# Decolonising the Agenda in UK Higher Education: A Comparative Study of British Minority Ethnic and International Students' Perspectives at One UK University

Jingman Li[1]

[1] School of Education, University of Birmingham, Edgbaston, Birmingham, B15 2TT, United Kingdom

Correspondence: Jingman Li, School of Education, University of Birmingham, Edgbaston, Birmingham, B15 2TT, United Kingdom.

## Abstract

Initiatives to focus on issues of racial discrimination and the advancement of people of colour have put pressure on all areas of British society to confront their colonial legacy and racial inequalities. Within universities, the dominant Eurocentric curriculum forms the majority of the existing university curriculum, which has a significant impact on minority ethnic students. The decolonisation agenda can therefore be described as an attempt to diversify curriculum content, incorporate more perspectives of people of colour, foster a sense of belonging for people of colour, and provide an inclusive environment. However, it seemed that only one in five universities had truly attempted to address the legacy of harmful problematic colonialism. Thus, this research seeks to explore the state of and obstacles to advancing the decolonisation agenda in higher education, such as language challenges, sense of belonging, and engagement of students in the classroom, through a comparative study of these two groups, from the perspectives and experiences of British minority ethnic and international students. To explore this comparison, I used semi-structured interviews. The main findings of this research found that international students face greater challenges in finding a sense of belonging than British minority ethnic students. The study also revealed that the advancement of the decolonisation agenda at this university does provide a very comfortable sense of belonging and an inclusive environment for the majority of coloured students, but racial exclusion and a lack of voice can still be present on a small percentage of the campus. Overall, this research presents a new direction on the topic, deconstructing the term ethnic minority in the hope of gaining a more comprehensive and in-depth perspective to assess the progress of this agenda.

**Keywords:** decolonisaion, decolonisation curriculum, minorities, international students, higher education

## 1. Introduction

The decolonisation agenda is in a developing stage, and more publications being issued in this area are still increasing. Decolonisation implies the elimination of colonial aspects from educational institutions so that they can represent various cultural value systems, draw on these value systems to address cultural issues, and acknowledge cultural diversity (Gamble, 2003). With Rhodes Must Fall erupted in Cape Town and Oxford, it called to expose the legacy of empire and colonialism that reinforced institutions, disciplines, curricula and practices. These campaigns appealed to remove the colonial element from higher education, but it is obvious that education in the West has remained an invaluable site for the institutionalisation and naturalisation of colonialism from the past to the present (Takayama, Sriprakash & Connell, 2016).

Within the context of the continuing economic downturn in universities and growing racial consciousness due to the global financial crisis of 2008 (Virdee & McGeever, 2018), universities may be more receptive to the

discourse of decolonisation as the demand for BAME students increases in UK universities. However, in the wake of COVID-19, higher education was revealed more pervasive prejudices and biases. Following the UK's exit from the EU, there has been a rise in racial harassment in higher education settings (Housee, 2018). Essentially, it may be that the rights of these minority ethnic students are not adequately protected.

Furthermore, some UK educational institutions may feel pressure to recruit overseas students as a result of the shifting global higher education market (Shain, Yldz, Poku & Gokay, 2021). This has led some university executives in the UK to support "decolonisation" in order to further the strategic goal of attracting international students. However, the push for decolonisation by universities may not be a voluntary necessity on the part of university leadership, but more likely an attempt to reduce the impact of public opinions on the reputation of universities. As Bell (1980) states, higher education concessions may be based on 'convergence of interests'. The minority civil rights movement could only win if whites and minorities have common interests. It could be argued that higher education may have responded to decolonisation only for personal glory and motivation, and the benefits decolonization may have brought to HE are more appropriate to the current state of social development.

To assess the advancement of the decolonisation agenda in higher education, I compare the perspectives and experiences of British minority ethnic (BME) and international students. It is necessary to clarify that British minority ethnic students (BME) refer to people of colour who were born and raised in the UK or immigrated to the UK from other countries and they have British nationality. International students are students who are studying in the UK on a student visa and may be from Malaysia, China, Dubai, India and so on. The term that will be mentioned in this dissertation 'minority ethnic' indicates BME and international students, which could be regarded as an umbrella term for these two groups of people. My hypothesis for this research is that the decolonisation agenda has brought some benefits for minority ethnic students in higher education, but that few practical actions and improvements have been done. I also predicted that international students may feel it more challenging than BME students to experience the benefits of decolonisation and to integrate into the local higher education environment.

Throughout my research project, I intend to answer the following three research questions:

1) To what extent are the contents of teaching material decolonised according to British minority ethnic and international students?

2) To what extent do British minority ethnic and international students feel that they are studying in an inclusive environment?

3) How to promote decolonisation agenda based on British minority ethnic and international students perspectives?

## 2. Literature Review

There is a large literature on decolonisation that maps the progress of the decolonisation agenda in UK higher education, but its reviews are rather mixed. In this chapter, I outline the context in which my research is situated through a review of the existing academic literature. This will include a framework of decolonisation theory and the participation and achievements of minority ethnic students in HE, as well as racial inequalities in HE. Starting with theoretical framework allows for effectively tying the research to the existing context of decolonisation. Following by analysing the work that has been done around the topic and then highlighting the gaps in the pieces of literature that I have identified and want to fulfil.

*2.1 Theoretical Framework*

Decolonisation is a term that has given rise to much controversy. On the one hand, traditionalists understand decolonisation as the process by which legally dependent territories gain constitutional independence and enter the world stage of international relations as sovereign states (Bismarck, 2012). On the other hand, decolonisation is used to describe the achievement of restorative justice through cultural, psychological and economic freedom (Bismarck, 2012). Decolonisation involves identifying colonial systems, structures and relations and working to challenge them (Open University, 2022). It is not 'integration' or the symbolic inclusion of non-white cultural and intellectual achievements. Rather, it involves a paradigm shift from the exclusion and denial of culture to the creation of space for other political philosophies and knowledge systems (Keele, 2021). It is a cultural shift to think more broadly about why common sense is the way it is, and to adjust cultural perceptions and power relations in this way.

Ngũgĩ (1986) notes in relation to the idea of decolonisation in Africa that it involves the search for an emancipatory perspective in which we can see ourselves clearly in relation to other-selves in the universe. If the decolonisation of Africa began at the domestic level, the decolonisation of Europe might need to begin in another direction, namely with the world, because of its authentic participation in the crucial role of empire and

colonialism in its own formation. This includes not only Europe's own forays and influences on the world but also a sustained study of how these forays and the world itself have made 'Europe' (Gopal, 2021). According to Fanon (1963), in material terms, Europe was a creation of the Third World, deriving its wealth from labour, resources and profits, and providing a reckoning, which demonstrates how British and European institutions benefited from the labour, profits and commodities of the colonial world. In addition to a substantial measure of debt, these European universities were in an advantageous position because they could undertake much of the intellectual and cultural work to decolonise Western thought. Thus, decolonisation means the repair of "Europe", seeking to understand and expand knowledge of how cultures and communities that were racialised as other than white and European gave and shaped 'Europe' (Gopal, 2021). In particular, Europe had sole epistemological authority in its colonial incarnation, and legitimate knowledge could only emerge within its sphere of competence.

Decolonisation can also lead to a reassessment of cultural identity and the way people understand themselves and their place in the world. The legacy of colonialism often leaves people feeling disconnected from their cultural heritage and lacking a sense of belonging to their own society (Fanon, 1963). Decolonisation can provide an opportunity for people to reconnect with their cultural roots and reclaim a sense of belonging.

The concept of belonging is defined as an individual's sense of connection and attachment to a particular community, group or place (Allen et al., 2021). Belonging is not just about membership, rights and obligations, such as citizenship, or simply forms of identification with a group or other people, but also about the social places from which such identities and memberships are constructed, and the ways in which social places resonate with the stability of the self (Anthias, 2008). In other words, belonging is not a fixed or innate characteristic, but rather a process that is constantly negotiated and redefined in a variety of social, cultural and political contexts.

Multicultural belonging is an ongoing activity of mutual integration between majority and minority communities. It highlights the operation of integration agendas in existing multicultural states and how the claims of minority groups relate to these frameworks (Chin, 2019). In addition to improving physical and institutional integration, multicultural belonging advocates the transformation of national cultures. For cultural minorities, multiple rights are a means to achieve inclusive integration (Chin, 2019). These rights articulate the foundations of ethnoculturalism and inclusion, and they set the conditions for integration, while also illustrating how equitable integration constitutes community (Kymlicka, 1995).

Specifically, equitable integration requires equality. Minorities should not be forced to integrate into society and institutions, but should be provided with the same respect and opportunities as the majority. Thus, belonging is a two-way process and immigrants cannot belong to the society in which they have chosen to settle unless that community welcomes them (Parekh, 2005). True belonging can only be achieved when the voices of minorities are valued. In higher education, a sense of belonging and decolonisation may have significant impacts on ethnic minority students' experiences of higher education (Strayhorn, 2018; Hurtado et al., 1998; Osterman, 2000). As the decolonisation agenda moves forward, a number of higher education institutions and the state have introduced new policies and measures to help ethnic minorities better integrate into their local environment, which has attracted more international and BME students to enrol in UK universities.

### 2.2. Overview of Minority Ethnic Students Participation and Attainment in UK Higher Education

2.2.1 British Minority Ethnic Students in UK HE

The latest available data from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) shows that 619,415 UK students from ethnic minority backgrounds are studying in UK higher education institutions in the academic year 2021/22. This represents 21.6% of all students studying in higher education in the UK. However, students from ethnic minority backgrounds are not equally distributed across institutions in the UK. Research suggests that students from ethnic minority backgrounds in the UK are more likely to attend post-1992 universities (universities that were established after 1992), which tend to have a more diverse student group and provide a wider range of vocational and professional courses (Connor, 2004).

The number of British students from minority ethnic backgrounds studying in the UK has been increasing in recent years. There was an increase in the number of BME students who were admitted to UK higher education from 20.5% in 2017/18 to 21.6% in 2021/22 (HESA, 2023). Nevertheless, in 2021/22, 60% of those who completed their degree and achieved a first or upper-second-class honours degree were White British, while BME students accounted for around 21%. In addition, BME students are less likely to progress to postgraduate studies, indicating that there may be barriers that prevent BME students from entering or succeeding at the postgraduate level (Richardson, 2008).

2.2.2 International Minority Ethnic Students in UK HE

In 2021/22, the UK welcomed 679,970 international students, almost a decade ahead of the 2030 deadline

(HESA, 2023). International students represented approximately 23.7% of the total student population for the academic year 2021-22 (HESA, 2023). There is a noticeable trend that the number of international students studying in the UK has been steadily increasing in recent years. The year 2021/22 saw an increase of over 30% in the number of international students admitted to UK universities compared to 2017/18 levels and continues the five-year pattern of steady growth in UK higher education (HESA, 2023). In terms of academic performance, according to the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA), international students accounted for only 18.6% of those who achieved a first or upper-second-class honours degree in the academic year 2021-22.

Although the number of both international and BME students enrolling in UK universities has increased significantly in recent years, the number of students achieving good degrees is much lower than that of White students (Richardson, Mittelmeier, & Rienties 2020). Therefore, the racial inequalities faced by minority ethnic students in higher education cannot be ignored.

### 2.3 Racial Inequalities in UK Higher Education

#### 2.3.1 Issues of Awarding Gap

Gaps and inequalities persist for minority ethnic students with regard to the likelihood of dropping out and gaining a first or second-class degree and employment opportunities (OfS, 2018a). In terms of university dropout rates, Black students may be more than twice as likely to drop out compared to White or Asian students (Keohane & Petrie, 2017). In addition, high levels of participation do not result in a correspondingly significant increase in academic attainment for minority ethnic students. According to Owen et al. (2000), minority ethnic graduates are less likely to obtain a good degree from UK higher education than White students. In particular, Asian students are half as likely to obtain a good degree as White students, while Black students are only about a third as likely to obtain a good degree as White students. These differences can only be partly explained by differences in entry qualifications or type of institution (Richardson, 2008).

This difference in academic attainment could also be attributed to the language barriers, cultural adjustment, discrimination and prejudice in HE and issues of belonging that minority ethnic students may face (Wilczewski & Alon, 2022). In academic settings, for example, student-teacher interactions play a crucial role in student inclusion in learning (Cotton et al., 2015). Minority ethnic students may have fewer interactions with their tutors than White students. Furthermore, academic achievement may be limited by discriminatory practices of academic staff, or by triggering negative stereotypes of the students themselves and creating anxiety about the task (Brown & Lee, 2005). As I will discuss next the issue of institutional racial discrimination in UK.

#### 2.3.2 Addressing Institutional Racism and Discrimination in UK HE

In fact, the minority ethnic attainment gap does not exist in isolation in higher education but is part of a broader structure of racial inequality in the UK (Cruz, 2022). The racist murder of black British teenager Stephen Lawrence in 1993 highlighted the deep-rooted institutional racism in the Metropolitan Police. In 2016, the UK government launched the Race Disparity Audit to assess racial inequalities in society. However, over the next decade, the report revealed significant racial discrimination in all areas of life, whether in employment, education or even housing. For example, it may be that one in 25 white British people will be unemployed, but for people from minority ethnic backgrounds, the unemployment rate may increase to one in ten (Cabinet Office, 2017). But this is only a fraction of the phenomena that racial discrimination presents.

Over the last two decades, there has been a growth in research related to challenging racial disparities compelling educational interventions and an awareness of the urgent need for such educational interventions (Blum, 2002). Multicultural education, as an educational response to racism, seeks to address inequalities based on race and to promote educational practices that foster acceptance of cultural diversity (Mood ley, 1995). It has focused primarily on redressing race-based disadvantage in academic achievement, promoting equal opportunities, and reducing individual prejudice so that male and female students, as well as students belonging to different racial and cultural groups, have equal opportunities to achieve academic success in HE (Fleras & Elliot, 1992). This facilitates the elimination of race-based prejudice and works towards a more inclusive cultural environment.

It is obvious that institutional racism and discrimination have a significant impact on an individual's sense of belonging in the community or in higher education. When racism or discrimination exists in a university or community, it indicates that certain individuals or groups are not valued or accepted. This might lead to feelings of exclusion, alienation and disconnection, which in turn affects people's sense of belonging (Morris et al., 2020).

#### 2.3.3 Fostering Belonging Through Decolonisation in Higher Education

Developing students' sense of belonging in higher education is extremely valuable. Araujo et al. (2014) describe a three-tier model to support the development of a sense of belonging across the student lifecycle, which is

'linked to the cohort at programme level, within and interdisciplinary learning environment for example at school/faculty level and the third tier linked to the global intercultural network linked to their subject or profession', this three-tier model can be effective in helping students enter, complete and leave university. In general, students who are more likely to drop out of university are described as — ethnic minorities, low achievers, socially underprivileged students, and students with low entry qualifications. These students may be at increased risk of not succeeding at university without the support of their school or tutors (Meeham & Howells, 2018). Only if students learn more, the more value they find in their studies and the higher the likelihood that they will continue to persist in their studies. This means that the purpose of higher education is not just to retain students, but to drive their retention by building to develop competence and a sense of belonging (Tinto, 2003).

One of a report from OfS (2022) presents that students may prefer to attend more diverse post-92 universities rather than Russell Group universities or less diverse institutions. On the one hand, the student body at post-92 universities tends to be more diverse than at Russell Group institutions, and many students value the opportunity to study with people from different backgrounds and cultures (OfS, 2022). They are more likely to feel a sense of belonging in this setting, which may be attractive to some minority ethnic students. On the other hand, post-92 universities tend to offer a wider range of courses than Russell Group universities, particularly in vocational areas such as nursing, teaching and social work (HESA, 2022), which provides effective foundational academic support for students' specific career paths. It could be argued that post-92 universities may be seen as more progressive and inclusive in their approach to curriculum development, pedagogy and engagement with diverse perspectives (Andalo, 2007). The implementation of decolonisation in higher education is probably more evident in post-92 universities, which are the reasons why more students may choose to attend these universities.

According to Batty (2020), 84 of the 128 universities surveyed in the decolonisation process are committed to curriculum reform to make their syllabuses more diverse and inclusive. For instance, Keele University has been a leader in the decolonisation of the curriculum. Colonising the curriculum is preventing students and teachers from freely pursuing knowledge (Mbembe, 2016). The Decolonising the Curriculum (DTC) work is consequently a critical part of Keele's work to address the student achievement gap and other injustices and inequities in its Race Equity Charter (Keele University, 2021). DTC discusses how knowledge can become dominant, oppressive and pervasive. It addresses the forces that underpin knowledge, exposing its long- hidden operations, its insidious and non-neutral influence, its agenda, its discrimination and marginalisation (Keele University, 2021). At Keele University, DTC runs through the entire journey from academic entry to graduation, it is built into school and faculty modules and can be seen as a dynamic thing that provides students with a better learning experience and space for personal development.

In the study by Wilson et al. (2022), Coventry University has made a strategic commitment to try to address race in the higher education environment ref. At its core is a proposed curriculum reform plan called 'Curriculum 2025'. The plan could provide resources for a wider range of staff who want to take action. In addition, student activities provide some opportunities for students to co-create the curriculum with teachers, giving students the space to explore the curriculum for themselves (Wilson et al., 2022). However, they identified that the decolonisation of projects and curriculum within higher education is a long-term process and that changing the nature of the totality of knowledge offered by HE in a short period of time is a difficult challenge for the current stress-filled university system as a result of the COVID-19 which has put the focus and energy on protecting the health and providing learning in a hybrid form or reproduction (Wilson et al., 2022; Craig et al., 2019).

Arday et al's (2020) examined whether the potential for inclusive pedagogy to emerge in higher education reflects the diversity of the UK's society. They show that the decolonisation movement in higher education is gaining strength as it gradually decentralises the predominately Eurocentric curriculum (Arday et al., 2020). However, Western knowledge systems continue to be viewed as a preferred way of thinking by default in universities (Andrews, 2016). It is therefore crucial to engage white classmates and staff in decolonisation projects, which require a reflexivity and white decentering that repositions minority individuals from the margins to the centre. However, the focus of the study is on minority ethnic students who are assumed to be British, which tend to ignore international students among them.

In general, members of groups subject to institutional discrimination or inequalities are likely to be relatively more unsure of their sense of belonging in higher education. As their ethnic groups are frequently negatively stereotyped or marginalised, they may be unsure whether they will be fully integrated into positive social relationships in these settings (Walton & Cohen, 2006). This uncertainty of belonging, especially when perpetuated, can undermine the performance of minority groups (Mendoza- Denton et al., 2002). This also results in an attainment gap between minority ethnic students and White students in higher education. In this context, the decolonisation agenda in higher education is more significant.

*2.4 Conclusions*

As mentioned above, Wilson et al. (2022) and Arday et al. (2020) both explore the development of a

decolonisation agenda in higher education. Wilson et al. (2022), emphasises the creation of a curriculum reform programme in higher education to address issues of race in teaching and learning, while Arday et al. (2020) primarily focused on the influence of the decolonisation agenda and the predominately Eurocentric curriculum on higher education programmes, as well as how it affects navigational elements like minority ethnic students' accomplishment, involvement, and belonging in HE.

A research gap is that previous studies involved minority ethnic students, but most importantly, these studies assumed that the experiences of international students and British minority ethnic students are homogenous. In other words, some minority ethnic students might be citizens of the UK themselves, having grown up in the UK and benefiting from the same educational resources and safeguards as their White peers. While other minority ethnic students may come from a different country. Therefore, my aim is to fill this research gap by deconstructing the term minority ethnic along nationality to compare their views, which will help to understand the different experiences and perceptions of these two groups.

This literature review allowed me to form my own research as I was able to point out the research gaps, strengths and weaknesses of other studies. I then applied them to my research. While there is a considerable level of research using methods such as focus groups and questionnaires to explore the process of decolonisation agendas in higher education, there is a limited amount of research comparing how decolonisation agendas have affected the experiences or feelings of students of different ethnicities. Based on this research gap, in the next chapter, I will use semi- structured interviews to conduct my own research project.

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1 Research Design

The aim of this study is to understand the development of the decolonisation agenda in higher education based on a comparison between the perspectives of British minority ethnic students and international students. Thus, my research adopts an interpretivist paradigm that attempts to draw conclusions based on ideas rather than through numbers and facts (Tomas, 2013). Interpretivism assumes that situations are subject to change rather than constant (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018), whereas in my research, the perspectives of different categories of students on decolonisation and their own experiences are the subject of investigation, therefore, interpretivism fits into my overall aim. It could be argued that the benefit of interpretivism is based on the participants' responses to their perceptions of a particular event or agenda and that its results can effectively reflect social reality (Tomas, 2013). However, it is undeniable that interpretivism ignores to some extent the influence that external factors may have on behaviour, and despite this weakness which may have an impact on the findings, interpretivism is the most appropriate approach for my research project.

Comparative design could be regarded as a method for discovering empirical relationships between variables (Lijphart, 1971). It involves comparing two or more groups or conditions to determine similarities, differences and relationships. In my research, the differences in the impact of decolonisation in higher education on students of different ethnicities were explored by comparing the responses of two different groups, British minority ethnic students and international students. One of the advantages of using the comparative design is that the findings can be applied to a larger population than the study sample (Creswell, 2009), although the sample of participants in my research was limited. However, as a reflection, comparative designs rely on observational data, which might be influenced by uncontrolled confounding variables (Creswell, 2009). Hence, more care and objectivity are required in the later stages of analysing the data to improve the accuracy of the research findings as much as possible.

### 3.2 Interview Research

As my research relied on the thoughts and views of British minority ethnic students and international students, I decided to use Skinner's (2010) semi-structured interviews to collect qualitative data. I had a set of sample questions prepared in advance, which allowed me to ask more in-depth questions to obtain more specific data based on the participants' responses. The sample questions for the interviews were provided to the participants in advance, which gave them some insight into the type of questions they would be asked and enough time to consider their answers before the interviews began. In all interviews, the questions I asked were open-ended to encourage a wider range of responses from the participants.

### 3.3 Data Collection and Research Participants

3.3.1 Recruitment and Sampling

In order to evaluate accurately the thoughts of British minority ethnic students and international students, I realised that my research had to be based on a comparison between students across multiple ethnicities. Therefore, the university I chose to conduct my research at was the one I was currently attending and I had some connection to this university, which meant that it was less challenging for me to contact and find participants.

Participants were recruited through selective sampling, also known as purposive sampling (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2012). Because I had made posters dedicated to briefly outlining my research, I asked for the participation of international students and British minority ethnic students who were interested in the project and also enrolled at this university. The advantage of a selective sample is the ability to effectively select participants who meet the criteria and purpose of the study (Liu, Motada & Yu, 2004).

I had intended to interview five BME and international students each. However, by the time the interview was conducted with the fifth participant, the information I had received was partly the same as the previous participants. By the sixth participant's interview, his responses were largely duplicated what had been said by previous participants. I realised that the data was saturated at this point (Baker & Edwards 2012). Therefore, my interview sample was reduced to a total of six students, four international students and two BME students.

3.3.2 Data Collection Procedure

When I had made contact with the participants, I organised a meeting with all the participants to explain the purpose and intent of my research to them more specifically. During the meeting, each participant was given an information leaflet, a consent form and a sample of interview questions for reference. Importantly, I found that giving participants a sample of the interview questions made them feel more comfortable with the research, which facilitated the opportunity to participate (Bolderston, 2012). All participants showed interest in the research as they wanted to learn about the impact of the decolonisation agenda on ethnically diverse students and the ways in which the findings might be able to provide more support for more international students or minority ethnic students. On the day of the interview, I explained all the ethical guidelines to the participants (discussed below). Once the participants were clarified on all the ethical guidelines and were required to sign a consent form, it meant that the interview could formally begin. The interviews were semi-structured and lasted approximately 40 minutes, depending on the length of the participants' responses. During the interviews, I used a number of precautions to ensure that the data I collected was as valid as possible. This is because some participants may maintain existing paradigms and try to change their behaviours (Payne & Payne, 2004). In other words, they might be influenced by social stereotypes, prejudices, and social expectations to give certain deviant responses when they consciously perceive themselves as research subjects (Lavrakas, 2008). This is because participants might believe that although the responses they give are acceptable to the researcher, they might not necessarily be accepted by their classmates or some members of the community. I tried to reassure the participants that their identifying information would remain strictly anonymous and that any information they shared would be kept confidential, which further encouraged them to express their true feelings and opinions in the interviews.

*3.4 Data Analysis Procedure*

During the interviews, my task was primarily to record all the interviews for subsequent analysis. I decided to use an intelligent transcription method, which removes all filler characters, also known as 'non-word elements' (Hammersley, 2010). This method may be more convenient for me to analyse the data. In analysing the qualitative data, I used Constant Comparative (Glaser, 1965), this method first requires the researcher to go through the data repeatedly, becoming closer and more familiar with the data via this process. (Tomas, 2013). Specifically, I needed to compare the responses and experiences of BME students and international students. I believed that the constant comparative method was the most appropriate method of data analysis for my research. As illustrated in the section of literature review: few studies have truly compared and deconstructed the experiences of minority ethnic students along with nationality. Therefore, I used the constant comparative method to understand the similarities and differences in the experiences and views of these two groups of students to assess whether the decolonisation agenda has been effectively advanced in higher education, or where obstacles are still being faced. Once I had all the raw data, I sorted and organised the extracts into groups based on attributes and themes, and analysed these groups in a structured way to form new findings to answer my research questions.

*3.5 Ethical Consideration*

Due to the nature of my research, complex ethical issues were more likely to arise in research (Tomas, 2017). Thus, I followed the British Educational Research Association's (BERA, 2018) guidelines, from consent, right to withdraw, confidentiality and anonymity, deception and data storage to protect the interests of participants. Firstly, I would ensure that all participants agreed to participate in the research and as part of obtaining participant consent, I prepared an information leaflet and consent form in advance, which included my research aims and a brief summary. I understood that my interviews could only reasonably proceed once I had the signed consent forms from the participants. Meanwhile, in the information leaflet, I explicitly explained their right to withdraw, guaranteeing their right to withdraw within a week after interview. Once they have withdrawn, the data associated with them will be deleted immediately. In addition, all interviews will be recorded and transcribed, but with the advantage that once their answers are transcribed, the original recording will be

immediately deleted and the interview will be anonymised and each participant will be assigned a number, (e.g. Participant 1 .... and so on). This interviewing and transcription are done entirely by me, and I ascertain that all participants are aware that their answers are anonymised and encoded. In this way, participants were able to express their true feelings more freely when answering the questions without fear of having their identity information revealed. Finally, in view of the privacy of the data, I would store all transcriptions in an encrypted computer folder. All data will be deleted as soon as the dissertation is submitted.

## 4. Findings and Discussion

In this section, I will detail the findings and conclusions drawn from my research. My research has revealed many different themes and findings, but I will organise this section by presenting the data closely related to the themes and my research questions. I have created a table for the sake of the analysability of the data and to clearly identify the participants and their backgrounds.

Table 1.

| Coded Name | Role |
| --- | --- |
| Participant 1 | International student |
| Participant 2 | BME student |
| Participant 3 | International student |
| Participant 4 | BME student |
| Participant 5 | International student |
| Participant 6 | International student |

*4.1 Four Key Findings*

4.1.1 Language Is an Obstacle for Most Minority Ethnic Students

BME and international students face academic and social transitions in their first year at university (Andrade, 2006). Through the interviews conducted in this research and a review of the existing literature, it was found that international students have more difficulty adapting and integrating than BME students, both in relation to academic and life adjustment situations. Academic adjustment problems for international students tend to focus on language. As participant 3 states that:

> *I always have many concerns and not be as active in asking questions, because I am at a disadvantage level in language and we have a lot of misunderstandings of the local culture. So sometimes I need encouragement from my teachers to communicate more. (International student)*

For most international students, the language gap could be extremely challenging and could lead to more complications than expected (Kuo, 2011). This is part of what international students need to experience during their stay in the UK. It could be described as a cultural transition and the impact of social and academic adjustment. To a certain extent, it could be argued that international students are being affected by language barriers. For example, students fear being told things on campus that they do not understand and then their brains freeze and they do not know how to react. Occasionally they may respond with irrelevant answers. This process leads to international students being potentially quieter, which might affect their academic performance and daily life.

> *I think my relationship with my tutor is not as good as her relationship with the White students, but the reason might come from me. As an international student, I am always afraid of expressing my true thoughts because of my limited vocabulary，and I do not rely on them too much because of the cultural barrier. (Participant 5, international student)*

Participant 1 also argues that:

> *... Some of us face language problems, but they are just afraid to speak out. (international student)*

However, among the BME participants I interviewed, language issues were relatively less of an issue for them.

> *...Language is not a barrier for me to study and live in the UK because I came here at a very young age, so I completed all my studies and exams in English, from primary school to secondary school to university and back again. Although my parents and I still use my mother tongue to communicate at home, my brother and I usually speak English, so it is not hard for me. (Participant 2, British minority ethnic student)*

It could be argued that the age of migration can be seen as a key factor in how well BME students learn English, as younger children acquire a new language more easily than adults (Dustmann & Fabbri, 2003). According to the data from the Migration Observatory analysis of the Labour Force Survey (2018), 88% of migrants who arrived in the UK before the age of five spoke English as a first language at home. However, for those aged 6-12 or 12-17, the proportion of immigrants with English as a first language in the home decreased to 69% and 54% respectively. In the majority of immigrants' households, their children are already using English earlier than most international students and their BME student status means that they come to the UK earlier than international students, so they tend to have a more professional and proficient command of English.

> *My family came to the UK late, but the schools I attended in my hometown are more international and teachers and students need to speak English, even though English is not necessary in my daily life. I felt a little uncomfortable when I first arrived. The main challenge I faced is like understanding certain cultural references or idioms used by teachers... As a non-native English speaker, I am not familiar with these expressions, which sometimes makes it difficult for me to participate in discussions or fully grasp their context. However, I have been proactive in addressing this issue, asking for clarification when needed and seeking out resources to expand my understanding of British culture and spoken language. By doing so, I can bridge the cultural gap (Participant 4, British minority student)*

The extracts provided illustrate the impact of language on minority ethnic students. The data provided suggests that more international students than BME students are afraid to express themselves due to the language barrier and are therefore unable to integrate better into their current environment. In particular, international students can feel socially isolated when participating in group activities, and because of the language barrier, they are at high risk of misunderstanding and misrepresenting themselves in their interactions with staff or peers, which can occasionally lead to them avoiding expression and making themselves quiet and invisible.

4.1.2 Belonging and Marginalisation on Campus

Leonardo (2016) argues that the omission of knowledge systems and pedagogical content other than the dominant Eurocentric system of knowledge denies the identity and history of minority ethnic students. In addition, he suggests an unfiltered curriculum, meaning that the content should cover the histories and identities of all groups of people and that specific groups of people should not be suppressed (Leonardo, 2016). However, in the feedback in this section, the participants' perspectives focused on their experiences of activities and courses on the university campus, and students recognised that although there was sometimes a certain pattern of exclusion in the curriculum. They felt that they still had a great experience at this university.

> *I think in the seminars, everyone's opinion is respected and it's kind of an encouraging culture...even we don't have any useful ideas, but when we answer, we definitely can get the response. (Participant 3, international student)*

> *...My opinions were acknowledged because the lecturers understand my views and respect them, and sometimes use it as an example, which means that the lectures acknowledge what I have said, so they value my opinion. (Participant 4, British minority ethnic student)*

In both extracts, the students' views and answers could be considered largely responded to by their tutors, and it was also evident that students were recognised regardless of their identity or nationality. In the next extracts, numerous experiences are provided which indicate a basic ability to see themselves reflected in the activities provided in attempts to establish a sense of belonging:

> *I quite feel like I belong here, because the university has many societies, such as the Islamic society, where people who share my faith can get together. There is also the Black and Caribbean Society, where we can share our experiences with confidence. The various societies I am involved in making me feel like I belong at this university. (Participant 2, British minority student)*

> *To be honest, I didn't feel much of a sense of belonging when I first arrived. However, during the learning process, I got in touch with many students and developed a sense of belonging with them, as well as a sense of belonging to the university. Some activities provide a place to socialise and gradually develop a sense of belonging, like concerts and various indoor activities held every week or month. I also felt that I had a mentor to support me when I face difficulties. (Participant 3, international student)*

A sense of belonging on campus and not being marginalised were seen as significant factors for better integration of students into higher education (Arday et al., 2020). In the participants' responses, it was found that they basically found a strong sense of belonging in this higher education, and the main source of this feeling was the number of relaxing activities and support services organised by the university. However, relative to international students, they may feel marginalised when they first enter higher education due to unfamiliarity

with things, which also means that most international students may take longer to integrate into the HE environment to find a sense of belonging compared to BME students.

However, the dominant content of the curriculum delivered within the college is largely Eurocentric (Leonardo, 2016), which can lead to minority students potentially being neglected. This resonates to some extent with the experiences of the participants in this research, particularly in terms of the way in which teaching and learning are constructed and the opportunities provided.

> *In the teaching environment, we are less willing to confront issues of race and racism. Because the curriculum is all about white people and there are some discussions where I will think about the feelings of the people in the room, like whether talking about race will show disrespect to the black students, so I always try to avoid these issues. Actually our tutor is the same way, I think she some times tries to protect white people's feelings or is more biased towards the white system, so they will question your answer about racism or simply respond to it to move on to the next topic, ... If you don't talk about these topics, everything seems to be going well. (Participant 5, international student)*

> *I think when the topic of decolonisation is mentioned, most students and tutors agree with it. But in reality they only focus on express, there is not much action to justify its necessity. Especially in subjects where Europe excels, such as architecture, more cases are based around Europe, even when professors receive suggestions from students like the study materials and cases should be more diverse, they tutor rarely actually modify the PowerPoint for lectures, or actually endorse the suggestion. (Participant 4, British Minority ethnic student)*

The extracts provided above illustrate the issues related to a sense of belonging in relation to the participants' experiences of participating in HE activities and Eurocentric led curriculum. The HE activities were effective in giving support to minority ethnic students and made it easier for them to find a sense of belonging, it was only international students who needed more time to integrate. However, school curriculums usually ignore specific types of history. Moreover, relevant researches show that educators and universities are generally reluctant to engage in meaningful and open discussions about race and racism that present whiteness and Eurocentrism as the dominant intellectual classics (Arday & Mirza, 2018). This has also made minority ethnic students aware of a certain pattern of exclusion and marginalisation that persists in campus classrooms. It seems that if they consciously avoid this issue, they can make the classroom better.

4.1.3 The Importance of a Diverse and Inclusive Curriculum

The importance of a diverse and inclusive curriculum was a central tenet throughout the research. In increasingly diverse universities, for many participants, there is a need to include a wider range of knowledge and concepts in the higher education curriculum. These knowledge and concepts can make connections between local, national and global contexts and thus respond to different cultures (Arday et al., 2020).

> *We really don't want to just learn about local cultures, so we all want our content to be diverse ... My major is film and we need to combine many cultures from around the world... Thinking or critiquing from a different dimension ... We are not just here to receive things like what the university and tutors give us, so we have to think about what are useful for our future. (Participant 1, International student)*

Participants felt that studying a mainstream Eurocentric curriculum and learning about the civilisations and histories of other regions was indispensable for students attempting to develop a broad world view and critical thinking that would facilitate the development of individual cultural diversity. Meanwhile, the responses of the participants in this study suggest that a fundamental aspect of advancing this endeavour is the development of diversity in teaching and learning content.

*The lectures are very varied in terms of the diversity of the students, with students from different countries, of different ages and with different experiences. The lecturers tried to get various examples from different countries to help us understand, so the lectures were diverse and inclusive ... Perhaps the reading lists are not very diverse because the authors were almost white and not many coloured authors, so the perspectives we get are limited... (Participant 2, British minority ethnic student)*

If universities can acknowledge the need to decolonise the curriculum and the general interest of all members of higher education, then pedagogical training for faculty to develop diverse and inclusive curricula becomes more achievable. According to Arday (2019), there is a direct correlation between the professional development of educators and their ability to engage in pedagogical interventions involving decolonised curricula. correlation. As illustrated by the participants' responses, the development of a decolonisation agenda needs the ongoing engagement and collaboration of students of colour and all HE staff to examine how to improve this issue:

> *... For improvement, I think the university could benefit by providing more workshops and resources for students and staff on cultural awareness and inclusion... This process allows them to discuss their*

*respective perspectives and suggestions. Moreover, the inclusion of more diverse perspectives and voices in course materials and lectures could further enrich our learning experience. (Participant 4, British minority ethnic student)*

At this point, both international and BME students are calling for the need to develop an agenda that encourages more collaborative communication between staff and students to support decolonisation in higher education. This is also seen as an integral part of moving beyond the dominant Eurocentric culture (Tate & Bagguley, 2017). This sentiment echoes existing appeals that students of colour should also be part of the design of the curriculum and that higher education should be aware that the curriculum and reading need to reflect the increasing diversity of the student body.

4.1.4 The Importance of the Decolonisation Agenda for Everyone

Among the participants in the research, there was a consensus on the need to decolonise higher education. In a decolonisation agenda, the curriculum would place people of colour in a discursive context and higher education events, seminars should be more inclusive and diverse. A central principle running through this thinking is that all members of society need to be aware of the diverse histories of different communities. This responsibility does not just fall on minority ethnic students, but all people should be aware of it:

*To promote the decolonisation of higher education is everyone's responsibility, and we as students want to think more critically about what we are learning, whether our tutors are teaching us from a patronising perspective or teaching us about cultures that are not applicable to our real lives. And we need to be vigilant and not to be bound by their inertia ... And then for staff and universities, of course, to expand the diversity of the content and the staff, if staff come from different cultural backgrounds, they definitely will stand as a voice for students, or for change in the education industry as a whole. (Participant 5, international student)*

The idea that decolonising higher education is a collective responsibility was also an important theme presented in the research. Furthermore, participants noted that diverse curriculum and inclusive environments may provide opportunities for higher education to truly reflect equality and the wider society (Arday, 2018).

*The responsibility for decolonising higher education should be shared by all stakeholders, including university administration, faculty, students and alumni. This can be achieved through collective efforts such as revising curricula, promoting diverse research, creating inclusive learning environments and fostering dialogue and understanding between different cultural backgrounds. (Participant 4, British minority ethnic student)*

The above extracts highlight the need for students and staff to work in partnership and that the decolonisation agenda can be taken forward across higher education from decolonising the curriculum. The themes in the research resonate with the idea of pedagogically engaging staff and students in the curriculum, and this decolonisation of the curriculum and reflection has benefits for all members of the university to form a diverse intellectual canon covering different histories.

*4.2 Summary*

Overall, from these data analyses of the key themes discussed above, I was able to assess whether the research questions I had presented in the Introduction section had been answered.

*1) To what extent are the contents of teaching material decolonised according to British minority ethnic and international students?*

To answer this research question, I asked all participants their views on whether their curriculum, which included lectures, teaching materials and reading, was inclusive and diverse. From the responses of both international and BME students, I found that the majority of students agreed that the content of lectures was generally diverse and inclusive, as tutors would refer to different examples from around the world to illustrate some theories or background knowledge. Students were guided to actively express their views in the process, regardless of where they were from. However, participants indicated that most of the authors recommended by tutors for students to read were white, which meant that publications by people of colour may be less likely to be recommended, and then the different perspectives students received may have been limited and less in-depth.

*2) To what extent do British minority ethnic and international students feel that they are studying in an inclusive environment?*

From my initial research, I found that BME students and international students largely felt that they were in an inclusive environment. Participants indicated that they could participate in a variety of activities, clubs and societies organised by the university. This can cater to everyone's different interests and cultures. They were able to meet numerous friends and find a community where they felt welcome. In addition, students are encouraged to answer questions in the learning seminars and their answers are basically taken into account by the tutors. In

my literature review, I stated the importance of a sense of belonging for the minority ethnic group to fit in with the current environment. The research revealed that they felt that they almost had a strong sense of belonging at the university. It is just that this process takes more time for international students.

As international students mostly face more language barriers than BME students. Therefore, when they first enter higher education, it is more difficult for them to feel a sense of belonging and inclusion in an unfamiliar environment. Due to their limited language skills, most international students may find it difficult to make good friends and they may interact and communicate less with tutors in seminars. In contrast to BME students who migrated to the UK earlier, they take more time to adapt to language challenges and find a welcoming community.

*3) How to promote decolonisation agenda based on British minority ethnic and international students perspectives?*

Direct colonial domination has disappeared, but colonialism still exists in the form of cultural, economic and political oppression in the institutions of society (Sardar, 2008). BME students and international students show distinctly different emphases on suggestions of how the decolonisation agenda might be more effectively advanced in higher education. Firstly, as the decolonisation movement continues to gather momentum within the academy, it is important to realise that if higher education is to truly contribute to the pedagogical transformation of a more diverse curriculum, then there must be a deep understanding that what is taught and how it is taught can be modified in the process of diversifying the classics. According to BME participants, they all prefer more diversity in what they learn and for students to focus on the roots or historical context of the subject of study, which would help them understand how the past has influenced our understanding of the subject today, especially in lectures. In addition, a greater diversity of voices and readings will hopefully likewise be incorporated into the curriculum to benefit the students' learning experience. It could be argued that such a curriculum facilitates a needed re-imagining of the past and the shaping of the present and future in our multi-racial society.

For international students, participants' needs for improvement were focused on language barriers and cultural differences. Participants expressed a desire for more supportive support at school, either in terms of improving English language skills or cultural integration. This could be done by simplifying the application process for some of the English language tutorials for international students and by setting up intercultural meetings to help international students become more aware of the native culture, such as everyday language and habits. This may help international students to become more familiar with the university environment and to feel a sense of belonging. In addition, the role of teaching assistants in the module can help special groups of students to answer questions about the campus and to facilitate their learning as quickly as possible. In this way, international students are more likely to feel included and have a sense of belonging in the environment, which could allow the decolonisation agenda to be taken forward in an effective way.

Finally, a common response to both groups of students was the need for a collective effort to decolonise the curriculum. They need a collective and concerted effort to improve higher education curriculum to provide more diverse and inclusive content, as these diverse histories are necessary to successfully navigate in a truly multicultural global society. There is therefore a need to conceptualise the educational space as a platform for students and educators to recreate new systems of knowledge in the process of accepting and critiquing reality. The higher education reform and decolonisation movement has now gained a global foothold, and coalitions of students and educators have become anti-racist activists seeking to support the decolonisation of the curriculum. As participants, we need to continue to hold the university to account by sustaining non-violent, intellectual and evidence-based discourses that seek to decentre Eurocentrism and eliminate cognitive violence within the academy in an attempt to envision something real included.

*4.3 Limitations*

On the whole, participants evaluated the feedback on decolonisation at this university relatively well. In my literature review, I highlighted the impact that a sense of belonging and racial inequalities rooted in society might have an impact on minority ethnic students. However, the results of the interviews showed that none of them seemed to have experienced racial discrimination in higher education and that they felt a strong sense of belonging at this university. This result may be attributed to my small research sample, and therefore they may not be representative of the full range of international or BME students in the UK. Also, my research was limited to one university in the UK, and this university is located in a city with a relatively large foreign population, which means a more inclusive environment. Consequently, this university's living environment and teaching content may not be representative of other UK higher education institutions more broadly. Finally, both of my BME participants were not extremely late to immigrate to the UK, so language issues were not a serious enough challenge for them. In fact, it is not just international students who face language challenges among the migrant population, but many immigrant students as well. However, the two participants in the research hardly viewed

language as a barrier, so their views might be seen as representative of some BME students who have a better grasp of English, but not of some BME students who have poorer English.

## 5. Conclusion

This research explores the extent to which the decolonisation agenda is being advanced in higher education based on the perspectives of British minority ethnic and international students. By interviewing two separate groups of students, I gained a comprehensive understanding of where the decolonisation agenda is at in higher education and how it can be improved.

### 5.1 Main Findings and Expectations

The main findings of the research are organised by theme and they are: Language is an obstacle for most minority ethnic students, belonging and marginalisation on campus, the importance of a diverse and inclusive curriculum, the importance of the decolonisation agenda for everyone. These themes are all highlighted and discussed in depth in the chapter of Finding and Discussion, which is then used to answer my research questions.

At the beginning of my research, I provided background information to explore the decolonisation agenda. I hypothesised that the decolonisation agenda has been advanced to some extent in higher education and has led to some more inclusive and diverse environments and advantages for students, but that some of the more specific actions and improvements may not have been practised in depth. I also hypothesised that BME students should adapt more easily to the higher education environment than international students. My first hypothesis proved to be correct. Because the students do feel a sense of belonging at the university and most of the lectures include examples from around the world, they are taught as much diversity as possible. However, some tutors recommend reading by more white authors, which means that the views of some authors of colour may not be recommended and presented. Beyond the professional content, both students and tutors may be in favour of decolonising higher education, but some concrete actions and talk of sensitive topics in public may not be evident in practice. Thus, there is much room for improvement in the achievement of decolonisation in higher education. However, my second hypothesis in the context of this experiment is one that also proves to be true. As predicted, international students face greater language challenges, and they may be shy to express themselves or not understand the questions of their peers and tutors, which can make them more likely to feel uncomfortable and isolated. They are able to integrate into the community more challenging than BME students, who have fewer language issues.

### 5.2 Research Implications and Recommendations for Future Research

The decolonisation movement in higher education continues to gather momentum as it gradually decentralises the dominant Eurocentric curriculum while attempting to address the cognitive violence of colonial knowledge and colonial ideas (Pillay, 2015). From my literature review, I struggled to find research that explored the development of a decolonisation agenda by comparing the views of BME students and international students. By using my research project, it is possible to break down nationality to locate to specific categories of BAME populations, rather than just looking at the experiences of international and BME students as homogeneous, which could be seen as a new direction of exploration for research in the field. It would be interesting to repeat this research to engage all higher education institutions associated with decolonisation to understand the bigger picture. By interviewing as many BME and international students in HE as possible would help to get a more comprehensive view of the current state of development of the decolonisation agenda in HE and suggestions for improvement.

## References

Allen, K.-A. et al., (2021). Belonging: A review of Conceptual Issues, an integrative framework, and directions for future research. *Australian Journal of Psychology*, *73*(1), pp. 87-102.

Andalo, D., (2007). Post-92 universities 'more effective' than older colleges. The Guardian. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/education/2007/may/03/highereducation.uk1 [Acessed: April 7, 2023].

Andrade, M.S., (2006) International students in English-speaking universities. *Journal of Research in International Education*, *5*(2), pp. 131-154.

Andrews, K., (2016). At last, the UK has a black studies university course. It's long overdue. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/may/20/black-studies-university-course-long-overdue [Accessed 9 Mar 2023].

Anthias, F., (2008). Thinking through the lens of translocational positionality: an intersectionality frame for understanding identity and belonging. *Translocations: Migration and social change*, *4*(1), pp. 5-20.

Araujo, N., D. Carlin, B. Clarke, L. Morieson, K. Lukas, and R. Wilson., (2014). Belonging in the First Year: A Creative Discipline Cohort Case Study. *The International Journal of the First Year in Higher Education,*

*5*(2), pp. 21-31.

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), pp. 141-161.

Arday, J., (2019). *The black curriculum: Black British history in the national curriculum report.* The Black Curriculum.

Arday, J., & Mirza, H. (eds.)., (2018). *Dismantling race in higher education: Racism, whiteness and decolonising the academy*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Arday, J., Zoe Belluigi, D. and Thomas, D., (2020). Attempting to break the chain: reimaging inclusive pedagogy and decolonising the curriculum within the academy. *Educational Philosophy and Theory, 53*(3), pp. 298-313.

Baker, S. E. and Edwards, R., (2012). *How many qualitative interviews is enough?* Expert voices and early career reflections on sampling and cases in qualitative research (National Centre for Research Methods Reviews) Southampton, GB. National Centre for Research Methods.

Batty, D., (2020). Only a fifth of UK universities say they are 'decolonising' curriculum, The Guardian. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2020/jun/11/only-fifth-of-uk-universities-have-said-they-will-decolonise-curriculum [Accessed 5 March 2023].

Bell, D., (1980). Brown v. Board of Education and the Interest-Convergence Dilemma. *Harvard Law Review*, *93*(3), p. 518.

BERA, (2018). Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research. [Online]. Available at: https://www.bera.ac.uk/researchers-resources/publications/ethical-guidelines-for-educationalresearch-2018 [Accessed 10 March 2023].

Bismarck, H.V., (2012). *Defining Decolonization*. Essay for The British Scholar Society.

Blum, L., (2002). *I'm not a racist, but: The moral quandary of race.* Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Bolderston, A., (2012). Conducting a Research Interview. *Journal of Medical Imagining and Radiation Sciences*, *48*, pp. 66-67.

Bolton, P. and Lewis, J., (2022). *International students in UK higher education: Faqs*, UK Parliament. Available at: https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research- briefings/cbp-7976/ [Accessed: April 7, 2023].

Brown, R.P. and Lee, M.N., (2005). Stigma consciousness and the race gap in college academic achievement. *Self and Identity*, *4*, pp. 149-157.

Cabinet Office, (2017). Race Disparity Audit Summary Findings from the Ethnicity Facts and Figures website. London: Cabinet Office. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/686071/Revised_RDA_report_March_2018.pdf [Accessed 5 March 2023].

Chin, C., (2019). The concept of belonging: Critical, Normative and Multicultural, *Ethnicities, 19*(5), pp. 715-739.

Connor, H., (2004). *Why the difference?: A closer look at Higher Education Minority ethnic students and graduates.* Nottingham: DfES Publications.

Craig, G., Cole, B., Ali, N. and Qureshi, I., (2019). *The missing dimension: where is 'race' in social policy teaching and learning?* Social Policy Association.

Creswell, J.W., (2009). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.

Cruz, M., (2022). *We are not operating a level playing field: addressing the BAME attainment gap this Black History Month.* EPIGRAM. Available at: https://epigram.org.uk/2022/10/26/we-are-not-operating-a-level-playing-field-addressing-the-bame-attainment-gap-this-black-history-month/ [Accessed: April 7, 2023].

Dustmann, C., and Fabbri, F, (2003). Language proficiency and labour market performance of immigrants in the UK. *The Economic Journal, 113*(489), pp. 695-717.

EHRC, (2019a). Public Sector Equality Duty [online]. Available at: https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/public-sector-equality-duty [Accessed 5 March 2023].

Fanon, F., (1963). *The Wretched of the Earth, trans*. Constance Farrington. New York: Grove Weidenfeld. pp. 102.

Felix, M., (2022). *Anti-racism in UK higher education*. Centre for Global Higher Education working paper series, 83, pp. 1-22.

Fleras, A., & Elliott, J. L., (1992). *Multiculturalism in Canada*. Scarborough, Toronto: Nelson Canada.

Fomunyam, K. and Teferra, D., (2017). Curriculum responsiveness within the context of decolonisation in South African higher education. *Perspectives in Education, 35*(2), pp. 196-207.

Gamble, J., (2003). *Curriculum responsiveness in FET colleges*. Pretoria: HSRC Press.

Glaser, B. G., (1965). The Constant Comparative Method of Qualitative Analysis. *Social Problems*, *12*(4), pp. 436-445.

Gopal, P., (2021) On Decolonisation and the University. *Textual Practice,* 35(6), pp. 873-899 Hammersley, M. (2010). Reproducing or constructing? Some questions about transcription in social research. *Qualitative Research*, *10*(5), pp. 553-569.

Hart, C., (2018). *Doing a literature review*. 1st ed. SAGE.

Higher Education Statistics Agency, (2023). *What are HE students' progression rates and qualifications?* Available at: https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/students/outcomes [Accessed 5 March 2023].

Higher Education Statistics Agency, (2023). Where do HE students come from? Available at: https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/students/where-from [Accessed 5 March 2023].

Higher Education Statistics Agency, (2023). Where do HE students study? Available at: https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/students/where-study [Accessed 5 March 2023].

Higher Education Statistics Agency. (2023). Who's studying in HE? Available at: https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/students/whos-in-he [Accessed 5 March 2023].

Housee, S., (2018). *Speaking Out Against Racism in the University Space.* Stoke-On- Trent: Trentham Books.

Hurtado, S., Milem, J. F., Clayton-Pedersen, A. R., & Allen, W. R., (1998). Enhancing campus climates for racial/ethnic diversity: Educational policy and practice. *The Review of Higher Education, 21*(3), pp. 279-302.

Keele, (2021). Keele's Manifesto for Decolonising the Curriculum? Available at: http://www.keele.ac.uk/equalitydiversity/equalityframeworksandactivities/equalityawar dsand reports/equalityawards/raceequalitycharter/keeledecolonisingthecurriculumnet work/ [Accessed 5 March 2023].

Keele University, (2021). Decolonising the Curriculum Staff Guide. Available at: https://www.keele.ac.uk/equalitydiversity/equalityframeworksandactivities/decolonisingthecurriculum/Keel e%20University%20DTC%20Staff%20Guide%20.pdf [Accessed: April 7, 2023].

Keohane N, Petrie, K, (2017). On course for success? Student retention at university. London: Social Market Foundation. Available at: http://www.smf.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/UPP-final-report.pdf [Accessed 5 March 2023].

Kift, S., (2004). Organising First Year Engagement around Learning: Formal and Informal Curriculum Intervention.

Kuo, Y.-H., (2011). Language challenges faced by international graduate students in the United States. *Journal of International Students, 1*(2), pp. 38-42.

Kymlicka, W. (1995). *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Lavrakas, P., (2008). Social Desirability. Sage Research Methods. [Online] Available at: http://methods.sagepub.com/reference/encyclopedia-of-surveyresearch- methods/n537.xml [Accessed 10 March 2023].

Leonardo, Z., (2016). The color of supremacy. In E. Taylor, D. Gillborn, & G. Ladson- Billings (eds.), *Foundations of critical race theory in education*, Routledge.

Lijphart, A., (1971). Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method. *The American Political Science Review*, *65*(3), pp. 682-693.

Liu, H., Motoda, H. and Yu, L., (2004). A selective sampling approach to active feature selection. *Artificial Intelligence*, *159*(1-2), pp. 49-74.

Mbembe, A.J, (2016). Decolonizing the university: New Directions. *Arts & Humanities in Higher Education*, *15*(1), pp. 29-45.

Meehan, C. and Howells, K., (2018). In search of the feeling of 'belonging' in higher education: Undergraduate students transition into Higher Education. *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, *43*(10), pp. 1376-1390.

Mendoza-Denton, R. et al., (2002). Sensitivity to status-based rejection: Implications for African American students' college experience. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *83*(4), pp. 896-918.

Moodley, K. A., (1995). Multicultural education in Canada: Historical development and current status. In J. A. Banks, & C. A. McGee Banks (Eds.), *Handbook of research on multicultural education*, (pp. 801–820). New York, NY: Macmillan.

Morris KS, Seaton EK, Iida M, Lindstrom Johnson S., (2020). Racial Discrimination Stress, School Belonging, and School Racial Composition on Academic Attitudes and Beliefs among Black Youth. *Social Sciences*, *9*(11), pp. 191.

Ngũgĩ, W.T., (1986). 'The Quest for Relevance', in Decolonizing the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature, pp. 87.

OfS, (2018a). Topic briefing: Black and minority ethnic (BAME) students [online]. Available at: https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/145556db-8183-40b8-b7af- 741bf2b55d79/topic-briefing b me-students.pdf [Accessed 5 March 2023].

Open University, (2022). Decolonising Educational Technology. Available at: https://www.open.ac.uk/blogs/CALRG/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/UNESCO_Decolonising-Education-Te chnology.pdf [Accessed 5 March 2023].

Osterman, K. F. (2000). Students' need for belonging in the school community. *Review of Educational Research, 70*(3), pp. 323-367.

Owen, D. A; Green J. P and Maguire, M., (2000). *Minority ethnic participation and achievements in education, training and the labour market,* London: Department for Education and Skills. Research Report No. 225.

Parekh, B.C., (2005). Unity and diversity in multicultural societies. *International Institute for Labour Studies,* pp. 1-20.

Payne, G. and Payne, J, (2004). The Hawthorne Effect. Sage Research Methods. [Online] Available at: http://methods.sagepub.com/book/key-concepts-in- socialresearch/n22.xml [Accessed 10 March 2023].

Pillay, S., (2015). Decolonising the university, Africa is a Country.

Richardson, J.T.E., (2008). The attainment of ethnic minority students in UK higher education. *Studies in Higher Education*, *33*(1), pp. 33-48.

Sardar, Z., (2008). Foreword to the 2008 edition. I think it would be good if certain things were said: Fanon and the epidemiology of oppression. In F. Fanon (ed.), 1967, *Black skins, White masks* (2008 ed., pp. vi–xx). Pluto Books.

Saunders, M., Lewis, P. & Thornhill, A., (2012). *Research Methods for Business Students* 6th edition, Pearson Education Limited.

Shain, F., Yıld ız, Ü., Poku, V. and Gokay, B., (2021) From silence to 'strategic advancement': institutional responses to 'decolonising' in higher education in England. *Teaching in Higher Education*, *26*(7-8), pp. 920-936.

Skinner, B., (2010). English as an Additional Language and initial teacher education: views and experiences from Northern Ireland. *Journal of Education for Teaching, 36*(1), pp.75-90.

Strayhorn, T. L., (2018). *College students' sense of belonging: A key to educational success for all students.* Routledge.

Takayama, K., Sriprakash, A., & Connell, R., (2017). Toward a Postcolonial Comparative and International Education. *Comparative Education Review*, *61*(1), pp. 1-24.

Tate, S. A., & Bagguley, P., (2017). Building the anti-racist university: next steps. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, *20*(3), pp. 289-299.

Thomas, G., (2013). *How to do your research project.* 2nd ed. SAGE.

Thomas, G., (2017). *How to do your Research Project: A Guide for Students in Education and Applied Social Sciences*, 3rd edition. London: Sage Publications.

Tinto, V., (2003). *Learning Better Together: The Impact of Learning Communities on Student Success.* Higher Education Monograph Series 2003 - 1. Higher Education Program, School of Education, Syracuse University.

Universities UK, (2019). Black, Asian and minority ethnic student attainment at UK universities: #closingthegap. Available at: https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/sites/default/files/field/downloads/2021-07/bame-student-attainment.pdf [Accessed 5 March 2023].

Virdee, S. and McGeever, B., (2017). Racism, Crisis, Brexit. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, *41*(10), pp.1802-1819.

Walton, G.M. and Cohen, G.L., (2006). *A question of belonging: Race, gender, social fit, and achievement,* PsycEXTRA Dataset [Preprint].

Wilczewski, M. and Alon, I., (2022). Language and communication in international students' adaptation: A bib liometric and content analysis review, Higher Education [Preprint].

Wilson, C., Broughan, C., & Daly, G., (2022). Case Study: Decolonising the Curriculum — An Exemplification. *Social Policy and Society, 21*(1), pp. 142-150.

**Copyrights**