_Creating_and_Maintaining_an_Inclusive_Classroom.pdf

Dancy, M., Rainey, K., Sterns, E., Mickelson, R., & Moller, S. (2020). Undergraduates' awareness of White and male privilege in STEM. *International Journal of STEM Education*, *7*(52). https://stemeducationjournal.springeropen.com/track/pdf/10.1186/s40594-020-00250-3.pdf

Dandridge, N. (2021). *Reflections on a challenging year and priorities for the future*.

Dandridge, N., Rawat, S., Williams, J., Cousin, G., Hammond, N., Masterson, J., & Sin, C. (2008). Ethnicity, gender and degree attainment project. *Higher Education Academy*.

Datta, R. (2018). Decolonizing both researcher and research and its effectiveness in Indigenous research. *Research Ethics*, *14*(2), 1–24. https://doi.org/10.1177/1747016117733296

David, M., & Sutton, C. (2011). *Social research: An introduction* (2nd ed.). Sage Publications.

De Sousa Santos, B. (2007). Beyond abyssal thinking: From global lines to ecologies of knowledge. *Eurozine*, *33*(1), 45–89.

De Sousa Santos, B. (2014). *Epistemologies of the South: Justice against epistemicide*. Routledge.

Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. (1990). A motivational approach to self: integration in

personality. *Nebraska Symposium On Motivation*, *38*(3), 238–288. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15326985ep2603&4_6

Decolonise Keele Network. (2020). Keele's Manifesto for Decolonising the Curriculum. *Journal of Global Faultlines*, *7*(1), 107–110. https://doi.org/10.13169/jglobfaul.7.1.0107

Decolonise UoK Collective. (2020). Decolonise UKC. In D. S.P Thomas & S. Jivraj (Eds.), *Towards decolonising the university: A kaleidoscope for empowered action*. Counterpress.

DeCuir-Gunby, J. T., Chapman, T. K., & Schutz, P. A. (Eds.). (2019). *Understanding critical race research methods and methodologies*. Routledge.

DeCuir-Gunby, J. T., & Schutz, P. A. (2014). Researching Race Within Educational Psychology Contexts. *Educational Psychologist*, *49*(4), 244–260. https://doi.org/10.1080/00461520.2014.957828

Delgado, R, & Stefanic, J. (2017). *Critical race theory: an introduction*. New York University Press.

Delgado, R. (1998). Derrick Bell and the ideology of racial reform: Will we ever be saved? *Yale Law Review*, *97*(5), 923–947.

Delgado, R. (2016). On telling stories in school: A reply to Farber and Sherry. In E Taylor, D. Gillborn, & G. Ladson-Billings (Eds.), *Foundations of critical race theory ineducation* (2nd ed., pp. 310–333). Routledge.

Delgado, R, & Stefancic, J. (1997). *Critical White studies: Looking behind the mirror*. Temple University Press.

Delgado, R, & Stefancic, J. (1998). Critical Race Theory: Past, present and future. *Current Legal Problems*, *51*(1), 467–491. https://doi.org/10.1093/clp/51.1.467

Department for Business Innovation and Skills. (2016). *Success as a knowledge economy*. Gov.Uk. https://doi.org/ISBN 97814741 32862

Dewey, J. (1902). *The child and the curriculum*. University of Chicargo Press.

Dewey, J. (1980). *Art as experience*. Berkley.

Dillman, D. (2000). *Mail and internet surveys: The tailored design method* (2nd ed.). Wiley.

Dixon, A. (2014). Researching race in education: Polic, practice and qualitative research: Information Age Publishing as ar of the education policy in practice. In R. Hopson & E. Hamann (Eds.), *Critical cultural studies*. Information Age Publishing.

Douglas, T.-R. M., Shockley, K. G., & Toldson, I. (Eds.). (2020). *Campus uprisings: How student activists and collegiate leaders resist racism and create hope*. Teacher College Press.

Drennan, J. (2003). Cognitive interviewing: verbal data in the design and pretesting of questionnaires. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, *42*(1), 57–63.

Du Bois, W. (1903). *The soul of Black folk: Essays and sketches*. Johnson Reprint Corp.

Durik, A. M., Shechter, O. G., Noh, M., Rozek, C. S., & Harackiewicz, J. M. (2014). What if I can't? Success expectancies moderate the effects of utility value information on situational interest and performance. *Motivation and Emotion*, *39*(1), 104–118. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11031-014-9419-0

Dweck, C. S. (1986). Motivational Processes Affecting Learning. [Article]. *American Psychologist October*, *41*(10), 1040–1048.

Ebert, E., Ebert, C., & Bentley, M. (2013). *The editor's field guide: Thousand layers of curriculum theory*. Eye on Education.

Eccles, J., Alder, T., Futterman, R., Goff, S., Kaczala, C., Meece, J., & Midgley, C. (1983). Expectancies, values and academic behaviours. In J. Spence (Ed.), *Achievement and Achievement motives*. Freeman, WH.

Eirich, A., Baichorova, A., Sopranzetti, C., Cherneski, J., Harris, M., & McFarlane, R. (2018). Decolonising whiteness: White voices in Rhodes Must Fall. In Rosemarie

Chantiluke, B. Kwoba, & A. Nkopo (Eds.), *Rhodes Must Fall: The struggle to decolonise the racist heart of empire* (pp. 103–135). Zed Books.

Ellis, A. (2004). *Examples of curriculum theory*. Eye on Education.

Equality Act. (2010). *Equality Act*. Changes to Legislation; The Stationery Office. https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents

Equality and Human Rights Commission. (2015). *Equality Act 2010 guidance for students: what equality law means for you as a student in further or higher education*. http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/uploaded_files/EqualityAct/fehe_user_guide.pdf

Equality Challenge Unit. (2008). *Equality in higher education: statistical report 2008*.

Equality Challenge Unit. (2017). *Equality in higher education : students statistical report 2017*.

Essed, P. (1991). *Understanding everyday racism: An interdisciplinary theory*. Sage Publications.

Ezaz, C. (2015, October 30). Rhodes remains a symbol in Oxford. *The Oxford Student*.

Fairbanks, E. (2015, November 18). Why South African students have turned on their parents' generation. *The Guardian*. https://www.theguardian.com/news/2015/nov/18/why-south-african-students-have-turned-on-their-parents-generation

Fanon, F. (1986). *Black skin white masks*. Pluto Press.

Ferguson, B., & Scruton, J. (2015). How do support mechanisms for adult Black and minority ethnic students affect retention, progression and attainment? *Race Equality Teaching*, *33*(2), 43–46.

Field, A. (2018). *Discovering statistics using IBM SPSS statistics* (5th ed.). Sage.

Fildes, K. J., Beck, E., Bur, T., Burns, P., Chisholm, L. A., Dillon, Carolyn, T., Kuit, T.

A., McMahon, A. T., Neale, E. P., Paton-Walsh, C., Powell, S., Skropeta, D., Stefoska-Needham, A., Tomlin, A., Treweek, T. M., Walton, K., & Kennedy, J. (2021). The first steps on the journey towards curriculum reconciliation in science, medicine and health education. *Higher Education Research and Development*, *40*(1), 194–206. https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2020.1852393

Fine, M., Weis, L., Powell, L., & Wang Mun Wong, L. (Eds.). (1997). *Off-white: Readings on race, power and society*. Routledge.

Fine, M., Weseen, S., & Wong, L. (2003). For whom? Qualitative research, representations and social responsibilities. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *THe landscape of qualitative research* (2nd ed., pp. 167–207). Sage.

Fowler, F. (2008). *Survey research methods*. Sage.

Framing student engagement in higher education. (n.d.).

Frankfort-Nachmias, C., & Nachmias, D. (1992). *Research methods in the social sciences*. Edward Arnold.

Fredricks, J. A., Blumenfeld, P. C., & Paris, A. H. (2004). School Engagement: Potential of the Concept, State of the Evidence. *Review of Educational Research*, *74*(1), 59–109. https://doi.org/10.3102/00346543074001059

Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. Penguin.

Fricker, M. (2010). *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing*. Oxford University Press.

Frings, D., Gleibs, I., & Ridley, A. (2020). What moderates the attainment gap? The effects of social identity incompatibility and practical incompatibility on the performance of students who are or are not Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic. *Social Psychology of Education*, *23*, 171–188. https://doi.org/doi.org/10.1007/s11218-019-09531-4

Fuentes, M. A., Zelaya, D. G., & Madsen, and J. W. (2021). Rethinking the Course

Syllabus: Considerations for Promoting Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion. *Teaching of Psychology*, *48*(1), 69–79. https://doi.org/10.1177/0098628320959979

Furlong, A., & Cartmel, F. (2009). *Higher education and social justice*. The Society for Research into Higher Education and The Open University Press.

Gabriel, D. (2017). Pedagogies of social justice and cultural democracy in media higher education. *Media Education Research Journal*, *8.1*.

Garcia, N. M., López, N., & Vélez, V. N. (2018). QuantCrit: rectifying quantitative methods through critical race theory. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, *21*(2), 149–157. https://doi.org/10.1080/13613324.2017.1377675

Gay, G. (2010). *Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, research, and practice* (2nd ed.). Teachers College Press.

Gay, G. (2013). Teaching to and through cultural diversity. *Curriculum Enquiry*, *43*, 48–70. https://doi.org/10.1111/curi.12002

Gay, G. (2000). *Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, research and practice*. Teachers College Press.

Gay, G. (2002). PREPARING FOR CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE TEACHING. *Journal of Teacher Education*, *53*(2), 106–116. https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0022487102053002003

Gillborn, D. (2010). The colour of numbers: Surveys, Statistics and Deficit-thinking about race and class. *Joournal of Education Policy*, *25*(2), 253–276.

Gillborn, D. (2008). *Racism and education : coincidence or conspiracy?* Routledge.

Gillborn, D, Warmington, P., & Demack, S. (2018). QuantCrit: education, policy, 'Big Data' and principles for a critical race theory of statistics. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, *21*(2), 158–179. https://doi.org/10.1080/13613324.2017.1377417

Gillies, V., & Robinson, Y. (2012). "Including" while excluding: Race, class and behaviour support units. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, *15*(2), 157–174.

https://doi.org/10.1080/13613324.2011.578126

Gilroy, P. (1993). *The black Atlantic:Modernity and double consciousness*. Verso.

Glatthorn, A., Boschee, F., Whitehead, B., & Boschee, B. (2019). *Curriculium leadership: Strategies for development and implementation* (5th ed.). Sage.

Glatthorn, A., Carr, J., & Harris, D. (2001). Planning and organising for curriculum renewal. In A. . Glatthorn, J. . Carr, & D. . Harris (Eds.), *Curriculum handbook: Panning and organising for curriculum renewal*. ASCD Express. http://www.ascd.org/publications/curriculum-handbook/398/chapters/Thinking-About-Curriculum.aspx

Goddard, J. (1979). *Curriculum inquiry: The study of curriculum practice*. McGraw-Hill.

Gorusch, R. (1983). *Factor Analysis*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Inc.

Grant, C. A. (2008). Behavioral Scientist An Essay on Searching for Role of Gender. *American Behavioral Scientist*, *51*(7), 885–906. https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764207311996

Gray, D. E. (2018). *Doing research in the real world*. Sage Publications.

Grosfoguel, Ramon. (2012). The Dilemmas of Ethnic Studies in the United States Between Liberal Multiculturalism, Identity Politics, Disciplinary Colonization, and Decolonial Epistemologies. *Human Architecture: Journal of Sociology of Self-Knowledge*, *1*, 81–90. https://scholarworks.umb.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1434&context=humanarchitecture

Grosfoguel, R. (2013). The Structure of Knowledge in Westernized Universities: Epistemic Racism/Sexism and theFour Genocides/Epistemicides of the Long 16thCentury. *Human Architecture: Journal of Sociology of Self-Knowledge*, *11*(1), 73–90.

Grue, M. (2021). Diversify or Decolonise? What you can do right now and how to get

started. In D.S.P. Thomas & J. Arday (Eds.), *Doing equity and diversity for success in higher education: Redressing structural inequalities in the academy* (1st ed., pp. 163–174). Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-65668-3_13

Hackman, H. W. (2005a). Five Essential Components for Social Justice Education. *Equity & Excellence in Education*, *38*(2), 103–109. https://doi.org/10.1080/10665680590935034

Hackman, H. W. (2005b). Five Essential Components for Social Justice Education. *Equity & Excellence in Education*, *38*(2), 103–109. https://doi.org/10.1080/10665680590935034

Hafferty, F. (1998). Beyond curriculum reform: Confromting medicine's hidden curriculum. *Axademic Medicine*, *73*(4), 403–407.

Hall, B. L., & Tandon, R. (2017). Decolonization of knowledge, epistemicide. *Research for All*, *1*(1), 6–19. https://doi.org/10.18546/RFA.01.1.02

Hall, S. (1990). Cultural identity and diaspora. In J. Rutherford (Ed.), *Identity, community and cultural difference*. Lawrence and Wishart.

Hall, S. (1991). Old and New Ethnicities, Old and New Identities. In A. King (Ed.), *Culture, Globalization and the World System* (pp. 41–68). Macmillan.

Hall, S. (2017a). *Familiar Stranger: A Life Between Two Islands*. Allen Lane an Imprint of Penguin Books.

Hall, S. (2017b). *The fateful triangle: Race, ethnicity, nation*. Harvard University Press.

Harackiewicz, J. M., Barron, K. E., Carter, S. M., Lehto, A. T., & Elliot, A. J. (1997). Predictors and consequences of achievement goals in the college classroom: Maintaining interest and making the grade. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *73*(6), 1284–1295. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.73.6.1284

Harackiewicz, J., Smith, J. ., & Priniski, S. . (2016). Interest matters: The importance of promotinginterest in education. *Policy Insights from the Behavioural and Brain*

Sciences, 1–8. https://doi.org/10.1177/2372732216655542

Harper, S., & Quaye, S. (2007). Shifting the onus from racial/ethnic minority students to faculty: Accountability for culturally inclusive pedagogy and curricula. *Liberal Education*, *92*(3), 19–24. https://repository.upenn.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1212&context=gse_pubs

Harper, S. R. (2013). Am I My Brother's Teacher? Black Undergraduates, Racial Socialization, and Peer Pedagogies in Predominantly White Postsecondary Contexts. *Review of Research in Education*, *37*(1), 183–211. https://doi.org/10.3102/0091732X12471300

Harper, S.R. (2012). *Black male student success in higher education: Areport from the National Black Male College Achievement Study*.

Harper, S.R. (2021). *AERA President Shaun Harper calls on researchers to accept responsibility for educational and social problems*. https://www.aera.net/Newsroom/AERA-Highlights-E-newsletter/AERA-Highlights-April-2021/AERA-2020-President-Shaun-Harper-Calls-on-Researchers-to-Accept-Responsibility-for-Educational-and-Social-Problems

Harper, S.R, & Hurtado, S. (2007a). Nine themes in campus racial climates and implications for institutional transformation. In *Responding to the realities of race on campus: New directions for student services* (Harper, Sh, pp. 7–24).

Harper, S.R, & Hurtado, S. (2007b). Nine themes in campus racial climates and implications for institutional transformation. In S.R Harper & L. Patton (Eds.), *Responding to the realities of race on campus: New directions for student services* (pp. 7–24). Jossey Bass.

Harper, S.R, Smit, E. J., & Davis, C. H. F. (2018). A Critical Race case analysis of black undergraduate student success at an urban university. *Urban Education*, *53*(1).

Harris, C. (1993). Whiteness as property. Law Review. *Harvard Law Review*, *106*,

1707– 1791.

Hartigan, J. (1997). Unpopular culture: The case of 'white trash.' *Cultural Studies*, *11*(2), 316–343.

HEFCE. (n.d.). *Corporate social responsibility - Higher Education Funding Council for England*. Higher Education Funding Council for England; Higher Education Funding Council for England. Retrieved January 31, 2018, from http://www.hefce.ac.uk/about/csr/

Henriques, A., & Abusouk, L. (2018). Decolonising Oxford:The Student Movement from Stuart Hall to Skin Deep. In Jason Arday & H. S. Mirza (Eds.), *Dismantling race in higher education: Racism, whiteness and decolonising the academy*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Henry, W. L. (2007). *Whiteness made simple: Stepping into the grey zone*. Nu-Beyond Ltd: Learning by Choice.

HESA. (2021a). *HE graduate outcomes data*. https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/graduates

HESA. (2021b). *Higher Education Student Statictics: UK, 2019/20 - Student numbers and characteristics*. https://www.hesa.ac.uk/news/27-01-2021/sb258-higher-education-student-statistics/numbers

Hidi, S, & Anderson, V. (1992). Situational interest and its impact on reading and expository writing. In K. S. A. Hidi Renninger Krapp (Ed.), *The role of interest in learning and development* (pp. 215–238). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Inc.

Hidi, S, & Harackiewicz, J. M. (2000). Motivating the academically unmotivated: A critical issue for the 21st century. *Review of Educational Research*, *70*, 151–179.

Hidi, Suzanne. (1990). Interest and its contribution as a mental resource for learning. *Review of Educational Research*, *60*(4), 549–571. https://doi.org/10.3102/00346543060004549

Hidi, S, & Renninger, K. A. (2006). The Four-Phase Model of Interest Development. *Educational Psychologist*, *41*(2), 111–127. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15326985ep4102_4

Higher Education Statistical Agency. (2020). *Higher Education Student Statistics: UK, 2018/19*.

Hill Collins, P. (1986). Learning from the outsider within: The sociological significance of Black feminist thought. *Social Problems*, *33*(6), S15–S32.

Hillman, N. (2021). A short guide to non-continuation in UK universities. *Higher Education Policy Institute – HEPI Policy Note 28*.

Hiraldo, P. (2010). The Role of Critical Race Theory in Higher Education. *The Vermont Connection*, *31*(1), 7. http://scholarworks.uvm.edu/tvchttp://scholarworks.uvm.edu/tvc/vol31/iss1/7%0Ahttp://scholarworks.uvm.edu/tvc%5Cnhttp://scholarworks.uvm.edu/tvc/vol31/iss1/7

Hitchcock, G., & Hughes, D. (1989). *Research and the teacher*. Routledge.

Hockings, C. (2010). Inclusive learning and teaching in higher education: a synthesis of research. *Retreived August*, *April*, 1–67.

Holgate, H. (2016). *Development and initial validation of a culturally responsive classroom climate scale*. Purdue University.

Hornung, E. (1999). *History of ancent Egypt*. Edinburgh University Press.

Howansky, K., Maimon, M., & Sanchez, D. (2021). Identity safety cues predict instructor Impressions, belonging, and absences in the pychology classroom. *Teaching of Psychology*, *1*(6). https://doi.org/10.1177/0098628321990362

Hu, S. (2011). Reconsidering the relationship between student engagementand persistence in college. *Innovative Higher Education*, *36*, 97–106.

Hu, S., & Kuh, G. (2002). Being (dis) engaged in educationallypurposeful activities: The influences of student and institutional charac-teristics. *Research in Higher*

Education, *43*, 555–575.

Hu, S., Kuh, G., & Li, S. (2008). The Effects of Engagement in Inquiry-Oriented Activities on Student Learning and Personal Development. *Innovative Higher Education*, *2*, 71–81.

Hughey, M. W. (2012). Racializing redemption, reproducing racism: The odyssey of magical negroes and white saviours. *Sociological Compass*, *6*(9), 751–767. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1751-9020.2012.00486.x

Hulleman, C. S., & Harackiewicz, J. M. (2009). Promoting interest and performance in high school science classes. *Science*, *326*(5958), 1410–1412. https://doi.org/10.1126/science.1177067

Hulleman, C. S., Schrager, S. M., Bodmann, S. M., & Harackiewicz, J. M. (2010). A Meta-Analytic Review of Achievement Goal Measures: Different Labels for the Same Constructs or Different Constructs With Similar Labels? *Psychological Bulletin*, *136*(3), 422–449. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0018947

Hurtado, S. (1992). The Campus Racial Climate: Contexts of Conflict. *Journal of Higher Education*, *63*(5), 539–569.

Hussain, M. (2015). *Why is my curriculum white*. https://www.nus.org.uk/en/news/why-is-my-curriculum-white/

Hutchinson, J., & Smith, A. (1996). *Ethnicity*. Oxford University Press.

Hylton, K. (2011). *Atlantic crossings : international dialogues on critical race theory*. C-SAP, University of Birmingham. https://www.academia.edu/1473600/Atlantic_Crossings_International_Dialogues_on_Critical_Race_Theory_free_PDF_?auto=download

Hylton, K. (2018a). *Contesting Race and Sport: Shaming the Colour Line*. Routledge.

Hylton, K. (2018b). Talk the talk, walk the walk: Defining critical race theory in research. In D. Gilborn, A. . Dixson, G. Ladson-Billings, L. Parker, N. Rollock, &

P. Warmington (Eds.), *Critical Race Theory in Education: Major Themes in Education*. Routledge.

Ignatiev, N. (1996). *How the Irish became White*. Routledge.

Indiana Department of Education. (2010). *Definition of terms*. Accountability S`ystems for Academic Progress. http://www.doe.in.gov/asap/definitions.html

Jackson, P. (1992). Conception of curriculum. In P. Jackson (Ed.), *Handbook of research on curriculum* (p. Handbook of research in curriculum). Macmillan.

Jansen, M., Lüdtke, O., & Schroeders, U. (2016). Evidence for a positive relation between interest and achievement: Examining between-person and within-person variation in five domains. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, *46*, 116–127.

Jay, M. (2003). Critical race theory, multicultural education and the hidden curriculum of hegemony. *Multicultural Perspectives*, *5*(4), 3–9.

Joint Committee on Human Rights. (2020). *Black people, racism and human rights*. https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/3376/documents/32359/default/

Kahu, E. (2013). Framing student engagement in higher education. *Studies in Higher Education*, *38*, 758–773.

Kahu, E., Nelson, K., & Picton, C. (2017). Student interest as a key driver of engagement for first year students. *Student Success*, *8*(2), 55. https://doi.org/10.5204/ssj.v8i2.379

Kahu, E. R., & Nelson, K. (2018). Student engagement in the educational interface: understanding the mechanisms of student success. *Higher Education Research and Development*, *37*(1), 58–71. https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2017.1344197

Kaiser, H., & Rice, J. (1974). Little jiffy, mark 4. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, *34*(1), 111–117.

Kant, I. (1798). *The Conflict of the Faculties* (T. and I. by M. J. Gregor (Ed.)). Abaris Books.

Karodia, N. (2020). Weaving people and history into STEM education. *Advance HE*.

Kendi, I. X. (2019). *How to be an antiracist*. Penguin.

Kennedy, M. (2017, October 25). Cambridge academic seeks to decolonise English syllabus. *The Guardian*. https://www.theguardian.com/education/2017/oct/25/cambridge-academics-seek-to-decolonise-english-syllabus

Kim, Y., & Sax, L. (2017). The impact of college students' interactions with faculty: A review of general and conditional effects. *Higher Education: Handbook of Theory and Research*, *32*, 85–139.

Kingston University London. (n.d.). *Inclusive Curriculum Framework*. Retrieved April 3, 2020, from https://www.kingston.ac.uk/aboutkingstonuniversity/equality-diversity-and-inclusion/our-inclusive-curriculum/inclusive-curriculum-framework/

Kinzie, J., & Kuh, G. (2017). Reframing Student Success in College: Advancing Know-What and Know-How. *Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning*, *49*(3), 19–27. https://doi.org/10.1080/00091383.2017.1321429

Krause, K. (2005). Understanding and Promoting Student Engagement in University Learning Communities. *James Cook University Symposium*, 1–33. http://www.deakin.edu.au/itl/student-engagement/Resources/StudengKrause.pdf

Kuh, G.D, Kinzie, J., Buckley, J., Bridges, B., & Hayek, J. (2007). Piecing together the student success puzzle: Research, propositions, and recommendations. *ASHE Higher Education Report*, *32*(5).

Kuh, G D. (2009). The national survey of student engagement: Conceptual and empirical foundations. In *New Directions for Institutional Research* (Vol. 141, pp. 5–21). https://doi.org/10.1002/ir

Kuh, G.D. (2001). Assessing What Really Matters to Student Learning *Inside The National Survey of Student Engagement*. *Change: The Magazine of Higher*

Learning, *33*(3), 10–17. https://doi.org/10.1080/00091380109601795

Kuh, G.D. (1995). The Other Curriculum: Out-of-Class Experiences Associated with Student Learning and Personal Development. *The Journal of Higher Education*, *66*(2), 123–155. https://doi.org/10.2307/2943909

Kuh, T. (1962). *The structure of scientific revolutions*. University of Chicago Press.

Ladson-Billings, G. (1997). *The dreamkeepers: Successful teachers of African-American children*. Jossey Bass.

Ladson-Billings, G. (2014). Culturally relevant pedagogy 2.0: a.k.a. the remix. *Harvard Educational Review*, *84*(74–84).

Ladson-Billings, G. (1992). Culturally relevant teaching: The key to making multicultural education work. In C. A. Grant (Ed.), *Research in multi-cultural education: From the margins to the mainstream* (1st ed., pp. 102–118). The Falmer Press.

Ladson-Billings, G. (1995a). Towards a critical race theory in education. *Teachers College Record*, *97*(1).

Ladson-Billings, G. (1995b). Towards a theory of culturally relevant pedagogy. *American Education Research Journal*, *32*(3), 465–491.

Ladson-Billings, G. (1997). *The dreamkeepers: Successful teachers of African American children*. Josey-Bass.

Ladson-Billings, G. (1998). Just what is critical race theory and what's it doing in a nice field like education? *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, *11*(1), 7–24. https://doi.org/10.1080/095183998236863

Ladson-Billings, G. (2000). Racialised Discourses and Ethnic Epistemologies. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (2nd ed., pp. 257–277). Sage Publications. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2486.2007.01438.x

Ladson-Billings, G, & Tate, W. F. (1995). Toward a Critical Race Theory of Education.

Teachers College Record, *97*(1), 47–58. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315709796-2

Ladson Billings, G., & Tate, W. (1995). Towards a critical race theory in education. *Teachers College Record*, *1*(97).

Lammy, D. (2017). *The Lammy Review: An independent review into the treatment of, and outcomes for, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic individuals in the Criminal Justice System*. https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/643001/lammy-review-final-report.pdf%0Ahttps://www.gov.uk/government/publications/lammy-review-final-report

Lawton, G. (2018, January). Imported from https://www.theguardian.com/inequality/2018/jan/17/why-do-black-students-quit-university-more-often-than-white-peers?CMP=share_btn_tw. *The Guardian*. https://www.theguardian.com/inequality/2018/jan/17/why-do-black-students-quit-university-more-often-than-white-peers?CMP=share_btn_tw

Lazowski, R. A., & Hulleman, C. S. (2016). Motivation Interventions in Education: A Meta-Analytic Review. *Review of Educational Research*, *86*(2), 602–640. https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654315617832

Leask, B. (2014). Internationalising the curriculum and all students' learning. *International Higher Education*, *78*, 5–6.

Ledesma, M. C., & Calderón, D. (2015). Critical Race Theory in Education: A Review of Past Literature and a Look to the Future. *Qualitative Inquiry*, *21*(3), 206–222. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800414557825

Lent, R., Brown, S., & Hackett, G. (1994). Toward a unifying social cognitive theory of career and academic interest, choice and performance. *Journal of Vocational Behaviour*, *45*(1), 79–122.

Lewis-Beck, M. S., Bryman, A., & Futing Liao, T. (2004). *The SAGE encyclopedia of social science research methods*. Sage. https://doi.org/0.4135/9781412950589

Light, R. (2001). *Making the most of college: Students speaking their minds*. Harvard University Press.

Litowiz, D. E. (2016). Some critical thoughts on Critical Race Theory. In Edward Taylor, D. Gillborn, & G. Ladson-Billings (Eds.), *Foundations of critical race theory in education*. Routledge.

Littlefield, A., Lieberman, L., & Reynolds, L. . (1982). Redifining race: The potential demise of a concept. *Current Anthropology*, *23*.

Liyanage, M. (2020). Miseducation: Decolonising curricula, culture and pedagogy in UK universities. *Higher Education Policy Institute – Debate Paper*, *23*. https://www.hepi.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/HEPI_Miseducation_Debate-Paper-23_FINAL.pdf

Long, W. (2008). Decolonising higher education: Postcolonial theory and the invisible hand ofstudent politics. *New Agenda*, *69*, 20–26.

López, F. A. (2017). Altering the Trajectory of the Self-Fulfilling Prophecy: Asset-Based Pedagogy and Classroom Dynamics. *Journal of Teacher Education*, *68*(2), 193–212. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487116685751

Lorde, A. (1984). *Sister Outsider*. Crossing Press.

Lorde, A. (1992). Age, race, class and sex: women redifining difference. In M. Andersen & P. Hill Collins (Eds.), *Race, class and gender: An anthology* (pp. 495–502). Wadsworth.

Lorde, Audrey. (1978). A litany of survival. In *The black unicorn*. Norton.

Lou, Y. (2015). Learning ants: A portrait of Chinese college students in mass higher education. In J. Shin, G. Postiglione, & F. Huand (Eds.), *Mass higher education development in East Asia: Strategy, quality and challenges* (pp. 177–188). Springer

International Publishing.

Lundberg, C., & Schreiner, L. (2004). Qualiy and frequency of faculty-student interaction as predictors of learning: An analysis by student race/ethnicity. *Journal of College Student Development*, *45*(5), 545–569.

Lynn, M. (1999). Towards a Critical Race Pedagogy: A research note. *Urban Education*, *33*(5), 606–626.

Macpherson, W. (1999). *The Stephen Lawrence enquiry*.

Mann, S. J. (2001). Alternative Perspectives on the Student Experience : Alienation and engagement. *Studies in Higher Education*, *26*(1), 7–19. https://doi.org/10.1080/0307507002003068

Margolis, E. (2001). *The hidden curriculum in higher education* (E. Margolis (Ed.)). Routledge.

Markus, H. (2008). Pride, prejudice and ambivalence: Toward a unified theory of race and ethnicity. *American Psychologist*, *65*, 651–670.

Matsuda, M. J., Lawrence, C. R., Delgado, R., & Crenshaw, K. W. (1993). *Words that wound: Critical race theory, assaultive speech, and the first amendment*. Westview Press.

Mayhew, M., Rockenbach, A., Bowman, N., Seifert, T., Wolniak, G., Pascarella, E., & Terenzini, P. (2016). *How college affect students*. Jossey Bass.

Maylor, U. (2009). What is the meaning of "black"? Researching "black" respondents. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, *32*(2), 369–387. https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870802196773

Mbembe, A. J. (2015). Decolonizing Knowledge and the Question of the Archive. *Wits Institute for Social and Economic Research (WISER), University of the Witwatersrand*, 29. http://wiser.wits.ac.za/system/files/Achille Mbembe - Decolonizing Knowledge and the Question of the Archive.pdf

McCoach, D., & Madura, J. (2013). *Instrument development in the affective domain: School and corporate applications* (3rd ed.). Springer.

McCormic, A., Kinzie, J., & Gonyea, R. (2013). Student engagement: Bridging research and practiceto improve the quality of undergraduate education. In *Higher education: Handbook of theory and research* (pp. 47–92). Springer.

Mcduff, N., Tatam, J., Beacock, O., & Ross, F. (2018). *Closing the attainment gap for students from black and minority ethnic backgrounds through institutional change The BME attainment gap*. *20*(1), 79–101.

McIntosh, P. (1992). White privilege and male privilege: A personal account of coming to see correspondences through work in women's studies. In *Race, class and gender: an anthology*. Wadsworth.

Meda, L. (2020). Decolonising the curriculum: Students' Perspectives. *Africa Education Review*, *17*(2).

Menon, G. (1994). Judgments of behavioural frequencies: Memory search and retrieval strategies. In N Schwarz & S. Sudman (Eds.), *Autobiographical memory and validity of retrospective reports* (pp. 161–172). Springer Verlag.

Mertens, D. . (2010). *Reserch and evaluation in education and psychology: Integrating diversity with quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods* (3rd ed.). Sage.

Merwin, J. C. (1969). Historical review of changing concepts of evaluation. In R. L. Tyler (Ed.), *Educational evaluation: New roles, new methods. The sixty-eighth yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part II*. University of Chicago Press.

Mheta, G., Nyangu Lungu, B., & Govender, T. (2018). Decolonisation of the curriculum: A case study of the Durban University of Technology in South Africa. *South African Journal of Education*, *38*(4). https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.15700/saje.v38n4a1635

Mignolo, W. D. (2007). Introduction – Coloniality of power and de-colonial thinking. *Cultural Studies*, *21*(2), 155–167. https://doi.org/10.1080/09502380601162498

Miller, M. (2016). *The Ethnicity Attainment Gap Literature Review*. https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/polopoly_fs/1.661523!/file/BME_Attainment_Gap_Literature_Review_EXTERNAL_-_Miriam_Miller.pdf

Miller, P. (2016). 'White sanction', institutional, group and individual interaction in the promotion and progression of black and minority ethnic academics and teachers in England. *Power and Education*, *8*(3), 205–221. https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/1757743816672880

Mills, C. (2007). White Ignorance. In S. Sullivan & N. Tuana (Eds.), *Race and Epistemologies of Ignorance Race and Epistemologies of Ignorance White Ignorance* (pp. 11–39). SUNY Press.

Mills, C. (2014). *The racial contract*. Cornell University Press.

Mirza, H. S. (1997). *Black British Feminism* (H. S Mirza (Ed.)). Routledge.

Mirza, Heidi S. (2018). Racism in higher education: "What then can be done?" In J Arday & H. S. Mirza (Eds.), *Dismantling race in higher education: Racism, whiteness and decolonising the academy* (pp. 3–23). Palgrave Macmillan.

Mountford-Zimdars, A., Sabri, D., Moore, J., Sanders, J., & Hiagham, L. (2015). Causes of Differences in Student Outcomes. *Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE)*, *July*, 132. https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2011.585710

Mountford-Zimdars, A., Sanders, J., Moore, J., Sabri, D., Jones, S., & Higham, L. (2017). What can universities do to support all their students to progress successfully throughout their time at university? *Perspectives: Policy and Practice in Higher Education*, *21*(2–3), 101–110.

Murayama, K., Pekrun, R., Litchfield, S., & Vom Hofe, R. (2013). Predicting long term growth in students' mathematics achievement: The unique contributions of

motivation and cognitive strategies. *Child Development*, *84*(4), 1475–1490.

Murphy, M. C., Steele, C. M., & Gross, J. J. (2007). Signaling Threat. *Psychological Science*, *18*(10), 879–885. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9280.2007.01995.x

Murphy, M. K., & Harris, T. M. (2017). White innocence and Black subservience: The rhetoric of white heroism in The Help. *Howard Journal of Communications*, *29*(1), 49–62.

Museus, S. D. (2014). The culturally engaging campus environments (CECE) Model: A new theory of college success among racually diverse student populations. *Higher Educaton: Handbook of Theory and Research*, *29*. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-017-8005-6_5

Museus, S., & Quaye, S. (2009). Toward an intercultural perspective of racial and ethnic minority college student persistence. *The Review of Higher Education*, *33*(1), 67–94.

Nagdee, I., & Shafi, A. (2021). Decolonising the academy: A look at student-led interventions in the UK. In Dave S.P Thomas & J. Arday (Eds.), *Doing equity and diversity for success in higher education: Redressing structural inequalities in the academy* (pp. 139–150). Palgrave Macmillan.

Nascimento, A. do. (2003). *Quilombo: Vida, Problemas e Aspiracoes do Negro. 1948-1950*. Editora.

National Institute for Transformation and Equity. (n.d.). *CECE Surveys at a glance*. Retrieved March 18, 2021, from https://nite-education.org/surveys-at-a-glance/

Neave, J. (2015). *Equality in higher education: statistical report 2015 Part 1: staff Further information Equality in higher education*. https://www.ecu.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Equality-in-HE-statistical-report-2015-part-1-staff.pdf

Neves, J. (2017). *The UK Engagement Survey: Student participation and skills gain*. Higher Education Academy.

Neves, J., & Hewitt, R. (2021). *Student Academic Experience Survey*.

Newsinger, J. (2016). Why Rhodes Must Fall. *Race and Class*, *58*(2), 70–78. https://doi.org/10.1177/0306396816657726

NSSE. (n.d.). *National Survey of Student Engagement*. Retrieved June 7, 2018, from http://nsse.indiana.edu/html/survey_instruments.cfm

Nunnally, J. (1978). *Psychometric Theory*. McGraw-Hill.

Nunnally, J. . (1978). *Psychometric theory*. McGraw-Hill.

Obasogie, O. K. (2013). *Blinded by sight: Seeing race through the eyes of the blind* (Stanford U). Stanford University Press.

Office for National Statistics. (n.d.). *Ethnic group, national identity and religion*. Retrieved March 3, 2018, from https://www.ons.gov.uk/methodology/classificationsandstandards/measuringequality/ethnicgroupnationalidentityandreligion

Office for National Statistics. (2020). *National identity, ethnic group, language and religion question development for Census 2021*. https://www.ons.gov.uk/census/censustransformationprogramme/questiondevelopment/nationalidentityethnicgrouplanguageandreligionquestiondevelopmentforcensus2021#executive-summary

Office for Students (OfS). (2021). *National Student Survey – NSS*. https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/student-information-and-data/national-student-survey-nss/

Olusoga, D. (2017). *Black and British: A forgotten history*. Pan.

Omi, M., & Winant, H. (1986). *Racial formation in the United States*. Routledge.

Omi, M., & Winant, H. (1994). *Racial formation in the United States: from the 1960's to the 1990's* (2nd ed.). Routledge.

Omi, M., & Winant, H. (2002). Racial formation. In P Essed & D. Goldberg (Eds.), *Race*

critical theories. Blackwell.

ONS. (2011). *Ethnicity and National Identity in England and Wales - Office for National Statistics*. Census. https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/ethnicity/articles/ethnicityandnationalidentityinenglandandwales/2012-12-11

Osborne, J., & Costello, A. (2004). Sample size and subject to item ratio in principal component analysis. *Practical Assessment in Research Evaluation*, *9*(8).

Osterman, K. (2000). Students' need for belonging in the school community. *Review of Educational Research*, *70*(3), 323–367. https://doi.org/10.3102/00346543070003323

Oyserman, D., Terry, K., & Bybee, D. (2002). A possible selves intervention to enhance school involvement. *Journal of Adolescence*, *25*, 313–326. https://doi.org/10.1006/yjado.474

Pace, C. Robert. (1984). *Measuring the Quality of College Student Experiences: An. Account of the Development and Use of the College Student Experiences Questionnaire*. 1–136.

Pace, C.R. (1980). Measuring the quality of student effort. *Current Issues in Higher Education*, 10–16.

Pallant, J. (2016). *SPSS Survival Manual: A step by step guide to data analysis using IBM SPSS* (6th ed.). Open University Press.

Pascarella, E. T., & Terenzini, P. (2005). *How college affects students: A third decade of research*. John Wiley and Sons.

Pascarella, E., & Terenzini, P. (1991). *How college affects students*. Josey-Bass.

Pedhazur, R. (1997). *Multiple Regression in Behavioural Research: Explanation and Prediction*. Harcourt Brace College Publishers.

Peoples, L. Q., Islam, T., & Davis, T. (2021). *The culturally responsive-sustaining STEM*

curriculum scorecard. New York: Metropolitan Center for Research on Equity and the Transformation of Schools. https://steinhardt.nyu.edu/sites/default/files/2021-02/CRSE-STEAMScorecard_FIN_optimized %281%29.pdf

Peters, M. A. (2018). Why is my curriculum white? A brief genealogy of resistance. In J. Arday & H. S. Mirza (Eds.), *Dismantling race in higher education: Racism, whiteness and decolonising the academy* (pp. 253–270). Palgrave Macmillan.

Petrucelli, J. (2007). Brazillian ethnoracial classification and affirmative action policies: Where are we and where do we go? *International Conference on Social Statistics and Ethnic Diversity: Should We Count, How We Count, and Why?*

Pilkington, A. (2013). The interacting dynamics of institutional racism in higher education. *Race Ethnicity and Edcuation*, *16*(2), 225–245.

Popper, K. (1968). *The logic of scientific discovery* (2nd ed.). Hutchinson.

Portelli, J. P. (1993). Exposing the hidden curriculum. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, *25*(4), 343–358.

Pring, R. (2015). *Philosophy of educational research* (3rd ed.). Bloomsbury Academic.

Proudfoot, M., & Lacey, A. (2010). Epistemology. *The Routledge Dictionary of Philosophy*, 118–122.

Punwar, N. (2004). *Space Invaders: Race, gender and bodies out of place*. Berg Publishers.

Purnell, L. (2000). A Description of the Purnell Model for Cultural Competence. *Journal of Transcultural Nursing*, *11*(1), 40–46.

Quinlan, C. (2011). *Business research methods*. Cengage Learning EMEA.

Quinlan, K. (2018). *Conditions that influence students' interest development in and out of university classrooms: analysis of a poetic case*.

Quinlan, K. (2019). What triggers students' interest during higher education lectures? personal and situational variables associated with situational interest. *Studies in*

Higher Education, *44*. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2019.1665325

Rabaka, R. (2010). *Against epistemic aparthied: W.E.B Du Bois and the disciplinary decadence of sociology*. Lexican Books.

Ragan, W. (1960). *Modern elementary curriculum*. Henry Holt.

Ramsden, P. (1992). *Learning to Teach in Higher Education*. Routledge.

Rankin, S., & Reason, R. (2008). Transformational tapestry model: A comprehensive approach to transforming campus climate. *Journal of Diversity in Education*, *1*(4), 262–274. https://www.ucsf.edu/sites/default/files/legacy_files/Rankin_Reason_Model-Transformational_Tapestry_Approach.pdf

Renninger, A. K., & Hidi, S. E. (2016). *The power of interest for motivation and engegement*. Routledge.

Renninger, K. A., & Hidi, E. S. (2020). To level the playing field, develop interest. *Policy Insights from the Behavioural and Brain Sciences2*, *7*(1), 10–18. https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/2372732219864705

Renninger, K., & Su, S. (2012). Interest and its development. In R. Ryan (Ed.), *The Oxford handbook of human motivation* (pp. 167–187). Oxford University Press.

Renninger, K. A. (1992). Individual interest and development: Implications for theory and practice. In K. A. S. Renninger Hidi Krapp (Ed.), *The role of interest in learning and development.* Erlbaum.

Renninger, K. A, & Hidi, S. (2011). Revisiting the conceptualization, measurement, and generation of interest. *Educational Psychologist*, *46*(3), 168–184. https://doi.org/10.1080/00461520.2011.587723

Renninger, K.A. (2000). Individual interest and its implications for understanding intrinsic motivation. In C. Sansone & J. M. Harackiewicz (Eds.), *Intrinsic and*

extrinsic motivation: The search for optimal motivation and performance (pp. 373–404). Academin. https://doi.org/citeulike-article-id:1624036

Rhodes Must Fall. (2018). *Rhodes must fall: The struggle to decolonise the racist heart of empire* (R. Chantiluke, B. Kwoba, & A. Nkopo (Eds.)). ZED Books.

Richardson, J. T. E. (2008). The attainment of ethnic minority students in UK higher education. *Studies in Higher Education*, *33*(1), 33–48. https://doi.org/10.1080/03075070701794783

Richardson, J. T. E. (2015). The under-attainment of ethnic minority students in UK higher education: what we know and what we don't know. *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, *39*(2), 278–291. https://doi.org/10.1080/0309877X.2013.858680

Richardson, J. T. E. (2018). Understanding the under-attainment of ethnic minority students in UK Higher Education: The known knowns and the known unknowns. In Jason Arday & H. S. Mirza (Eds.), *Dismantling race in higher education: Racism, whiteness and decolonising the academy* (pp. 87–101).

Roediger, D. R. (2005). *Working toward Whiteness: How America's immigrants became White* (B. Books (Ed.)).

Rollock, N. (2007). *Failure by Any Other Name ? – Educational Policy and the Continuing Struggle for Black Academic Success*.

Ross, F. M., Tatam, J. C., Hughes, A. L., Beacock, O. P., & McDuff, N. (2018). "The great unspoken shame of UK higher education": Addressing inequalities of attainment. *African Journal of Business Ethics*, *12*(1). https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.15249/12-1-172

Rotgans, J. I., & Schmidt, H. G. (2018). How individual interest influences situational interest and how both are related to knowledge acquisition: A microanalytical investigation. *Journal of Educational Research*, *111*(5), 530–540. https://doi.org/10.1080/00220671.2017.1310710

Rowan, A., & Neves, J. (2021). *2021 UK Engagement Survey*. Advance HE.

Rowe, M. (2008). Micro-affirmations & Micro-inequities. *Journal of the International Ombudsman Association*, *1*(1). https://ombud.mit.edu/sites/default/files/documents/micro-affirm-ineq.pdf

Ryan, R., & Deci, E. (2000). Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being. *The American Psychologist*, *55*(1), 68–78. https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.55.1.68

Said, E. (1978). *Orientalism*. Vintage Books.

Sarantakos, S. (2005). *Social research* (3rd ed.). Palgrave Macmillan.

Savin-Baden, M., & Major, C. H. (2013). *Qualitative Research: The Essential Guide to Theory and Practice*. Routledge.

Schiefele, U., Krapp, A., & Winteler, A. (1992). Interest as a predictor of academic achievement: A meta-analysis of research. In K.A. Renninger, S. Hid, & A. Krapp (Eds.), *The Role of Interest in Learning and Development* (pp. 183–211). Erlbaum.

Schön, D. A. (1995). *Knowing-In-Action* : The New Scholarship Requires a New Epistemology. *Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning*, *27*(6), 27–34. https://doi.org/10.1080/00091383.1995.10544673

Schucan Bird, K., & Pitman, L. (2020). How diverse is your reading list? Exploring issues of representation and decolonisation in the UK. *Higher Education*, *79*, 903–920. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-019-00446-9

Schwarz, Norbert. (2007). Cognitive aspects of survey methodology. *Applied Cognitive Psychology*, *21*(1), 277–287. https://doi.org/10.1002/acp.1340

Seedhouse, D. (1998). *Ethics: The heart of healthcare*. Wiley.

Shilliam, R. (2015). Black academia: The doors have been opened but the architecture remains the same. In C. Alexander & J. Arday (Eds.), *Aiming Higher: Race, Inequality and Diversty in the Academy* (pp. 32–33). Runnymede.

Shilliam, R. (2016). The Aims and Methods of Liberal Education: Notes from a Nineteenth Century Pan-Africanist. *International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society*, *29*(3), 251–267. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10767-016-9227-5

Shilliam, R. (2017). *How Black Deficit Entered the British Academy*. https://robbieshilliam.files.wordpress.com/2017/06/how-black-deficit-entered-the-british-academy.pdf

Shilliam, R. (2019). Behind the Rhodes statue: Black complacency and the imprial academy. *History of Human Sciences*, *xx*(x), 1–25.

Singh, G. (2011). *A synthesis of research evidence. Black and minority ethnic (BME) students' participation in higher education: improving retention and success.* 1–73.

Skinner, E. A., & Belmont, M. J. (1993). Motivation in the Classroom: Reciprocal Effects of Teacher Behavior and Student Engagement Across the School Year. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *85*(4), 571–581. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-0663.85.4.571

Smedley, A, & Smedley, B. (2005). Race is a biological fiction, racism as a social problem is real. *American Psychologist*, *60*, 16–26.

Smedley, A. (1998). "Race" and the Construction of Human Identity. *American Anthropologist*, *100*(3), 690–702.

Smit, R. (2012). Towards a clearer understanding of student disadvantage in higher education: Problematising deficit thinking. *Higher Education Research and Development*, *31*(3), 369–380. https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2011.634383

Smith, L. T. (2012). *Decolonising Methodologies*. Zed Books.

Smith, S. (2016). Exploring the Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Student Attainment Gap: What Did It Tell Us? Actions to Address Home BME Undergraduate Students' Degree Attainment. *Journal of Perspectives in Applied Academic Practice*, *5*(1), 48–57. https://doi.org/10.14297/jpaap.v5i1.239

Solomonides, I., & Martin, P. (2005). All this talk of Engagement is making me itch: an investigation into the conceptions of 'engagement 'held by students and staff. *SEDA Special 22: Aspects of Student Engagement*, *2002*, 1–7. http://scholar.google.com/scholar?hl=en&btnG=Search&q=intitle:All+this+talk+of+engagement+is+making+me+itch:+An+investigation+into+the+conceptions+of+'engagement'+held+by+students+and+tutors#0

Solorzano, D. G. (1997). Images and words that wound: Critical race theory, racial stereotyping, and teacher education. *Teaching Education Quarterly, Summer 1997*, *24*(3), 5–19.

Solórzano, D. G., & Yosso, T. J. (2002). Critical Race Methodology: Counter-Storytelling as an Analytical Framework for Education Research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, *8*(1), 23–44. https://doi.org/10.1177/107780040200800103

Steele, C., & Aronson, J. (1995). Claude Steele Stereotype Threat 1995. *Journal of Sociology and Social Psychology*, *69*(5), 797–811. http://mrnas.pbworks.com/f/claude steele stereotype threat 1995.pdf%5Cnpapers2://publication/uuid/F1E4976D-1153-4535-B5CE-A61535C32D6F

Steele, C. M. (1997). F 1965). *American Psychologist*, *52*(6), 613–629. https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.52.6.613

Steele, D. M., & Cohn-Vargas, B. (2013). *Identity safe classrooms: Places to belong and learn*. Corwin.

Stevens, J. (2002). *Applied multivariate statistics for the social sciences*. NJ: Erlbaum.

Stevenson, J. (2012). *Black and minority ethnic student degree retention and attainment*. *October*.

Strayhorn, T. (2019). *College students' sense of belonging: A key to educational success for all students* (2nd ed.). Routledge.

Strayhorn, T.L. (2012). *College students' sense of belonging: A key to educational success*. Routledge.

Sullivan, E. (2007). *A Critical Policy Analysis: The Impact of Zero Tolerance on Out-of-School Suspensions and Expulsions of Students of Color in the State of Texas by Gender and School Level*. Texas A&M University.

Sullivan, E., Larke, P. ., & Webb-Hasan, G. (2010). Critical Policy and Critical Race Theory to Examine Texas. *School Disciplinary Policies. Race, Gender & Class*, *17*(1–2), 72–87.

Swain, H. (2019, January 30). Students want their curriculums decolonised. Are universities listening? *The Guardian*.

Tabachnik, B., & Fidell, L. (2007). *Using multivariate statistics* (6th editio). Allyn and Bacon.

Tauber, R. (1997). *Self-fulfilling prophecy: A practical guide to its use in education*. Praeger.

Taylor, E. (2016). Foundations of critical race theory in education: An introduction. In E Taylor, D. Gillborn, & G. Ladson-Billings (Eds.), *Foundations of critical race theory in education* (Second, p. 9). Routledge.

Taylor, E., Gillborn, D., & Ladson-Billings, G. (Eds.). (2016). *Foundations of critical race theory in education* (2nd ed.). Routledge.

Terenzini, P. T., & Pascareila, E. T. (1991). Tweny years of research on college students: Lessons for future research. *Research in Higher Education*, *32*(l), 83–92. https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00992835

The Higher Education Academy. (2105). *UK Engagement Survey – UKES 2015*. https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/system/files/downloads/ukes_2015_items.pdf

Thomas, D. S.P (2022). Perceptions, expectations and realities: Reflections on building staff-student partnerships through a reading list review. In A. Day, L. Lee, D. S.

Thomas, & J. Spickard (Eds.), *Diversity, Inclusion and Decolonisation: Practical Tools for Improving Teaching, Research and Scholarship*. Bristol University Press.

Thomas, D. S., & Quinlan, K. M. (2021a). Reimagining Curricula: Effects of Cultural (In)Sensitivity of Curricula on Minority Ethnic Students'Engagement. *International Research Conference 2021 (Re)Connecting, (Re)Building: Higher Education in Transformative Times*. https://srhe.ac.uk/arc/21/SRHE2021-0509.pdf

Thomas, D. S.P., & Quinlan, K. M. (2021b). Reimagining Curricula: Supporting Minority Ethnic Students' Interest through Culturally Sensitive Curricula. *Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association*.

Thomas, D. S.P., & Quinlan, K. M. (2021c). Reimagining the curricula in higher education: Increasing students' interaction with teachers and interest through culturally sensitive curricula. *Open University 6th Biennial International Conference on Access, Participation, and Success*. https://www.open.ac.uk/about/wideningparticipation/sites/www.open.ac.uk.about.wideningparticipation/files/files/6th-conference/1_9 Reimagining the curricula in higher education - Increasing students' interaction with teachers and interest through cultural

Thomas, D. S.P., & Quinlan, K. M. (2021d). The Culturally Sensitive Curricula Scales (CSCS): Measuring BAME vs White students' perspectives on the cultural sensitivity of the curriculum. *Advance HE Surveys & Insights Conference 2021: Adapting to Challenging Times*.

Thomas, D. S.P., & Quinlan, K. M. (2021e). Why we need to reimagine the curricula in higher education to make it more culturally sensitive. *Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning*, *23*(3). https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.5456/WPLL.23.3.37

Thomas, D. (2018). A Liberating Curricula as a Social Responsibility for Promoting Social Justice and Student Success within the UK Higher Education Institution

(HEI). In C. Brown & N. Uzoechi (Eds.), *Corporate Social Responsibility and Strategic Market Positioning for Organizational Success*. IGI Global.

Thomas, D, Lea, J., Harvey Sporle, B., Lombart, A., Pellowe, D., & Risley, K. (2014). What I know now… reflections on involvement in a partners in learning scheme. *Educational Developments*, *15.3*.

Thomas, D.S.P., & Jivraj, S. (Eds.). (2020). *Towards decolonising the university: A kaleidoscope for empowered action*. Counterpress.

Thomas, D. (2020a). Belonging for 'Outsiders Within', A Critical Race Perspective on Whiteness as a Means of Promoting the 'Insider Without' Syndrome. *Encyclopedia of Teacher Education*, 1–5. https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007%2F978-981-13-1179-6_372-1.pdf

Thomas, D. (2020b). *Democracy, Diversity and Decolonisation: Staff-student partnerships in a reading list review*. Advance HE. https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/news-and-views/Democracy-Diversity-and-Decolonisation

Thomas, D. (2020c). Don't let the pandemic overshadow racial inequalities in higher education. *Times Higher Education*.

Thomas, D, & Adewumi, B. (2019). *University of Kent Faculty of Social Sciences Learning and Teaching Enhancement Fund End of Project Report on Diversity Mark Pilot Project,SSPSSR Medway*.

Thomas, D.S.P, & Arday, J. (Eds.). (2021). *Doing equity and diversity for success in higher education: Redressing structural inequalities in the academy* (1st ed.). Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-65668-3

Thomas, L. (2012a). Building Student Engagement And Belonging In Higher Education At A Time Of Change. *What Works? Student Retention & Success*, *July*, 100.

Thomas, L. (2012b). *What works? Student retention and success: building student engagement and belonging in higher education at a time of change: final report*

from the what works? Student retention and success programme. https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/system/files/what_works_final_report.pdf

Threadgold, S. (2012). "I reckon my life will be easy, but my kids will be buggered": Ambivalence in young people's positive perceptions of individual futures and their visions of environmental collapse. *Journal of Youth Studies*, *15*(1), 17–32. https://doi.org/10.1080/13676261.2011.618490

Tikly, L., Haynes, J., Caballero, C., Hill, J., & Gillborn, D. (2006). *Evaluation of Aiming High: African Caribbean Achievement Project*. 133. http://eprints.ioe.ac.uk/1700/

Timm, B. K., & Andersen, C. (2019). Affective politics and colonial heritage, Rhodes Must Fall at UCT and Oxford. *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, *25*(3), 239–258. https://doi.org/10.1080/13527258.2018.1481134

Tinto, V. (1975). *Dropout from Higher Education : A Theoretical Synthesis of Recent Research*. *45*(1), 89–125.

Tinto, V. (1993). *Leaving college: Rethinking the causes and cures of student attrition* (2nd ed.). University of Chicargo Press.

Tinto, V. (2012). *Completing college: Rethinking institutional action*. University of Chicago Press.

Trowler, V. (2010). *Student Engagement Literature Review Vicki Trowler Department of Educational Research University of Lancaster* (Issue November 2010). https://www.researchgate.net/publication/322342119_Student_Engagement_Literature_Review/references

Tuck, E., & Yang, W. K. (2012). Decolonization is not a metaphor. *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*, *1*(1), 1–40.

Turner, K. (2018, February 28). University minister warns against "decolonising" the curricula to avoid "unfashionable" subjects. *The Telegraph*. https://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/2018/02/28/universities-minister-warns-

against-decolonising-curricula-avoid/

Turney, L., Law, I., & Phillips, D. (2002). *Institutional Racism in Higher Education: Building the anti-racist university: a toolkit*. 1–114. http://www.sociology.leeds.ac.uk/assets/files/research/cers/the-anti-racism-toolkit.pdf

Tyler, I. (2008). "CHAV MUM CHAV SCUM": Class disgust in contemporary Britain. *Feminist Media Studies*, *8*(1), 24–34.

Tyler, R. (1957). The curriculum then and now. In *Proceedings of the 1956 International Conference on Testing Problems*. Educational Testing Service.

UCL. (2014). *Why is my curriculum white?* http://www.dtmh.ucl.ac.uk/videos/curriculum-white/

UCL. (2017). *Six projects funded to explore diversifying the curriculum*. https://www.ucl.ac.uk/teaching-learning/news/2017/feb/six-projects-funded-explore-diversifying-curriculum

UCU. (2020). *Phenomenal Women: Portraits of UK Black Female Professors*. https://ucu.org.uk/article/10681/Phenomenal-Women-Portraits-of-UK-Black-Female-Professors

UK Government. (2020). *Widening participation in higher education*. https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/widening-participation-in-higher-education

United States Census Bureau. (2019). *Race: About*. https://www.census.gov/topics/population/race/about.html

Universities UK (UUK). (2020). *Tackling racial harassment in higher education*. https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/policy-and-analysis/reports/Documents/2020/tackling-racial-harassment-in-higher-education.pdf

USC Race Equity Centre. (n.d.). *National Assessment of Collegiate Campus Climates (NACCC)*. Retrieved April 1, 2020, from https://race.usc.edu/naccc/

UUK. (2019). *Black, Asian and minority ethnic student attainment at UK universities: #CLOSINGTHEGAP*. https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/policy-and-analysis/reports/Documents/2019/bame-student-attainment-uk-universities-closing-the-gap.pdf

Vertovec, S. (2007). Super-diversity and its implications. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, *30*(6), 1024–1054. https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870701599465

Villapano, O., & Deagdo Bernal, D. (2002). A critical race theory analysis of barriers that impede the success of faculty of colour. In W. Smith, P. Altbach, & K. Lomotey (Eds.), *The racial crisis in American higher education: Contiuing challengesfor the twenty-first century* (pp. 243–269). State University of New York Press.

Walker, R. (2011). *When we ruled*. Black Classic Press.

Wallace, D. (2017). Reading 'Race' in Bourdieu? Examining Black Cultural Capital Among Black Caribbean Youth in South London. *Sociology*, *51*(5), 907–923. https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038516643478

Walliman, N. (2006). *Social research methods*. SAGE Publications, Ltd. https://doi.org/https://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781849209939

Walton, G. M., & Cohen, G. L. (2007). A question of belonging: Race, social fit, and achievement. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *92*(1), 82–96. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.92.1.82

Walton, G. M., & Cohen, G. L. (2011). A brief social-belonging intervention improves academic and health outcomes of minority students. *Science*, *331*(6023), 1447–1451. https://doi.org/10.1126/science.1198364

Warmington, P. (2019). Critical race theory in England: Impact and opposition.

Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power. https://doi.org/10.1080/1070289X.2019.1587907

Watkins, M. (2000). *Monte Carlo PCA for Parallel*. Ed & Psych Associates.

Wei, F. (2007). Cross-cultural teacing apprehension: A co-identity approach to minority teachers. *New Directions for Teaching and Learning*, *110*, 5–14.

West, C. (1993). *Race Matters*. Beacon.

Whitchurch, C. (2015). The Rise of Third Space Professionals: Paradoxes and Dilemmas. In U. Teichler & W. . Cummings (Eds.), *Recruiting and Managing the Academic Profession*. Springer.

Wigfield, A. (1994). Expectancy-Value theory of achievement motivation: A developmental perspective. *Educatonal Psychology Review*, *6*(1).

Williams, C. (1987). *The destruction of Black civilisation: Great issues of race from 4500 B.C to 2000 A.D*. Third World Press.

Williams, J. (2017, March 1). "The 'decolonise the curriculum' movement re-racialises knowledge." *Open Democracy*.

Williams, J. (2016). A critical exploration of changing definitions of public good in relation to higher education. *Studies in Higher Education*, *41*(4), 619–630. https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2014.942270

Williams, M., & May, T. (1996). *Introduction to the philosophy of social research*. Routledge.

Williams, P., Bath, S., Arday, J., & Lewis, C. (2019). *The broken pipeline: Barriers to black PhD students accessing research coucil funding*. http://leadingroutes.org/?mdocs-file=2943

Wilson, S. (2008). *Research is ceremony: Indigenous research methods*. Fernwood.

Woodfield, S. (2015). Institutional research in the UK and Ireland. In K. Webber & A. Calderon (Eds.), *Institutional research and planning in higher education: Global*

contexts and themes (pp. 86–100). Routledge.

Woolf, K., Cave, J., Greenhalgh, T., & Dacre, J. (2008). Ethnic stereotypes and the underachievement of UK medical students from ethnic minorities: qualitative study. *Bmj*, *337*(aug18 1), a1220–a1220. https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.a1220

Wray, M. (2006). *Not Quite White: White Trash and the Boundaries of Whiteness*. Duke University Press.

Zepke, N., Leach, L., & Butler, P. (2010). Engagement in post-compulsory education: Students' motivation and action. *Research in Post-Compulsory Education*, *15*(1), 1–17. https://doi.org/10.1080/13596740903565269

Zuberi, T. (2001). *Thicker than blood: How racial statistics lie*. University of Minnesota Press.

Zusho, A. (2017). Toward an Integrated Model of Student Learning in the College Classroom. *Educational Psychology Review*, *29*(2), 301–324. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-017-9408-4

Appendix A – Culturally Sensitive Curricula Scale

Original Statements Alpha version	Original Construct	Justification for change	Revised Statements *Beta* version	Revised Construct
1. The curriculum features visually diverse people, and the people of colour do not all look alike.	Diversity Present (DP)	No Change	1. The curriculum features people from diverse backgrounds.	Diversity Represented (DR)
2. There are references to different ethnic and cultural traditions, languages, religions and clothing.		No Change	2. The curriculum references different ethnic and cultural traditions, languages, religions and/or clothing.	
3. Diverse ethnicities and nationalities are portrayed (e.g. not all Asian families are Chinese, not all Black families are African etc.)		Example removed	3. Diverse ethnicities and nationalities are portrayed	
4. Diverse family structures (i.e. Single parents, adopted or fostered children, same-sex parents, other relatives living with family, etc.) are portrayed.		No Change	4. Diverse family structures (i.e. single parents, adopted or fostered children, same-sex parents, other relatives living with family, etc.) are portrayed.	
5. Differently-abled people are represented.		No Change	5. Differently-abled people are represented.	
6. People like me are represented conducting research and not just as the subject of research.		Too general in stating "people like me". A narrower focus adopted to illuminate how diversity is represented.	6. People of diverse ethnicities are represented as researchers or professionals, not just as participants in research,	Accurate Portrayals (AP)

			clients, consumers, customers, etc.	
7. When problems or conflicts are presented, people like me are usually considered the problem.		Sentence reformatted and repositioned to the following construct.	7. *When social problems (e.g. crime, violence) are presented, people of colour are usually considered the problem.	
8. People like me are usually assumed to have low family wealth, low educational attainment and/or low income.		Statement repositioned due to the merging of two concepts	8. *When interpersonal conflicts are presented, people of colour are usually considered the problem.	
9. Social situations and problems are situated within a social context rather than seen as individual problems	Accurate Portrayals (AP)	No Change	9. *Social situations and problems are situated within a social context rather than seen as individual problems only.	
10. People like me are represented stereotypically, or presented as foreign or exotic.		Repositioned within the component to question 14.	10. When people of colour have problems, white people are usually presented as being able to solve those problems.	
11. Problems faced by people of colour are not resolved through the benevolent intervention of a white person.		Question revised and repositioned as question 10.	11. Non-dominant populations and their strengths and assets are highlighted.	
12. Non-dominant populations and their strengths and assets are highlighted.	Decolonisation/ Power and Privilege (DPP)	Repositioned to question 11	12. +People like me are usually assumed to have low family wealth, low educational	

			attainment and/or low income.	
13. People like me are represented in terms of their strengths, talents and knowledge, rather than their perceived flaws or deficiencies.		To ambiguous. Question reframed.	13. +People like me are usually assumed to be competent and successful.	
14. The curriculum raises critical questions about things that are taken for granted.		Question revised and repositioned to question 22 due to the presence of multiple ideas in the same question.	14. +People like me are represented stereotypically, or presented as foreign or exotic.	
15. The curriculum respects knowledge systems based in communities of colour, collectivist cultures, matriarchal societies or non-Christian religions.	Catering for Multiple Perspectives (CMP)	Original question ambiguous. Redeveloped and presented as question 21.	15. +When people like me are represented, it is in terms of their strengths, talents or knowledge, rather than their perceived flaws or deficiencies.	
16. The curriculum presents different points of view on the topic, especially points of view from marginalized people/communities.		Repositioned to question 17.	16. The curriculum respects that different cultures may have different understandings, skills and/or philosophies.	Multiple Perspectives (MP)
17. The curriculum includes knowledge that is relevant to people like me.		Repositioned to question 19.	17. The curriculum presents different points of view on the topic, especially points of view from marginalized people/communiti es.	
18. The curriculum addresses problems that are relevant to people like me.		Repositioned to question 20.	18. The curriculum addresses problems that are of concern to marginalized	

			people/communities.	
19. The curriculum provides ways for me to connect learning to social, political or environmental concerns that affect me and my community of origin.	Connect Learning to Real Life Action (CLA)	Reformatted due to ambiguity. Repositioned to question 18.	19. +The curriculum includes knowledge that is relevant to people like me.	
20. The curriculum encourages me to take actions that fight inequity or promote equity.		Question reformatted and repositioned to question 23.	20. +The curriculum addresses problems that are relevant to people like me.	
21. When I engage in experiential learning activities, I am guided in being culturally sensitive.		Modified and repositioned to question 27.	21. +The curriculum includes perspectives from people like me.	
22. My instructors encourage students to be mindful of other students' perspectives.	Inclusiveness	Reformatted and repositioned to question 29	22. The curriculum raises critical questions about power and/or privilege that are usually taken for granted.	Challenge Power (CP)
23. My instructors welcome my views even if they are different from the other student's.		Reformatted and repositioned to question 28	23. The curriculum encourages students to challenge existing power structures in society.	
24. My instructors encourage students to be respectful of other students' perspectives.		Reformatted and repositioned to question 30	24. The curriculum encourages students to critique unearned privilege.	
25. I feel comfortable responding when my instructor asks questions.		No change. Repositioned to question 31	25. The curriculum encourages students to connect learning to social, political or	Connecting Learning and Action (CLA)

			environmental concerns.	
26. My instructors provide examples which relate to my cultural background.	Cultural Competence (CC)	No change. Repositioned to question 32	26. The curriculum encourages students to take actions that fight inequity or promote equity.	
27. My instructors use examples from different cultures to explain concepts.		Question removed as deemed too ambiguous	27. When I engage in experiential learning activities, I am guided to accept cultural differences and adjust my communication appropriately.	
28. My instructors seem to understand my culture.		No change. Repositioned to question 33.	28. My instructors make an effort to pronounce everyone's name correctly.	Inclusive Learning Environment (ILE)
29. My instructors show interest in my cultural background.		No change. Repositioned to question 34	29. My instructors encourage students to be mindful of other students' perspectives.	
30. My instructors make an effort to pronounce everyone's name correctly.		No change. Repositioned to question 28	30. My instructors encourage students to respect other students' perspectives.	
			31. I feel comfortable responding when my instructor asks questions.	Instructor Cultural Competence (ICC)
			32. +My instructors provide examples which relate to my cultural background.	

	33. +My instructors seem to understand my culture.	
	34. +My instructors show interest in my cultural background.	

*Item reversed
+ "Like me" items

Appendix B – Culturally Sensitive Curricula Scale (CSCS) Final

Culturally Sensitive Curriculum Scale

You are invited to participate in a research study that explores the extent to which your curriculum is culturally sensitive (or not). Culturally sensitive education means that attitudes, teaching methods and practice, teaching materials, curriculum, and theories relate to your culture, identity and context throughout your educational experience.

The data is being collected by Dave Thomas, Doctoral Researcher and Student Success Project Manager. You are invited to participate by completing a short survey (10 minutes). There are no right or wrong answers. Please answer with honesty and rate how you feel about the statements at this moment in time. Your participation is voluntary; whether you participate or not will have no impact on your marks or relationship with your lecturers. However, you may benefit from the opportunity to reflect on your overall learning and teaching experiences.

Your input is confidential and will be aggregated with that of other students. We are asking for your Student Number/ Login because it will allow us to link your comments with other demographic information already on file at the university (saving you time in completing another section about your personal and educational background). Once we have done so, your Student Number/ Login will be removed from the questionnaire and each participant will be allocated a numeric code to ensure anonymity (i.e. you will not be identifiable in any dataset). The data will be stored according to the Data Protection Act 2018. Only the research team will have access to this database. Aggregated analyses will be shared with other members of the School and University to inform the development of the services that we provide at the University. By completing this survey, you consent to your input being used in this way.

Privacy notice
The university's privacy notice contains information that outlines how your personal data will be processed as part of this research process. This can be found at: https://research.kent.ac.uk/researchservices/wp-content/uploads/sites/51/2018/05/GDPR-Privacy-Notice-Research.pdf. Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. Your cooperation is very much appreciated.

Student Number: ___________________ **Student Login:** ______

Date: ________________________________

Purpose of this Scale

This scale is designed to assess to what extent course curricula are (or are not) culturally sensitive. The overall objective is to explore how the curriculum can be changed to better engage students from diverse backgrounds.

How to use this Scale

The scale asks you to rate the extent to which you think each statement is true of the curriculum of your programme overall. By curriculum we mean both the content and how it is taught. By programme, we mean the collection of modules that you study on your current degree course.

There are no right or wrong answers; we simply want to know about your opinion. Please use the following categories to describe the curriculum. Circle the number that corresponds with your answer.

- **Strongly Disagree (1)** You have seen no evidence that any portion of the statement is correct.
- **Disagree (2)** You have seen little evidence that the statement is correct, or it is only partially correct.
- **Agree (3)** You can recall some evidence that the statement is correct.
- **Strongly Agree (4)** You can recall multiple examples (stories, illustrations, passages, quotes, etc.) from your curriculum to show how and why the statement is correct.
- **Not applicable (0)** If you believe that this does not apply to you or your programme of study.

Part 1 – Cultural Sensitivity of Your Curriculum

How do you rate each of the following items?

Statements	(1) Strongly Disagree	(2) Disagree	(3) Agree	(4) Strongly Agree	(0) Not Applicable
1. The curriculum features people from diverse backgrounds.	1	2	3	4	0
2. The curriculum references different ethnic and cultural traditions, languages, religions and/or clothing.	1	2	3	4	0
3. Diverse ethnicities and nationalities are portrayed	1	2	3	4	0
4. Diverse family structures (i.e. single parents, adopted or fostered children, same-sex parents, other relatives living with family, etc.) are portrayed.	1	2	3	4	0
5. Differently-abled people are represented.	1	2	3	4	0
6. People of diverse ethnicities are represented as researchers or professionals, not just as participants in research, clients, consumers, customers, etc.	1	2	3	4	0
7. When social problems (e.g. crime, violence) are presented, people of colour are usually considered the problem.	1	2	3	4	0
8. When interpersonal conflicts are presented, people of colour are usually considered the problem.	1	2	3	4	0
9. Social situations and problems are situated within a social context rather than seen as individual problems only.	1	2	3	4	0
10. When people of colour have problems, white people are usually presented as being able to solve those problems.	1	2	3	4	0
11. Non-dominant populations and their strengths and assets are highlighted.	1	2	3	4	0
12. People like me are usually assumed to have low family wealth, low educational attainment and/or low income.	1	2	3	4	0
13. People like me are usually assumed to be competent and successful.	1	2	3	4	0

14. People like me are represented stereotypically, or presented as foreign or exotic.	1	2	3	4	0
15. When people like me are represented, it is in terms of their strengths, talents or knowledge, rather than their perceived flaws or deficiencies.	1	2	3	4	0
16. The curriculum respects that different cultures may have different understandings, skills and/or philosophies.	1	2	3	4	0
17. The curriculum presents different points of view on the topic, especially points of view from marginalised people/communities.	1	2	3	4	0
18. The curriculum addresses problems that are of concern to marginalised people/communities.	1	2	3	4	0
19. The curriculum includes knowledge that is relevant to people like me.	1	2	3	4	0
20. The curriculum addresses problems that are relevant to people like me.	1	2	3	4	0
21. The curriculum includes perspectives from people like me.	1	2	3	4	0
22. The curriculum raises critical questions about power and/or privilege that are usually taken for granted.	1	2	3	4	0
23. The curriculum encourages students to challenge existing power structures in society.	1	2	3	4	0
24. The curriculum encourages students to critique unearned privilege.	1	2	3	4	0
25. The curriculum encourages students to connect learning to social, political or environmental concerns.	1	2	3	4	0
26. The curriculum encourages students to take actions that fight inequity or promote equity.	1	2	3	4	0
27. When I engage in experiential learning activities, I am guided to accept cultural differences and adjust my communication appropriately.	1	2	3	4	0
28. My instructors make an effort to pronounce everyone's name correctly.	1	2	3	4	0
29. My instructors encourage students to be mindful of other students' perspectives.	1	2	3	4	0
30. My instructors encourage students to respect other students' perspectives.	1	2	3	4	0

31. I feel comfortable responding when my instructor asks questions.	1	2	3	4	0
32. My instructors provide examples which relate to my cultural background.	1	2	3	4	0
33. My instructors seem to understand my culture.	1	2	3	4	0
34. My instructors show interest in my cultural background.	1	2	3	4	0

Interaction with Teaching Staff Scale

Part 2. Your relationship with teaching staff

While at University, how often have you done each of the following?

	(0) **Not Applicable**	**(1)** **Never**	**(2)** **Sometime s**	**(3)** **Often**	**(4)** **Very Often**
1. Discussed ideas from my course with teaching staff outside taught sessions, including by email/online.	0	1	2	3	4
2. Communicated with teaching staff about the content of my course outside of taught sessions.	0	1	2	3	4
3. Communicated with teaching staff about assignments outside of taught sessions.	0	1	2	3	4
4. Talked with a member of teaching staff about my academic interests.	0	1	2	3	4
5. Discussed my academic performance and/or feedback with teaching staff, including by email/online.	0	1	2	3	4
6. Communicated with teaching staff about my academic performance.	0	1	2	3	4
7. Communicated with a member of the teaching staff about my career interests.	0	1	2	3	4
8. Discussed career plans with teaching staff, including by email/online.	0	1	2	3	4
9. Discussed non-academic matters with teaching staff, including by email/online.	0	1	2	3	4
10. Communicated with teaching staff about my personal development.	0	1	2	3	4
11. Talked with teaching staff about a personal issue.	0	1	2	3	4

Interest Scale

Part 3. Your interest in and knowledge about this field (that is, your degree programme) broadly.
In deciding your answers, think about the overall field of this degree programme (e.g. law, psychology, not a specific module). Please rate each statement below in terms of how much you agree with it, answering all questions.
Please rate each statement below in terms of how much you agree/ disagree with it, answering all questions.

Statements	**(1) Strongly Disagree**	**(2) Disagree**	**(3) Neither Agree nor Disagree**	**(4) Agree**	**(5) Strongly Agree**
1. I try hard on assignments in this field.	0	1	2	3	4
2. I participate in extra-curricular activities related to this field.	0	1	2	3	4
3. I talk about this field beyond what is required for classes.	0	1	2	3	4
4. I read about this field in my free time.	0	1	2	3	4
5. Regularly I find myself thinking about ideas from lectures in this field when I'm doing other things.	0	1	2	3	4
6. I know a lot about this field.	0	1	2	3	4
7. I am confident in my abilities in this field.	0	1	2	3	4
8. I am quite good in this field.	0	1	2	3	4
9. I am interested in this field in general.	0	1	2	3	4
10. I am curious about this field in general.	0	1	2	3	4
11. I am inquisitive about this field in general.	0	1	2	3	4

Thank you very much for completing this questionnaire. Please feel free to contact Dave Thomas by email: d.s.p.thomas@kent.ac.uk should you have any queries regarding this survey.

Appendix C – Ethics Application

FULL APPLICATION FOR RESEARCH ETHICS APPROVAL
CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF HIGHER EDUCATION

If academic staff or students answer 'yes' to any of the questions in Section IV A) of the Ethics Review Checklist, a full ethics application must be made to the CSHE Research Ethics Advisory Group (REAG). Complete this form and send it to the Chair of the REAG along with supporting documentation: a copy of the full research proposal; any participant information sheets and consent forms; any surveys, interview schedules; any advertising material or proposed website wording. **It is important to note that you must not commence any research with human participants until full approval has been given by the CSHE REAG - you will be notified via email when this has been granted.**

Overview
Name of Applicant(s)
Dave Thomas
Contact Details (Please include your UoK address, email and telephone number)
School of Sport and Exercise Science, M2-30A, Medway Campus, d.s.p.thomas@kent.ac.uk, 01634888457
Title of Project
School of Sports and Exercise Science Survey of Incoming Students (and follow-up) and Culturally Sensitive Curricula Scale
Lay Summary (Please provide a brief summary of the study)
Although there is a higher proportion of students who identify as belonging to a black, Asian or minority ethnic background (BAME) entering UK higher educational institutions than their white counterparts, it is widely acknowledged that there are persistent, pervasive inequalities in experiences and good degrees [1] awarded (see OfS 2018).[2] Inevitably, there was a Degree Awarding Gap[3] of 13% among 2017/18 graduates (HESA 2019). Results from the National Student Survey suggest that student outcomes are underpinned by their experiences of higher education and their overall satisfaction. This corroborates with a growing body of literature that investigates these persistent, pervasive inequalities in student experiences and degrees awarded (see Mountford-Zimdars *et al.* 2015: 2017). Broecke and Nicholls concluded that even when 'controlling for other factors[4]… ethnicity is still statistically significant in explaining attainment in HE; students from minority ethnic communities … are found to be less likely to achieve a good degree than White UK and Irish students (Broecke and Nicholls, 2007, pp. 16-19); the greatest disparity in attainment is between white and black students. Consequently, emerging evidence at Kent suggests that white students and BAME students have different levels of interest in their subject and different hopes for their university learning experience (Quinlan 2018). The university has subsequently commissioned research to develop a framework of powerful of powerful student experiences for undergraduates that outlines principles within which students can construct their individual student experiences[5] This research seeks to answer the following research questions: 1. To what extent does the "whiteness" of the curriculum affect black students' interest during university? 2. What aspect of the program support (or not) student's interest?

[1] A good degree represents a classification of First (1) or Upper Second Class (2:1) degree classification.
[2] OfS (2018). *A New Approach to Regulating Access and Participation in English Higher Education Consultation Outcomes'* [Online]. Available at: www. officeforstudents.org.uk/media/546d1a52-5ba7- 4d70-8ce7-c7a936aa3997/ofs2018_53.pdf [Accessed: 12 July 2019].
[3] Difference in the proportion of UK domiciled White students receiving a degree classification of First (1) or Upper Second-Class degree classification compared with the proportion of UK domiciled BME students.
[4] Prior attainment, subject of study, age, gender, disability, deprivation, type of HE institution attended, type of level 3 qualifications, mode of study, term-time accommodation and ethnicity (Broecke and Nicholls 2007).
[5] https://www.kent.ac.uk/cshe/kent-login/A%20Framework%20for%20Powerful%20Student%20Learning%20Experiences%20final%20250119.pdf

Broecke, S. and Nicholls, T. (2007). Ethnicity and degree attainment. :1–24.
HESA (2019). *Who's Studying in HE?* [Online]. Available at: https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/students/whos-in-he [Accessed: 3 August 2019].
Mountford-Zimdars, A. *et al.* (2015). Causes of Differences in Student Outcomes. *Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE)* [Online]:132. Available at: http://www.hefce.ac.uk/media/HEFCE,2014/Content/Pubs/Independentresearch/2015/Causes,of,differences,in,student,outcomes/HEFCE 2015_diffout.pdf
Mountford-Zimdars, A. *et al.* (2017). What can universities do to support all their students to progress successfully throughout their time at university? *Perspectives: Policy and Practice in Higher Education* **21**:101–110.
Quinlan, K. (2018). *Conditions That Influence Students' Interest Development in and out of University Classrooms: Analysis of a Poetic Case.*

3. To what extent does the environmental features/aspects of students' program of study interact with their interest (or lack of interest) and overall attainment?

The study will be conducted longitudinally, involving the following stages:

- A follow-up survey of incoming students (2018/19 cohort)
- A survey of incoming students 2019/20
- Developing a Culturally Sensitive Curricula Scale (involving a pilot study and broader dissemination)

The first phase of the study involves conducting a survey of incoming students (2019/20) and a follow-up survey of incoming students (2018/19 cohort). In both surveys, data will be collected from participants (students) at the University of Kent School of Sports and Exercise Science. A follow-up study will be conducted with the 2019/20 cohort throughout the duration of their undergraduate studies.

The survey of incoming students (2019/20) aims to find out about students' interests, perceptions of the value that they place on their educational outcomes, their expectations of their university learning experience and prior educational experiences. The follow-up Survey of Incoming Students (2018/19 cohort) aims to find out about students' interest in and knowledge about their field of study; the usefulness of components taught on their program of study; interesting moments in lecture; emotions associated with interesting moment; and student's relationship with lecturers.

The second stage of the study is to design and dessiminate a Culturally Sensitive Curricula Scale. The Culturally Sensitice Curricula Scale is designed to help students to determine the extent to which their course curricula are (or are not) culturally sensitive. There are many reasons to examine cultural sensitivity in higher education curricula. When the curricula reflect and reinforces a students' background and identity, they may feel like they belong in the institution, be more interested, feel more competent and learn better. The overall objective is to explore how the curriculum can be changed to better engage a diverse student body. The scale asks students to rate the extent to which you think each statement is true of the curriculum of their programme overall.

Linking survey responses to students' records allows us to investigate other demographic variables (e.g. race, age, first generation status, and prior educational qualifications) that may be associated with different educational interest, values and motivation. Student records allow us to see the extent to which students' interests, expectations and motivations predict student engagement behaviour (e.g. attendance and marks.) The findings from the study will be used to inform the design of initiatives to stimulate/sustain students' interest and promote optimum student engagement and subsequent attainment.

Name of Supervisor(s) (If applicable)
Dr Kathleen M Quinlan

Risks and ethical issues
Please list the principal criteria for inclusion and exclusion
The principal criteria for inclusion in the survey of incoming students is that participants are students the University of Kent School of Sports and Exercise Science who are commencing their undergraduate studies in 2019. Students who do not currently study at the University of Kent School of Sports and Exercise Science, or those who study at the school but are not part of the undergraduate stage 1 cohort in the academic year 2019/20 are excluded from participation in this survey. The principal criteria for inclusion in the follow-up survey of incming students (2018/19 cohort) is that participants are currently registered as undergraduate students, having commenced studies in 2019. Students who do not meet this criteria will be excluded frm participation in this survey. The principal criteria for inclusion in the research of the cultural sensitivity of the curricula – Culturally Sensitive Curricula Scale – is that participants are students of the University of Kent. Participants who do not meet this criteria will be excluded from participation in the study.

How long will each research participant be in the study in total, from when they give informed consent until their last contact with the researcher/s?
Completion of the survey should take nomore than 20 minutes. The researcher will continue to access their student records (anonymously via student ID numbers) throughout their study at the University of Kent (e.g. 3 years).
What are the potential risks and burdens for research participants and how will you minimise them? (Describe any risks and burdens that could occur as a result of participation in the research, such as pain, discomfort, distress, intrusion, inconvenience or changes to lifestyle. Describe what steps would be taken to minimise risks and burdens as far as possible)
Power imbalance (staff/student) and exploitation of participants – this will be minimised by explicitly informing participants that their participation is voluntary and that whether they participate or not will have no impact on your marks or relationship with your lecturers. Additional steps that will be taken are to avoid asking leading questions in the survey and the avoidance of discussing personal information. **Emotional distress due to vulnerability** – this will be minimised by obtaining the appropriate consent prior to conducting the survey. **Deception of participants** – this will be minimised by clearly outlining the purpose of the study and how the data that is collected will be used. The purpose of the study will be explicitly outlined in the survey briefing paper. **Privacy and anonymity of participants** – data will be aggregated, processed and stored securely on the university server. Each record will be assigned a unique participant number, rather than students' university identification number, in order to maintain anonymity. A separate file will contain the correspondence between the unique participant number and students' university identification number. This file will be kept only for the duration of data collection (4 years). The data will be stored in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations.
Please describe what measures you have in place in the event of any unexpected outcomes or adverse effects to participants arising from involvement in the project
These impacts on participants are very unlikely as the questions are not of a sensitive nature. In the event of unexpected outcomes, or adverse effects to participants, the primary researcher will endeavour to consult with participants on an individual basis then make any necessary referral to the university's Student Support and Wellbeing services.
Will interviews/questionnaires or group discussions include topics that might be sensitive, embarrassing or upsetting, or is it possible that criminal or other disclosures requiring action could occur during the study?
The questionnaire does not include topics that might be sensitive, embarrassing or upsetting. It is highly unlikely that criminal disclosures or other disclosures requiring action will occur during the study.
If yes, please describe the procedures in place to deal with these issues
n/a
What is the potential benefit to research participants?
Potentially, this research may benefit as co-producers of knowledge; findings from the survey may be used to inform the development of processes within the school/university in relation to learning, teaching, assessment and the improvement of the overall student experience. Participants will also benefit from the opportunity to reflect on their hopes for university, their interest in the subject and their study-related values and motives.
What are the potential risks to the researchers themselves?
None identified.

Will there be any risks to the University? (Consider issues such as reputational risk; research that may give rise to contentious or controversial findings; could the funder be considered controversial or have the potential to cause reputational risk to the University?) The purpose here is not to hinder risky research but to ensure that you have considered possible outcomes.
It is not perceived that there will be reputational risk to the university, due to the nature of the survey. Nonetheless, the University will be anonymised in any presentations and publications. The attainment gap is already well-documented within the university and across many universities, so discovering attainment gaps by race will be no surprise. The data will be stored securely and in accordance with the GDPR, so the risk of raw data being released is low.
Will any intervention or procedure, which would normally be considered a part of routine care, be withheld from the research participants, e.g. disruption of a student's access to their normal educational entitlement and curriculum? (If yes, give details and justification)
No

Recruitment and informed consent
How and by whom will potential participants, records or samples be identified?
Potential participants will be identified by the researcher. The researcher will also align the raw data with student records while analysing the raw data.
Will this involve reviewing or screening identifiable personal information of potential participants or any other person? (If 'yes', give details)
No
Has prior consent been obtained or will it be obtained for access to identifiable personal information?
Yes. This was obtained as part of the students' university registration process. The participant information sheet also makes it clear that there will be links made between the survey and their student records.
Will you obtain informed consent from or on behalf of research participants? (If 'yes' please give details. If you are not planning to gain consent, please explain why not).
Yes. Informed consent will be gained from each research participant in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations and the university's ethics procedures.
Will you record informed consent in writing? (If 'no', how will it be recorded?)
Yes
How long will you allow potential participants to decide whether or not to take part?
Potential participants will have approximately 10 minutes to decide whether to take part, once they have received the briefing. Until the point at which the link between Student IDs and their unique participant number is destroyed (4 years), students could withdraw.
What arrangements have been made for persons who might not adequately understand verbal explanations or written information given in English, or have special communication needs? (eg, translation, use of interpreters?)
All participants will be students from the University of Kent School of Sports and Exercise Science. It is mandatory that all students who study at the university demonstrate an excellent level of spoken and written English. In the case of participants with an accessibility need, consultation will be sought from the university's Student Support and Wellbeing department.
If no arrangements will be made, explain the reasons (eg, resource constraints)
N/A

Confidentiality
In this section personal data means any data relating to a participant who could potentially be identified. It includes pseudonymised data capable of being linked to a participant through a unique code number.
If you will be undertaking any of the following activities at any stage (including in the identification of potential participants) please give details and explain the safeguarding measures you will employ • Electronic transfer by magnetic or optical media, email or computer networks • Sharing of personal data outside the European Economic Area • Use of personal addresses, postcodes, faxes, emails or telephone numbers • Publication of direct quotations from respondents • Publication of data that might allow identification of individuals, either directly or indirectly • Use of audio/visual recording devices • Storage of personal data on any of the following: – Manual files – University computers – Home or other personal computers – Private company computers – Laptop computers – Servers at the University or elsewhere
Publication of direct quotations from respondents – all direct quotations from respondent will be anonymised as part of the data analysis and processing process., All data from this survey will be anonymised prior to publication. **Storage of personal data in paper files** – All paper files in the form of raw or processed data will be held in a locked cabinet. **Storage of personal data on University servers** – all data in relation to this survey that will be stored on the University of Kent server will be password protected. **Electronic transfer by email** – all data files in relation to this survey which will be transmitted by email will be encrypted and password protected.
How will you ensure the confidentiality of personal data? (eg, anonymisation or pseudonymisation of data)
All data in relation to this study will be anonymised in order to ensure confidentiality is maintained.
Who will have access to participants' personal data during the study?
The researcher (Dave Thomas) and the researcher's supervisor (Dr. Kathleen M Quinlan) will be the only people with access to participant's personal data during the study.
How long will personal data be stored or accessed after the study has ended? (If longer than 12 months, please justify)
The data will be stored for six years from the start of the study. This allows tracking of student participation and attainment throughout their studies (4 years) and allows a further 2 years in which to write up final results and papers.
Please note: as a requirement of many funders, where practical, researchers must develop a data management and sharing plan to enable the data to be made available for re-use, eg, for secondary research, and so sufficient metadata must be conserved to enable this while maintaining confidentiality commitments and the security of data.

Incentives and payments
Will research participants receive any payments, reimbursement of expenses or any other benefits or incentives for taking part in this research? (If 'yes', please give details)
No payments, incentives or reimbursements of expenses will be paid to participants who take part in the survey.

Will individual researchers receive any personal payment over and above normal salary, or any other benefits or incentives, for taking part in this research? (If 'yes', please give details)
No
Does the Principal Investigator or any other investigator/collaborator have any direct personal involvement (e.g. financial, shareholding, personal relationship, etc) in the organisations sponsoring or funding the research that may give rise to a possible conflict of interest? (If 'yes', please give details)
N/A

Data Protection and GDPR compliance
What data do you need to collect (e.g. is this the minimum necessary for the research purposes?
I need to collect the minimum data necessary to gain insight into students' perception of the cultural sensitivity of te curriculum, as well as their interests and expectations for their learning experiences at the University of Kent School of Sports and Exercise Science.
Does it infringe on any personal rights?
No
Have you included a privacy notice in participant information including a link to the University-level privacy notice?
Yes
What would happen if the data was leaked?
If the data was leaked, the possibility of reputational damage to the university or emotional harm to the participants would be minimal as all data will be anonymised and the university and School pseudonymised. All data will be assigned a unique participant number once they are matched with the students' university records and subsequently stored in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations.
What measures have been put in place to mitigate risks to individuals?
The personal identifier (student ID) will be removed from the raw data, once it has been matched with student records.
What processing option will you use (e.g. 'task in the public interest' / consent, etc.) and will an exemption apply to your research (e.g. processing for archiving purposes and for scientific or historical research and statistical purposes)?
The processing option that will be used in relation to these data will be based on consent. Prior to dissemination of the survey, the consent process will be checked to ensure that the relationship, the processing methods and the purposes of the research have not changed. Individuals will not be penalised should they wish to withdraw from participating in the survey. An exemption will not apply to this research.
How do you plan to store, access and work with, the data you collect?
The data will be converted into an electronic format and stored on the University of Kent server in a password protected folder. Student ID will be replaced with a unique participant ID and the coding between the two will be stored in a separate file to ensure that the dataset is fully anonymised. Access will be permitted to the primary researcher and the research supervisor only.
Will there be any third party involvement in processing the data?
No
Will the data be transferred outside of the European Economic Area?
No
Can you fully anonymise the data and still achieve the same results?
Student ID is required at the point of matching up the survey with students' records. At no point are students' names required.

What will you do with the data once you've finished with it? The anonymised and pseudonymised raw data will be archived within two years of completion of data collection. The file linking student ID to participant ID will be destroyed upon completion of data collection.

Publication and dissemination
How do you intend to report and disseminate the results of the study? If you do not plan to report or disseminate the results please give your justification
The results of the study will be reported and disseminated in the form of internal reports, conference papers, journal articles, workshops and information sessions. The justification for this is that the aims and objectives of this study are aligned with a wider institutionally funded research project (the Student Success (EDI) project). It will also comprise part of the lead researcher's PhD thesis which will be put in a thesis repository upon completion.
Will you inform participants of the results? (Please give details of how you will inform participants or justify if not doing so)
Participants will be informed of the results through information sessions, workshops and marketing material (at a school level and university level). The results may also inform the university's student engagement and/or equality, diversity and inclusivity strategy.

Management of the research		
Other key investigators/collaborators. (Please include all grant co-applicants, protocol authors and other key members of the Chief Investigator's team, including non-doctoral student researchers)		
None		
Has this or a similar application been previously rejected by a research Ethics Committee in the UK or another country? (If yes, please give details of rejected application and explain in the summary of main issues how the reasons for the unfavourable opinion have been addressed in this application)		
No		
How long do you expect the study to last?		
• Planned start date: 24/09/2019	• Planned end date: 24/03/20	• Total duration: 6 months
Where will the research take place? Does your research involve you travelling overseas? ~~YES~~/NO If yes, please read, complete and attach to this proposal the University of Kent's Overseas Travel Risk Assessment Form (available here: https://www.kent.ac.uk/safety/hs/pages/travel-work-overseas/Travel'work_Overseas_Oct09_RevNov10.pdf).		
No		

Insurance/indemnity
Does UoK's insurer need to be notified about your project before insurance cover can be provided? *The majority of research carried out at UoK is covered automatically by existing policies, however, if your project entails more than usual risk or involves an overseas country in the developing world or where there is or has recently been conflict, please check with the Insurance Office that cover can be provided. Please give details below.*

N/A

Children
Do you plan to include any participants who are children under 16? (If no, go to next section)
No
Please specify the potential age range of children under 16 who will be included and give reasons for carrying out the research with this age group
N/A
Please describe the arrangements for seeking informed consent from a person with parental responsibility and/or from children able to give consent for themselves
N/A
If you intend to provide children under 16 with information about the research and seek their consent or agreement, please outline how this process will vary according to their age and level of understanding
N/A

Participants unable to consent for themselves	
Do you plan to include any participants who are adults unable to consent for themselves through physical or mental incapacity? (If yes, the research must be reviewed by an NHS REC or SCREC)	
No	
Is the research related to the 'impairing condition' that causes the lack of capacity, or to the treatment of those with that condition?	
☐ Yes	If 'yes' proceed to next question
☒ No	If 'no' the study should proceed without involving those who do not have the capacity to consent to participation
Could the research be undertaken as effectively with people who do have the capacity to consent to participate?	
☒ Yes	If 'yes' then the study should exclude those without the capacity to consent to participation
☐ No	If 'no' then the inclusion of people without capacity in the study can be justified
Is it possible that the capacity of participants could fluctuate during the research? (If yes, the research must be reviewed by an NHS REC or SCREC)	
No	
Who inside or outside the research team will decide whether or not the participants have the capacity to give consent? What training/experience will they have to enable them to reach this decision?	
The primary Investigator who is a qualified Occupational Therapist.	
What will be the criteria for withdrawal of participants?	
Participants are entitled to signal their intention to withdraw from participating in the survey at any time prior to commencement of completing the questionnaire.	

Declaration
To be signed by the Chief Investigator

- I agree to comply, and will ensure that all researchers involved with the study comply with all relevant legislation, accepted ethical practice, University of Kent policies and appropriate professional ethical guidelines during the conduct of this research project
- If any significant changes are made to the design of the research I will notify the CSHE Research Ethics and Advisory Group (REAG) and understand that further review may be required before I can proceed to implement the change(s)
- I agree that I will notify the CSHE REAG of any unexpected adverse events that may occur during my research
- I agree to notify the CSHE REAG of any complaints I receive in connection with this research project

Signed: Dave Thomas	Date: 14/9/19

What to do next

Send your completed form, along with all supporting documentation, to the the Chair of the CSHE Research Ethics Committee. Current chair (July 2016) is Dr Tom Parkinson (t.parkinson@kent.ac.uk).

Checklist	
Please ensure you have included the following with your application (where relevant):	
• Full research proposal (current project)	☐
• Participant information sheet	☐
• Consent form	☒
• Covering letter (if relevant)	☐
• Any questionnaires/interview schedules/topic guides to be used	☒
• Any approved instruments/measures to be used	☐
• Any advertising material to be used to recruit participants	☐
• Confirmation that project is covered by UoK insurance policies (if necessary)	☐

This form is modelled on that used by the Social Sciences Faculty Research Ethics Advisory Group.

If you need advice on how to complete this form or have queries about ethical issues, please contact your supervisor, the Director of Research or the Chair of the CSHE REAG. There are useful resources in the CSHE shared folders, in the library and on the Research Services webpages.

Appendix D – Publications and Presentations

D.1 – Reimagining Curricula: Supporting Minority Ethnic Students' Interest through Culturally Sensitive Curricula

Reimagining Curricula: Supporting Minority Ethnic Students' Interest through Culturally Sensitive Curricula

Dave S.P. Thomas and Kathleen M. Quinlan, Centre for the Study of Higher Education, University of Kent, Canterbury, United Kingdom

This study examined the relationship between university students' perceptions of the cultural sensitivity of their curriculum and their interest in their major. An ethnically diverse sample (*N*=262) rated the cultural sensitivity of the curriculum of their major and their interest. Ethnic minority students (*n*=157) perceived their curriculum as less culturally sensitive on all four dimensions and had lower levels of interest than White students (*n*=100). Each of the newly developed Culturally Sensitive Curriculum Scales was significantly related to interest. Regression analyses showed that two dimensions of cultural sensitivity (Diversity Represented and Challenge Power) mediated effects of ethnicity on interest. Therefore, ensuring curricula are diverse and critical may support minority ethnic students' interest and potentially contribute to reducing achievement gaps.

Objectives

Given recent calls to decolonize higher education (HE) curricula (Douglas, Shockley & Toldson 2020; Peters 2018), this study aimed to explore: 1) the extent to which students, particularly Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME)[1] students, perceive their curriculum as culturally sensitive; and 2) the relationship between cultural sensitivity in curricula and students' individual interest in the subject. A new set of Culturally Sensitive Curricula Scales was developed, which make a significant conceptual and methodological contribution to the literature about minority ethnic students' experiences.

Conceptual Framework

Critical race theory (CRT) (Ladson-Billings, 1998; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995) contends that the curriculum is hegemonically *White*, with racism structurally ingrained through the assumption of Whiteness as the norm. Thus, the experiences of ethnic minorities are "muted and erased", leading to "distortions, omissions, and stereotypes" that are often invisible to White people (Ladson-Billings, 1998, p.8). To measure the extent of the cultural (in)sensitivity of HE curricula, we built on three main frameworks (Bryan-Gooden, Hester & Peoples 2019; Ladson-Billings & Tate 1995; Holgate 2016) to develop a set of four Culturally Sensitive Curricula Scales (CSCS): *Diversity Represented*, *Positive Portrayals*, *Challenge Power* and *Inclusive Classroom Interactions*. Diversity Represented refers to whether ethnically diverse people, experiences, and perspectives are represented (Bryan-Gooden, Hester & Peoples 2019). Positive Portrayals captures *how* ethnic minorities are represented, seeking to overcome stereotypes (Bryan-Gooden, Hester & Peoples 2019). Challenge Power refers to encouraging students to develop critical consciousness (Ladson-Billings & Tate 1995). Inclusive classroom interactions

[1] BAME is a collective term used by the British government to describe a range of people of colour in the UK including those of Black, Asian or minority ethnic heritage. Following Omi and Winant (1994), we use the word ethnicity to represent the result of group formation process based on culture and descent.

1.

focus on classroom interactions between teachers and students and among peers (Holgate 2016). The absence of these curricular dimensions promote ethnic minority students' feelings of being stereotyped, being 'othered', disempowerment, alienation, marginalization, and micro-invalidation (Arday, Belluigi, & Thomas, 2020; Harper, 2013; Harper, Smit, & Davis, 2018; Meda, 2020; Museus, 2014; UUK, 2019). Thus, we propose that these dimensions are likely to affect BAME students' interest in the subject.

We draw on Renninger and Hidi's (2016; 2011) interest theory, which conceptualizes interest as affective and cognitive engagement with a specific object, involving person-environment interactions, and having a physiological/ neurological basis connected to reward circuitry. Interest drives students' attention, goals, self-regulation, and academic performance (Schiefele, Krapp and Winteler 1992; Ainley, Hidi and Berndorff 2002; Renninger and Hidi 2016). Previous studies found that BAME students had lower interest in their major (Quinlan, 2019). Consistent with interest theory (Hidi & Harackiewicz, 2000) and CRT (Ladson-Billings, 1998), we investigated curricular dimensions that may support or suppress BAME students' interest. Given that utility value (relevance) interventions can enhance students' interest and help to close minority ethnic achievement gaps (Harackiewicz & Priniski, 2018; Harackiewicz, Canning, Tibbetts, Priniski, & Hyde, 2016), we hypothesize that cultural insensitivity of the curriculum more broadly may explain BAME students' lower interest.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

First, we hypothesized that BAME students will experience their curricula as less culturally sensitive than White students. Second, we hypothesized that BAME students will have lower interest in their major subject than White students. Third, we asked whether cultural sensitivity of the curricula explains differences between BAME and White students' interest in the subject.

Method

Sample and Procedure

The sample (N=262; 189 Female; 73 Male; 157 BAME; 100 White) were enrolled in a minority-serving institution (37% BAME) in the UK. BAME students were oversampled to center their experiences. The majority were of African heritage (n=99; 84 Black African; 15 Black Caribbean). Ninety two percent (n=242) were undergraduates, with the majority in social sciences (63%) or humanities (23%).

Measures

Participants completed a survey assessing their perceptions of the cultural sensitivity of their major and their interest in that major. Participants also reported demographic information about program and stage of study, gender, ethnicity, sex, age and country of domicile.

Culturally Sensitive Curricular Scales (CSCS). Participants rated 34 items (see Table 1 for the items) on a 4-point Likert scale (1=*strongly disagree* to 4=*strongly agree*) in relation to their perceptions of the cultural sensitivity of their curriculum. The results of a Principal Component Analysis led to the removal of 15 unsuitable items. The remaining 19 items measured four

separate dimensions: Diversity Represented (8 items; α=.87); Positive Portrayals (3 items; α=.81); Challenging Power (5 items; α=.88); and Inclusive Classroom Interactions (3 items; α=.83).

Individual interest. Quinlan's (2019) 11-item Individual Interest Scale was used to assess interest. Students responded to the items on a 5-point Likert scale (1=*strongly disagree* to 5=*strongly agree*) in relation to their major. Reliability was very good (α=.88). Items were consistent with Renninger and Hidi's (2015) definition of individual interest by capturing emotional interest in the field (e.g., 'I am curious about this field in general'), knowledge (e.g., 'I am quite good in this field'), and frequent, independent and voluntary engagement (e.g., 'Regularly I find myself thinking about ideas from lectures in this field when I'm doing other things').

Results

Perceptions of Cultural Sensitivity

BAME students experienced the curriculum as less culturally sensitive than White students. CSCS mean scores were significantly lower for BAME students than White students on all four subscales (Table 2), with large effect sizes (d=.66, 1.08, .68, .97, respectively), supporting Hypothesis 1.

Interest

Confirming Hypothesis 2, the BAME students reported significantly lower interest in their major (M=3.59, SD=.60) than White students (M=3.95, SD=.50; $t(255)=-4.766$, $p<.001$). The differences in means (mean difference=.34) was moderate (d=.610). Furthermore, each of the four dimensions of the CSCS was positively correlated with students' interest (Table 3).

Relations between Ethnicity, Cultural Sensitivity of Curricula, and Interest

To investigate the third research question, four separate mediation analyses were performed to explore whether each dimension of the CSCS mediated the effects of ethnicity on interest (Table 4). Given the correlations between the CSCS scales (Table 3), we conducted separate analyses to avoid problems of multicollinearity. In each analysis, ethnicity significantly predicted interest (β=.305, p <.001).

Diversity Represented*.* Ethnicity significantly predicted perceptions of Diversity Represented (β=.306, p<.001). Diversity Represented also significantly predicted interest (β= .133, p < .05). In Model 3, the effect of ethnicity on interest was reduced after including Diversity Represented in the model (β=.265, p < .001). The indirect effect was significant (z=.04, p=<.05).

Positive Portrayals. Ethnicity also significantly predicted Positive Portrayals, (β=.446, p=<.001). However, Positive Portrayals did not make a statistically significant contribution to predicting interest.

Challenge Power. Ethnicity significantly predicted Challenge Power, (β=.306, p=<.001). Challenging Power also made a statistically significant contribution in predicting Interest, (β=.146, p<.01). The relationship between Ethnicity and Interest is stronger in model 1 (β=.305) than in model 3, (β=.261). Challenge Power had a significant indirect effect mediating ethnicity and interest (z=.04, p=<.01).

3.

Inclusive Classroom Interactions. Ethnicity was also shown to significantly predict Inclusive Classroom Interaction, (β=.381, p=<.001). However, Inclusive Classroom interactions did not make a statistically significant contribution to predicting Interest.

Taken together, these results show that the Diversity Represented (DR) and Challenging Power components of the CSCS each mediated the relationship between ethnicity and interest.

Discussion

We constructed and validated a set of Culturally Sensitive Curricula Scales (CSCS) that can be used to assess, reflect on, and improve the cultural sensitivity of HE curricula (S. Harper & Quaye, 2007). While other scales assess the overall racial climate on campuses (USC Race Equity Centre, n.d.), there are no instruments available that assess the cultural sensitivity of what is taught and how it is taught.

As expected, BAME students perceived their curricula as less culturally sensitive than White students on four dimensions of the CSCS: whether racial and cultural diversity was represented in the curriculum, how positive the portrayals of people of color were, whether the curriculum encouraged students to challenge power, and the inclusivity of classroom interactions. This finding is consistent with a central CRT claim that the curriculum is normatively White (Ladson-Billings 1998). Using quantitative methods, this study provides further empirical support for BAME students' qualitative reports of the Whiteness of the curriculum and its effects (Arday et al., 2020; Harper, 2013; Harper et al., 2018; Meda, 2020; Museus, 2014; UUK, 2019). All dimensions of the CSCS were associated with higher interest. Consistent with previous findings (Quinlan, 2019), BAME students had lower interest in their major than White students. This was partially explained by perceptions of the cultural (in)sensitivity of the curriculum, particularly lack of representations of diversity and failures to challenge power structures and inequities. Thus, these dimensions may be particularly important for faculty to attend to in course design (Quaye & Harper, 2007).

Significance and Directions for Future Research

The development and validation of new measurement scales for cultural sensitivity of HE curricula (CSCS) is a significant contribution, enabling further research on culturally engaging campus environments (Museus, 2014). The findings support calls for faculty to improve their cultural competence (Gabriel, 2017; Purnell, 2000) and diversify their curricula (Douglas, Shockley and Toldson 2020; Peters, 2018), suggesting that a culturally sensitive curriculum may enhance BAME students' interest.

Future research should investigate the relationship of culturally sensitive curricula with achievement and with other measures of student engagement that are related to achievement, such as interactions with teachers (Lundberg & Schreiner, 2004). Further research with the CSCS in other institutional contexts, and systematically across different courses in the same discipline would be useful next steps. Ultimately, the CSCS should be used in intervention studies in which course contents and teaching approaches are made more culturally sensitive and tested for their impact on students' perceptions, interest, and achievement.

4.

References

Ainley, M., Hidi, S., & Berndorff, D. (2002). Interest, learning, and the psychological processes that mediate their relationship. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *94*, 546–561.

Arday, J., Belluigi, D. Z., & Thomas, D. (2020). Attempting to break the chain: reimaging inclusive pedagogy and decolonising the curriculum within the academy. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*. https://doi.org/10.1080/00131857.2020.1773257

Bryan-Gooden, J., Hester, M., & Peoples, L. (2019). *Culturally responsive curriculum scorecard*. Metropolitan Centre for Research on Equity and the Transformation of Schools, New York University.

Douglas, T.-R. M. ., Shockley, K. G., & Toldson, I. (Eds.). (2020). *Campus uprisings: How student activists and collegiate leaders resist racism and create hope*. Teacher College Press.

Gabriel, D. (2017). Pedagogies of social justice and cultural democracy in media higher education. *Media Education Research Journal*, *8.1*.

Harackiewicz, J.M., & Priniski, S. (2018). Improving student learning outcomes in higher education: The science of targeted intervention. *Annual Review of Psychology*, *69*(11), 111–127.

Harackiewicz, Judith M, Canning, E. A., Tibbetts, Y., Priniski, S. J., & Hyde, J. S. (2016). Closing Achievement Gaps With a Utility-Value Intervention: Disentangling Race and Social Class. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *111*(5), 745–765. file:///Users/davethomas/Downloads/HarackiewiczCanningetal.2016.pdf

Harper, S., & Quaye, S. (2007). Shifting the onus from racial/ethnic minority students to faculty: Accountability for culturally inclusive pedagogy and curricula. *Liberal Education*, *92*(3), 19–24. https://repository.upenn.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1212&context=gse_pubs

Harper, S. R. (2013). Am I My Brother's Teacher? Black Undergraduates, Racial Socialization, and Peer Pedagogies in Predominantly White Postsecondary Contexts. *Review of Research in Education*, *37*(1), 183–211. https://doi.org/10.3102/0091732X12471300

Harper, Shaun R, Smit, E. J., & Davis, C. H. F. (2018). A Critical Race case analysis of black undergraduate student success at an urban university. *Urban Education*, *53*(1).

Hidi, S., & Harackiewicz, J. M. (2000). Motivating the academically unmotivated: A critical issue for the 21st century. *Review of Educational Research*, *70*, 151–179.

Holgate, H. (2016). *Development and initial validation of a culturally responsive classroom climate scale*. Purdue University.

Ladson-Billings, G. (1995). Towards a theory of culturally relevant pedagogy. *American Education Research Journal*, *32*(3), 465–491.

Ladson-Billings, G. (1998). Just what is critical race theory and what's it doing in a nice field like education? *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, *11*(1), 7–24. https://doi.org/10.1080/095183998236863

Ladson-Billings, G., & Tate, W. F. (1995). Toward a Critical Race Theory of Education. *Teachers College Record*, *97*(1), 47–58. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315709796-2

Meda, L. (2020). Decolonising the curriculum: Students' Perspectives. *Africa Education Review*, *17*(2).

Morgan, C., Isaac, J., & Sansone, C. (2001). The role of interest in understanding the career choices of female and male college students. *Sex Roles*, *44*, 295–320.

Museus, S. D. (2014). The culturally engaging campus environments (CECE) Model: A new theory of college success among racually diverse student populations. *Higher Educaton: Handbook of Theory and Research*, *29*. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-017-8005-6_5

Peters, M. A. (2018). Why is my curriculum white? A brief genealogy of resistance. In J. Arday & H. S. Mirza (Eds.), *Dismantling race in higher education: Racism, whiteness and decolonising the academy* (pp. 253–270). Palgrave Macmillan.

Purnell, L. (2000). A Description of the Purnell Model for Cultural Competence. *Journal of Transcultural Nursing*, *11*(1), 40–46.

Quinlan, K. (2019). What triggers students' interest during higher education lectures? personal and situational variables associated with situational interest. *Studies in Higher Education*, *44*. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2019.1665325

Renninger, A. K., & Hidi, S. E. (2016). *The power of interest for motivation and engegement*. Routledge.

Renninger, K. A., & Hidi, S. (2011). Revisiting the conceptualization, measurement, and generation of interest. *Educational Psychologist*, *46*(3), 168–184. https://doi.org/10.1080/00461520.2011.587723

Rotgans, J., & Schmidt, H. (2011). Situational interest and academic achievement in the active-learning classroom. *Learning and Instruction*, *21*(1), 58–67.

Sansone, C., & Harackiewicz, J. (1996). I don't feel like it": The function of interest in self-regulation. In L. Martin & A. Tesser (Eds.), *Striving and feeling: Interactions among goals, affect, and self-regulation*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Inc.

Schiefele, U., Krapp, A., & Winteler, A. (1992). Interest as a predictor of academic achievement: A meta-analysis of research. In K. A. Renninger, S. Hid, & A. Krapp (Eds.), *The Role of Interest in Learning and Development* (pp. 183–211). Erlbaum.

USC Race Equity Centre. (n.d.). *National Assessment of Collegiate Campus Climates (NACCC)*. Retrieved April 1, 2020, from https://race.usc.edu/naccc/

UUK. (2019). *Black, Asian and minority ethnic student attainment at UK universities: #CLOSINGTHEGAP*. https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/policy-and-analysis/reports/Documents/2019/bame-student-attainment-uk-universities-closing-the-gap.pdf

6.

Table 1. *Culturally Sensitive Curricula* Scales (CSCS): Constructs and Items

Scale	Items	Description
Diversity Represented	1. The curriculum features people from diverse backgrounds. 2. The curriculum references different ethnic and cultural traditions, languages, religions and/or clothing. 3. Diverse ethnicities and nationalities are portrayed 4. Diverse family structures (i.e. single parents, adopted or fostered children, same-sex parents, other relatives living with family, etc.) are portrayed. 5. Differently-abled people are represented. 6. People of diverse ethnicities are represented as researchers or professionals, not just as participants in research, clients, consumers, customers, etc. 7. The curriculum respects that different cultures may have different understandings, skills and/or philosophies. 8. The curriculum addresses problems that are of concern to marginalized people/communities.	focuses on how people from diverse backgrounds are referenced within the curriculum.
Positive Portrayals	1. When social problems (e.g. crime, violence) are presented, people of colour are usually considered the problem. (R) 2. When interpersonal conflicts are presented, people of colour are usually considered the problem. (R) 3. When people of colour have problems, white people are usually presented as being able to solve those problems. (R)	focuses on redressing the assumptions, perceptions and considerations of people from diverse backgrounds that may distort how they are considered by society
Challenge Power	1. The curriculum raises critical questions about power and/or privilege that are usually taken for granted. 2. The curriculum encourages students to challenge existing power structures in society. 3. The curriculum encourages students to critique unearned privilege. 4. The curriculum encourages students to connect learning to social, political or environmental concerns. 5. The curriculum encourages students to take actions that fight inequity or promote equity.	focus on the curriculum's ability to provoke critical thought and challenge dominant ideologies
Inclusive Classroom Interactions	1. My instructors make an effort to pronounce everyone's name correctly. 2. My instructors encourage students to be mindful of other students' perspectives. 3. My instructors encourage students to respect other students' perspectives.	focuses on the development of a learning environment accepting of cultural differences and respectful of different perspectives

7.

Table 2. Independent Samples T-test for CSCS - Ethnicity (BAME vs White Students)

Sub Scale	BAME Mean	White Mean	BAME SD	White SD	MD	t	Cohen's d
Diversity Represented (DR)	2.661	3.106	.745	.530	-.445	-5.580***	.664
Positive Portrayals (PP)	2.200	2.964	.735	.662	-.764	-8.293***	1.080
Challenge Power (CP)	2.740	3.278	.878	.638	-.538	-5.294***	.678
Inclusive Classroom Interactions (ICI)	3.018	3.683	.786	.486	-.665	-8.380***	.970

***p<.001; **p < .01 (2-tailed); *p<.05

MD=differences in means between BAME and White students

8.

Table 3. *Pearson Product-Moment Correlations for the Study Variables*

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Interest	1					
2. Ethnicity	.305**	1				
3. Diversity Represented	.214**	.306**	1			
4. Positive Portrayals	.223**	.446**	.459**	1		
5. Challenging Power	.226**	.306**	.574**	.417**	1	
6. Inclusive Classroom Interaction	.207**	.381**	.372**	.332**	.450**	1

***$p<.001$; **$p < .01$ (2-tailed); *$p<.05$

Table 4. *Effects of Ethnicity on Interest: Mediation by Cultural Sensitivity of Curriculum*

	Model 1 (dv: Interest)				Model 2 (dv: CSCS Mediator)				Model 3 (dv: Interest)			
	B (SE)	β	t	95% CI for b	*B* (SE)	β	t	95% CI for b	*B* (SE)	β	t	95% CI for b
Diversity Represented as a Mediator												
Constant	3.254 (.099)		32.777 ***	[3.059;3.450]	2.267 (.118)		19.161***	[2.034;2.500]	1.753 (.266)		6.585***	[1.229;2.227]
Ethnicity	.339 (.065)	.305	5.173 ***	[.210;.468]	.404 (.078)	.306	5.180***	[.251;.558]	.351 (.081)	.265	4.309***	[.190;.511]
Diversity Represented									.158 (.073)	.133	2.153*	[.013;.303]
R^2	.093				.094				.109			
Positive Portrayals as a Mediator												
Constant	3.254 (.099)		32.777 ***	[3.059;3.450]	1.564 (.129)		12.150***	[1.311;1.818]	3.129 (.128)		25.342***	[2.928;3.421]
Ethnicity	.339 (.065)	.305	5.173 ***	[.210;.468]	.667 (.085)	.446	7.852***	[.500;.834]	.285 (.075)	.257	3.618***	[.120;.406]
Positive Portrayals									.080 (.050)	.108	1.685	[-.014;.179]
R^2	.093				.199				.097			
Challenge Power as a Mediator												
Constant	3.254 (.099)		32.777 ***	[3.059;3.450]	2.275 (.140)		16.207***	[1.998;2.551]	3.019 (.140)		21.637***	[2.744;3.293]
Ethnicity	.339 (.065)	.305	5.173 ***	[.210;.468]	.479 (.093)	.306	5.177***	[.297;.662]	.289 (.068)	.261	4.242***	[.155;.423]
Challenge Power									.103 (.043)	.146	2.379**	[.018;.189]
R^2	.093				.093				.113			
Inclusive Classroom Interactions as a Mediator												
Constant	3.254 (.099)		32.777 ***	[3.059;3.450]	2.505 (.124)		20.240***	[2.262;2.749]	3.047 (.159)		19.188***	[2.734;3.359]
Ethnicity	.339 (.065)	.305	5.173 ***	[.210;.468]	.542 (.082)	.381	6.641***	[.382;.703]	.294 (.071)	.265	4.164***	[.155;.433]
Inclusive Classroom Interactions									.083 (.050)	.106	1.669	[-.015;.180]
R^2	.093				.145					.103		

Submissions Abstract Book - All Papers (Included Submissions)

0509

Reimagining Curricula: Effects of Cultural (In)Sensitivity of Curricula on Minority Ethnic Students' Engagement

Dave S.P. Thomas[1], Kathleen M M. Quinlan[1]

[1]*Centre for the Study of Higher Education, University of Kent, Canterbury, United Kingdom*

Research Domain: Learning, teaching and assessment (LTA)

Abstract: This study examined the relationship between university students' perceptions of the cultural sensitivity of their curriculum and their engagement (interactions with their teachers and interest in their programme of study). Students (*N*=262) rated the cultural sensitivity of their curriculum, using a newly developed set of four Culturally Sensitive Curriculum Scales, their interactions with teachers, and their interest. Ethnic minority students (*n*=157) perceived their curriculum as less culturally sensitive on all four dimensions, reported fewer academic interactions with teachers, and lower levels of interest than White students (*n*=100). Each Scale was significantly related to academic interactions with teachers and interest. Regression analyses showed that all dimensions of cultural sensitivity mediated effects of ethnicity on interactions with teachers. Two dimensions of cultural sensitivity (Diversity Represented and Challenge Power) mediated effects of ethnicity on interest. Ensuring curricula are diverse and critical may support minority ethnic students' engagement may contribute to reducing achievement gaps.

Paper:

Introduction

Calls to diversify HE curricula (Peters 2018; Thomas & Jivraj, 2020) have gained traction in England as the percentage of Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME) students has risen (HESA, 2020) while racial disparities in experiences (Neves & Hewitt, 2021), and outcomes (Advance HE, 2020) remain. To reduce these inequalities, researchers have recommended making curriculum more culturally sensitive (Dale-Rivas, 2019; Mountford-Zimdars et al., 2015). Further research is needed on culturally sensitive curriculum and its relationship to students' engagement. While engagement is variously defined in HE, we focus on two key variables. First, interactions with teachers, as used here, refers to interaction between students and teachers on academic matters relating to their programme of study.

Positive interactions with teachers have been shown to be associated with attainment (Frings et al., 2020; Hu et al., 2008), particularly with BAME students (Lundberg & Schreiner, 2004). Yet BAME students in a predominantly White institution may face barriers in forming positive relationships with their teachers (Back, 2004; Woolf et al., 2008). Thus, we expected BAME students would report

fewer interactions with teachers and that more culturally sensitive curricula could improve these interactions.

Interest is defined as affective and cognitive engagement with a specific object (Renninger & Hidi, 2016; 2011) and affects many aspects of students' learning and performance (Ainley Hidi and Berndorff, 2002; Jansen, Lüdtke and Schroeders, 2016; Renninger & Hidi, 2016; Schiefele et al, 1992). Students' interest is higher when curricula are relevant (Crouch et al., 2013; Dohn et al., 2009; Quinlan, 2019; Rotgans & Schmidt, 2011). Thus, students who do not perceive the curricula as culturally sensitive were expected to have lower interest

Research Questions

We developed a new set of Culturally Sensitive Curricula Scales (CSCS), drawing on Critical Race Theory (Ladson-Billings, 1998; Ladson Billings & Tate, 1995), and related instruments (Bryan-Gooden, Hester and Peoples, 2019; Holgate, 2016). Then, this study explored: 1) the extent to which students perceive their curriculum as culturally sensitive; and 2) the relationship between cultural sensitivity in curricula and students' engagement, defined as interactions with teachers and interest in the subject. To do so, we developed a new set of culturally sensitive curricular scales (CSCS).

Methods

Students (N=262; 157 BAME;100 White) enrolled in a diverse English university. Students completed a survey on which they gave demographic information and rated:

1. the cultural sensitivity of their curriculum on four scales (CSCS): *Diversity Represented*; *Positive Portrayals*; *Challenging Power*; and *Inclusive Classroom Interactions* (Table 1) (1=*strongly disagree*; 4=*strongly agree*).
2. Interactions with teachers (6 items; a=.86) (1=*never*; 4=*very often*) (e.g., 'Communicated with teaching staff about assignments outside of taught sessions').
3. Interest in their subject (11 items, α=.88) (Quinlan, 2019) (1=*strongly disagree*; 5=*strongly agree*) (e.g., 'I am curious about this field in general', 'Regularly I find myself thinking about ideas from lectures in this field when I'm doing other things').

Findings

BAME students rated the curriculum as less culturally sensitive on all four CSCS dimensions, reported significantly fewer academic interactions with their teachers and lower interest in the subject than White students (Table 2). Each CSCS dimension was positively correlated with (Table 3) and

significantly predicted students' interactions with teachers (Table 4) and interest (Table 5). Each CSCS component mediated the relationship between ethnicity and interaction with teachers. Only the *Diversity Represented* and *Challenging Power* CSCS components mediated the relationship between ethnicity and interest.

Discussion

BAME students perception of their curricula as culturally insensitive is consistent with a central Critical Race Theory claim that the curriculum is normatively White (Ladson-Billings 1998) and qualitative reports of the persistent Whiteness of the curriculum and its effects (Arday et al., 2020; Harper, 2013; Harper et al., 2018; Meda, 2020; UUK, 2019; Thomas and Jivraj, 2020).

All dimensions of the CSCS were associated with students reporting more frequent academic interactions with their teachers. That is, when students experienced the curriculum as culturally sensitive, they were also more likely to report interacting with their teachers. BAME students' experience of the curriculum as less culturally sensitive partially explained their lower interactions with teachers and interest.

All dimensions of the CSCS also were associated with higher interest. This finding was partially explained by perceptions of the cultural (in)sensitivity of the curriculum, particularly lack of representations of diversity (DR) and failures to challenge power structures and inequities (CP). These two dimensions may be particularly important for academics to attend to in course design.

The development and validation of new measurement scales for cultural sensitivity of HE curricula (CSCS) is a significant contribution, enabling further research on culturally engaging campus environments that focuses specifically on curricula (Museus, 2014). These findings support calls for academics to improve their cultural competence (Gabriel, 2017; Purnell, 2000) and diversify their curricula (Peters, 2018).

References:

References

Advance HE. (2020). *Equality + higher education: Students statistical report*. https://s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/assets.creode.advancehe-document-manager/documents/advance-he/2020-08 AdvHE stats_report_students_FINAL_12mb_1603451622.pdf?X-Amz-Content-Sha256=UNSIGNED-PAYLOAD&X-Amz-Algorithm=AWS4-HMAC-SHA256&X-Amz-Credential=AKIATYAY

Ainley, M., Hidi, S., & Berndorff, D. (2002). Interest, learning, and the psychological processes that mediate their relationship. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *94*, 546–561.

Arday, J., Belluigi, D. Z., & Thomas, D. (2020). Attempting to break the chain: reimaging inclusive pedagogy and decolonising the curriculum within the academy. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*.

https://doi.org/10.1080/00131857.2020.1773257

Back, L. (2004). Ivory Towers? The Academy and Racism. In I. Law, D. Phillips, & L. Turney (Eds.), *Institutional Racism in Higher Education* (pp. 1–6). Trentham Books.

Bryan-Gooden, J., Hester, M., & Peoples, L. (2019). *Culturally responsive curriculum scorecard*. Metropolitan Centre for Research on Equity and the Transformation of Schools, New York University.

Crouch, C. H., Wisittanawat, P., Ming, C., & Renninger, A. K. (2013). Initial Interest, Goals, and Changes in CLASS Scores in Introductory Physics for Life Sciences. *2013 Physics Education Research Conference*. https://doi.org/10.1119/perc.2013.pr.014

Dale-Rivas, H. (2019). *Report 120 The white elephant in the room: ideas for reducing racial inequalities in higher education*. https://www.hepi.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/The-white-elephant-in-the-room-ideas-for-reducing-racial-inequalities-in-higher-education.pdf

Dohn, N. B., Madsen, P. T., & Malte, H. (2009). The situational interest of undergraduate students in zoophysiology. *Advanced Physiology Education*, *33*(1), 196–201.

Douglas, T.-R. M., Shockley, K. G., & Toldson, I. (Eds.). (2020). *Campus uprisings: How student activists and collegiate leaders resist racism and create hope*. Teacher College Press.

Frings, D., Gleibs, I., & Ridley, A. (2020). What moderates the attainment gap? The effects of social identity incompatibility and practical incompatibility on the performance of students who are or are not Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic. *Social Psychology of Education*, *23*, 171–188. https://doi.org/doi.org/10.1007/s11218-019-09531-4

Gabriel, D. (2017). Pedagogies of social justice and cultural democracy in media higher education. *Media Education Research Journal*, *8.1*.

Harper, S. R. (2013). Am I My Brother's Teacher? Black Undergraduates, Racial Socialization, and Peer Pedagogies in Predominantly White Postsecondary Contexts. *Review of Research in Education*, *37*(1), 183–211. https://doi.org/10.3102/0091732X12471300

Harper, Shaun R, Smit, E. J., & Davis, C. H. F. (2018). A Critical Race case analysis of black undergraduate student success at an urban university. *Urban Education*, *53*(1).

Higher Education Statistical Agency. (2020). *Higher Education Student Statistics: UK, 2018/19*.

Holgate, H. (2016). *Development and initial validation of a culturally responsive classroom climate scale*. Purdue University.

Hu, S., Kuh, G., & Li, S. (2008). The Effects of Engagement in Inquiry-Oriented Activities on Student Learning and Personal Development. *Innovative Higher Education*, *2*, 71–81.

Jansen, M., Lüdtke, O., & Schroeders, U. (2016). Evidence for a positive relation between interest and achievement: Examining between-person and within-person variation in five domains. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, *46*, 116–127.

Ladson-Billings, G. (1995). Towards a theory of culturally relevant pedagogy. *American Education Research Journal*, *32*(3), 465–491.

Ladson-Billings, G. (1998). Just what is critical race theory and what's it doing in a nice field like education? *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, *11*(1), 7–24. https://doi.org/10.1080/095183998236863

Ladson Billings, G., & Tate, W. (1995). Towards a critical race theory in education. *Teachers College Record*, *1*(97).

Lundberg, C., & Schreiner, L. (2004). Qualiy and frequency of faculty-student interaction as predictors of learning: An analysis by student race/ethnicity. *Journal of College Student Development*, *45*(5), 545–569.

Meda, L. (2020). Decolonising the curriculum: Students' Perspectives. *Africa Education Review*, *17*(2).

Mountford-Zimdars, A., Sabri, D., Moore, J., Sanders, J., & Hiagham, L. (2015). Causes of Differences in Student Outcomes. *Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE)*, *July*, 132. https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2011.585710

Museus, S. D. (2014). The culturally engaging campus environments (CECE) Model: A new theory of college success among racually diverse student populations. *Higher Educaton: Handbook of Theory and Research*, *29*. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-017-8005-6_5

Neves, J., & Hewitt, R. (2021). *Student Academic Experience Survey*.

Peters, M. A. (2018). Why is my curriculum white? A brief genealogy of resistance. In J. Arday & H. S. Mirza (Eds.), *Dismantling race in higher education: Racism, whiteness and decolonising the academy* (pp. 253–270). Palgrave Macmillan.

Purnell, L. (2000). A Description of the Purnell Model for Cultural Competence. *Journal of Transcultural Nursing*, *11*(1), 40–46.

Quinlan, K. (2019). What triggers students' interest during higher education lectures? personal and situational variables associated with situational interest. *Studies in Higher Education*, *44*. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2019.1665325

Renninger, A. K., & Hidi, S. E. (2016). *The power of interest for motivation and engegement*. Routledge.

Renninger, K. A., & Hidi, S. (2011). Revisiting the conceptualization, measurement, and generation of interest. *Educational Psychologist*, *46*(3), 168–184. https://doi.org/10.1080/00461520.2011.587723

Rotgans, J., & Schmidt, H. (2011). Situational interest and academic achievement in the active-learning classroom. *Learning and Instruction*, *21*(1), 58–67.

Schiefele, U., Krapp, A., & Winteler, A. (1992). Interest as a predictor of academic achievement: A meta-analysis of research. In K. A. Renninger, S. Hid, & A. Krapp (Eds.), *The Role of Interest in Learning and Development* (pp. 183–211). Erlbaum.

Thomas, D. S. P., & Jivraj, S. (Eds.). (2020). *Towards decolonising the university: A kaleidoscope for empowered action*. Counterpress.

UUK. (2019). *Black, Asian and minority ethnic student attainment at UK universities: #CLOSINGTHEGAP*. https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/policy-and-analysis/reports/Documents/2019/bame-student-attainment-uk-universities-closing-the-gap.pdf

Woolf, K., Cave, J., Greenhalgh, T., & Dacre, J. (2008). Ethnic stereotypes and the underachievement of UK medical students from ethnic minorities: qualitative study. *Bmj*, *337*(aug18 1), a1220–a1220. https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.a1220

Table 1. *Culturally Sensitive Curricula* Scales (CSCS): Constructs, Items and Scale Reliabilities

Scale	Variable	#Item	Scale Description
Diversity Represented (8 items; α=.87)	**DR1**	The curriculum features people from diverse backgrounds.	focuses on how people from diverse backgrounds are referenced within the curriculum.
	DR2	The curriculum references different ethnic and cultural traditions, languages, religions and/or clothing.	
	DR3	Diverse ethnicities and nationalities are portrayed	
	DR4	Diverse family structures (i.e. single parents, adopted or fostered children, same-sex parents, other relatives living with family, etc.) are portrayed.	
	DR5	Differently-abled people are represented.	
	DR6	People of diverse ethnicities are represented as researchers or professionals, not just as participants in research, clients, consumers, customers, etc.	
	DR7	The curriculum respects that different cultures may have different understandings, skills and/or philosophies.	
	DR8	The curriculum addresses problems that are of concern to marginalized people/communities.	
Positive Portrayals (3 items; α=.81)	**PP1**	When social problems (e.g. crime, violence) are presented, people of colour are usually considered the problem. (R	focuses on redressing the assumptions, perceptions and considerations of people from diverse backgrounds that may distort how they are considered by society
	PP2	When interpersonal conflicts are presented, people of colour are usually considered the problem. (R)	
	PP3	When people of colour have problems, white people are usually presented as being able to solve those problems. (R)	
Challenge Power (5 items; α=.88)	**CP1**	The curriculum raises critical questions about power and/or privilege that are usually taken for granted.	focus on the curriculum's ability to provoke critical thought and challenge dominant ideologies
	CP2	The curriculum encourages students to challenge existing power structures in society.	
	CP3	The curriculum encourages students to critique unearned privilege.	
	CP4	The curriculum encourages students to connect learning to social, political or environmental concerns.	
	CP5	The curriculum encourages students to take actions that fight inequity or promote equity.	
Inclusive Classroom Interactions (3 items; α=.83)	**ICI1**	My instructors make an effort to pronounce everyone's name correctly.	focuses on the development of a learning environment accepting of cultural differences and respectful of different perspectives
	ICI2	My instructors encourage students to be mindful of other students' perspectives.	
	ICI3	My instructors encourage students to respect other students' perspectives.	

Table 2. Independent Samples T-test for CSCS - Ethnicity (BAME vs White Students)

Sub Scale	BAME Mean	White Mean	BAME SD	White SD	MD	t	Cohen's d
Diversity Represented (DR)	2.661	3.106	.745	.530	-.445	-5.580***	.664
Positive Portrayals (PP)	2.200	2.964	.735	.662	-.764	-8.293***	1.080
Challenge Power (CP)	2.740	3.278	.878	.638	-.538	-5.294***	.678
Inclusive Classroom Interactions (ICI)	3.018	3.683	.786	.486	-.665	-8.380***	.970
Interactions with Teachers (AIT)	2.957	3.250	.638	.652	-.293	-3.559***	.455
Interest	3.592	3.935	.599	.500	-.343	-4.766***	.610

***$p<.001$; **$p < .01$ (2-tailed); *$p<.05$

MD=differences in means between BAME and White students

Table 3. *Pearson Product-Moment Correlations for the Study Variables*

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	Ethnicity	1						
2	Diversity Represented	.306**	1					
3	Positive Portrayals	.446**	.459**	1				
4	Challenge Power	.306**	.574**	.417**	1			
5	Inclusive Classroom Interactions	.381**	.372**	.332**	.450**	1		
6	Interactions with Teachers	.217**	.187**	.217**	.228**	.248**	1	
7	Interest	.305**	.214**	.223**	.226**	.207**	.330**	1

** $p < .01$ (2-tailed)

Table 4. *Effects of Ethnicity on Interactions with Teachers: Mediation by Cultural Sensitivity of Curriculum*

	Model 1 (dv: AIT)				Model 2 (dv: CSCS Mediator)				Model 3 (dv: AIT)			
	B (SE)	β	t	95% CI for b	*B* (SE)	β	t	95% CI for b	*B* (SE)	β	t	95% CI for b
Diversity Represented as a Mediator												
Constant	2.691 (.115)		23.472 ***	[2.446;2.917]	2.267 (.118)		19.161***	[2.034;2.500]	2.406 (.177)		13.602***	[2.058;2.755]
Ethnicity	.271 (.076)	.217	3.581 ***	[.122;.420]	.404 (.078)	.306	5.180***	[.251;.558]	.220 (.079)	.176	2.788***	[.065;.376]
Diversity Represented									.126 (.060)	.133	2.105*	[.008;.243]
R^2	.047				.094				.063			
Positive Portrayals as a Mediator												
Constant	2.691 (.115)		23.472 ***	[2.446;2.917]	1.564 (.129)		12.150***	[1.311;1.818]	2.496 (.147)		16.956***	[2.206;2.785]
Ethnicity	.271 (.076)	.217	3.581 ***	[.122;.420]	.667 (.085)	.446	7.852***	[.500;.834]	.187 (.086)	.150	2.181**	[.018;.357]
Positive Portrayals									.125 (.057)	.150	2.179**	[.012;.238]
R^2	.047				.199				.062			
Challenge Power as a Mediator												
Constant	2.691 (.115)		23.472 ***	[2.406;2.917]	2.275 (.140)		16.207***	[1.998;2.551]	2.368 (.160)		14.763***	[2.052;2.684]
Ethnicity	.271 (.076)	.217	3.581 ***	[.122;.420]	.479 (.093)	.306	5.177***	[.297;.662]	.203 (.078)	.162	2.587**	[.048;.357]
Challenge Power									.142 (.050)	.178	2.844**	[.044;.241]
R^2	.047				.093				.076			
Inclusive Classroom Interactions as a Mediator												
Constant	2.691 (.115)		23.472 ***	[3.059;3.450]	2.505 (.124)		20.240***	[2.262;2.749]	2.265 (.181)		12.498***	[1.908;2.622]
Ethnicity	.271 (.076)	.217	3.581 ***	[.210;.468]	.542 (.082)	.381	6.641***	[.382;.703]	.179 (.081)	.143	2.217**	[.020;.337]
Inclusive Classroom Interactions									.170 (.057)	.194	3.008**	[.059;.282]
R^2	.047				.145				.079			

Table 5. *Effects of Ethnicity on Interest: Mediation by Cultural Sensitivity of Curriculum*

		Model 1 (dv: Interest)			Model 2 (dv: CSCS Mediator)				Model 3 (dv: Interest)			
	B (SE)	B	t	95% CI for b	*B* (SE)	β	T	95% CI for b	*B* (SE)	β	t	95% CI for b
Diversity Represented as a Mediator												
Constant	3.254 (.099)		32.777 ***	[3.059;3.450]	2.267 (.118)		19.161***	[2.034;2.500]	1.753 (.266)		6.585***	[1.229;2.227]
Ethnicity	.339 (.065)	.305	5.173 ***	[.210;.468]	.404 (.078)	.306	5.180***	[.251;.558]	.351 (.081)	.265	4.309***	[.190;.511]
Diversity Represented									.158 (.073)	.133	2.153*	[.013;.303]
R^2	.093				.094				.109			
Positive Portrayals as a Mediator												
Constant	3.254 (.099)		32.777 ***	[3.059;3.450]	1.564 (.129)		12.150***	[1.311;1.818]	3.129 (.128)		25.342***	[2.928;3.421]
Ethnicity	.339 (.065)	.305	5.173 ***	[.210;.468]	.667 (.085)	.446	7.852***	[.500;.834]	.285 (.075)	.257	3.618***	[.120;.406]
Positive Portrayals									.080 (.050)	.108	1.685	[-.014;.179]
R^2	.093				.199				.097			
Challenge Power as a Mediator												
Constant	3.254 (.099)		32.777 ***	[3.059;3.450]	2.275 (.140)		16.207***	[1.998;2.551]	3.019 (.140)		21.637***	[2.744;3.293]
Ethnicity	.339 (.065)	.305	5.173 ***	[.210;.468]	.479 (.093)	.306	5.177***	[.297;.662]	.289 (.068)	.261	4.242***	[.155;.423]
Challenge Power									.103 (.043)	.146	2.379**	[.018;.189]
R^2	.093				.093				.113			
Inclusive Classroom Interactions as a Mediator												
Constant	3.254 (.099)		32.777 ***	[3.059;3.450]	2.505 (.124)		20.240***	[2.262;2.749]	3.047 (.159)		19.188***	[2.734;3.359]
Ethnicity	.339 (.065)	.305	5.173 ***	[.210;.468]	.542 (.082)	.381	6.641***	[.382;.703]	.294 (.071)	.265	4.164***	[.155;.433]
Inclusive Classroom Interactions									.083 (.050)	.106	1.669	[-.015;.180]
R^2	.093				.145					.103		

Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning
Volume 23, Number 3, December 2021 ISSN: 1466-6529

Why we need to reimagine the curricula in higher education to make it more culturally sensitive

Dave S.P. Thomas, University of Kent, UK

Kathleen M. Quinlan, University of Kent, UK

Email: d.s.p.thomas@kent.ac.uk

DOI: https://doi.org/10.5456/WPLL.23.3.37

Abstract Persistent racial equality gaps exist in HE. We argue that culturally sensitive curricula can address those racial equality gaps as well as support the development of culturally competent graduates equipped for social change. In this short piece, we briefly describe our conceptualisation of culturally sensitive curricula and the tool we have developed to support curricular enhancement. We report on emerging evidence of the impact of culturally sensitive curricula on students' engagement and suggest how such curricula could lead to impact on educational outcomes.

Key words culturally sensitive curricula; subject interest; student engagement; higher education; racial inequality

Introduction

> 'Insufficient progress is being made to tackle structural racism and systemic inequalities in [higher education (HE)], creating unacceptable challenges and outcomes for students and colleagues who work [and learn] in the sector.' (Advance HE, 2021: 8)

In the UK, persistent racial equality gaps have negative consequences for access and widening participation,[1] with UK students from Black, Asian or minority ethnic (BAME)[2] backgrounds least likely to progress to high tariff (selective admission) universities (UK Government, 2020). Once enrolled, they experience the highest rate of attrition (Keohane, 2016), largest disparities in outcomes (Codiroli Mcmaster, 2021), lowest rates of progression to postgraduate studies (Williams et al., 2019) and unfair outcomes in terms of graduate employment (Mountford-Zimdars et al., 2015).

A hostile campus environment that compromises BAME students' potential to thrive[3] has been cited as a key causal factor

that promotes and sustains structural inequalities (Museus, 2014; Mountford-Zimdars et al., 2015). While there are many aspects of student experience, we focus on curricula as a key part of campus environments. We argue that students' perceptions of the curriculum have implications for their engagement and, more specifically, students' interaction with teachers and their interest in the subject. Both of these indicators of engagement are associated with higher attainment (Hu et al., 2008; Jansen et al., 2016) and BAME/White gaps exist on both of them (Lundberg and Schreiner, 2004; Quinlan, 2019). Thus, for educators to reduce the awarding gaps, they need to create educational environments that promote BAME students' engagement. Figure 1 illustrates this set of assumptions.

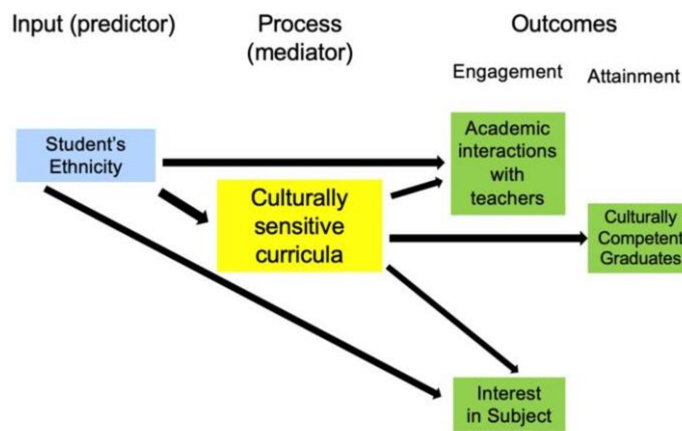

Figure 1 – Conceptual Framework

Our work is anchored in Critical Race Theory (CRT) – a methodological and conceptual framework that highlights the extent to which racism is structurally ingrained in the curriculum (Ladson-Billings and Tate, 1995), with hegemonic whiteness as the *norm*. Based on CRT, we contend that educators in HE tend to teach in supposedly culturally neutral ways. Insofar as White is seen as normative and, therefore, "neutral", students are overexposed to White-dominant perspectives that undermine the

 ISSN: 1466-6529

value and intellectual worth of viewpoints from other demographic groups.

We argue that BAME students notice the Whiteness of this curriculum (Peters, 2018) and that it erodes their engagement – specifically their interest in the subject and their interactions with teachers. As one student put it, 'The only time we look at non-White material is in relation to colonialism (slavery/anti-slavery) or extremism, and the material tends to be negative as opposed to positive' (UoK Manifesto in Thomas and Jivraj, 2020: 22). Therefore, we call for culturally sensitive curriculum in which attitudes, teaching methods and practice, teaching materials and theories relate to and respect students' diverse cultures, histories, identities and contexts. Prior studies have highlighted the importance of culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995), culturally responsive education (Bryan-Gooden et al., 2019) and culturally responsive classroom climate (Holgate, 2016). Yet, there are no race-focused (DeCuir-Gunby and Schutz, 2014) instruments specifically designed to measure higher education students' perceptions of the cultural sensitivity of their curriculum.

Researching Culturally Sensitive Curricula

The field needs new tools to be able to define, assess and reflect on the cultural sensitivity of the curricula as well as to understand its relationship with student engagement and attainment. To address this gap, we conceptualised and developed a new set of Culturally Sensitive Curriculum Scales (CSCS) which make an important conceptual and methodological contribution to research. Our scales built on three CRT-consistent frameworks (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Holgate, 2016; Bryan-Gooden et al., 2019). We developed 19 Likert-scale items (1=*strongly disagree* to 4=*strongly agree*) about students' perceptions of the cultural sensitivity of the curricula, which grouped into four dimensions:

1. Diversity represented, which refers to whether ethnically diverse peoples' experiences and perspectives are represented (Bryan-Gooden et al., 2019).

2. Positive portrayals, which captures how racialised minority groups are represented, seeking to overcome stereotypes (Bryan-Gooden et al., 2019).
3. Challenge power, which refers to encouraging students to develop critical consciousness and socio-political awareness (Ladson-Billings and Tate, 1995).
4. Inclusive classroom interactions focus on classroom interactions between teachers and students and among peers (Holgate, 2016).

We administered a survey with these items (Table 1) to a diverse sample of HE students to better understand how they perceived their curricula. We also surveyed those students on their engagement with the curricula. In particular, we asked them about their academic interaction with teachers and their interest in the subject. We briefly summarised the findings of this study (see Thomas and Quinlan, 2021a for more details).

Table 1 - Culturally Sensitive Curricula Scales (CSCS): Constructs and Items

Scale	Item#	Item
Diversity Represented	DR1	The curriculum features people from diverse backgrounds.
	DR2	The curriculum references different ethnic and cultural traditions, languages, religions and/or clothing.
	DR3	Diverse ethnicities and nationalities are portrayed
	DR4	Diverse family structures (i.e. single parents, adopted or fostered children, same-sex parents, other relatives living with family, etc.) are portrayed.
	DR5	Differently-abled people are represented.
	DR6	People of diverse ethnicities are represented as researchers or professionals, not just as participants in research, clients, consumers, customers, etc.
	DR7	The curriculum respects that different cultures may have different understandings, skills and/or philosophies.
	DR8	The curriculum addresses problems that are of concern to marginalized people/communities.
Positive Portrayals	PP1	When social problems (e.g. crime, violence) are presented, people of colour are usually considered the problem. (R)
	PP2	When interpersonal conflicts are presented, people of colour are usually considered the problem. (R)
	PP3	When people of colour have problems, white people are usually presented as being able to solve those problems. (R)
Challenge Power	CP1	The curriculum raises critical questions about power and/or privilege that are usually taken for granted.
	CP2	The curriculum encourages students to challenge existing power structures in society.
	CP3	The curriculum encourages students to critique unearned privilege.
	CP4	The curriculum encourages students to connect learning to social, political or environmental concerns.
	CP5	The curriculum encourages students to take actions that fight inequity or promote equity.
Inclusive Classroom Interactions	ICI1	My instructors make an effort to pronounce everyone's name correctly.
	ICI2	My instructors encourage students to be mindful of other students' perspectives.
	ICI3	My instructors encourage students to respect other students' perspectives.

BAME students perceived the curriculum as less culturally sensitive than their White peers on all four dimensions of cultural sensitivity. BAME students also reported fewer academic interactions with their teachers than White students. Each component of the CSCS was shown to explain the relationship between ethnicity and interaction with teachers. That is, we may be able to improve students' interactions with teachers by making the curriculum more culturally sensitive. Additionally, BAME students reported significantly lower interest in their programme of study than White students. The Diversity Represented and Challenge Power components of the CSCS each partially explained this interest gap between BAME and White students. Thus, we have evidence to support the links assumed in Figure 1 between ethnicity, culturally sensitive curricula and engagement. We do not yet have evidence on the link between culturally sensitive curricula and attainment. The new CSCS scales are a vital tool, though, for investigating those linkages. We are further developing the scales to ensure applicability in a wider range of settings and also are trialling them in evaluations of the impact of curricular changes. In our study, we focused on students' overall programmes. However, we think it may also be a useful tool at the module level and are currently experimenting with that approach.

In addition to serving as a research and evaluation tool for programmes or modules, we hope that the CSCS will also serve as a guide for reflection and action by teachers. The items themselves can be read as 19 actions teachers can take to enhance their curricula. Teachers could, therefore, self-assess their own teaching materials and processes in their own modules against these items. Alternatively, they could ask students to rate the items and compare students' ratings with their own self-assessments as a process that complements traditional module evaluation forms. It can also serve as a tool for supporting overall programme evaluation, insofar as it offers a checklist to guide curricular review.

A principle of CRT is that dominant groups only support changes that meet the needs of marginalised groups when the change also benefits them (Bell, 1980). Although our primary aim was to assess and enhance the curriculum so that it benefits BAME students, we also think that attention to culturally sensitive

curricula will benefit all students. Across all the students in our study (Thomas and Quinlan, 2021b), perceptions of the culturally sensitive of curricula predicted students' interaction with teachers. Two dimensions of cultural sensitivity (diversity represented and challenge power) also predicted students' interest. That is, making curricula more culturally sensitive may engage all students more fully.

While our conceptualisation of culturally sensitive curricula centres race, it speaks to the entire widening participation agenda insofar as it seeks to foreground social justice. We think that when students glimpse visions of social justice in their curricula and see pathways to achieving greater social justice, that they are inspired. Furthermore, culturally sensitive HE curricula may create more culturally competent students. Students who can take multiple perspectives, appreciate the value that diverse people bring, and know how to participate in inclusive conversations will be able to make meaningful contributions to society. Employers have now discovered that failures to engage diverse employees in workplaces is very costly (Accenture, 2020). Therefore, employers are looking for culturally competent staff who will contribute to nurturing diverse talent and creating climates where all employees can thrive.

Conclusion

Shaun Harper, in his Presidential Address to the American Educational Research Association (2021), called on researchers and teachers to accept individual and collective responsibility for complex educational and social problems. Widening participation comes with responsibilities to develop campus environments conducive to equitable outcomes for students. The curriculum is one key aspect of the educational environment.

We developed and validated a new instrument to assess the cultural sensitivity of curricula and support further research on this key aspect of campus environments. Using it, we found that BAME students saw their curricula as less culturally sensitive than their White peers, which helped explain why BAME students in our study had fewer interactions with their teachers and lower interest in their subject. Re-curating curricula to make them more culturally sensitive will ensure that all students can see

 ISSN: 1466-6529

themselves and their cultures affirmed and the problems of their cultural communities acknowledge and addressed. Our findings suggest that when curricula do that, students will be more engaged. Our study showed there is a particular need to make curricula more culturally sensitive for students from minoritised and non-traditional backgrounds, for whom current learning environments seem to inadvertently pose barriers to engagement. We also suggest that such curricular changes may reduce racial degree awarding gaps, as well as grow graduates who are equipped and inspired to contribute to social betterment, though more research is needed on these issues.

[1] Widening participation strategy in higher education in England is designed to improve access to young people who are under-represented in higher education – for example, those from lower socio-economic backgrounds, racialised minorities and looked after children (Weedon and Riddell 2015). In England and Wales, the term 'looked after children' is defined in law under the Children Act 1989 and relates to a child who is in the care of or provided with accommodation by the local authority for more than 24 hours.
[2] The acronym BAME is an umbrella term which is inconsistently used in governmental research in UK to identify a range of people belonging to Black, Asian or minority ethnic backgrounds. Notably, this identifier has been imposed on people, as opposed to them self-identifying in this manner.
[3] The term 'thrive', as it is used here, encompasses achieving a sense of empowerment, positive, inclusive classroom interactions with teachers/peers, development of interest in their subject/programme of study, learning and academic achievement.

References

Accenture (2020) *Getting to Equal 2020: The Hidden Value of Culture Makers*, at https://www.accenture.com/us-en/about/inclusion-diversity/_acnmedia/Thought-Leadership-Assets/PDF-2/Accenture-Getting-To-Equal-2020-Research-Report.pdf.

Advance HE (2021). Advance HE Strategy 2021-24: Helping HE Shape its Future. [Online]. Available at: https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2021-05/Advance HE Strategy 2021–24.pdf.

American Educational Research Association (2021) 'AERA President Shaun Harper calls on researchers to accept responsibility for educational and social problems', at https://www.aera.net/Newsroom/AERA-Highlights-E-newsletter/AERA-Highlights-April-2021/AERA-2020-President-Shaun-Harper-Calls-on-Researchers-to-Accept-Responsibility-for-Educational-and-Social-Problems.

Bell, D. (1980) 'Brown vs. Board of Education and the Interest Convergence Principle', *Harvard Law Review*, 93: 518–33.

Bryan-Gooden, J., Hester, M. and Peoples, L. (2019) *Culturally responsive curriculum scorecard*, New York: Metropolitan Centre for Research on Equity and the Transformation of Schools, New York University.

Codiroli Mcmaster, N. (2021) *Ethnicity Awarding Gaps in UK Higher Education in 2019/20*. London: Advance HE.

DeCuir-Gunby, J.T. and Schutz, P.A. (2014) 'Researching Race Within Educational Psychology Contexts', *Educational Psychologist*, 49, 4: 244–60. doi:10.1080/00461520.2014.957828.

Holgate, H. (2016) *Development and Initial Validation of a Culturally Responsive Classroom Climate Scale*, MSc thesis, Purdue University.

Hu, S., Kuh, G. and Li, S. (2008) 'The Effects of Engagement in Inquiry-Oriented Activities on Student Learning and Personal Development', *Innovative Higher Education*, 33: 71–81.

Jansen, M., Lüdtke, O. and Schroeders, U. (2016) 'Evidence for a Positive Relation between Interest and Achievement: Examining Between-Person and Within-Person Variation in Five Domains', *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 46: 116–27.

Keohane, N. (2016) *On Course for Success? Student Retention at University*, at http://www.smf.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/UPP-final-report.pdf.

Ladson-Billings, G. (1995) 'Towards a Theory of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy', *American Education Research Journal*, 32, 3: 465–91.

Ladson-Billings, G. and Tate, W. F. (1995) 'Toward a Critical Race Theory of Education', *Teachers College Record*, 97, 1: 47–58. doi:10.4324/9781315709796-2.

Lundberg, C. and Schreiner, L. (2004) 'Quality and Frequency of Faculty-Student Interaction as Predictors of Learning: An Analysis by Student Race/Ethnicity', *Journal of College Student Development*, 45, 5: 545–69.

Mountford-Zimdars, A., Sabri, D., Moore, J., Sanders, J., Jones, S. and Higham, L. (2015) *Causes of Differences in Student Outcomes*, Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE).

Museus, S.D. (2014) 'The Culturally Engaging Campus Environments (CECE) Model: A New Theory of College Success Among Racially Diverse Student Populations', *Higher Education: Handbook of Theory and Research*, 29: 189–227. doi:10.1007/978-94-017-8005-6_5.

Peters, M.A. (2018) 'Why is My Curriculum White? A Brief Genealogy of Resistance' in Arday, J. and Mirza, H.S. (eds.) *Dismantling Race in Higher Education: Racism, Whiteness and Decolonising the Academy*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 253–70.

Quinlan, K. (2019) 'What Triggers Students' Interest During Higher Education Lectures? Personal and Situational Variables Associated with Situational Interest', *Studies in Higher Education*, 44, 10: 1781–92. doi: 10.1080/03075079.2019.1665325.

Thomas, D.S.P. and Jivraj, S. (eds.) (2020) *Towards Decolonising the University: A Kaleidoscope for Empowered Action*, Oxford: Counterpress.

Thomas, D.S.P. and Quinlan, K.M. (2021a) 'Reimagining Curricula: Supporting Minority Ethnic Students' Interest through Culturally Sensitive Curricula', Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, 8–12 April 2021, Orlando, Florida, USA, at https://kar.kent.ac.uk/87272/.

Thomas, D.S.P. and Quinlan, K.M. (2021b) 'Reimagining the Curricula in Higher Education: Increasing Students' Interaction with Teachers and Interest through Culturally Sensitive Curricula', Open University 6th Biennial International Conference on Access, Participation, and Success, 15–18 March 2021, at https://www.open.ac.uk/about/wideningparticipation/sites/www.open.ac.uk.about.wideningparticipation/files/files/6th-conference/1_9 Reimagining the curricula in higher education - Increasing students' interaction with teachers and interest through culturally sensitive curricula.pptx.

UK Government (2020) *Widening Participation in Higher Education*, at https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/widening-participation-in-higher-education (accessed: 25 May 2021).

Weedon, E. and Riddell, S. (2015) 'Higher Education in Europe: Widening Participation' in Shah, M., Bennett, A., and Southgate, E. (eds.) *Widening Higher Education Participation*, Amsterdam: Chandos Publishing, 49–62.

Williams, P., Bath, S., Arday, J. and Lewis, C. (2019) *The Broken Pipeline: Barriers to Black PhD Students Accessing Research Council Funding*, at http://leadingroutes.org/?mdocs-file=2943.

D.4 Publications stemming from the PhD

Conference Presentations

Thomas, D.S.P, and Quinlan, K.M. (2021). "Reimagining Curricula: Supporting Minority Ethnic Students' Interest through Culturally Sensitive Curricula." in *Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association* (AERA). Orlando, Florida.

Thomas, D.S.P., and Quinlan, K.M. (2021). "The Culturally Sensitive Curricula Scales (CSCS): Measuring BAME vs White Students' Perspectives on the Cultural Sensitivity of the Curriculum." in *Advance HE Surveys & Insights Conference 2021: Adapting to challenging times*.

Thomas, D.S.P., and Quinlan, K.M. (2021). "Reimagining Curricula: Effects of Cultural (In)Sensitivity of Curricula on Minority Ethnic Students'Engagement." in *International Research Conference 2021 (Re)connecting, (Re)building: Higher Education in Transformative Times*. Society for Research into Higher Education.

Thomas, D.S.P., and Quinlan, K.M. (2021). "Reimagining the Curricula in Higher Education: Increasing Students' Interaction with Teachers and Interest through Culturally Sensitive Curricula." in *Open University 6th Biennial International Conference on Access, Participation, and Success*.

Thomas, D.S.P. (2021). "*Supporting students' transition to higher education: Why we need to reimagine curricula to make them more culturally sensitive*." In Transitions and Transformations: New Opportunities for a 21st Century Education?BAME Outcomes Gap Event 2. [Online] https://www.nerupi.co.uk/events/transitions-and-transformations-new-opportunities-for-a-21st-century-education

Thomas, D.S.P. (2021). "The Post-Pandemic World: Why We Need to Reimagine the Curricula in Higher Education to Make It More Culturally Sensitive." In School of Continuing Studies, McGill University Power Skills Virtual Career Summit. [Online] https://powerskills.scs.mcgill.ca/events/the-post-pandemic-world-why-we-need-to-reimagine-the-curricula-in-higher-education-to-make-it-more-culturally-sensitive%E2%80%AF/

Thomas, D.S.P. and Quinlan, K.M. (2020) "*The need for research and evaluation in student success: Culturally Sensitive Curricula Scales as new tools for evaluating students' perceptions of the cultural sensitivity of the curriculum"* in *"Network Evaluating and Researching University Participation Interventions (NERUPI) Convention 2020"* [Online] https://www.nerupi.co.uk/public/assets/images/NERUPI-BAME-OUTCOMES-2_11NOV2020_-PROG.pdf

Research Papers

Thomas, D.S.P, and Quinlan, K.M. (2021). "Why We Need to Reimagine the Curricula in Higher Education to Make It More Culturally Sensitive." *Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning* 23(3). doi: https://doi.org/10.5456/WPLL.23.3.37.

Thomas, D.S.P and Quinlan, K.M. (2022 under review) "Reimagining Curricula: Effects of Cultural (In)Sensitivity of Curricula on Minority Ethnic Students' Engagement." Scheduled to be published in the Studies in Higher Education journal.

Blogs

Quinlan, K.M., Alajaj, N., de Burca, S., Earl, C., Hedoti, E., Hughes, C., Parkinson, T., Rovagnati, V., and Thomas, D.S.P. (2021). "How to Enhance PGR Research Culture." *AdvanceHE*. Retrieved January 29, 2022 (https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/news-and-views/how-enhance-pgr-research-culture).

Edited Books

Thomas, D.S.P., and Jivraj, S. (eds.) 2020. *Towards Decolonising the University: A Kaleidoscope for Empowered Action*. Oxford, UK: Counterpress.

Thomas, D.S.P., and Arday, J. (eds.) 2021. *Doing Equity and Diversity for Success in Higher Education: Redressing Structural Inequalities in the Academy*. 1st ed. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Day, A., Lee., Thomas, D.S.P., and Spickard, J. (eds) (2022). *Diversity, Inclusion, and Decolonization: Practical Tools for Improving Teaching, Research and Scholarship*. Bristol: Bristol University Press.