A Q-Methodological Study: Which Factors are Considered to be the Most Impactful for the Academic Success of Black-African Caribbean Males?

Tavelah Robinson BSc

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Abstract

The present study focuses on the consistent academic disparities experienced by Black African Caribbean (BAC) children and young people (CYP) within the UK educational landscape, emphasising their persistent underperformance on average, when compared to other ethnicities (Bowe, 2015; Demie & Mclean, 2017; Roberts & Bolton, 2020). Recent evidence from the Department for Education (DfE; Strand, 2021) on Attainment 8 scores signifies limited progress in tackling such inequalities, highlighting the imminent need for further investigation into the distinct educational shortcomings faced by BAC CYP and the necessity to develop bespoke interventions tailored to subgroup differences (Demie & Mclean, 2017; Roberts & Bolton, 2020; Commission on Racial and Ethnic Disparities, Education and Training, 2021). Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory is used as a framework for understanding the complex layers of influence affecting the attainment of BAC CYP within schools, specifically in relation to systemic biases such as institutional racism (Bronfenbrenner, 1977; Nation et al., 2020). This framework sheds light on the interwoven systems within the educational environment and stresses the importance of developing targeted interventions to address the underlying causes of academic disparities (McLaughlin & Talbert, 2006; Valencia, 2010).

This study adopted a Q methodological approach to explore the perspectives of 21 college-aged, BAC males regarding factors beneficial for their educational success (Brown, 1996). Findings indicated there are three unique viewpoints amongst participants each providing distinct insights into achieving academic success. Furthermore, common themes emerged across all Q-sorts, highlighting the significance of positive school and community role models, parental support, intrinsic motivation, and clear two-way communication between parents and schools. These outcomes provide useful directions for school practitioners and educational psychologists (EPs) to design bespoke interventions that effectively address these

key areas, promoting educational success and the whole development of BAC males within

the UK education system.

1. Chapter 1 – Introduction

1.1. Statement of Positionality

I am a trainee Educational Psychologist (TEP) from Leeds, living in Birmingham and studying in Nottingham. I am of black African Caribbean (BAC) heritage and identify as female. My mother's parents were born in St. Kitts and my father's parents were born in Jamaica. My parents were born and raised in Leeds, UK, and identify as British and Caribbean, as do I. My mother completed a university qualification, albeit she took a less conventional route to academia and completed her higher education after having five children and working for many years. She now works as a Mental Health Transformation Lead for the National Health Service (NHS). My mother and father were both touring singers and musicians and my father continues to play drums as his main source of income. I was raised alongside my twin sister and three brothers. One of my brothers went on to college and achieved his level 2 qualifications, while my other two brothers discontinued their academic careers after secondary school. My brothers often highlighted issues of bullying, discrimination, and racism which they believe inhibited their abilities to achieve well and my father was excluded from school in his first year of high school and never returned. However, my twin sister completed the same A-level and degree qualifications as I do and is currently training to become a clinical psychologist. My familial experience is my biggest inspiration for conducting this research because I have witnessed the females in my family aspire and reach great achievements, whereas the males in my family have not completed a conventional academic route to their careers. I have always been curious about why the females in my family were able to achieve more academic success in school compared to the males.

In addition, I previously taught English and Drama as a secondary school teacher in a multicultural school in Birmingham for four years before becoming a TEP. In this role, I have experienced BAC males in school and witnessed differential treatment from staff members

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towards them compared to other ethnic groups. I have also spoken with many BAC boys in school about their educational experiences, many of whom have expressed a distaste for their schooling experience. This led me to feel passionate about upholding the voices of BAC males and challenging the current school system.

As the only trainee EP of BAC heritage on my cohort, I felt personally aligned and responsible for representing my ethnicity and culture in research and advocating for BAC males in education. After learning more about the demographic and statistical data which has highlighted that the underachievement of BAC males has continued for many decades with little to no change, this has fuelled me to pursue this research and find a viable and realistic solution to this issue.

As a BAC female, I recognise that my familial and cultural experiences make me biased and passionate about the topic being researched. I recognise that my own experiences living and working with BAC males could influence my search and analysis processes and influence how I interpret and understand the results. However, my enthusiasm for this topic will ensure I make all the possible and necessary steps to make a change for BAC males in education.

1.2. Aims and Objectives / Policy Backdrop

The aim of this literature review is to conduct a thorough search and synthesis of the existing evidence base regarding the success factors that are impacting BAC males and their educational achievement. From the critical appraisal of current literature, and identification of gaps in the research, this researcher will justify and explain the rationale and context for this research.

2. Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1. Introduction to Chapter

Understanding the educational landscape of BAC males in the United Kingdom (UK) requires a thorough analysis, dissecting the multifaceted layers that impact their educational journeys. The educational experiences of BAC males are not only the result of singular factors but a combination of potential systemic biases from the individual level to the institutional and socio-cultural level within UK society. This narrative review is in two sections, firstly exploring the terminology associated with this subject area and the possible existence of racism within the educational sphere. Secondly, section two explores some perceived issues with deficit-focused research, which has dominated thus far when investigating educational underachievement, and outlines how solution-oriented research might be better suited to understand how best to support BAC males with their academic attainment at the secondary school level. Following the narrative review, this researcher presents the rationale for conducting a systematic literature review (SLR), followed by a thorough outline of the SLR aimed at investigating the current research on success factors impacting BAC males in UK education settings.

2.2. Section 1: Understanding the Terminology and Context

The terminology used to understand matters concerning ethnicity and identity are varied and there is much debate about which terminology is most appropriate when describing different ethnic groups. In this section, one will explore the terms associated with research around ethnic groups and unpack some of the difficulties around using certain terms (such as race) over other terms. The terms most favoured will be highlighted and justified.

2.2.1. *Understanding Terminology: Culture*

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Culture can be understood from various perspectives, and whilst definitions may vary, the American Psychological Association's (APA, 2023) definition is widely accepted within psychology and provides standardised psychological definitions. According to the APA, culture involves the beliefs, values, rituals, language, traditions, and behaviours passed down generations within any social group. This broad view includes the collective identity shaped by a society's way of life, including its interactions, attitudes, and influence on areas like community practices and education.

From another perspective, culture is viewed as a complicated, learned system of shared values, beliefs, and practices that influence behaviour and social interactions within a group. This definition stresses that culture manifests through core values, observable artifacts, and deep-rooted assumptions, which differ across individual experiences and social contexts (Spencer-Oatey & Franklin, 2012). Additionally, Cohen (2009) suggests that a wider understanding of culture—beyond the conventional or widely accepted definitions—can improve our understanding of cultural specificity and universality.

2.2.2. Understanding Terminology: Race

Race refers to categorisations based on physical traits such as facial features and skin colour (Cambridge Dictionary, 2023). This term is controversial, and often criticised for limiting identity flexibility and imposing boundaries between groups (Khunti et al., 2020; Fought, 2006). Historically, the construct of race has been associated with racism and systemic inequalities, strengthening the concept of fixed differences between groups (Gilligan, 2016). Early anthropologists like Boas (1901) challenged the notion of race as a biological factor, instead highlighting the role of environmental and cultural factors.

Modern psychological research emphasises the negative impact of racial labelling, including the perpetuation of stereotypes and biases that affect social interactions and

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decision-making (Steele & Aronson, 1995; Jones, 2000; Eberhardt, 2020). Similarly, the APA (2023) defines race as a social construct used to group people based on perceived physical traits, which might reinforce sociopolitical hierarchies. This definition agrees that racial categories are not permanent but differ across contexts and can encompass religious, cultural, geographic, and national affiliations (APA, 2023). As such, race is context-dependent and flexible, and some individuals could potentially identify with multiple racial backgrounds.

Despite attempts to redefine the term, "race" remains a contentious concept, with "ethnicity" increasingly preferred for its multifaceted and more contemporary understanding of identity. The following section will explore why "ethnicity" is considered a more appropriate term.

2.2.3. Understanding Terminology: Ethnicity

Ethnicity, not like race, is argued by psychologists and the APA as being rooted in ancestry and historical cultural practices, incorporating shared cultural elements such as language, music, food, dress, values, and beliefs (Cornell & Hartmann, 2006; APA Dictionary of Psychology, 2023).

In sociology, ethnicity emphasises self-identity and individual affiliations, allowing individuals to define their identity through historical connections and shared customs (Morning & Sabbagh, 2005; Clair & Denis, 2015). The UK government promotes the use of "ethnicity" over "race" to acknowledge this adaptable aspect of identity (Ethnicity Facts and Figures, 2021).

2.2.4. Understanding Terminology: Racism

Racism is understood within psychology as a multifaceted problem involving both individual prejudices and systemic biases. It is described within psychology as a system of practices and beliefs that uphold racial hierarchies, potentially leading to discriminatory

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treatment and unequal opportunities based on race (APA, 2023). This includes racism on an individual level, which might involve discriminatory actions and personal prejudices, as well as systemic racism, referring to engrained institutional policies and practices that could perpetuate racial inequalities (Gillborn, 2008). Racism could manifest through explicit discriminatory behaviours and subtle, typically unintentional microaggressions—indirect comments or actions that might reinforce racial stereotypes (Sue et al., 2007). Additionally, racial identity and structural factors are considered to play significant roles in perpetuating systemic racism and influencing psychological experiences of discrimination (Smith, 2004). This review aims to explore these aspects using an ecological framework to understand how various systems might enable racism, while using the terms 'ethnicity' and 'racism' to address related issues throughout.

This next section will explore how racism in education might present itself in various ways: from the direct and individual levels to the broader, indirect, and systemic levels. An ecological framework will be used to explore this further, briefly alluding to the possible ways in which racism can manifest in society and impact BAC children in education.

2.3. Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory: A Framework for Understanding Racism in Education

Bronfenbrenner's (1977; 1979) ecological systems theory helps to explain the different systems at play within society which directly impact how people think, feel, and behave within society. These systems can be understood as layers that impact all people and provides a different lens for researchers to holistically analyse human behaviour and experiences (Nation, et al, 2020). Youth development occurs on multiple interacting and embedded social systems which include family, school, community, and broader sociocultural and historical systems which can be affected by each other and time (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). The

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multiple layers of this ecological framework will be explained in further detail under each sub-heading of the system: micro-system, meso-system, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem. Under each of the sub-systems, racism in schools will be explored considering the multiple levels which this can be experienced by CYP.

2.3.1. Microsystem

The microsystem is characterised as the closest environment to the child including the child, their family, their school, and any other influences who have direct and regular contact with the child (Bronfenbrenner, 2000; Berk, 2000). Ryan (2001) interprets this level to be a two-way influential relationship between the child and their environment; the child impacts their surrounding system, and their environment affects them directly. Bronfenbrenner defines this to be a bi-directional relationship and states that this level has the most powerful impact on a child's development (Bronfenbrenner, 2000).

CYP can experience racism, within the school system, on the micro-level, including through direct interactions with children and staff members at school who share racist views and perpetuate feelings of difference, inadequacy, and insecurity within individual children. For example, racism can be perpetuated through micro-aggressions: a subtle, often unintended, comment or behaviour that shows a prejudiced view toward a member of a marginalised group, such as a racial minority (Cambridge Dictionary, 2023; Merriam-Webster, 2023; Psychology Today, 2023). Such racist interaction, often characterised by stereotypes and biases, be it overt or sub-conscious, can contribute to the self-esteem and confidence development of CYP from certain ethnic groups, significantly impacting their academic trajectories, worsening disparities in outcomes and opportunities, and reducing their abilities to build emotional resilience (Woods-Jaeger et al, 2022; Tikly, 2022; Keels et al, 2017). Measuring microaggressions through self-report (like in Keels et al, 2017) reduces the

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validity of results, increasing bias and opportunity for false reports; however, these studies offer some insight into how those who experience direct and regular racist incidences have less positive emotional and academic outcomes.

2.3.2. *Mesosystem*

The mesosystem is defined as the linkages between aspects of the microsystem that interact and directly impact one other, and the CYP they are surrounding, e.g., the relations between school and home (Bronfenbrenner, 1986; Ryan, 2001). Within this aspect of the model, it is useful to analyse how well aspects of the microsystem are interacting and whether they are aligned (e.g., on their values) as conflict can affect the developing CYP within the microsystem (Härkönen, 2001; Bronfenbrenner, 1989).

When applying the mesosystem as a lens to understand racism in schools, it highlights a critical rift between educational environments and home. This disconnect can foster a deep mistrust among BAC parents and children towards school staff who perpetuate such discriminatory narratives. This distrust can catalyse challenging behaviours amongst BAC males, eventually leading to higher exclusions and limiting their prospects for academic success. Notably, Crozier's (1996) critical case study on BAC parents within the UK outlines this detrimental effect, whilst Wallace's (2013) findings emphasise the marginalisation of ethnic minority parents whose views on the educational system are systematically ignored, leading to their voices having a minimal perceived impact in the shaping of their children's educational experience.

Therefore, the interplay between aspects of the microsystem could have the power to affect the personal experiences and perspectives of a developing child, impacting their behaviour and in turn their educational experience.

2.3.3. *Exosystem*

The exosystem, described as interconnected systems indirectly affecting a child's development, involves structures such as mass media, local governments, and extended family (Bronfenbrenner, 1986; Härkönen, 2001). An example of this might involve a child's home and a parent's workplace, where a change in the employment status at work could directly impact the child's access to resources (Bronfenbrenner, 1977; 1979; 1986; 2002).

The impact of racialisation on marginalised ethnicities' educational experiences is argued to be influenced by media-driven racial stereotypes, potentially shaping biases amongst educators and their support for students. Scholars like Laird (2008) and Sudbury & Wilberforce (2006) highlight mass media's pervasive influence on racial stereotyping within educational settings. These biases might affect teachers' aspirations and support for black students, as evidenced by Dee (2005), Cushion et al. (2011), and Castro (2017). Mahmud and Gagnon's (2023) recent study further highlights the need for educators to understand diverse backgrounds to foster inclusive learning environments and mitigate biases towards black students, supported by its contemporary and large-scale approach, which is crucial for promoting equitable educational outcomes.

2.3.4. *Macrosystem*

The macrosystem is understood to be how cultural elements can impact a child's development, including cultural ideologies and attitudes that a child is immersed in. This includes beliefs about family structures, gender roles, social issues, and the concept of success within a society (Härkönen, 2001; Bronfenbrenner, 1977; 1979; 1986; 2002). These social norms, values, and beliefs affect the child's microsystem, e.g., children should be taught the reading canon in the UK to obtain academic success. This level also includes

socioeconomic status. However, within a common macrosystem, there will be differing and opposing viewpoints within it (Bronfenbrenner, 1977; 1979; 1986; 2002).

In terms of racialisation in UK schools, the macrosystem is a useful system to consider how cultural and societal norms could have permeated how the UK education system has been structured, which could benefit some children and significantly disadvantage others. One concept which might explain how the macrosystem impacts black children is institutional racism. This concept signifies the hard-grained systemic discrimination within organisational structures (e.g., schools), perpetuating differences without overtly discriminatory actions (Macpherson, 1999; Gillborn, 2008). It could affect expectations, policymaking, and resource allocation within educational systems, contributing to the differential outcomes of various ethnic groups (Gillborn, 2008; Gillborn et al, 2016).

2.3.5. *Chronosystem*

The Chronosystem is the final stage of Bronfenbrenner's ecological system which illuminates the evolving societal dynamics and historical underpinnings impacting a child's development. Historical events including slavery and the migration of BAC people to the UK in the 1960s, generally referred to as *the Windrush era* (due to the arrival of the Empire Windrush ship), are considered to have had enduring impacts on institutional practices, maintaining implicit biases (Dumas, 2014; Warmington, 2014). Scholars have argued that subconscious institutionalised biases subtly filter through educational settings, leading to lowered expectations and treatment of young black people, promoting educational inequalities (Shain, 2020; Khan, 2021; Shankley & Rhodes, 2021).

The nuanced application of ecological systems theory illuminates the potential systemic biases embedded in educational structures. Such biases might impede the educational

journeys and outcomes of black CYP by continuing historical marginalisation, a reality argued to be particularly evident for BAC males within education.

The rise of contemporary movements such as Black Lives Matter (BLM; Hillstrom, 2018; Chase, 2017) underscores an awakening of existing potential institutional biases, specifically within educational contexts. These biases arguably impact BAC children, reflecting the enduring result of historical marginalisation within educational systems (Warrener & Douglas, 2023; Arday & Jones, 2022; Pennant, 2022).

Analysing the educational disparities of BAC males through the lens of Bronfenbrenner's Chronosystem demands a thorough revaluation of institutional practices. The explicit recognition and proactive actions to dismantle existing biases within the education system are essential for promoting an equitable and inclusive educational environment, and helpful for the holistic development of all children, irrespective of their ethnic backgrounds.

2.3.6. Conclusion

In conclusion, a nuanced understanding of race, racism, ethnicity, and culture is vital in dissecting the difficulties with the educational experiences of BAC males in the UK. The interconnected influences of factors at various levels of Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems underscore the need for a comprehensive method of addressing the systemic barriers and promoting an inclusive educational environment (Gillborn & Youdell, 1999). Empowering BAC males requires not only critical analysis but also practical measures aimed at disassembling systemic biases and fostering a more conducive environment for BAC males' academic success (Laird, 2008; Pieterse et al, 2023).

2.4. Intersectionality: Understanding Factors Impacting Experiences of Education

2.4.1. Introduction

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It is important to understand that racism is one aspect of a range of factors potentially impacting the educational experiences of CYP. This section explores the impact of intersectionality on the educational attainment of CYP. Intersectionality offers a nuanced perspective to understand the educational difficulties faced by BAC males, understanding the interplay between factors such as race, gender, and socioeconomic status in affecting their experiences within the education system (Crenshaw, 2018).

The idea of intersectionality, originally coined by Crenshaw (2018), highlights the complicated interconnections among numerous social identities and systems of perceived oppression. In the educational context, this framework emphasises how multiple aspects of one's identity overlap to shape the educational experiences of individuals.

Various scholars (Harris & Leonardo, 2018; Evans-Winters, 2021; Crenshaw, 2018; Bhopal & Preston, 2012; Petersen, 2006) have outlined how the convergence of different social identities can influence the educational experiences of CYP. This intersectionality lens offers a holistic perspective on how the range of social identities (including race, gender, and socioeconomic status) interact to affect the educational trajectories of CYP.

2.4.2. *Racial Dynamics Across Ethnic Groups*

2.4.2.1. **Black, Asian, and Other Ethnic Minority Groups.**

Disparities persist among various ethnic groups within education as research has found there to be differential treatment in academic outcomes, with some ethnicities facing more substantial challenges (Roberts & Bolton, 2020; Harris & Leonardo, 2018; Evans-Winters, 2021; Crenshaw, 2018; Bhopal & Preston, 2012; Petersen, 2006). For instance, recent government statistical data shows that Black and mixed-race children faced pronounced academic trials compared to their Asian counterparts (across all Asian ethnicities; Modood,

2003; Strand, 2021). This racial disparity in academia will be explored in further depth in this chapter.

Asian and Ethnic Subgroups. Young people who categorise themselves as belonging to the 'Asian' ethnic group (including Chinese, Pakistani, Indian, and Bangladeshi) experience considerably different educational experiences, understandably due to the differing cultural, religious, and economic statuses across the range of Asian countries (Modood, 2003; Archer, 2010; Strand, 2021). While some Asian subgroups experience academic success (e.g., Chinese and Indian), others face barriers due to cultural differences, language, and stereotypes (Archer & Francis, 2005; Archer, 2010; Strand, 2021).

White Ethnic Groups Disparities. White ethnic group disparities are typically overlooked, particularly when socioeconomic status is not considered in the analysis of outcomes (Demie & Lewis, 2011; House of Commons Education Committee, 2021). Research indicates a plethora of variations in the academic success for white working-class CYP based on regional factors and socioeconomic status affecting the educational experiences of white working-class CYP (Crozier et al, 2008; Reay et al., 2010; Strand, 2021; Demie & Lewis, 2011).

Racial Disparities for BAC CYP. Department for Education (DfE) statistics indicate that BAC CYP face considerable challenges in educational attainment (Roberts & Bolton, 2023). They consistently underachieve in standardised assessments and examinations, experience higher exclusion rates, and experience systemic barriers which limit their academic success (Bhopal, 2018; Roberts & Bolton, 2020). The extent of their educational disadvantages will be explored in further depth later in this chapter.

Therefore, it is evident that there are clear disparities in academic attainment across ethnic groups and some ethnicities face significantly more educational barriers than other ethnic

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groups. BAC children appear to be one of the lowest attaining groups whilst some Asian ethnicities experience more academic success than others. White working-class CYP also experience a level of disadvantage within education which appears to be rooted in socioeconomic status as opposed to race. This highlights the need to look at intersectionality and the impact that various other factors, alongside race, have on the educational experiences of children and young people. This next section will dissect some sub-sections of society (gender and socioeconomic status) to understand how such factors interplay and impact the academic attainment of CYP, and BAC CYP specifically.

2.4.3.   *Impact of Gender on Educational Experiences.*

Gender dynamics in educational settings significantly affect the experiences of CYP, with specific biases and expectations arguably impacting academic attainment (Pekkarinen, 2012; Gibb et al, 2008; Mensah & Kiernan, 2010) In the case of BAC males, Carlile (2012) argues that gendered stereotypes interconnect with racial biases, influencing their educational performance and self-perception. Gender is a key factor affecting the challenges experienced by BAC CYP, with considerable difficulty being faced by males. Scholars including Roberts and Bolton (2020) and Gillborn and Mirza (2000) have highlighted differences in academic outcomes, showcasing higher exclusion rates, reduced university attendance, and lower pass rates than their female counterparts. This will be discussed further, later in this section.

2.4.4.   *Impact of Socioeconomic Status on Educational Experiences.*

Socioeconomic status can significantly affect educational trajectories by impacting access to academic resources and success (Crozier et al., 2008; Reay et al., 2010). These factors specifically impact BAC CYP, who achieve lower levels of academic success compared to other ethnic groups, potentially limiting their opportunities for higher achievement (Strand, 2021; Demie, 2021a). Strand (2021) has research evidence supporting the notion that

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socioeconomic disparities among ethnic groups in the UK are significant, with BAC CYP experiencing significant educational challenges. Using the Longitudinal Study of Young People in England (LSYPE) dataset, the study found that BAC and MWBC students from lower SES backgrounds, especially boys, have some of the lowest mean scores at age 16, like low SES White British CYP. Boys from low SES Pakistani, White Other, and Any Other ethnicities also score below the mean but outperform their BAC/MWBC and White British counterparts. Generally, non-White British students achieve higher scores than White British students of the same SES, except for high SES BAC and Black African boys, and high SES Pakistani girls, who underperform compared to their White British counterparts. These findings highlight the need to consider both SES and ethnicity in educational outcomes.

The disparities in academic outcomes can be partially explained by varying levels of socioeconomic deprivation among ethnic groups. Low SES students typically achieve less academic success due to factors like health issues, poor nutrition, low parental education, housing instability, limited financial resources, and high-crime neighbourhoods (Bradley & Corwyn, 2002; Reiss, 2013). In 2016, 14% of White British pupils were eligible for Free School Meals (FSM), compared to 25% of Black African, 28% of BAC, and 29% of MWBC pupils (Strand, 2021). Socioeconomic disparities in income, employment, housing, and health (Strand, 2011) increase the risk of low academic achievement for some ethnic groups. Understanding these differences requires comparing examination outcomes of pupils from similar SESs across ethnic groups.

Understanding intersectionality is vital for creating targeted interventions that address the unique and complex challenges faced by BAC CYP, particularly males. By acknowledging and demolishing the interconnecting structures of perceived disadvantage, educators and policymakers can work towards encouraging a more equitable and inclusive educational environment for all CYP.

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2.4.5. Conclusion.

This section outlines the crucial role of intersectionality in understanding the multifaceted nature of educational experiences. Even though this thesis primarily focuses on the intersections of gender and race in the context of BAC males' education, it recognises the importance of socioeconomic factors and introduces some exploration of this area in upcoming discussions. The following section will explore in more depth, the nature of the educational landscape for BAC males, outlining the need to focus on this demographic for intervention.

2.5. The Educational Landscape for BAC Males – A Richer Picture

The academic attainment of BAC CYP has caused long-lasting concerns among scholars and within the UK government (Demie, 2021a; Demie, 2021b; Demie & Mclean, 2017; Gillborn & Youdell, 1999). BAC CYP, in the UK, consistently underperform in General Certificates of Secondary Education (GCSE) exams and post-16 education (Bowe, 2015; Demie & Mclean, 2017; Roberts & Bolton, 2020). BAC CYP's performances are notably lower than all other ethnic groups, excluding Gypsy Roma and Irish traveller CYP (Bhopal, 2018; Gillborn, 2014; Clark & Shankley, 2020). Strand (2021) analysed data from the Department for Education (DfE) Statistical First Releases and National Pupil Database, discovering that BAC and Mixed White and Black Caribbean (MWBC) pupils are the only two ethnic groups to score significantly below the mean average of White British pupils. Black African and Mixed White and Black African (MWBA) pupils scored nearly identically to White British pupils. However, merging BAC and MWBC pupils under one category ignores the distinct educational experiences of these groups (Roberts & Bolton, 2020; Roberts & Bolton, 2023).

Roberts and Bolton (2020; 2023) highlighted education outcomes in their research briefings, commissioned by the UK House of Commons. They noted that black CYP are amongst the lowest attaining ethnicities, followed by Irish Traveller and Gypsy Roma communities. Whilst GCSE scores imply lower attainment for black pupils compared to other ethnic groups, Progress 8 scores (an alternative measure of school progress) indicate that black CYP make more progress in their academic grades on average (+0.22) than white pupils (-0.14) from the beginning of Key Stage 3 (KS3) to the end of Key Stage 4 (KS4) between 2022-2023.

Nevertheless, when black pupils' scores are disaggregated, white pupils continue to outperform BAC pupils, with separate analyses indicating that black African pupils obtained an average pass rate in maths and English of 69%, exceeding white pupils (63.4%) and BAC pupils (52%) in GCSE pass rates and overall Progress 8 scores. This stresses the need to differentiate between outcomes for BAC and black African pupils due to their significantly different education experiences (Roberts & Bolton, 2020; 2023).

Overall, BAC CYP's academic attainment raises alarms, justifying the need for further investigation into the disparities between BAC CYP's achievements and other ethnic groups. Separating between black subgroups is essential to address the specific educational needs of BAC pupils (Demie & Mclean, 2017; Roberts & Bolton, 2020).

These findings imply a distinctive educational disadvantage for BAC pupils in the UK education system. Despite efforts to highlight this issue, in Roberts and Bolton's (2020) briefing, the situation remained unaffected in 2022. The Department for Education (DfE) released Attainment 8 scores (combined scores of 8 eligible GCSE subjects including English and maths) for mainstream schools in England. In 2022, BAC pupils obtained the lowest average Attainment 8 score compared to other ethnicities (excluding Gypsy Roma and Irish

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traveller communities). On average, they underperformed when compared to Black African pupils, with BAC pupils scoring an average of 44.0 out of 90.0, while Black African pupils scored 52.2 out of 90.0. However, there are limited explanations from this analysis explaining why this disparity exists. Despite the Government's Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities admitting that this is a significant issue and commissioning research to improve BAC pupils' achievement levels, limited progress has been made over the years (Commission on Racial and Ethnic Disparities, Education and Training, 2021).

2.6.   Section 2 of Literature Review – Issues with Existing Research in the Constructions of Race in Education

2.6.1.   Issues with Deficit-Based Research

The research literature which looks at the educational disadvantage of BAC males often strongly focuses on problem-focused research (e.g., institutional racism, BAC personalities, socioeconomic deprivation; a lack of BAC role models, and low parental expectations; Tikly, 2022; Demie, 2021a; Bowe et al, 2015; Strand, 2011; Maylor, 2009; Baker et al, 2012; Haynes et al, 2006; Gillborn & Mirza, 2000). While this research has offered insights into the problems and potential solutions, this deficit-based approach, looking at what is missing or going wrong, tends to generate a negative narrative about the school experiences of BAC males. It potentially disregards the underrepresented groups of higher-achieving BAC males. Davis and Museus (2019) suggest that deficit thinking unfairly faults historically oppressed groups for their disparities and inequalities, in turn, failing to hold the oppressors accountable. Many scholars strive to counteract these practices within research (McKay & Devlin, 2016; Valencia, 2010; Bruton & Robles-Piña, 2009; Weiner, 2003; Dinishak, 2022).

Russell et al's (2022) research supports this notion with empirical evidence, stating that 60% of selected manuscripts from research, which aimed to explain the reasons for the

educational outcomes of black people, perpetuated deficit narratives about black people in education. They propose that these negative, race-oriented narratives may inadvertently benefit white ethnicities by potentially validating the marginalisation of certain ethnic groups, such as BAC children. This argument may carry bias and have little empirical evidence to support this claim, but concerns remain about deficit-based research failing to improve the academic outcomes of BAC males. Subsequently, adopting a strengths-based approach to research could offer a more constructive guide to address the educational disadvantages of BAC males in academia.

2.6.2. *Strength-Based Research*

Research suggests that strength-based and solution-oriented approaches, to educational research, have a higher likelihood of implementation and result in positive outcomes (McLaughlin & Talbert, 2006). They offer a useful contribution to practical problem-solving (Hinkel & Bisaro, 2016). Watkins and Kurtz (2001) stated that the use of strengths-based approaches to problem-solving helped reduce the placement of African American children in special schools. However, McKergow (2016) emphasises the need for such approaches to prioritise the views of those impacted by the change, highlighting the importance of understanding individual perspectives. Adopting a strengths-based psychological approach could significantly support schools in improving the academic attainment of BAC males, respecting their viewpoints, promoting change, and empowering stakeholders to make achievable improvements in the school system.

In conclusion, whilst acknowledging the value of a strengths-based approach, research investigating BAC males' educational experiences highlights the key role of racism, gender differences, socioeconomic status, and a range of other factors perpetuating their educational

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disadvantages. Addressing these systemic problems requires interventions that aim to dismantle biases engrained within educational practices and policies.

2.6.3. Conclusion

By delving into the complex realm of BAC males' experiences within the UK education system, this narrative review has covered various dimensions that impact their academic journeys. It has dissected the intricacies of terminology such as culture, race, ethnicity, and racism; and outlined how racism could manifest in the school educational landscape using an ecological systems framework. Intersectionality arose as a critical lens, demonstrating the intertwined effects of race, gender, and socioeconomic status on BAC male experiences within the education system.

Additionally, this narrative review delved further into the educational landscape for BAC males and shed light on the nuanced challenges that might be faced by them, highlighting their consistently lower academic performance compared to other ethnic groups and black African CYP. It emphasised gender differences and the disparities in exclusion rates compared to other ethnicities (including black African males).

However, the need for a systematic literature review is apparent within this discussion. While the narrative review demonstrates a broad understanding of the nuances and challenges that might be experienced by BAC males, it represents only a snapshot of existing knowledge, and is riddled with subjectivity, and over-generalisations. A systematic review is necessary to comprehensively synthesise and analyse the current research, providing a structured and deeper exploration of the success factors that impact the academic attainment of BAC males. The undertaking of a systematic review will be pivotal in informing policies, practices, and interventions aimed at dismantling systemic barriers and promoting an inclusive educational environment supporting the success of BAC males.

2.7.   Rationale for the Present Review

Educational Psychologists (EPs) play a role in supporting underrepresented groups. Aligned with the anti-oppressive practice agenda, which stresses the responsibility of professionals to uphold the voices of oppressed groups and foster change to address areas of perceived oppression (Dominelli, 2012; British Psychological Society, 2023), practitioners should adopt solution-oriented and strengths-based approaches to discover ways to promote change for BAC males.

A useful starting point would be to review the existing literature which identifies potential strengths and success factors supporting BAC males in achieving academic success. By synthesising the findings, education practitioners can learn what the existing "solutions" are and focus on promoting specific factors contributing to success in schools or communities. This offers a rationale for the current systematic literature review, which aims to explore the following question: What has existing research found to be the success/supporting factors impacting the academic achievement of BAC males?

2.8.   Methods used in the SLR

2.8.1. Study Selection

The Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines (Moher et al, 2009), a widely used methodical framework, was used as a guide for this SLR to ensure transparency and completeness (Shamseer et al, 2015; Sohrabi et al, 2021). The electronic databases that were systematically searched in June 2023 included: Google Scholar, Nusearch, ERIC, and ProQuest, to generate all relevant studies for review. Some of the included studies had their references harvested to discover additional studies. Using Boolean logic, the search terms used in all databases included variations of ('Academic achievement' OR 'academic attainment' OR 'academic success' OR 'education*

achievement' OR 'education* attainment' OR 'education* success') AND ('Black Caribbean male*' OR 'African Caribbean male*' OR 'African Caribbean boy*' OR 'Black Caribbean boy*') AND ('secondary school' OR 'high school') AND ('United Kingdom' OR 'UK' OR 'Engl*' OR 'Brit*'). 134 studies were identified from searching databases, 138 were elicited from search engines, and 15 from reference searching. A total of 287 studies were identified (see Appendix 1 for a full table outlining the databases and search engines used and the reasons for exclusion). After removing duplicates (34), and removing studies that were irrelevant (111), 142 studies were filtered to ensure they met the inclusion criteria (see Appendix 2 for a table of inclusion criteria).

Following the initial title and abstract screening, 26 studies were considered appropriate based on the inclusion criteria. These 26 full texts were examined to verify eligibility (one study was not retrieved). 19 studies were excluded due to:

1. The study not having clear success factors as outcomes (n=2)

2. Not being a UK study (n=3)

3. Not being a research study (n=1)

4. Success factors/ strengths/ positive factors in secondary school not being discussed in the study (2)

5. Being a duplication (2)

6. Not measuring qualitative data (e.g., perspectives) (1)

7. Measuring factors impacting crime (1)

8. Not mainly focusing on the factors affecting BAC males (5)

9. Measuring the impact of a specific intervention only (2)

The search included grey literature. Grey literature involves research not traditionally published through commercial or academic channels, making it less accessible through

conventional means, such as academic journals. The purpose of this was to reduce

publication bias (Benzies et al, 2006; Conn et al, 2003) and increase the chances of including

all relevant research. However, there are risks associated with using grey literature. For

example, it is not peer-reviewed which holds risks of reliability and credibility. It is advised

that researchers critically appraise the content of such literature before including it in a

systematic review (Benzies et al, 2006; Conn et al, 2003). No additional studies were

identified using reference harvesting or citation searching. Therefore, six studies were

considered eligible and were included in the present review (see Figure 2.1 for a full

PRISMA flow diagram).

Figure 2.1:

PRISMA Flow Diagram of Search Strategy
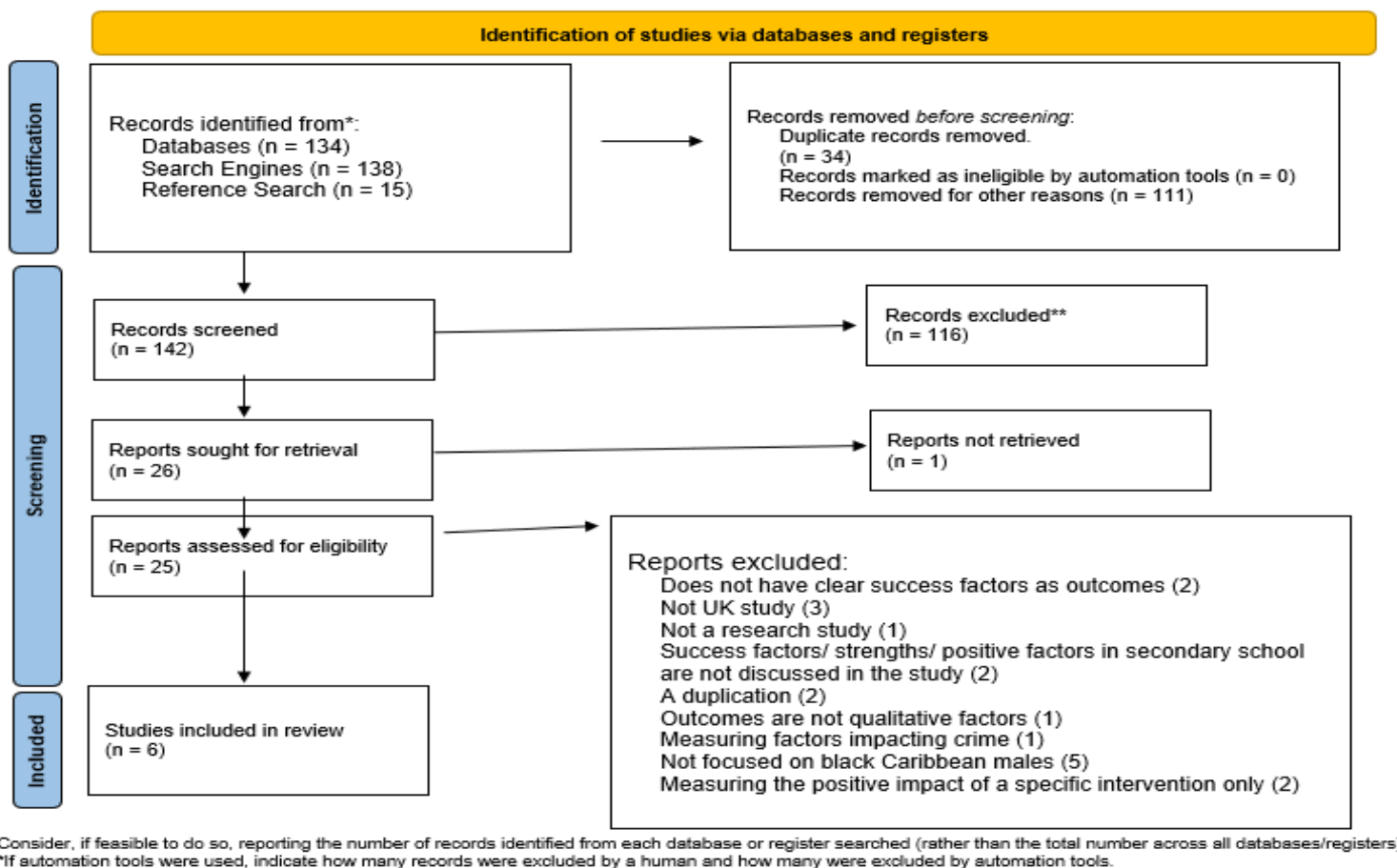
Figure 2.1 - PRISMA Diagram of Search Strategy

2.8.2. *Data Extraction*

A table was used to collate the relevant data extracted from all included studies. The table included participants, methodology, findings, limitations, and ethics (see Appendix 3 for a full table of included studies).

2.8.3. *Quality Appraisal*

The Weight of Evidence Framework (Gough, 2007) is a guide to quality appraise each of the included studies. To appraise the quality of the studies, the following steps and specific questions were used for each Weight of Evidence (WoE) category:

2.8.3.1. *Methodological Quality (WoE A)*

Methodological quality was assessed using Mays and Pope's (2000) qualitative study quality checklist, which is particularly suited for qualitative and mixed-methods research. The checklist helped evaluate:

- **Research Design Rigor**: Was the research design clearly articulated and appropriate for the study's aims?

- **Data Collection**: Were the data collection methods clearly described and suitable for the study's objectives?

- **Analytical Procedures**: Were the data analysis methods well-defined and appropriate for addressing the research questions?

Each study was scored 0, 0.5, or 1 point based on its adherence to these methodological standards. Under WoE A there were 15 questions which addressed the headlines above. Therefore, the maximum score possible to obtain for WoE A was 15 points per study. The full list of all 15 questions under the Mays and Pope Checklist can be found in Appendix 4.

Methodological Appropriateness (WoE B)

The appropriateness of the study's methodology was evaluated with specific questions tailored to the review's objectives. The criteria included:

- **Sample Definition**: How clearly was the sample defined in terms of relevant characteristics?

- **Focus**: To what extent did the study concentrate on the academic attainment of Black Caribbean males?

- **Data Gathering**: Was the data collection method effective in identifying success factors for Black Caribbean males?

- **Analysis Method**: Was the method used for data analysis appropriate for generating and understanding success factors?

Studies received scores of 0, 0.5, or 1 point based on how well they met these criteria. There were three questions addressing the above headlines for WoE B, therefore the highest possible score for WoE B was three points per study. The full list of questions for WoE B can be found in Appendix 4.

2.8.3.2. *Focus of Evidence (WoE C)*

The focus of the evidence was assessed to ensure that the study's outcomes were relevant to the review's research question. The key questions included:

- **Success Factors**: Did the study identify clear success factors specifically supporting Black Caribbean males?

- **Stakeholder Perspectives**: Did the study incorporate perspectives from various stakeholders?

- **Implications for Practice**: Did the study offer practical implications for professional practice?

Studies were scored 0, 0.5, or 1 point based on their alignment with these aspects. There were three questions addressing the above headlines for WoE C, therefore the highest possible score for this category was three per study. The full list of questions for WoE C can be found in Appendix 4.

2.8.3.3. *Overall Weight of Evidence (WoE D)*

The overall Weight of Evidence score was derived by combining the scores from WoE A, B, and C. The steps included:

- **Summation**: Adding the scores from WoE A, B, and C to calculate the total WoE D score.

- **Quality Classification**: Categorising studies as low (0-7), medium (8-14), or high (15-21) quality based on their total score. To determine the numerical range for each category, this researcher divided the highest possible score for WoE D (n=21) into three to determine quality thresholds.

Detailed justifications for each question and the quality appraisal measures are available in Appendices 4 and 5.

2.8.4. *Synthesis Method: Thematic Synthesis*

A thematic synthesis was the method chosen for this review. This was because the findings from all included studies were qualitative and therefore, heterogenous. Thematic Synthesis is a widely utilised, tried, and tested method of analysis and synthesis of research studies (Thomas & Harden, 2008). This approach helps to extract meaningful insights from the literature findings. Once the literature has been selected and screened for relevance and

quality, a thorough and rigorous examination of the selected studies follows. This examination aims to categorise recurring ideas, patterns, and concepts in the data; these patterns are known as "themes". Following this, the next step of the synthesis process includes the continued organisation and refinement of themes to develop a logical and comprehensive understanding of the research question. Thoman and Harden's (2008) framework was used as a guide for this Thematic Synthesis. This process involves:

1. **Line-by-Line Coding**. At this stage, all the selected studies and relevant quotations from the text are reviewed to help answer the research question. All the identified quotations are given a descriptive label or "code" which represents the meaning of that quotation. A comprehensive list of codes is produced, which represent the essence of the data.

2. **Development of Descriptive Themes.** Secondly, codes are reviewed and grouped into broader themes ('descriptive themes'). Descriptive themes are generated based on the similarities and shared concepts across various codes. The goal is to categorise themes into a clear group of descriptive themes which reflect the key concepts across the data.

3. **Generation of Analytical Themes**. Finally, analytical themes are generated. This involves the exploration of relationships between the descriptive themes. Through the identification of connections between descriptive themes, higher-order concepts can be developed, and explanations emerge from the data. The analytical themes generated should offer a deeper understanding of the research question.

In this research, the results sections from each included study were imported into NVIVO, a qualitative analysis software. A thorough inspection of each study's results section was conducted to detect the 'success' factors affecting the academic attainment of BAC males in the UK. These identified factors, along with any significant explanatory sentences, were coded line-by-line. This systematic coding process enabled the development of descriptive themes, further refined into analytical themes.

A strength of Thematic Synthesis is that the process helps to discover broader trends across the data and helps researchers develop a more holistic understanding of the research question. The synthesis and analysis process offers robust evidence-based theory development and decision-making.

The software used to support the synthesis process was NVivo. NVivo is a software package that supports qualitative and mixed-methods research analysis. This software is a platform for coding, classifying, and analysing all types of qualitative data.

2.9. Results

The research question for this review was: what has existing research found to be the success/supporting factors impacting the academic achievement of BAC males? The aim was to collate the findings from relevant studies to gain an insight into what are considered to be supporting factors for the academic success of BAC males.

The six studies included in the thematic synthesis were Demie (2013); Dumangane (2011); Rhamie (2012); Rhamie and Hallam (2002); Robinson (2020) and Simon (2019). These studies were included because they met the inclusion criteria:

- Contains the words 'education' anywhere in the abstract, title, or keywords

- Research conducted with secondary-aged pupils (aged 11-16 years old)

- Black Caribbean males are the focus of research

- Solution-oriented research/ success factors

- Research study gathering views of BAC males, parents of BAC, and/ or key stakeholders working with BAC males

- A UK study

Amongst the six included studies: four were peer-reviewed and published in peer-reviewed journals (Demie, 2005; Dumangane, 2011; Rhamie & Hallam, 2002; Rhamie, 2012). The studies that were not peer-reviewed were included due to the limited number of relevant published literature addressing the research question (Robinson, 2020; Simon, 2019). The choice to exclude papers devoid of a peer-reviewed status could risk reducing the validity of this review (Higgins, 2011). The grey literature will be considered tentatively due to the issues mentioned previously.

2.9.1. *Overview of Samples and Study Settings*

The included studies ranged from 2002-2020 (without limiting the date range in the initial search). In total, there were 48 known participants. However, one of the included studies (Demie, 2005) did not specify an exact number of participants. There was a range of study settings including Lambeth, Cardiff, outer London, and Birmingham.

2.9.2. *Overview of Data Collection and Sampling Methods*

All studies used qualitative designs for the aspects of their studies most relevant to this review. There was a range of data collection methods used, these included: observations (Demie, 2005); semi-structured interviews (Simon, 2019; Rhamie & Hallam, 2002; Dumangane, 2011) or unspecified interviews (Demie, 2005; Rhamie, 2012; Robinson, 2020); and questionnaires (Rhamie, 2012).

Two studies used purposive sampling methods (Simon, 2019; Robinson, 2002). One study used an opportunity sample (Rhamie & Hallam, 2002). One study used a convenience sample (Dumangane, 2011). Two studies used a combination of sampling methods; one combined stratified and purposive sampling (Demie, 2005); and one combined opportunity and purposive sampling (Rhamie, 2012).

2.9.3. *Overview of Design and Analysis Methods*

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Each study differed in its analysis method. The methods included thematic analysis (Simon, 2019); structural linguistic narrative analysis (Robinson, 2020); and Qualitative content analysis (Rhamie, 2012), though the analysis method for this study was not specified and was inferred by this researcher based on the description of the analysis approach; constructivist grounded theory (Dumangane, 2011); and factor analysis (Rhamie & Hallam, 2002). One study did not describe their analysis method and it was difficult for this researcher to infer without the risk of false reporting (Demie, 2005). There was a risk of bias with all studies because the biases of the researcher could have impacted their interpretation of participant responses. Demie (2005) was a generally difficult study to elicit information from, as there was limited information about the methodological design or participants (e.g., number of participants). All the outcome measures involved the generation of themes in some capacity.

2.9.4. *Outcomes of Quality Appraisal*

All included studies ranged between 'medium' and 'high' quality (WofE D). Two studies were categorised as 'medium' quality (Rhamie and Hallam, 2002; Demie, 2005) and the remainder of included the studies were 'high' following vigorous scrutiny. The quality of each study was determined by the combined scores of WoE A, B, and C. Rhamie and Hallam's (2002) and Demie's (2005) 'medium' scores were largely due to methodological choices, lack of clarity, limited transparency, and lack of reflexivity (explained in Appendix 4). The remainder of studies scored 'high' in the quality appraisal for scoring well in methodology, the relevance of the research methods to address their research questions, and the relevance of the study concerning this review's research aims (explained in Appendix 4).

2.9.5. *Thematic Synthesis Findings*

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Five themes were identified, each including a varied number of sub-themes. Figure 2.2 summarises the main themes (analytical themes) and sub-themes (descriptive themes) identified from the thematic synthesis process (Thomas & Harden, 2008). Appendix 5 summarises the number of studies that each theme was elicited from, and some example quotations demonstrating each theme.

Figure 2.2:

Analytical and Descriptive Themes Identified from the Thematic Synthesis

Influence of Peers	Influence of Family	Influence of Community	Personal Quality of BAC males	Influence of School
• Learning from Peers • Peer Support	• Parental Factors • Family Support • Family Influence	• Community-based role models to motivate and encourage • High emphasis on achievement within the church • Participating in church clubs • Participating in cultural and historical activities in the community	• Participation in Activities • Awareness and avoidance of negative influences	• Community-based role models to motivate and encourage • High emphasis on achivement • Participating in church clubs • Participating in cultural and historical activities in the community

Figure 2.2 - Analytical and Descriptive Themes Identified from the Thematic Synthesis

The five analytical themes collated from the thematic synthesis were *influence of family, influence of school, key personal qualities of BAC males, influence of peers, and influence of community.* The theme represented by the most studies (all six studies) was *Influence of Family.* The second most popular theme was *Influence of School* (with four studies). The third most popular was *Personal Quality of BAC males* with 3 studies and the *Influence of Community* and *Influence of Peers* had two studies representing them.

Each of the findings from these themes will now be summarised, from most popular to least popular themes. It is crucial to emphasise that the order of theme presentation in the results does not reflect their relative importance, as qualitative research does not aim to rank themes by value. Instead, themes are organised based on their prevalence, not their significance. Each theme retains its intrinsic merit, as each holds relevance for at least one participant.

2.9.5.1.   *Theme 1: Influence of Family.*

Parental Factors. The synthesis of all six included studies consistently found that family plays a key role in shaping the academic achievement of BAC males. Particularly, parental influence emerged as the predominant familial factor impacting BAC males' academic progress. Parents reportedly show their support for their children through practical assistance and encouragement (Rhamie, 2012; Rhamie & Hallam, 2012; Simon, 2019; Dumangane, 2011; Demie, 2013). This support often involves efforts to familiarise themselves with the British education system, allowing them to offer more informed assistance (Rhamie & Hallam, 2012), and provide tutoring in specific subjects, such as English, within the home environment (Simon, 2019).

Additionally, parents held high expectations for their children (Rhamie, 2012; Robinson, 2020; Simon, 2019). The study findings revealed that some parents communicate their elevated expectations positively, highlighting the importance of education (Rhamie, 2012) and encouraging their children to deviate from a mediocre educational outcome to aspire for greater achievements (Simon, 2019). In response, some BAC males perceived these heightened expectations as challenges and some expressed a desire to bring honour to their parents (Simon, 2019; Robinson, 2012). Furthermore, Rhamie and Hallam (2012) found that parental awareness of the systemic challenges faced by BAC males in education, paired with

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active efforts to address these problems, contributed to their children's academic accomplishments. These efforts involved challenging teachers' low expectations of their children (Dumangane, 2011) and navigating the education system through 'negotiations' with schools (Rhamie & Hallam, 2012).

Furthermore, the research highlights that a prescriptive and controlling parental approach supports the academic success of BAC males (Dumangane, 2011; Robinson, 2020; Rhamie & Hallam, 2002). Discouraging sports to prioritise academia (Dumangane, 2011; Rhamie & Hallam, 2002), setting educational boundaries (Dumangane, 2011), and supervising or discouraging social activities (Robinson, 2020), were all linked to positive academic outcomes for BAC males.

Therefore, parents play a significant role in supporting the attainment of BAC males. Evidently, when parents are emotionally and academically supportive, understand the British education system, instil high expectations on their children, and set boundaries for their boys, BAC males are more likely to achieve well in school. Parents are integral in supporting the attainment gap between BAC males and other ethnicities.

Family Support and Influence. The research indicated that siblings play a key role in fostering the academic success of BAC males. Siblings can provide emotional support and advice, helping to navigate friendship and peer influences. Moreover, the wider family support network, including aunties and uncles, positively impacts the self-esteem of BAC males (Robinson, 2020; Simon, 2019). Both siblings and the extended family act as role models for BAC males, offering both positive models to follow, such as academic role models (Simon, 2019), and negative models to learn from and avoid (Robinson, 2020).

Furthermore, Robinson (2020) found that an insightful understanding of their ethnic identities and the historical context of BAC communities served to ground and motivate BAC

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males, fostering a commitment to pursue the 'collective good' and a desired future for BAC people. According to Robinson (2020), this understanding was frequently communicated through oral traditions, with knowledge and stories passed down through generations. Therefore, it is beneficial when BAC males are raised with their family network and have opportunities to learn from familial role models, seek advice, and learn more about their ethnicities and family identities. According to these findings, when BAC males have access to their family network, they are more likely to achieve well in school.

2.9.5.2.   *Theme 2: Influence of School.*

Influence of Teachers. Four studies loaded onto this theme (Demie, 2005; Rhamie, 2012; Rhamie & Hallam, 2002; Simon, 2019). This analysis highlights the key role that schools, particularly in Lambeth and Birmingham, play in promoting academic achievement among BAC males. Notably, Simon's work in 2019 focused on four secondary-aged pupils in Birmingham, while Demie's study in 2005 involved an unspecified number of pupils. Both studies highlighted the significant impact of teachers on the academic success of BAC males (Demie, 2005; Simon, 2019).

Demie (2005) identified numerous key attributes seeming to contribute towards the academic success of BAC males, including vision, moral purpose, positive relationships, commitment, energy, making time, deep understanding of their BAC students, and explicit teaching and learning objectives. Simon (2019) further highlighted understanding, nurturing, and self-identification as BAC, as additional supportive attributes of teachers. Teachers' high expectations of their pupils emerged as another necessary factor supporting BAC males to achieve academic success (Demie, 2005; Rhamie & Hallam, 2002). Demie (2005) showed that when teachers treat all learners as capable of high achievement, irrespective of ethnicity or learning abilities, it positively affects the academic performance of BAC males in school.

Effective Leadership. In addition to individual teachers, the school leadership approach and school ethos were perceived to impact the achievement of BAC males in a positive way (Rhamie & Hallam, 2002; Demie, 2005). The bulk of findings for this theme were from Demie's (2005) study. Demie (2005) found that strong school leadership was characterised by having a clear vision; being flexible in how support is offered; being responsive to parents' needs and reducing their barriers; and listening to the needs of parents and pupils. Furthermore, Demie (2005) observed that effective organisation and utilisation of student performance data in school offer advantages for BAC males. These factors incorporate tracking and monitoring the academic progress of students, placing BAC males in higher-attaining groups. School leadership appears to play a key role in fostering the learning and subsequent achievement of BAC males in the context of this study, by ensuring they are prioritised and maintaining positive links with their parents.

Strong Home-School Communication. Positive home-school relationships impact the academic success of BAC males. Parents show great support for the school and appreciate its efforts to provide a beneficial learning environment (Demie, 2005). Effective information sharing and communication about students' academic progress and development improves parental involvement (Demie, 2005). When school leadership actively endeavours to reduce barriers and create a welcoming environment (Demie, 2005) this encourages more engagement from parents. In addition, parent involvement in meetings with teachers as indicative of their support, has been perceived to positively influence the academic success of one BAC male (Dumangane, 2011). Overall, these factors promote a nurturing environment in school, and positive home-school relations, which enhances the students' achievements (Demie, 2005; Dumangane, 2011).

Diverse and Inclusive Culture. The diversity and inclusivity of schools was a theme that was perceived to have a considerable impact on the academic success of BAC males.

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Successful schools promoting BAC male achievement often include diverse staff teams, ideally including staff from a BAC ethnicity, who actively advocate for BAC male progress and have a great understanding of the diverse community needs. Furthermore, these schools effectively deploy appropriate staff support, such as learning mentors and pastoral staff, to provide personalised assistance to BAC male students, further contributing to their academic successes (Demie, 2005; Simon, 2019).

Overall, this review highlights that schools play a key role in the academic attainment of BAC males. When teachers and leadership are effective, the school and staff culture is inclusive and diverse, and home-school relationships remain positive and mutually beneficial, BAC males can thrive and achieve academically.

2.9.5.3. *Theme 3: Personal Qualities of BAC males.*

Participation in Activities. Three included studies loaded onto this theme (Rhamie, 2012; Rhamie & Hallam, 2002; Robinson, 2020). Participation in extra-curricular activities considerably affects the academic attainment of BAC males (Rhamie & Hallam, 2002; Rhamie, 2012). Their involvement in a diverse range of activities, such as music tuition, dance classes, sports, study courses, and church-organised clubs, improves their skills, confidence, and motivation to learn (Rhamie, 2012). Additionally, cultural-based activities, like visits to local cultural sites, museums, libraries, and the Caribbean, enrich their lives and play an important role in their educational success (Rhamie, 2002; Rhamie & Hallam, 2012). Overall, active engagement in non-academic and cultural activities outside of school facilitates greater academic success for BAC males (Rhamie & Hallam, 2002; Rhamie, 2012).

Awareness and Avoidance of Negative Influences. Robinson (2020) discovered that some BAC males ascribed their academic success to opposing negative stereotypes from

teachers. They adapted their behaviours to avoid receiving negative treatment and adopted actions that elicited positive responses from staff, e.g., speaking more academically. Additionally, one BAC male was motivated to achieve well in school after witnessing his family's difficulties with low academic achievements and unsatisfactory jobs.

Therefore, this review highlights that BAC males have personal attributes that allow them to engage in multiple extra-curricular activities and avoid the negative influences of peers. This indicates that there is a level of autonomy present in BAC males, where they can actively make changes and choices in their lives to better their chances of success.

2.9.5.4.   *Theme 4: Influence of Peers.*

Learning from Peers. In two studies, peers played a significant role in influencing the academic success of BAC males in school (Robinson, 2020; Simon, 2019). Robinson (2020) found that friendships based on a shared educational perspective and common interests worked well as models for learning behaviours and academic engagement. Peers inspired the BAC boys to aspire towards aspirational high grades, motivating them to constantly improve and excel beyond their friends' achievements. Additionally, Simon's (2019) study highlighted how open competition with a peer promoted one participant, James, to stay focused and determined in his educational progression.

Peer Support. In addition, peer support was found to impact the academic achievements of BAC males. Robinson (2020) found that peers offered emotional support, allowing boys to manage the pressures of school and cope better with challenges, contributing to better mental health outcomes. Moreover, peers provided practical support with homework and revision, resulting in mutual benefits from their friendships. Peer relationships were considered to be essential in helping BAC males achieve and perform better in school.

Overall, peers play a vital role in supporting the learning of BAC males. They can act as role models, competitors, and emotional and practical support systems for them, which allows BAC males to aspire high and gain support to reach their academic goals.

2.9.5.5.   Theme 5: Influence of Community.

Two studies aligned with this theme (Rhamie, 2012; Rhamie & Hallam, 2002). There was some evidence across studies to suggest that the community played a part in fostering academic success in BAC males. Rhamie (2012) emphasised the importance of motivators and positive role models within the community, encouraging the academic success of BAC males. Role models helped to instil confidence in some BAC males and shine a light on their inert abilities and skills, inspiring them to strive for success. Additionally, Rhamie and Hallam (2002) found that visits to the Caribbean and local cultural sites provided positive role models for Caribbean people from various levels in society. This helped to promote a sense of possibility and aspiration towards greater success among participants.

2.10.   Discussion

This review found five main factors to support the academic achievements of successful BAC males in the UK, these include *influence of family, influence of school, key personal qualities of BAC males, influence of peers,* and *influence of community*.

The influence of family was a significantly large factor found amongst all studies, suggesting that this factor is consistent over time (at least between 2002 and 2020) as well as being prevalent for BAC males of varying ages. This supports the findings from deficit-based research by Bowe et al (2015) who found low parental aspirations to contribute towards the low attainment of BAC males. Additionally, it supports Maylor (2009); Baker et al (2012), and Strand (2011) who stated that an absence of positive familial and school role models causes low attainment in BAC males. This review provides a solution-oriented perspective,

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highlighting that when parents have high aspirations and are positive role models, then BAC males can achieve well. However, the present review contradicts the notion that parents must be consistently positive role models because it was found that lower-achieving parental role models had the power to deter BAC males from the hardships associated with having low achievements (Robinson, 2020). Therefore, this review highlights the role of autonomy in BAC males and that their familial circumstances alone do not depict their level of aspiration or academic success. However, working with the families of BAC males in primary school could support parents to foster high expectations at home. Other familial factors such as deterring negative influences and having access to resources could all be reinforced by supporting the community to tackle negative influences (e.g., gangs), and increasing access to funding for BAC families who cannot afford resources.

The present review found that BAC males have personal attributes that can support their academic attainment, including an ability to engage and participate in extra-curricular or church-based activities which enrich them. This finding indicates that keeping busy and having hobbies to focus on, or religious commitments, can have a positive influence on BAC males, but highlights a potential societal issue. Previous research indicated that BAC males who are less successful could be subject to lower socioeconomic circumstances (Haynes et al, 2006; Gillborn & Mirza, 2000) and if access to extra-curricular activities can support BAC males to be successful, then their level of poverty could be impacting their ability to access clubs and activities. Extra-curricular activities are an expense, and with government funding for arts-based activities being cut, there might be limited opportunities for some BAC males to access this. However, the socioeconomic status of participants was not explicitly mentioned in the included studies, and they could have been from a low socioeconomic status themselves. Therefore, there could be other ways of accessing extra-curricular activities which might be supportive for BAC males to achieve well, but this remains unknown since

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the included studies did not reveal this. Nevertheless, BAC males benefit from access to extra-curricular activities, and finding ways for the government to increase access to this could support BAC attainment further.

Additionally, in this review, BAC males attributed their own academic success to their ability to avoid negative influences from peers and adapt to evade negative stereotyping from teachers. This highlights an issue with the school system and supports the notion that institutional racism is limiting the success of BAC males, highlighted by various researchers (Youdell, 2003; Gillborn et al, 2012; Gillborn, 2014; Christian, 2005; Crozier, 2005; Strand, 2011; Graham & Robinson, 2004; Bowe, 2015; Phillips, 2011). According to the findings in this review, BAC males are having to learn about the issues within the school system, and actively make efforts to negate these effects on them. One could argue that this is a highly intellectual task which requires great insight and self-awareness, and this might be difficult at secondary age. This highlights a significant level of knowledge, insight, and skills from the participant sample in this review. However, it is the role of schools to actively address these issues and challenge the subconscious stereotyping that might be occurring amongst staff (Christian, 2005). This finding that BAC males adapt to avoid negative stereotypes disputes research by Connolly (2006) who found BAC males adopt a hyper-aggressive position in schools for popularity, causing teachers to treat them as deviants and punish them more harshly. This review found the opposite to be true, that BAC males can actively conform to the positive learning behaviours they believe teachers will want, to remain socially accepted in school and achieve well. This highlights that amongst the minority, BAC males can adopt positive learning behaviours to benefit from the education system, but perhaps these skills are missed by teachers. This indicates that significant change is needed, in the role of teaching, around subconscious biases to support BAC males and prevent the need for them to adapt in this way. Nevertheless, it is evident that some BAC males have learned skills of adaptability

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necessary to thrive in schools which might not be upholding their best interests. The solution-focused approach to this research has made it possible to uncover how the successful males are coping and adapting, and much learning can be taken from this approach to address these issues in schools. This supports claims by McLaughlin and Talbert (2006) and Hinkel and Bisaro (2016) about the benefits solution-focused research can have for problem-solving real-world issues.

The role of the community was a key finding in the present review, which helps to explain how some BAC males were able to identify issues of institutional racism in school and adapt to evade this influence on them. This review found that having strong community role-models and opportunities to learn about Caribbean culture and histories, was supporting BAC males to achieve success in schools. This might explain why BAC males felt equipped to identify racism in school and felt motivated to address it. In this review, BAC males benefitted from learning about the collective responsibility of BAC people in the community, to respond to the racism and hardship that the community has faced in history and learn how to move forward and achieve more. Therefore, it appears that having links to the Caribbean culture and community can foster a greater sense of purpose and understanding, needed to benefit from the education system. EPs and community activists could support with community work, to foster the learning of Caribbean culture and support BAC people to form connections with each other, to continue to foster this sense of purpose and understanding within the BAC community.

In addition, the role of peers was a significant finding in this review. This finding suggests that BAC males can utilise peers with similar goals and aspirations to them, as competition and support systems. They can even use negative peer influences as social learning opportunities as opposed to role models. This offers some refuting evidence against the research which suggests that BAC males uphold 'hyper forms of masculinity' in order to

become popular in schools (Connolly, 2006). The present review highlights that BAC males have the power to choose how they behave around peers, and this is dependent on how they perceive their social influences. One might argue that those boys who respect their peers with hyper-aggressive behaviours, are more likely to conform, and those who are more motivated by academic achievements are less likely to conform. It appears that many of the participants from the included studies within this review, were higher achievers, so it could be inferred that their higher aspirations deterred them from negative influences and made them more likely to befriend peers with similar goals and aspirations (as highlighted in Robinson, 2020 and Simon, 2019). Therefore, the focus of discussions should be aimed at understanding which factors lead to higher aspirations in BAC males in the first place. This could already be answered by the findings in this review, as it was highlighted that high aspirations at school and home; a sense of community responsibility to achieve well; and positive role models in school and home can all contribute to a BAC child's aspirational level (Demie, 2005; Simon, 2019; Robinson, 2020; Rhamie & Hallam, 2002; Rhamie, 2012). Therefore, the achievement of BAC males is systemic and requires a combination of factors to occur for BAC males to achieve.

Furthermore, school was a significant factor found to support some BAC males' ability to achieve. It was found that tracking the performance of BAC males and placing them in higher ability groups fostered higher achievement. This finding directly supports research by Bowe (2015); Gillborn (2008); Tikly et al (2006); and Wright et al (2020) who collectively argue that BAC males experience greater levels of educational disadvantage when placed in lower-ability sets. This review highlights that when schools actively reverse this, the opposite outcome happens. This significantly shows a potentially easy issue to fix; schools should either avoid ability grouping altogether or ensure that BAC males are not disproportionately placed in lower ability sets. However, the issue goes beyond BAC males' needs, as this

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highlights a problem with how ability-based sets can limit the educational outcomes of all learners in these groups, as they often are associated with lower aspirations and lower-level examinations (Bowe, 2015). EPs could play a role in supporting schools to seek alternative ways of grouping students, so staff do not limit the potential of BAC males.

Additionally, the findings from the present review showed that schools foster the best outcomes in BAC males, when there is a culture of diversity and inclusivity. This suggests that the schools who actively combat potential issues of institutional racism, are more likely to improve the educational experiences and subsequent outcomes of BAC males. This highlights a key role of EPs to support schools with training around anti-oppressive practice, unconscious biases, or other aspects of the Black Lives Matter agenda. Evidently, schools who seek ways of increasing this inclusivity are better equipped to support the needs of BAC males in school. This review also found that the benefits of an inclusive ethos are further supported when home-school relationships are improving for BAC families. Though prior research has not highlighted this as an important area, home-school relationships directly relate to parental factors (e.g., their ability to understand the school system) which impact school factors (where schools are better able to meet the needs of parents). Therefore, there is a relationship between school improvements fostering parental improvements which directly impact the BAC child. More systemic work is needed to ensure schools feel equipped to engage BAC families and help them to feel supported in school. EPs could foster this relationship through joint consultations or training for schools.

Overall, the present review has highlighted some key success factors which could benefit BAC males in schools and foster their academic attainment. However, there are evidently systemic issues impacting how BAC males are treated in schools, whether BAC males have access to resources, the influences and role models around them, and their level of aspiration. There are some within-child factors to consider such as motivation to learn, but the systemic

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factors (e.g., school, community, and familial factors) interplay and might significantly disadvantage BAC males in education. There is a role for EPs to intervene with BAC male achievement, but with so many systemic factors impacting each other, further research is needed to highlight where EPs should prioritise their limited time before an effective intervention can begin.

2.11.   Limitations

A limitation of this review was that all the included studies had small samples if mentioned at all (of 18 participants or less) in specific contexts (Birmingham, Lambeth, outer London, and other southern regions). This means that the themes generated might not be representative of all BAC male experiences in schools. Although McKergow (2016) emphasised the need for solution-focused research to gain the subjective experiences of those affected, this is at the cost of limiting the scope of the research to a larger percentage of the population. Further research would be needed to generate success factors in other areas of England (e.g., Yorkshire) to gain insight into how BAC males are successful across England.

In addition, many of the studies had limited BAC males within their samples (e.g., some with only 1/5 being BAC). This could reduce the validity of the themes generated as they might not represent the viewpoints of BAC males exclusively. Further research would be needed to generate a sample limited to BAC males to differentiate their experiences from other ethnicities or genders.

Furthermore, the use of grey literature has limited the validity of this review. These studies add to the knowledge base, but this reviewer would consider these findings with caution. The grey literature studies were both rated high following quality assurance. However, there is a risk that the original studies were reported with biases or inaccuracies which would be difficult to tell from initial scrutiny by a less experienced researcher.

Summary of Chapter 1

This SLR explored the factors that previous research has found to impact the academic success of BAC males in the UK, synthesising results from six studies conducted between 2002 and 2020. The review found key themes, including family influence, school environment, personal qualities, peer impact, and community support. Family support, such as practical assistance and high parental expectations, was considered important. Effective school leadership and teaching, combined with a diverse and supportive school culture, were also found to be vital. Personal qualities of BAC males, such as awareness of negative stereotypes and engagement in extracurricular activities, reportedly play significant roles. Peers offer necessary practical and emotional support, while community role models provide motivation and inspiration.

Despite its insights, the SLR had limitations, including small sample sizes and limited regional focus areas, which may affect the generalisability of the results. These limitations highlight the need for more comprehensive research. The empirical study detailed in the next chapter uses Q methodology to filter and focus on the most useful out of the existing factors. By exploring what BAC males themselves consider most impactful, this study aims to identify an area of focus to inform subsequent interventions. The next chapter will outline the aims, methodology, and approach of this empirical research, identifying the most useful factors for BAC males' academic success.

3. Chapter 3 – Methodology and Procedure to Address the Research Question: Which Factors are Considered to be the Most Impactful for the Academic Success of Black-African Caribbean Males?

This chapter will detail the methodological approach adopted in this study. The aims of this research and the research question for the current study are outlined along with my ontological and epistemological stance underpinning the methodological choice. In this section, this researcher will offer a clear rationale explaining how and why Q-methodology was used to answer the research question. The procedural approach of the research will be described with information such as participant recruitment, participant characteristics, and ethical standards. Finally, the data analysis process is outlined regarding the decision-making process when choosing the approach to analysing both statistical and rich data.

The structure of this section will be as follows:

- Epistemological Position

- The Q-Methodological Procedure for this Study

- Other Research Designs Considered

- Quality Indicators of Q Methodology

- Ethical Considerations

- Summary of the Methodology

3.1. Introduction to Methodology

The methodological approach adopted in this research is vital for unveiling the complexities surrounding the academic under-attainment of BAC boys in the UK. As mentioned in the preceding chapters, the consistent disparities in educational achievement, experienced by BAC boys, requires a methodological framework that is both robust and

sensitive to the nuances of their experiences. This section will comprehensively explain the rationale, design, and ethical considerations underpinning this study's methodology.

Critical Realism offers a profound lens to understand the multifaceted challenges BAC boys face in education and is the chosen philosophical framework for the present study. Based on the understanding of fundamental mechanisms influencing social events, Critical Realism suggests that there is the existence of an objective reality that is independent of human perception. This philosophical stance recognises the depth and complexity of the social world, acknowledging both the visible, surface-level events and the underlying mechanisms which impact these events (Bhaskar, 2013; Archer et al, 1999; Vincent & O'Mahoney, 2018). By exploring the underlying mechanisms and adopting a holistic understanding of reality, this research aims to illuminate the challenges BAC males face in a manner that is deeply rooted in the complexities of the social world, encouraging both academic exploration and actionable social change.

The sampling and participant selection are both vital aspects of this research methodology. The use of a purposive sampling approach allows for a targeted and intentional selection of participants, namely BAC males in post-16 education across the West Midlands. This deliberate sampling approach is designed to attain and understand the diverse views and perspectives within this demographic, providing a complex and rich data set for analysis.

The data collection methods, which include a card sort and structured questionnaire, have been meticulously created to gather detailed insights from participants. The card sort, involving a thoroughly curated set of statements derived from interviews and prior research, serves as a quantitative foundation. Simultaneously, the qualitative depth is achieved through structured questionnaires, allowing participants to elaborate on their choices, enriching the dataset with contextual narratives.

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Ethical considerations underpin all aspects of this research (see ethical approval letter in Appendix 6). Following ethical guidelines, including maintaining confidentiality, prioritising participant well-being, and obtaining informed consent safeguards the study's accuracy and credibility. Safeguarding measures, including provisions for participants to withdraw and anonymity protocols, are vital for mitigating potential harm and upholding the safety and dignity of the participants.

In the following sections, each aspect of the methodology is expanded upon, providing a thorough insight into the research design, data collection, analysis methods, and ethical safeguards. Through this methodological framework, this study aims to shed light on the unique factors impacting the academic attainment of BAC males, thereby contributing to a more equitable educational experience for all young people.

3.2.   Ontological and Epistemological Position: Critical Realist Paradigm

3.2.1. Ontology

Ontology, the philosophical study of existence, impacts researchers' views on reality within a specific paradigm (Guarino et al., 2009; Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017; Cohen et al., 2018). It explores essential questions about existence and lays the foundations for understanding the nature of being in a particular context.

The two main ontological positions are realism and relativism. Realism claims that an objective reality exists separately from individual viewpoints and is perceived homogenously by all observers, regardless of their subjective perspectives (Moore, 2005; Cohen et al., 2018). However, realism has been critiqued for assuming that scientific theories directly reflect objective reality, overlooking the impact of observer values and biases on data interpretation, and failing to address the complex relationship between theory and evidence (Kuhn, 1970; Laudan, 1984; Fletcher, 1996).

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In contrast, relativism asserts that reality is subjective and differs with individual experience rather than being ruled by universal laws (Slevitch, 2011; Mertens, 2015; Cohen et al., 2018). Criticisms of relativism include its denial of the existence of an objective truth and empirical standards, which could cause internal contradictions and limit researchers' ability to coherently evaluate their claims, as well as reducing scientific inquiry to political and social constructs (Gergen, 1985; Hare-Mustin & Marecek, 1988; Fletcher, 1996).

In this study, neither a purely realist nor a purely relativist position was considered appropriate. This study aimed to understand the unique perspectives of BAC males in education, and how their viewpoints could contribute to a better understanding of the most impactful success factors for this ethnic group. A solely realist approach might overlook the complex, subjective experiences of BAC males by aiming too heavily on understanding an objective reality that might not capture the nuances of their educational experiences. Equally, a relativist perspective might undermine the ability to generalise results or generate practical strategies by rejecting the importance of objective factors and wider trends. Therefore, a middle ground is essential—one that incorporates the strengths of both ontologies. This sets up the argument for embracing a critical realist stance, which will be explored further in this chapter.

3.2.2. *Epistemology*

Epistemology, the theory of knowledge, investigates the relationship between researchers and the reality they aim to understand, considerably affecting the methodological approaches used (Audi, 2010; Stainton, 2022). It influences how researchers investigate the natural world based on their ontological position, shaping the practical methods used for data collection within the selected paradigm (Kothari, 2004; Cohen et al., 2018; Stainton, 2022).

Understanding Critical Realism involves examining the two opposing epistemological positions it sits between. Positivism, linked to a realist ontology, claims that objective knowledge and facts originate from direct sensory experiences (Cohen et al, 2018). Researchers within this paradigm maintain a value-free stance, observing the natural world from an external perspective (Edirisingha, 2012; Al-Saadi, 2014). However, positivism is critiqued for being too reductionist, for broad generalisations, and disregarding individual perspectives, particularly in social research (Cohen et al, 2018). Its dominance in Western settings may overlook non-Western viewpoints, perpetuating potentially oppressive practices (Fricker, 1999; Robson, 2024). Additionally, the dependence on laboratory experiments compromises the ecological validity of real-world research, needing resource-intensive confirmation (Houghton, 2011; Cohen, et al, 2018). A scientific approach with alternative interpretations, scepticism, and further criticism is encouraged to improve validity (Robson, 2024).

Conversely, postmodernism aligns with relativist ontology, emphasising subjectivism and gathering perspectives influenced by cultures, values, and beliefs (Mathiesen, 1962). It perceives the researcher-participant interaction as active, prioritising confirmability over objectivity (Edirisingha, 2012; Mertens, 2015). Data interpretations are context-dependent, valuing individual perspectives in exploring the social world (Edirisingha, 2012). Despite its strengths, postmodernism faces criticisms for the lack of systemised process, affecting the overall validity, and raising concerns about response accuracy (Sim et al, 2012; Cohen et al, 2018). Challenges such as participant effects and researcher bias further complicate the perceived 'truth' from qualitative data (Cohen et al, 2018).

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3.2.3. *Advocating for the Critical Realist Theoretical Perspective in the Present Study*

The limitations of positivism and postmodernism stress the need for a mixed perspective on knowledge acquisition. Critical Realism provides this by acknowledging the existence of an objective reality understood through theoretical reasoning and empirical observation. It recognises the weakness of human perception but aims to reveal the underlying mechanisms and structures that shape social phenomena (Sayer, 1992; Bhaskar, 2013; Scott, 2010; Pearce & Frauley, 2007).

Critical Realism asserts that while an objective reality exists independently of human perception, our understanding of it is influenced by our perceptions and interpretations. This objective reality, though not always directly observable, influences our experiences and interpretations. Critical Realists consider both observable phenomena and the underlying causal mechanisms responsible for these observations (Bhaskar, 2013; Archer et al., 1999; Vincent & O'Mahoney, 2018). They propose three ontological domains: the empirical (observable phenomena), the actual (patterns and regularities), and the real (underlying structures and mechanisms) (Bhaskar, 2013; Bhaskar, 2020; Vincent & O'Mahoney, 2018).

Critical Realism bridges empirical evidence and causal mechanisms, offering a nuanced understanding of complex phenomena. It integrates quantitative and qualitative methods, providing insights into subjective experiences while revealing objective patterns (Bhaskar, 2013; Vincent & O'Mahoney, 2018). This approach supports reflexivity and addresses researcher bias, enhancing the depth of analysis (Vincent & O'Mahoney, 2018).

In conclusion, the shortcomings of positivism and postmodernism necessitate a framework that combines objective realities with subjective experiences. Critical Realism offers a comprehensive approach, making it suitable for exploring complex social phenomena. This study adopts a Critical Realist perspective, recognising an objective reality

while considering individual subjectivity (Bhaskar, 2013; Scott, 2010). It uses card sorts and structured questionnaires to investigate empirical data and reveal underlying patterns, while also examining deeper generative mechanisms such as institutional practices and systemic inequalities affecting BAC males' educational experiences. This approach aims to move beyond surface observations to inform targeted interventions and systemic changes. The next chapter will outline the study's aims, methodology, and approach, focusing on identifying key factors for BAC males' academic success.

3.3.   Other Research Designs Considered

When choosing a methodology for the present study, a range of approaches were evaluated, considering both practical and theoretical considerations. Pure qualitative approaches, e.g., focus groups, were rejected due to the limitation in their ability to capture the diverse viewpoints of BAC males in West Midlands. Previous studies adopting these methods suffered from a limited scope of small sample sizes, reducing their ability to provide comprehensive insights (Simon, 2019; Robinson, 2020). Therefore, to address this, a methodology competent in encompassing a wide range of perspectives was considered imperative. Furthermore, pure quantitative methods were rejected due to their tendency to generalise the nuances of individual perspectives and experiences (Johnson & Christensen, 2014). The richness of each unique narrative tends to dissipate when compressed into quantitative metrics, leading to a loss of the holistic understanding of lived experiences (Merriam, 2012). Moreover, quantitative methods often utilise predefined, closed-ended questions, reducing participants' answers to predetermined categories (Bryman, 2016).

In direct contrast, Q-methodology, grounded in a quantitative-qualitative hybrid approach, is a methodological approach that transcends these pitfalls (Brown, 1993). The open-ended nature of this approach allows participants to express their emotions and thoughts openly,

capturing the nuances and intricacies of their perspectives (Watts & Stenner, 2012). By combining quantitative rigor with qualitative depth, Q-methodology warrants a comprehensive understanding of individual viewpoints whilst recognising general patterns within the data (Stenner et al, 2008; Watts & Stenner, 2012; Webler et al, 2009).

Furthermore, the Critical Realist standpoint adopted in the present study highlights the need to acknowledge both the subjective experiences of individuals and the existence of an objective reality (Bhaskar, 2013). Pure quantitative approaches do not merge these dual aspects. However, Q-methodology, positioned within a Critical Realist framework, expertly navigates this delicate balance (Ponterotto, 2006). It allows for the exploration of both the objective factors shaping participants' experiences and subjective perspectives through which these experiences are comprehended (Davis & Michelle, 2011).

In summary, the fundamental limitations of pure quantitative and qualitative approaches to research make it difficult to focus on one approach when the aim is to capture a range of unique perspectives on a given topic. Q-methodology, embedded within a Critical Realist perspective, is an ideal choice for the present study (Watts & Stenner, 2012). It aligns well with the complexities of human experiences, ensuring a contextually rich and comprehensive exploration of the research question, encapsulating the essence of individual stories within a wider social context.

3.4. The Origins and Aims of Q-Methodology

3.4.1. Introduction

Q-Methodology, the methodology adopted for the present study, aims to understand perspectives within a specific context. Q-methodology is designed to allow researchers to explore individual viewpoints (Stenner et al, 2008; Watts & Stenner, 2005; Webler et al, 2009), making it an appropriate approach for investigating the nuances and complex

dynamics impacting the academic success of CYP from a BAC male demographic in the West Midlands. The main goal of utilising Q-Methodology in this research is to discover the most impactful success factors contributing to the academic achievements of BAC males in the West Midlands area.

A thorough understanding of Q-methodology is vital considering the misunderstood nature and critique of this methodology (Kitzinger, 1999). The following section provides an overview of the procedure generally used within Q-methodology, establishing the groundwork for its application in this specific study.

3.4.2. *Aims and Origins of Q-Methodology*

Q-methodology was originally developed in 1935 by William Stephenson, aimed to explore the subjective perspectives and viewpoints within specific social contexts (Stenner et al, 2008; Watts & Stenner, 2005; Webler et al, 2009). Adopting an abductive approach, it aims to discover hypotheses and diverse viewpoints, allowing participants to actively express their perspectives through Q-sorts (Brown, 1993; Stenner et al., 2008). Developed as a response to the limitations of traditional research methods, Q-methodology combines quantitative rigor with qualitative depth, utilising abductive reasoning or hypothesis discovery (Watts & Stenner, 2012; Cross, 2005). Researchers actively participate in the research, interpreting data patterns, and exploring similarities and differences in viewpoints. The assimilation aims to discover subjective human perspectives through factor analyses, correlations, and participant interpretations (Brown, 1993; Watts & Stenner, 2012).

3.4.3. *Subjectivity within Q-methodology*

During the early stages, Q-methodology grappled with the challenge of incorporating subjectivity into a scientific approach appropriate for factor analysis (Watts & Stenner, 2012). Therefore, Stephenson introduced the Q-sort method, where participants communicate their

subjective viewpoints by assessing and prioritising a set of stimuli based on their psychological significance (Watts & Stenner, 2012). The completed Q-sort provides a comprehensive representation of a participant's subjective perspective reliably. Particularly, the significance of each item emerges within the context of the participant's overall Q-sort configuration (Watts & Stenner, 2005). Stephenson conceptualised subjectivity as an experimental phenomenon happening within an individual's first-person perspective, opposing the notion that such subjectivity could be objectively measured through interactions with physical objects (Watts & Stenner, 2012). This foundational principle, regarding the communicability and systemic analysis of subjectivity, forms the basis of Q-methodology (Small, 2011).

3.4.4.   *Abductive Approach*

Q-methodology utilises an abductive approach to hypothesis generation, mostly adopted in exploratory research endeavours. Brown (1980) acknowledges Stephenson's (1961) viewpoint, considering factor analysis as a methodological extension of Pierce's Theory of Abduction (Peirce, 1931). Abduction involves researching a phenomenon to generate hypotheses explaining its manifestation (Peirce, 1931; 1958; Watts & Stenner, 2012). Abduction uses observations as clues instead of facts in formulating the "best guess" explanation (Shank, 1998; Watts & Stenner, 2012). Abductive approaches aim to explain and generate new theories as opposed to inductive approaches, which aim to describe existing phenomena (Watts & Stenner, 2012). Q-methodology rejects deduction and avoids imposing assumptions or pre-defined hypotheses (Watts and Stenner, 2005). In Q-methodology, participants assign meaning and significance to data, rather than the researcher or the methodology itself (Watts & Stenner, 2005). Abductive reasoning assumes importance in explaining the researcher's role in factor rotation and interpretation (Watts & Stenner, 2012)

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3.5. The Q-Methodological Procedure for this Study

Q-methodology has often been misrepresented and misused as an approach to research, with some researchers drawing on aspects of Q-methodology in isolation, e.g., the card sort or the factor analysis, though Q-methodology requires both of these distinct aspects to qualify as a true Q-methodology study (Watts & Stenner, 2012). Considering guidance from Watts and Stenner (2005; 2012) and Webler et al (2009), six essential steps were taken for this Q-methodological study:

1. Formulating the research question

2. Generating the Q-set

3. Selecting the P set

4. Collecting data

5. Analysing data

6. Interpreting factors

The first step has been discussed in Chapter three, the remainder of this chapter will thoroughly discuss steps 2-4, briefly touching on step 5. Steps 5 and 6 will be discussed in Chapter four.

3.5.1. Generating the Q-Set

Identifying the Concourse. The first step involves identifying the 'concourse'. The concourse is the range of opinions and perspectives on the topic of interest (Watts & Stenner, 2005; 2012). These statements can derive from a range of sources e.g., statements, interviews, literature, books, etc to capture all viewpoints on the subject area (Cross, 2005; Herrington & Coogan, 2011). Interviews with people from the target demographic helps to improve the authenticity of the concourse by gathering statements in their language (Webler et al., 2009; Herrington & Coogan, 2011). The precision of the statements is crucial; they

must be distinct, individual sentences, allowing participants to comprehend and interpret them successfully during the sorting process (Webler et al., 2009; Watts & Stenner, 2012). This systematic approach enables participants to respond appropriately to sorting instructions, supporting the exploration of diverse perspectives, and improving the following analysis.

There are two types of concourses within Q-methodology: naturalistic or ready-made (Damio, 2016; McKeown and Thomas, 2013). A ready-made concourse involves using previous literature or statements as the basis for participants' viewpoints, enabling researchers to explore predefined perspectives on a topic. A naturalistic concourse entails gathering expressions and opinions which naturally occur within a specific context.

For the present study, the concourse was a combination of both naturalistic and ready-made concourses, incorporating the diverse factors impacting the academic success of BAC male young people (YP) in the West Midlands. The naturalistic concourse involved semi-structured interviews with two BAC males to gain insight into potential success factors. The ready-made concourse involved an SLR of sex-relevant studies identifying success factors impacting BAC males in the UK. All previously identified factors were included initially to ensure the full scope of identified factors was represented in the concourse. To ensure the included statements represented the entire concourse, a strategic approach was used. This involved dividing the concourse into themes based on the previous literature and generating statements to align with each theme (Webler et al, 2009). For full transparency, a detailed explanation of the SLR and semi-structured interview processes are outlined below.

Systematic Literature Review. The systematic literature review aimed to explore the pertinent elements related to the research: What has existing research found to be the supporting factors impacting the academic achievement of secondary school-aged BAC males in the UK? This review's comprehensive details are presented in Chapter 2.

Within this review, six pertinent studies were scrutinised, resulting in the identification of five key analytical themes through a thematic synthesis. These themes included: *peer influence, family influence, community influence, personal attributes of BAC males, and school influence.* Each analytical theme stemmed from descriptive aspects, from the findings within the individual studies.

Figure 3.1:

Analytical and Descriptive Themes Identified from the Systematic Literature Review.

Influence of Peers	Influence of Family	Influence of Community	Personal Quality of BAC males	Influence of School
• Learning from Peers • Peer Support	• Parental Factors • Family Support • Family Influence	• Community-based role models to motivate and encourage • High emphasis on achievement within the church • Participating in church clubs • Participating in cultural and historical activities in the community	• Participation in Activities • Awareness and avoidance of negative influences	• Community-based role models to motivate and encourage • High emphasis on achivement • Participating in church clubs • Participating in cultural and historical activities in the community

Figure 3.1 - Analytical and Descriptive Themes Identified from the Systematic Literature Review.

Semi-structured Interviews. Two BAC males were chosen purposefully due to their different educational backgrounds, to improve the representativeness of the pilot sample and inform the refinement of the Q-set. Male 1, aged 27, obtained higher education qualifications (at level 6-degree level), whilst Male 2, aged 29, completed a BTEC qualification at level 2. Before interviewing, this researcher explained the study objectives and the concept of the concourse, confirming their consent.

Both participants undertook interviews, answering an identical question regarding the most influential success factors for their educational success. The question was: *which factors do you think contributed to your academic success?* Any factors mentioned were noted down and added to the concourse document. Key factors were recorded in a table, aligning them with previously identified factors from the SLR. Following this, participants were invited to review the existing concourse (see Appendix 7) providing any potentially missed themes.

Utilising this methodical approach, integrating insightful interviews with purposefully selected participants and an SLR, this researcher asserts a robust development of the concourse, encapsulating diverse perspectives. This approach helped to reduce any potential researcher bias (Webler et al., 2009) whilst allowing for a more comprehensive representation of viewpoints within this subject area.

3.5.2. *Developing the Q-Set*

Arranging Statements. The second stage involved curating the Q-set, which included a conscious arrangement of statements generated from the concourse. To develop the Q-set, a strategic approach is important to ensure it reflects the diverse opinions captured within the broader concourse. One approach involves physically organising statements, grouping similar statements, and iteratively improving each grouping until a reasonable and manageable number remains. This process promotes clarity and cohesion, allowing participants to sort statements effectively in subsequent stages of the process (Webler et al., 2009). Several stages were followed to refine the concourse into a Q-set. These stages allowed for a rigorous and systematic process to precisely capture a representation of the broader concourse.

An initial list of statements was generated. This involved extracting key viewpoints, ideas, and phrases that represented various success factors considered to be impacting the educational attainment of BAC males, from the concourse and tabulating each statement. It is advised that thorough attention is given to ensuring the inclusivity, and comprehensiveness of statements and that they are representative of important aspects of the subject matter (Plummer, 2012; Watts & Stenner, 2012; Cross, 2005). Furthermore, conducting pilot studies with the Q-set, with knowledgeable people, supports the fine-tuning of statements, ensuring each item contributes clearly and distinctly to each participant's evaluation. This should facilitate more accurate interpretations (Sexton et al., 1998; Watts & Stenner, 2012).

Therefore, considering advice by Watts and Stenner (2012), the statements were initially screened by two trainee educational psychologists (TEPs) conducting Q-methodology studies. Each reviewer was asked to complete a document (Appendix 8) with questions informed by Watts and Stenner (2008) to support the refinement of the Q-set. These questions included:

- Did any statements in the Q-set express similar or overlapping ideas/concepts?

- Did you feel the Q-set statements were clear?

- Do you feel any of the statements could be interpreted in different ways?

- Do you feel that the Q-set adequately covered the broad range of factors that might contribute to the academic success of BAC males?

- Is it possible that you may hold some bias in your interpretation of the Q-set?

This peer-review process ensued for a third time with a BAC trainee clinical psychologist, to gain further advice regarding the representativeness and cultural sensitivity of the statements, as advised by this researcher's supervisor.

Piloting. Following this, two pilot studies were conducted with two BAC males (aged 29 and 30) drawn from this researcher's workplace. This was to further enhance the statements based on the criteria of the peer reviews. In addition, the pilots added value by helping to check the validity of the statements, ensuring a wide range of viewpoints were included, ensuring the clarity of the statements, and adding any statements perceived to be missing.

Q Set Size. It is advised that researchers adhere to guidelines regarding what an ideal size Q-set looks like. There are variations of opinion among scholars, but the consensus that emerges advises that the Q-set ranges between 40-80 items (Watts & Stenner, 2012; Webler et al., 2009). This balance of cards allows participants to manage the task with minimal complexity whilst offering an ample number of statements for expression. In the present

study, the ultimate selection of the Q-set (containing 41 statements) emerged following thorough considerations of suggestions from pilot participants and reviewers. This number is in alignment with established guidelines from Watts and Stenner (2005; 2012), Brown's (1980) insights promote a representation of the diverse perspectives in the concourse, as well as an appropriate yet manageable set of statements. There is no fixed, ideal number for Q-sorts. However, 41 statements allow for an efficient and reasonable sorting task, with a wide spectrum of perspectives, allowing thorough analysis without the concern of overwhelming participants.

Additionally, as well as the Q-set, it is important to determine the '*Condition of Instruction*' (Watts & Stenner, 2012), this is outlined in a later section.

3.5.3.   *Specifying the Participants (P Set) and Instructional Context:*

A Q-methodological study requires a careful selection of participants based on their ability to contribute their interesting and unique perspectives on the topic of research and enhance the data quality (Webler et al., 2009).

There is little consensus amongst the literature regarding the optimum P set size to recruit for research. The recommended number typically ranges between 40-60 participants (Watts & Stenner, 2012). Some researchers even suggest less than 50 (e.g., 30-50) participants to optimise the effectiveness of the study (McKeown & Thomas, 2013). This conscious choice is grounded in the understanding that an excessively large P-set can obscure subtle distinctions and intricate patterns in the data, possibly compromising the research integrity and quality (Watts & Stenner, 2012; Van Exel & De Graaf, 2005). Sustaining a balanced ratio between items in the Q-set and participants is crucial, to ensure nuanced exploration and prevent data over-saturation.

The choice to recruit between 15-22 participants in the present research, guided by the number of cards (n=41), is supported by established Q-methodology principles. Previous research, exemplified by McKeown and Thomas (2013), supports the idea of a compact participant sample within Q-methodology. Moreover, criteria offered by Webler et al (2009) underscore the importance of maintaining a ratio of statements to participants of 3:1 or 2:1, aligning with the present participant-card ratio. However, Watts and Stenner (2012) offer cautionary advice suggesting that unwarranted numbers of participants could obscure nuanced patterns of data, hence emphasising a limitation related to reducing variables. Additional substantiation by Brown (1980) and Watts & Stenner (2005) highlights the need for an adequate number of Q-sorts to extract differing perspectives and ensure participant loading onto each factor. Furthermore, maintaining an appropriate number of participants within a range of 40-60, as proposed by prior research, proved difficult due to issues with recruitment and attrition of participants. In addition, the 3:1 and 2:1 ratio, advised by Webler et al (2009), justifies having a significantly smaller number of participants (n = 15-22), to improve the study's effectiveness.

Sampling Method. It is mentioned by Watts and Stenner (2005; 2012) that researchers should ensure the perspectives are diverse and relevant to the topic and recommend a purposive sampling method when necessary (Watts & Stenner, 2005; 2012). Therefore, a purposive sample was utilised, initiated by contacting the SENDCo of a West Midlands college via email to outline the inclusion criteria for participants. The inclusion criteria and the justification for each choice are in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1

Inclusion Criteria for Participants

Inclusion Criteria	Justification
Identify as a BAC male.	Ensures the study captures experiences specific to BAC males, focusing on factors relevant to this ethnic group's academic success.
Currently be in Post-16 education and over the age of 15.	Guarantees participants are engaged in relevant educational stages and can reflect on their recent secondary education experiences. Additionally, this allows them to give their own consent.
Previously attended a mainstream educational setting in the West Midlands (West Midlands) and have done so for the whole of secondary school.	Controls for regional and educational context, ensuring the study examines experiences within a consistent educational environment.
Studies a qualification which contributes towards Attainment 8 and Progress 8 school data (e.g., GCSEs).	Ensures relevance to current educational metrics and provides insights into factors impacting academic performance as measured by these standards.
Be able to communicate with expressive and receptive language skills to engage in an interview where they will be expected to	Effective communication skills are essential for participants to articulate their views on academic success and comprehend interview questions accurately. These skills

talk about success factors from their school experience.	are crucial for obtaining meaningful and precise data on their experiences and perspectives, without reliance on adult assistance that might influence the authenticity of their responses.
Be able to read and comprehend written information.	Essential for participating in the Q-sort activity, which involves reading and arranging written cards based on perceived importance.

Table 3.1- Inclusion Criteria for Participants

Subsequently, in-person recruitment commenced in college canteens across two college campuses. The stalls displayed informational posters, consent forms, and inclusion criteria sheets, offering potential participants an opportunity to familiarise themselves with the research and assess their alignment with the criteria. Interested participants were offered the opportunity to learn more and, if willing, signed consent forms and provided contact details for further communication through the college SENDCo. Post-recruitment, the college organised participants' schedules, assigning specific dates, times, and rooms for the card sorting sessions. Participants accessed pre-set online card sorting webpages on college-provided computers, following the '*Condition of Instruction*' to arrange cards according to their perceptions of impactful academic success factors for BAC males' educational achievement. The present study was conducted in a college library using a computer suite. Each participant conducted their Q-sorts on an individual computer with this researcher present to clarify any questions throughout the process. No more than three participants conducted the Q-sort at one given time. In this study, 22 participants undertook the card sort, all meeting the inclusion criteria, and identifying themselves as BAC males, with seven

participants being of mixed ethnicities (white and BAC, n=5; African and BAC, n=2) but identifying as BAC males. Participants ages ranged between 16 and 24 years old.

3.5.4.   *Administering the Q Sort.*

In Q-methodology, the process of acquiring data through ranking statements in the Q-set is known as the Q-sort (Brown, 1980). Participants are instructed to organise statements based on their personal opinions, beliefs, and values, arranging them along a scale from least to most agreeable (Webler et al, 2009; Watts & Stenner, 2012).

The Q-sort consisted of four significant stages, including:

1. **Familiarisation:** First, participants are asked to read each statement and understand what they mean about their own experiences. This stage is designed to familiarise participants with the content and context of the study, preparing them for further exploration.

2. **Q-sort Activity:** Following the familiarisation phase, participants undertake the Q-sort activity. They are instructed to arrange all statements from the Q-set along a quasi-normal distribution grid, based on their level of agreement with each statement. This activity encourages participants to prioritise and communicate their perspectives. The timeframe of the Q-sort process in the present study ranged between 20-40 minutes.

3. **Post-sort Data (Reflections):** Subsequently, participants were given open-ended questions, encouraging them to explain the rationale behind their top two statements from the Q-sort. This reflective activity, as advised by Watts and Stenner (2012), aimed to unveil the nuances of participants' subjective viewpoints.

4. **Post-sort Questionnaire:** Additionally, participants were given a questionnaire via Google Forms. This questionnaire covered aspects of personal demographic

information including age and their perceptions about whether they consider themselves to be successful or not. Through this questionnaire, the aim was to gather additional supporting information to improve the understanding of participants' viewpoints and experiences.

This allowed for the gathering of qualitative data to further understand the factors and validate the accuracy of the Q-set. A thorough explanation of each stage of a Q-sort can be found in Appendix 9.

The software systematically recorded all data from the card sort activities and the follow-up questionnaires.

3.5.5. Q-Sort Administration

3.5.5.1. Online Card-Sort.

QTIP, an online platform originally utilised in geography research (Nost et al., 2019), is specifically designed for conducting Q-sorts and is offered by the University of Wisconsin-Madison Geography Department (University of Wisconsin-Madison Geography Department, 2024). This online platform was used to facilitate the Q-sort. Conducting card sorts using the QTIP platform involved several steps:

1. **Accessing QTIP:** Participants were given access to the QTIP platform from a personalised web link generated by the researcher.

2. **Instructions and Condition of Instruction:** Before the card-sorting activity, participants were given clear instructions explaining the purpose of the activity, how to use the QTIP platform, and the *Condition of Instruction* (outlined in the following section). This condition informed participants of how to sort the cards based on their views or opinions on specific factors.

3. **Sorting Process:** Participants undertook a card-sorting activity by ranking the Q-set statements, according to their perspectives, on a quasi-normal distribution grid.

4. **Reflections and Post-Sort Questionnaires:** After the card-sort was complete, participants were asked to provide further insights and reflections on why they chose the top two statements.

3.5.5.2. *Condition of Instruction.*

An important element of the Q-sort process is the *Condition of Instruction*, a key aspect that guides the following sorting phase of the study. The instructional context offers a guide for participants to rank the items in the Q-set. It is vital that the instruction is clear, and direct and includes a single distinct proposition. The more clarity in the instruction, the more aligned the viewpoints are to the research focus, thus allowing a thorough exploration of the range of subjective perspectives (Watts & Stenner, 2005; 2012).

In the present study, the *Condition of Instruction* was created based on the research question and aims. Participants were instructed to consider Q-set items (the full list of statements in Appendix 10) concerning the set of statements (the *Condition of Instruction* can be found in Appendix 11).

Participants were prompted about the *Condition of Instruction* via the instructions on the online *Q-Tip* website. The boundaries of the normal distribution grid were distinctly labelled to align with the dimension of agreement, from least useful to most useful factors. This researcher committed time and effort into sharpening the instructions, aiming for precision and thoroughness (Watts & Stenner, 2012). Collaboration with two TEPs further contributed to the generation of clear and comprehensive instructions to streamline the Q-sorting process.

3.6. Factor Analysis and Interpretation

The ultimate stage of Q-methodology entails factor analysis and the interpretation of the extracted factor arrays. Typically, PQMethod (a computer package developed by Schmolck, 2014) is used to conduct a factor analysis (Watts & Stenner, 2012; Webler et al., 2009). The researcher manually inputs the Q-sort configuration into the PQMethod software, which proceeds through four chronological stages for analysis:

The inter-correlation of the whole Q-sort configuration is conducted using by-person factor analysis to ascertain the level of agreement or disagreement between them. This produces a correlation matrix, allowing the investigation of which individual Q-sort configurations group together to generate a "factor."

Factors are consequently extracted from the correlation matrix. A factor can be conceptualised as a pattern of likeness between Q-sort configurations indicating the perspectives of participants (Watts & Stenner, 2012). Centroid Analysis is generally favoured among Q-researchers over Principal Component Analysis as it improves the researcher's ability to engage with the factor rotation process in an abductive way (Small, 2011; Watts & Stenner, 2012).

In the factor extraction process following Centroid Analysis in Q methodology, four key statistical tests are used to determine which factors to retain:

- **Kaiser-Guttman Criterion:** This test identifies significant factors by prioritising those with eigenvalues greater than 1. Eigenvalues measure a factor's explanatory power and strength, so factors with values below 1 are usually excluded as they do not contribute meaningfully to data reduction (Watts & Stenner, 2012).

- **Two or More Significantly Loading Q-Sorts:** To ensure that each factor is robust and reflective of more than one viewpoint, it must be significantly loaded by at least two Q-sorts. This is determined using a significance threshold

calculated by the formula 2.58 x (1 ÷ √number of items in the Q-set), which

validates that the factor is representative and not an artifact of individual

responses (Brown, 1980).

- **Humphrey's Rule:** According to Humphrey's Rule, a factor is deemed significant

  if the cross product of its highest two loadings exceeds twice the standard error.

  The standard error is calculated as 1 ÷ √number of items in the Q-set, ensuring

  that factors are significant and not due to random chance (Brown, 1980; Watts &

  Stenner, 2012).

- **Scree Plot Test:** The scree plot test involves graphing the eigenvalues to visually

  decipher where the curve flattens, revealing the point at which the factors explain

  the majority of the variance. Factors to the left of this "elbow" are retained, while

  those beyond this point are considered less significant. This method helps in

  discriminating major factors from minor ones (Cattell, 1966; Ledesma et al., 2015;

  Watts & Stenner, 2012).

These tests collectively ensure that the selected factors are both relevant to the research

aims and statistically significant, providing a robust foundation for further analysis.

The third stage involves factor rotation, where a factor solution is pursued which accounts

for the largest amount of study variance explained with the lowest number of factors possible

while ensuring participants only load significantly onto one factor each (Hallam, 2014).

Researchers can utilise an objective automated process to uncover the mathematically ideal

factor solution or manually rotate the factors (Watts & Stenner, 2012).

Once a factor solution is established, the factors are analysed and converted into factor

arrays, providing a weighted average of all Q-sorts which correlate highly with a factor

(Plummer, 2012). Each factor array offers a "best fit" Q-sort configuration representative of an approximate viewpoint generally held among the participant set (Brown, 1993).

Factor interpretation is the final stage in the analysis process. The researcher draws upon post-sort qualitative data (e.g., questionnaires), theories, previous research, and/ or cultural knowledge to support their interpretation of each factor array and the positioning of its items (Cross, 2005). Through this interpretation protocol, the researcher generates an understanding of the viewpoint communicated in each factor and its unique story (Cross, 2005;). The process incorporates the researcher's subjective experiences and the analysis process. To improve objectivity in interpreting a factor array, some researchers employ a reliable systematic procedure to support their interpretation. In the present study, this researcher utilised a "crib sheet" methodology, provided by Watts and Stenner (2012).

Typically, researchers may use follow-up methods with participants to corroborate, clarify, and validate the interpretation of factors. The present study did not utilise follow-up methods due to time-constraints on placement.

This procedure was used in the present study, supported by KenQ Analysis Desktop Edition (KADE) version 1.2.1 (Banasick, 2019). More extensive information about this stage and the study findings can be found in Chapter 4.

3.7. Quality Indicators of Q-Methodology

3.7.1. Validity

Critics have challenged the validity of Q-methodology (Ramlo, 2021; Thomas & Baas, 1992). However, Brown (1980) argues that concerns about research validity are irrelevant in Q-methodology because there is no external criterion for a person's viewpoint. Since the Q-sorting process within this methodology is completely subjective and carried out by the participant, each configuration can be deemed as a valid expression of a perspective (Small,

87

2011; Watts and Stenner, 2012). Nonetheless, researchers can instil measures to improve validity:

- **Systematic Sampling**: thoroughly sample a concourse that broadly represents the topic, adopting a systematic approach drawing from a range of sources.

- **Collaborative Statement Refinement**: During concourse development interviews, involve participants in improving "Q-statements" to warrant accurate representation of their perspectives in their language and discourse.

- **Use of Participant Language:** Strengthen the face validity of Q-items by utilising language derived from participants and literature directly, where possible, with minimal editing (Valenta & Wigger, 1997).

- **Mitigation of Demand Characteristics:** Reassure participants that their information will be anonymised and that the study focuses solely on their viewpoints, highlighting that there are no right or wrong ways to approach the Q-sort. It is important to maintain anonymity with the Q-sort data, especially when researching socially contested subject matters (Cross, 2005; Peritore, 1989).

- **Consistent Systematic Approach:** Implement a systematic and consistent approach towards factor interpretation to make sure there is uniformity across all factors and deliver thorough interpretations (Watts and Stenner, 2012). This approach supports the maintenance of integrity throughout the analysis process and ensures a systematic understanding of the viewpoints expressed in each factor.

3.7.2. *Reliability*

Results from Q-methodological studies are generally considered to be reliable and stable over time, capable of repeating the extraction of shared perspectives within a specific population (Brown, 1980; Valenta & Wigger, 1997; Watts & Stenner, 2005). Studies have

consistently found Q-methodology to provide consistent results when the same Q-set is used with different samples or when different Q-sets based around the same topic are used (Valenta & Wigger, 1997), signifying its reliability in identifying clusters of viewpoints even with changes in sample population or Q-set.

However, Q-methodology does not suggest that participant perspectives remain consistent and static over time (Cross, 2005; Watts & Stenner, 2005). Despite this, various studies have shown high correlation coefficients within test-retest procedures, indicating a level of stability in individual viewpoints (Akhtar-Danesh et al., 2008; Brown, 1980; Nicholas, 2011).

3.7.3. *Generalisability*

Critics often highlight the limited generalisability of Q-methodological research (Thomas & Baas, 1992; Ramlo, 2021). However, Q-methodologists do not consider generalisability as a concern, as the aim is the gather a representative range of perspectives within the sample, as opposed to making claims about the prevalence in the broader population (Baker et al., 2006; Rodl et al., 2020; Van Exel & de Graaf, 2005). Q-methodology operates under the belief that there can only be a finite number of unique perspectives that exist on a given topic (Brown, 1980). Valid Q-sets unveil these viewpoints, allowing additional research using quantitative methods to determine the distribution of perspectives across a wider population (Small, 2011).

3.8.   Ethical Considerations

This researcher consulted ethical guidelines from The British Psychological Society's Code of Ethics and Conduct (BPS, 2018), The British Psychological Society's Code of Human Research Ethics (BPS, 2014), the University of Nottingham's Code of Research Conduct and Research Ethics (2016), and the Health and Care Professionals Council (HCPC). Ethical approval for the present study was acquired from The University of Nottingham

Ethics Committee before data collection (Appendix 6). In addition, a risk assessment

document (Appendix 12) was completed and approved. Table 3.2 underscores the main

ethical considerations encountered by this researcher and the mitigating steps taken to address

them:

Table 3.2

The Main Ethical Considerations Encountered in the Present Study

Ethical Consideration	Mitigation
Informed Consent	The researcher gained informed consent from all participants (Appendix 13, consent form), providing thorough information sheets for participants (Appendix 14) before their involvement in concourse development interviews, Q-set piloting, or Q-sort activities. Participants were encouraged to ask questions before, during, or after their involvement in the research.
Working with vulnerable young people	There could be some participants with learning needs, limiting their ability to offer full informed consent. The inclusion criteria for the present study were aimed at students with good reading skills and who have good verbal communication skills with good receptive and expressive language skills. Language skills were a requirement for this study. Any participants with learning needs who were capable of reading were allowed the support of an adult to help them read the

	Q-sort cards. The adults were not permitted to complete the Q-sort ranking for them. This was to ensure the young person's voice was upheld. There were no translators or interpreters in this study as a result.
Right to Withdraw	Participants were informed, before taking part, about the voluntary nature of their participation and their right to withdraw at any point. They were assured that incomplete data would not be included or saved if withdrawal occurred during piloting or the Q-sort activity.
Confidentiality	Participants were informed about the confidentiality of their data and information during and after the study, with data collection specified as being for research purposes only. All participants were anonymised with participant codes throughout the research.
Cultural Sensitivity	This researcher considered the need to respect and recognise the cultural experiences of BAC males. Therefore, the following considerations were made to mitigate this, including gaining the views of BAC males directly to inform the

	concourse; having a BAC female trainee clinical psychologist peer review the Q-set; asking potential participants to identify their ethnicity as opposed to this researcher attributing an ethnicity to them.
	Allowing BAC male quotes and direct views to be incorporated into the interpretation allows their unfiltered unique cultural perspectives to be considered.
	Sensitivity and careful consideration of the language of the Q-set and interpretation were key to avoiding stigmatisation or negative stereotyping of BAC males.
Equity and Fairness	To allow equitable access to participant opportunities, this researcher did not decide which participants fit the inclusion criteria but allowed them to decipher whether they met the inclusion criteria themselves. This reduced the likelihood of discrimination.
GDPR Compliance and Data Security	This researcher complied with the Data Protection Act (2018), including data anonymisation and storage on encrypted, password-protected devices. Data retention

	was restricted to three years before safe disposal.

Table 3.2- The Main Ethical Considerations Encountered in the Present Study

3.9.   Conclusion

In conclusion, the methodology utilised a multi-pronged approach to refine the Q-set, involving an SLR, semi-structured interviews, and a rigorous development process. The semi-structured interviews, conducted with specifically selected BAC males from differing educational backgrounds, offered valuable insights. These interviews enabled the identification and configuration of success factors with previous literature, ensuring the concourse was thorough.

The following development of the Q-set involved careful refinement stages, utilising insights from trainee educational and clinical psychologists. The iterative procedure, guided by established principles, resulted in a final set of 41 statements that comprised a wide range of perspectives relevant to the research.

The participant recruitment process, directed by established Q-methodology principles and relevant literature, sought the optimal balance between a number of statements and participants. However, challenges in participant tracking and attrition necessitated alterations in the final participant sample.

The online administration of the Q-sort allowed for an efficient and systematic approach to data gathering. However, the transition to online software resulted in technical difficulties, including faults in data recording and the loss of qualitative information from one participant.

The meticulous approach adopted in this methodology, while experiencing practical challenges, aimed to elicit valuable insights into the success factors affecting the educational attainment of BAC males. The next chapter will delve deeper into the findings derived from

the factor analysis and interpretation, offering a nuanced insight into the factors impacting

academic success within this demographic group.

4. Chapter 4: Results

4.1. Introduction to Results

In this results chapter, the findings from the Q-methodological approach used to collect the data (outlined in Chapter 3) will be explained. The structure will be as follows:

- Overview of factor analysis in Q Methodology

- Factor Extraction

- Factor Rotation

- Factor Arrays

- Factor Interpretations

- Consensus Statements

- Non-significant and Confounding Q-sorts

- Summary of All Consensus Statements

- Summary of Results

The analysis process will be elaborated upon to support readers in understanding the findings for two reasons. Firstly, readers may need a detailed understanding of the by-person factor analysis adopted in Q-methodology, as it can be complicated to understand. Secondly, as analysis and interpretation in Q-methodology are fundamentally subjective, presenting this detail will expose this researcher's rationale behind the conclusions made.

4.2. Overview of Factor Analysis in Q-Methodology

The present study included 21 completed Q-sorts, which were analysed using KADE software. Q-methodology utilises a by-person factor analysis to explore correlations across participants' arrangements of their Q-sorts, uncovering converging and diverging viewpoints. By-person factor analysis aims to capture the nuances of individual perspectives in cultural

narratives within social systems (Watts and Stenner, 2012; Brown, 1993). Distinct from traditional factor analysis, Q-methodology does not adopt a single definitive solution. Additionally, Q-methodology asks participants to relate to pre-prepared items that they do not need to generate themselves (Watts & Stenner, 2005). Alternatively, research aims to decipher how they will "cut the cake" of perspectives into segments of shared meaning or perspectives (Watts & Stenner, 2012; Brown, 1993). This analytical approach can be conducted inductively or deductively; thus, it can be exploratory or confirmatory (McKeown & Thomas, 2013). The present study utilised an inductive approach for factor extraction and rotation due to the absence of guiding hypotheses, enabling a less subjective analytical approach, directed by the data.

The analysis process involves participants' Q-sorts acting as variables (Watts & Stenner, 2005). These variables are statistically analysed and intercorrelated to identify highly correlated groups, known as factors. The aim of Q-methodology is to reduce the multitude of individual participant's perspectives, represented by Q-sorts, into factors that encompass the collective perspectives within the P set (Watts and Stenner, 2012). Factors encapsulate all participants who share a common overall viewpoint. KADE software (2022) was used to facilitate a range of data analysis protocols, including generating by-person correlation matrices, extracting factors, rotating factors, and creating factor arrays, each of which will be explained in turn. This researcher translates these factor arrays, supported by qualitative insights from post-Q-sort questionnaires, to understand participants' perspectives holistically.

4.3.   Factor Extraction

For the present study, seven unrotated factors were extracted from the intercorrelated matrix using Centroid Factor Analysis (CFA). This approach was adopted due to its ability to provide an intermediate number of factor solutions. This enables researchers to explore the

data from various perspectives and decipher the most appropriate factors. Hence, it is regarded as the preferred method of factor extraction for Q-methodology (Stephenson, 1953).

4.3.1.   Seven Factors Extracted – Brown's Magic 7

Seven factors were extracted for a number of reasons. Firstly, generating seven factors before rotation allows for a careful examination of each factor's value, supporting in the decision of whether to retain factors for subsequent rotation. Secondly, it is recommended that a factor should be extracted for every six Q-sorts in the study, suggesting that a minimum of three factors should be extracted for this study, as there were 21 Q-sorts obtained overall (Watts & Stenner, 2012). Thirdly, it is advised to consider Brown's (1980) notion of the 'magic number seven' as the default number of unrotated factor extractions to avoid prematurely dismissing potentially valuable factors (Watts & Stenner, 2012). Despite the recommendation to extract a factor for every six Q-sorts, which would necessitate a minimum of three factors, the researcher aimed to mitigate bias and thoroughly consider multiple factors before systematically reducing their number. Therefore, seven unrotated factors were extracted for the present study, using the automated '*Brown's Seven*' option on KADE (2022), as shown in Table 4.1. The table includes the commonalities associated with each Q-sort, the eigenvalues, and the explained variance of each unrotated factor.

Table 4.1

The Seven Unrotated Factors Extracted Using Centroid Factor Analysis (the eigenvalues; the percentage of explained variance; and the cumulative percentage of explained variance).

Q-Sort	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5	Factor 6	Factor 7
1	0.3542	-0.1328	0.0235	0.0078	-0.017	-0.0425	0.0024
2	0.3149	-0.0078	-0.1421	0.0049	-0.2657	-0.3046	0.1308
3	0.326	0.1274	-0.3954	0.0826	-0.3901	0.1516	0.1231
4	0.3825	-0.1737	-0.2292	0.0318	0.0224	-0.2968	0.0745
5	0.4809	0.0895	0.3061	0.0712	-0.2507	-0.2109	0.0821
6	0.489	0.3501	-0.6006	0.2843	0.272	0.1808	0.0781
7	0.3925	0.295	-0.5978	0.2538	0.3517	0.3023	0.1659
8	0.5982	0.2485	-0.2278	0.0587	0.0417	0.0349	0.0017
9	0.7323	0.1363	0.2288	0.0518	0.259	-0.1711	0.0806
10	0.5532	0.0687	0.3191	0.0741	-0.252	-0.0785	0.0491
11	0.0823	-0.5199	0.2166	0.1854	0.125	-0.4436	0.1862
12	0.5162	0.1808	0.1102	0.0328	0.120	-0.1671	0.0371
13	0.6058	-0.5128	-0.1605	0.1488	-0.242	0.0163	0.0383
14	0.6987	0.1367	0.0788	0.0199	-0.156	0.145	0.0259
15	0.5436	-0.1401	0.1532	0.0266	0.095	0.2863	0.0595
16	0.6796	0.1925	0.2826	0.0817	0.10	-0.175	0.0358
17	0.3892	-0.1373	0.1112	0.0183	0.060	0.3746	0.0987

18	0.5374	-0.1025	0.13	0.0178	-0.22	0.2322	0.0661
19	0.3634	0.4803	0.4226	0.2904	-0.12	0.109	0.0146
20	0.2124	-0.2642	0.1281	0.0467	0.21	0.0978	0.0414
21	0.4031	-0.3545	-0.2326	0.0828	0.22	-0.0003	0.0393
eigenvalues	4.9674	1.4636	1.7202	0.3293	0.9168	0.9852	0.1477
explained variance (%)	24	7	8	2	4	5	1
Cumulative explained variance (%)	24	31	39	41	45	50	51

Table 4.1 The Seven Unrotated Factors Extracted Using Centroid Factor Analysis (the eigenvalues; the percentage of explained variance; and the cumulative percentage of explained variance).

Post-factor extraction, it is advised that all unrotated factors are scrutinised to decipher which factors should be retained for rotation and further analysis. Various criteria and statistical tests can be used to guide the decision-making process. The statistical tests utilised in this study are aligned to the Kaiser-Guttman criterion (Guttman, 1954; Kaiser, 1960), the requirement of two or more significantly loading factors (Brown, 1980), Humphrey's rule (Brown, 1980), and the Scree Test. These statistical tests will now be explained in further detail and then applied to the present study.

4.3.2. Kaiser-Guttman Criterion

Factors with a low eigenvalue (EV), typically below 1, are often disregarded, given that eigenvalues are considered as "indicative of a factor's statistical strength and explanatory power" (Watts & Stenner, 2012, p. 105). The Kaiser-Guttman criterion aligns with this perspective implying that only factors with an eigenvalue exceeding 1 are deemed significant and should be retained. (Watts & Stenner, 2012). This practice comes from the understanding

that factors with eigenvalues below 1 would not make a significant contribution to the final factor solution. In addition, considering that the variance of a Q-sort is below 1 eigenvalue, retaining factors with eigenvalues below 1 would not be a meaningful reduction of the data.

However, there are differences in opinions regarding the strict adherence to this criterion. Specifically in large datasets, such a stringent criterion could lead to the retention of less meaningful factors, whilst simultaneously risking the dismissal of meaningful factors which do not meet this criterion (Brown, 1980; Watts & Stenner, 2012; Webler et al., 2009). Furthermore, Q-methodology, being a by-person approach, examines participant variance, thus emphasising its interest not only in consensus viewpoints but also in the perspectives of possible outliers (Watts & Stenner, 2012; Webler et al., 2009). This will be discussed further in the discussion.

Upon studying Table 4.1, it became evident that Factors 1,2, and 3 have an eigenvalue higher than 1. After applying the Kaiser-Guttman criterion, it was evident that Factors 4-7 should be dismissed, and three factors retained for rotation and further scrutiny.

4.3.3. Two or More Significantly Loading Q Sorts onto a Factor

In general, it is important to steer clear of having a factor defined by only one individual, since it poses a mathematical challenge to distinguish the social narrative from an individual viewpoint. Therefore, each factor should be supported by at least two Q-sorts that load significantly onto it. To determine whether a Q-sort loads significantly onto a factor at the 0.01 level, the following calculation is applied, as outlined by Brown (1980): $2.58 \times (1 \div \sqrt{\text{no.}}$ of items in Q-set).

The following equation was used to determine the significance value for the present study:

$$2.58 \text{ x } (1 \div \sqrt{41})$$

$$\sqrt{41} = 6.403$$

$$1 \div 6.403 = 0.1562$$

$$2.58 \text{ x } 0.1562 = 0.402$$

Upon applying Brown's (1980) equation, in the context of the present study, the calculated significance value was **0.4**. This threshold is the criterion for determining the meaningful contribution of individual Q-sorts to the factors under scrutiny.

One factor (1), from the unrotated data matrix, had two or more Q-sorts significantly loading onto it and therefore met this criterion. See Table 4.2 below for the full unrotated data matrix following a Brown Centroid Factor analysis using KADE (2022) software to generate the initial seven factors.

Table 4.2

A Table to Show the Unrotated Factors Following an Initial Brown Centroid Factor

Analysis Using KADE (2022). The Emboldened Q-Sorts Met the Significance Level Of 0.4.

Q-Sort	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5	Factor 6	Factor 7
1	0.3542	-0.1328	0.0235	0.0078	-0.017	-0.0425	0.0024
2	0.3149	-0.0078	-0.1421	0.0049	-0.2657	-0.3046	0.1308
3	0.326	0.1274	-0.3954	0.0826	-0.3901	0.1516	0.1231
4	0.3825	-0.1737	-0.2292	0.0318	0.0224	-0.2968	0.0745
5	**0.4809**	0.0895	0.3061	0.0712	-0.2507	-0.2109	0.0821
6	**0.489**	0.3501	-0.6006	0.2843	0.272	0.1808	0.0781
7	0.3925	0.295	-0.5978	0.2538	0.3517	0.3023	0.1659
8	**0.5982**	0.2485	-0.2278	0.0587	0.0417	0.0349	0.0017
9	**0.7323**	0.1363	0.2288	0.0518	0.259	-0.1711	0.0806
10	**0.5532**	0.0687	0.3191	0.0741	-0.252	-0.0785	0.0491
11	0.0823	-0.5199	0.2166	0.1854	0.125	-0.4436	0.1862
12	**0.5162**	0.1808	0.1102	0.0328	0.120	-0.1671	0.0371
13	**0.6058**	-0.5128	-0.1605	0.1488	-0.242	0.0163	0.0383
14	**0.6987**	0.1367	0.0788	0.0199	-0.156	0.145	0.0259
15	**0.5436**	-0.1401	0.1532	0.0266	0.095	0.2863	0.0595
16	**0.6796**	0.1925	0.2826	0.0817	0.10	-0.175	0.0358
17	0.3892	-0.1373	0.1112	0.0183	0.060	0.3746	0.0987
18	**0.5374**	-0.1025	0.13	0.0178	-0.22	0.2322	0.0661
19	0.3634	**0.4803**	**0.4226**	0.2904	-0.12	0.109	0.0146
20	0.2124	-0.2642	0.1281	0.0467	0.21	0.0978	0.0414
21	**0.4031**	-0.3545	-0.2326	0.0828	0.22	-0.0003	0.0393

Eigenvalues	4.9674	1.4636	1.7202	0.3293	0.9168	0.9852	0.1477
Explained variance (%)	24	7	8	2	4	5	1
Cumulative % explained variance	24	31	39	41	45	50	51

Table 4.2 - A Table to Show the Unrotated Factors Following an Initial Brown Centroid Factor Analysis Using KADE (2022). The Emboldened Q-Sorts Met the Significance Level Of 0.4.

4.3.4.   Humphrey's Rule

Humphrey's rule, another statistical test to indicate factor retention, asserts that a factor can be seen as significant if the cross product of its highest two loadings surpasses the standard error multiplied by two (Brown, 1980; Watts & Stenner, 2012). Brown (1980) outlined the following equation to calculate the standard error - here demonstrated as used within this study:

$$1 \div (\sqrt{no.\ of\ items\ in\ a\ Q-set})$$

$$1 \div (\sqrt{41}) = 0.156$$

When rounded up, the value becomes 0.16. This is then doubled to produce the criterion for this rule: **0.32.** As indicated in Table 4.3, all seven factors passed Humphrey's rule.

Table 4.3

A Table Which Indicates That All Seven Factors Had a Cross Product Which Exceeded the Standard Error Doubled (0.32), Suggesting That Seven Factors Should Be Extracted.

Factor	Product of two highest loadings multiplied	Humphrey's rule (above 0.32) Pass or Fail?
1	1.431	Pass
2	0.8304	Pass
3	0.7287	Pass
4	0.5747	Pass
5	0.6237	Pass
6	0.6769	Pass
7	0.3521	Pass

Table 4.3 - A Table Which Indicates That All Seven Factors Had a Cross Product Which Exceeded The Standard Error Doubled (0.32), Suggesting That Seven Factors Should Be Extracted

4.3.5. Scree Plot Test

The final statistical test pertains to the scree test (Cattell, 1966), which involves plotting the eigenvalues of each factor. This test serves to determine the major factors from the trivial ones, enabling a focused analysis of the former (Ledesma et al., 2015). The researcher visually analyses the scree plot to determine the point at which the variance explained by the factors is sufficient, and whether further factors would make a minor contribution (Ledesma et al., 2015). This involved inspecting the scree plot and identifying the point at which the slope of the line changes or levels off (Cattell, 1966; Ledesma et al., 2015; Watts & Stenner, 2012). The factors to the left of this juncture are retained for subsequent analysis. It is worth highlighting that while the scree test is commonly employed in factor analysis, it was initially designed for use in Principal Component Analysis (PCA). Particularly, it should not be applied when using Centroid Factor Analysis (CFA; Watts & Stenner, 2012). Thus, in the

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present study, the data underwent a PCA analysis before the Scree Plot test was applied to the unrotated factor solution.

The decision to retain four factors instead of two was reached following a thorough analysis of the scree plot, guided by consultations with an EP and two TEPs. The scree plot revealed a significant flattening after the fourth factor, indicating a natural breakpoint in the data. While there was initial consideration of a change in slope after the second factor, it was mutually agreed that the more definitive levelling after the fourth factor showed a robust point for factor retention. This analysis ensured that the chosen factors maximised the explanatory power of the model.

Furthermore, following Watts and Stenner's (2012) recommendations, we decided on a four-factor solution to comprise a broader range of perspectives, thus enriching the breadth and depth of our analysis. This approach improves the applicability and interpretability of our findings and captures a more comprehensive range of participant views. By selecting four factors, we reduce the risk of oversimplification inherent in a two-factor solution, warranting a more insightful and accurate representation of the complex beliefs and attitudes explored in our study.

Figure 4.1

A Diagram Indicating the Scree Plot Test Graph

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5	Factor 6	Factor 7	Factor 8
Eigenvalues	5.6513	2.3904	1.9837	1.5393	1.4163	1.2228	1.0979	0.9341
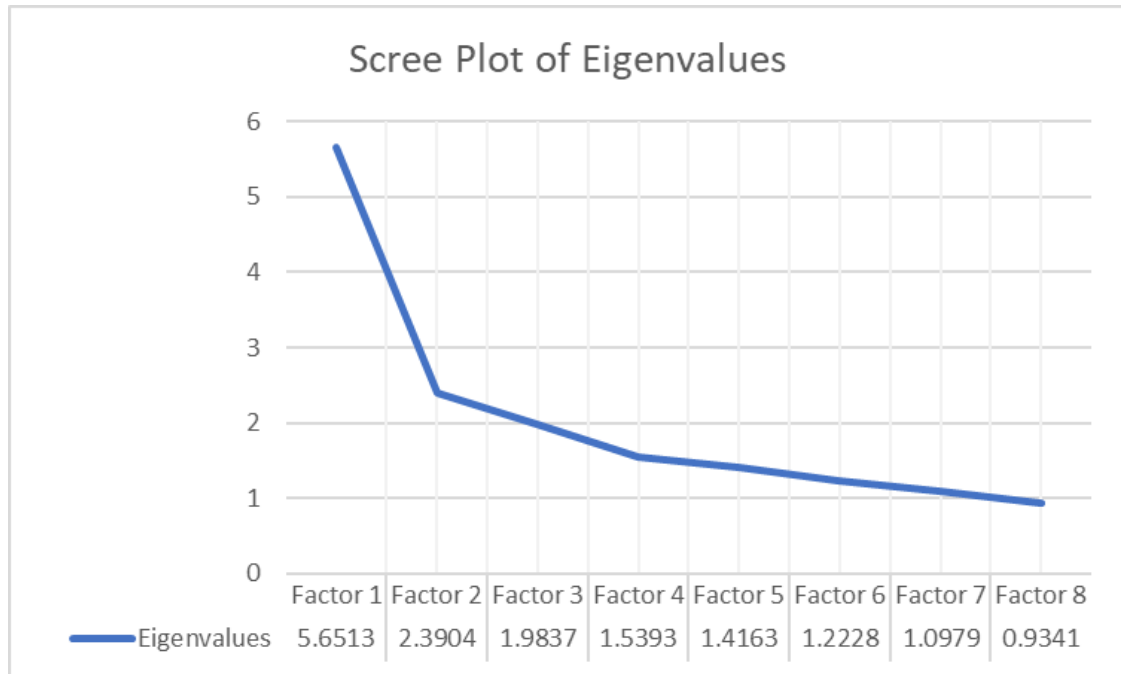
Figure 4.1 - A Diagram Indicating the Scree Plot Test Graph

4.4. Factor Rotation

Within Q-methodology, factor rotations play a significant role in refining the final factor solution and improving how meaningful the identified perspectives are. Factor rotation entails the examination of factors from different angles to determine the final factor solution (Van Exel & de Graaf, 2005). There are two primary methods employed for factor rotation which are Varimax and by-hand rotations, both offering unique benefits and serving different research aims.

4.4.1. Varimax Rotation

Varimax rotation is an objective statistical method designed to optimise the mathematical factor solution by maximising the explained variance within the factor solutions with the fewest number of factors possible (Van Exel & de Graaf, 2005; Watts & Stenner, 2005; Webler et al., 2009). The Varimax approach aims to guarantee individuals are associated with one exclusive factor, making analysis easier, and improving transparency. Significantly, this approach to rotation reduces researcher bias by offering a reliable and objective approach (Watts & Stenner, 2012). It is especially recommended for less experienced Q methodologists, as it reduces the need for subjective assessments (Webler et al., 2009).

4.4.2. By-Hand Rotation

Alternatively, by-hand rotation comprises manual adjustment of factors and is preferred by researchers interested in investigating marginalised perspectives and adopting a deductive analysis approach (Herrington & Coogan, 2011; Watts & Stenner, 2012). This approach enables researchers to focus on viewpoints that may be missed by more objective methods. However, by-hand rotation is typically considered as unreliable and subjective, particularly among those unfamiliar with Q-methodology (Watts & Stenner, 2012).

4.4.3.   Combining Varimax and By-Hand Rotation

A growing trend within Q-methodology is the combination of Varimax and by-hand rotation to utilise the strengths of both methods. Watts and Stenner (2012) suggest using an initial Varimax rotation to ensure objectivity, then following this with small by-hand adjustments to maximise the number of Q-sorts significantly loading onto a factor (Watts & Stenner, 2012). A combined approach was used within the present study to enable an abductive approach to the research, combining deductive and inductive reasoning to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the differing perspectives.

4.4.4.   Factor Rotation in the Present Study

Firstly, three factors were extracted from the data and rotated using Varimax rotation. The significance value of 0.4, determined from Brown's (1980) equation, was re-applied during the factor rotation exercise to refine which Q-sorts aligned with which factors. The factor solution, using the 0.4 significance level, had 16 Q-sorts which significantly loaded onto one of the three factors and explained 39% of the study variance. There were no confounding variables (where Q-sorts load significantly onto multiple factors), and five Q-sorts did not significantly load onto any factors and were labelled non-significant Q-sorts. Existing literature highlights the significance of reducing the number of confounding and non-significant Q-sorts to ensure that the identified factors are representative of a broader range of viewpoints within the P-set (Stainton Rogers & Stainton Rogers, 1990; Webler et al., 2009). This will be returned to in the discussion.

Table 4.4

A Table Which Indicates the Initial Factor Rotation Using Varimax Rotation (On KADE),

of the Selected Three Factors.

Q-Sort Number	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
16	0.7292 X	0.1513	0.1554
9	0.7158 X	0.2307	0.204
19	0.6856 X	-0.2669	-0.0047
10	0.6127 X	0.1915	0.0234
14	0.6048 X	0.2262	0.3102
5	0.5602 X	0.1383	0.0074
12	0.5062 X	0.094	0.215
15	0.433 X	0.3804	0.0801
18	0.4289 X	0.3468	0.1093
13	0.1599	0.7589 X	0.2329
21	0.0287	0.527 X	0.2524
11	-0.006	0.4707 X	-0.32
4	0.0823	0.3607	0.3035
20	0.1316	0.3233	-0.0977
17	0.2972	0.3041	0.0432
1	0.2227	0.29	0.0996

6	0.1378	-0.0056	0.8387 X
7	0.0488	-0.0068	0.772 X
8	0.3954	0.1053	0.5514 X
3	0.0558	0.0871	0.5178 X
2	0.1443	0.1766	0.2596
Total Q-sort Loadings	9	3	4
Eigenvalues	4.9674	1.4636	1.7202
Explained variance (%)	24	7	8

Table 4.4 - A Table Which Indicates the Initial Factor Rotation Using Varimax Rotation (On KADE), of the Selected Three Factors. The Q-sorts which load onto each factor are indicated in colours (red = factor 1; yellow = factor 2; green = factor 3). The X denotes which Q-sorts loaded significantly onto that factor.

Considering Brown's significance value of 0.4, a manual rotation was employed to rotate Factors 2 and 3 by 9 degrees to load Q-sort 4 onto Factor 2. According to this researcher, Q-sort 4 was the only factor close enough to the significance level and worthy of attempting to rotate onto a factor. This was completed without impacting the factors that the remaining Q-sorts loaded onto. Additionally, this was done before any interpretation of the factors to ensure this researcher maintained an abductive approach and that no prior knowledge could affect the manual rotation.

This resulted in a factor solution whereby 17 of the Q-sorts significantly loaded onto one of the three factors. There were four non-significant Q-sorts and no confounding Q-sorts in this final factor solution. This factor solution explained 39% of the variance, highlighting a significant level of explanatory power. This wider representation of perspectives was achieved by conducting the manual rotation. Kline (2014) highlighted that a factor solution is

considered acceptable when the explained variance exceeds 35%. Therefore, this factor

solution both meets and exceeds this suggested threshold, upholding the adequacy and

robustness of this factor solution.

Table 4.5

A Table Indicating the Final Factor Solution Following a By-Hand Rotation Of 9 Degrees Clockwise.

Q-Sort Number	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
16	0.7292 X	0.1737	0.1299
9	0.7158 X	0.2598	0.1654
19	0.6856 X	-0.2643	0.0372
10	0.6127 X	0.1928	-0.0069
14	0.6048 X	0.2719	0.271
5	0.5602 X	0.1378	-0.0143
12	0.5062 X	0.1265	0.1976
15	0.433 X	0.3883	0.0196
18	0.4289 X	0.3597	0.0537
13	0.1599	0.786 X	0.1113
21	0.0287	0.56 X	0.1668
11	-0.006	0.4148 X	-0.3897
4	0.0823	0.4038 X	0.2434
20	0.1316	0.3071	-0.0049
17	0.2972	0.304	0.147
1	0.2227	0.302	0.053
6	0.1378	0.1257	0.8292 X
7	0.0488	0.1141	0.7636 X
8	0.3954	0.1902	0.5281 X
3	0.0558	0.167	0.4978 X
2	0.1443	0.2151	0.2288

Total Q-sort Loadings	9	4	4
Eigenvalues	4.9674	1.4636	1.7202
Explained variance (%)	24	7	8

Table 4.5 - A Table Indicating the Final Factor Solution Following A By-Hand Rotation Of 9 Degrees Clockwise. The Q-sorts which load onto each factor are indicated in colours (red = factor 1; yellow = factor 2; green = factor 3). The X denotes which Q-sorts loaded significantly onto that factor.

4.4.5. The Final Check

Webler et al (2009) recommend researchers consider four principles that reinforce a good final factor solution. These principles support the decision-making process at this phase of the analysis.

These principles include:

- **Simplicity** – the minimum number of factors that allow for interesting information and viewpoints to be retained.

- **Clarity** – where possible, there should be as many Q-sorts loading onto a single factor as possible. Confounding or non-significant Q-sorts should be reduced to a minimum.

- **Distinctiveness** – the lower the correlations between factors, the more superior the final factor solution is. Highly correlated factors indicate that the perspectives are similar and less distinct. However, there is still the possibility of there being important points of difference between factors if they are highly correlated.

- **Stability** – within the correlation matrix, some participant accounts will cluster together due to their similarities. It is key to preserve the stability of these clusters.

Watts and Stenner (2012) encourage the use of the distinctness principle, highlighting the importance of low-factor correlations to make sure factors are representative of unique viewpoints. The correlations between Factor 1 and Factor 2 (0.34), Factor 2 and 3 (0.25), and

Factor 1 and 3 (0.31) fall within weak to moderate ranges, indicating distinctness. These correlations align with Dancey and Reidy's (2020) correlation coefficient strength parameters:

- 0.1 to 0.3 should be seen as weak.

- 0.4 to 0.6 as moderate.

- 0.7 to 0.9 as strong.

These parameters suggest that the correlations between all factors would be weak-moderate in strength. Therefore, each factor likely signifies a unique viewpoint, supporting this researcher's interpretation.

Furthermore, Watts and Stenner (2012) would argue that these factors are not significantly correlated, as they are below the 0.41 significance level of the present study. This researcher felt that this was indicative of sufficiently different viewpoints and could be analysed with minimal concerns.

A three-factor solution was most appropriate and met the following criteria:

- A study variance of which exceeds 35% (Kline, 2014)

- No Q-sorts were considered confounding.

- Two or more Q-sorts significantly loaded onto factors 1-3.

- eigenvalue was above 1 for three factors.

- Humphrey's rule indicated the use of seven factors, including the first three factors.

- The Scree Test indicated the use of four factors.

The final factor solution is represented in Table 4.5. The 17 significant Q-sorts (at p<0.4 level) are indicated with an X.

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In Q-methodology, positive numbers indicate statements ranked above the median position (0) on the Q-Sort grid, indicating they are deemed more useful. Negative numbers represent statements ranked below the median, suggesting that they are considered less useful. These negative values do not imply negative viewpoints but rather suggest a lower perceived usefulness.

4.5.   Factor Arrays

The penultimate stage of Q-methodology analysis involves the curation of factor arrays for each factor. A factor array represents the 'best estimate' Q-sort that represents the viewpoints associated with that factor (Watts & Stenner, 2012, pg. 140). The process involves using the Z scores from each item within the Q-sets and ranking the items using the normalised weighted average statement score of participants that define that factor (Van Exel & De Graaf, 2005). Factor arrays are vital in supporting the interpretation of factors by helping researchers to visualise where statements are ranked based on the perspectives expressed by participants subscribing to each factor.

Table 4.6 contains each Q-set item, where it is ranked within the factor array, and the corresponding Z score for each factor.

Table 4.6

A Table Indicating The Z-Scores and Factor Arrays for Each Statement.

Statement	Factor 1		Factor 2		Factor 3	
	Z score	Rank	Z score	Rank	Z score	Rank
1. Learning a broad and diverse school curriculum which is academic, well-resourced, reflects pupils' heritage, culture, and experiences	0.3	19	0.26	17	1.16	6
2. Staff having high and realistic expectations of your academic potential in school	0.3	18	0.91	9	1.58	3
3. Being religious and being part of religious groups in the community	-0.11	23	-1.08	34	-2.14	41
4. Having positive staff role models from ethnic minorities who relate to the black Caribbean culture	0.59	12	1.17	5	0.33	15
5. Having positive black Caribbean staff role models in school	1.41	3	1.78	2	0.86	11
6. Having positive staff role models who identify as male	0.06	21	0.28	16	-0.01	19
7. Having positive black Caribbean role models in the community	0.88	9	0.25	18	0.46	12
8. Attending a school with an inclusive ethos that promotes the equality and inclusion of all students	1.18	6	-0.03	24	0.22	17

9. Your parents and school having a positive relationship with clear, two-way communication	0.45	14	0.69	12	-0.08	20
10.Having a male parent/ carer who is interested in your academic achievements	0.75	11	1.79	1	0.25	16
11.Teachers are clear about learning objectives in each lesson	-0.15	24	-0.59	29	-0.65	31
12.Engaging in clubs which teach discipline	0.31	17	-0.84	31	-0.11	21
13.Having parents who support and encourage you to achieve in school	1.77	2	1.07	7	0.87	9
14.Parents having high occupational expectations of you and guide you towards them	0.87	10	0.38	15	-0.25	24
15.Parents understand the British educational system and what they need to do to support you	0.04	22	1.09	6	-0.12	22
16.You have grown up in a loving, stable, supportive and secure home environment, giving you a sense of belonging	1.19	5	0.06	22	-0.67	32
17.You have role models and/ or mentors in the family	0.46	13	-0.29	27	1.47	4
18.Your own self-motivation, discipline, confidence and desire to achieve well academically	1.09	7	0.83	10	1.46	5
19.Having external goals you wanted to achieve (e.g., making money)	2.26	1	0.18	21	1.03	8
20.Being involved in sports activities	1.24	4	-1.38	37	-1.75	40

21.Your own awareness of the position of black Caribbean males in education and how to adapt within the school system to achieve despite this.	0.41	16	1.5	3	-0.27	25
22.Having a natural talent or skill which you felt was recognised and supported by school	0.43	15	-1.56	38	0.87	10
23.Being able to behave and speak without your black Caribbean cultural influence (e.g., using correct English grammar and accent)	0.9	8	0.93	8	-0.92	34
24.Being placed in higher-ability sets/ groups at school	-1.14	35	0.46	14	-0.96	35
25.Being involved in extra-curricular activities in school	-1.32	36	-1.63	39	-1.4	39
26.Being involved in community-based and cultural activities/ clubs	-0.42	26	-2.01	41	0.37	14
27.Parents giving you strict guidance on academic goals and allowing you less independence (autonomy)	-1.11	33	0.79	11	-0.49	29
28.Receiving private tuition (e.g., academic or music tuition)	-0.63	29	-1.8	40	-0.33	26
29.Being taught financial literacy (e.g., learning how to grow and manage finances)	0.26	20	-0.15	26	1.89	2
30.Making friends with peers who were engaged, motivated and higher attaining	-0.28	25	-0.63	30	-0.9	33
31.Having family members who buffer the influence of peers (e.g., blocking negative peer influences)	-0.43	27	-1.19	36	-1.38	38

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32.Having parents who supervise or discourage unhelpful social activities	-1.12	34	-1.09	35	-0.55	30
33.Having strong family ties and being motivated to meet family high expectations and make them proud.	-0.55	28	-0.1	25	1.94	1
34.Having peers to compete with academically	-1.4	38	0.03	23	-1.36	37
35.Recognising that there are other areas of achievement/ success (e.g., playing an instrument)	-0.89	32	0.25	19	0.45	13
36.Having older siblings as academic role models	-1.36	37	0.94	33	-0.14	23
37.Having parents who challenge you to continually succeed in life	-0.64	30	1.29	4	-0.48	28
38.Having strict parents who are strong disciplinarians	-1.81	41	0.52	13	-1.11	36
39.Having a parental influence throughout your educational experience in the form of guidance or practical help (e.g., homework support; tutoring and buying additional books)	-1.5	40	-0.52	28	0.17	18
40.School offering alternative qualifications (e.g., non-academic/ vocational awards) and promoting them	-1.45	39	-0.86	32	1.09	7
41.Receiving guidance on how to set goals	-0.79	31	0.21	20	-0.41	27

Table 4.6 - A Table Indicating The Z-Scores and Factor Arrays for Each Statement. Z scores, which can be positive or negative, reflect the deviation from the mean and the number of standard deviations above or below it. A score of zero signifies an identical value.

These factor arrays were subsequently employed to interpret each factor into a holistic viewpoint. Detailed explanations of the factor interpretations will now follow.

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4.6.   Factor Interpretations

The final phase of data analysis within Q-methodology involves the interpretation of factors. It is the role of the researcher to develop a well-constructed narrative which captures the social viewpoints captured within each factor (Webler et al., 2009). Watts and Stenner (2012) highlight the importance of implementing a systematic approach during factor interpretation to ensure consistency and transparency. Adopting the crib sheet approach supports transparent factor interpretation and supports a thorough understanding of each factor. Therefore, this researcher employed Watts and Stenner's (2012) crib sheet approach to support factor interpretation, work abductively, to moderate researcher bias, and reduce subjectivity in interpretation.

Creating crib sheets involves reviewing factor arrays to outline demographic information, highest and lowest-ranked items, and potentially significant factors. The crib sheets, detailed in Appendix 15, include:

- Highest and lowest ranked items

- Items ranked higher or lower in each factor

- Distinguishing statements unique to each factor

- Demographic and qualitative information of participants.

- Additionally, data from post-Q-sort questionnaires (Appendix 16) and supplemented factor interpretation, including insights on distinguishing statements (Appendix 17).

The crib sheets generated for these factor interpretations can be found in Appendix 15. Data regarding the distinctive statements per factor, alongside insights generated from the post-Q-sort questionnaires, were added to bolster the interpretation of each factor gathered from the crib sheets. Distinguishing statements are detected in the KADE data output following the initial identification of the optimal factor solution. These statements are the

items which a specific factor has ranked significantly differently to all other factors. Furthermore, they were briefly reflected upon during follow-up questionnaires with participants who completed the Q-sorts, indicating the highest loading statements they chose, supporting the factor interpretation. The questionnaire responses can be found in Appendix 16. The distinguishing statements for Factors 1-3 can be found in Appendix 17.

In the following section, this researcher will use the term "viewpoint" to represent the extracted factors, therefore Factor One becomes Viewpoint One. This researcher aims to provide a clear and thorough interpretation of each viewpoint, accompanied by supporting evidence in the form of:

- Factor array rankings, which will be presented in brackets in this format:

(Q-set item: rank assigned within the factor array)

- Direct quotations from each post-Q sort questionnaire based on their top two highest ranking success factors.

Following each interpretation, this researcher will provide a succinct summary of each viewpoint, highlighting its key characteristics. To further enhance understanding of the factor interpretation, please refer to the factor interpretation crib-sheets in Appendix 15 and the final factor arrays for each viewpoint available in Appendix 19.

For transparency and clarity in these interpretations, the ranking position of each statement in the relevant factor arrays are referenced. Here is an example demonstrating how this will be presented:

5: +4

(Statement number: Ranked position in normal distribution grid)

4.6.1. *Viewpoint 1 – Driven by Goals and External Motivation: Achieving Success Through Support and Role Models*

Viewpoint 1: Demographic Information. Viewpoint 1 (Factor 1) explained 24% of the variance and had an eigenvalue of 4.97. Nine Q-sorts significantly loaded onto this viewpoint.

Five BAC males; one mixed BAC and African male (who identifies as BAC) and three MWBC males (who identified as BAC) represented this viewpoint. Six out of nine participants considered themselves to be successful, one participant did not respond to this question, and the remaining two considered themselves unsuccessful but both attributed their lack of success to intrinsic factors e.g., lack of motivation or revision. Participants ranged between 16 & 18 years old.

Participant 1 completed the highest loading Q-sort for this viewpoint, closely followed by Participant 2.

Viewpoint 1: Qualitative Interpretation. *Motivation to Achieve.* This viewpoint valued having external goals to achieve (e.g., making money; 19: +4) and believed extrinsically motivating factors support BAC males to achieve academically in school. The consensus expressed that this external motivation is coupled with having self-motivation, discipline, confidence, and a desire to achieve well academically (18: +2), propelling BAC males to strive for success and reach these external goals and job roles.

> *"I am doing trading and I want to be successful in this one day. Having that goal has made me work harder in school."*
>
> Participant 8, Questionnaire

"My whole life, I never really felt I was able to accomplish. In year 9 I sat down with my mum and told her that I want to achieve a good job and experience life for what is it. I want to become a fashion designer. I do not want to sit in a cubicle one day. I want to live."

Participant 9, Questionnaire

"If I do not have the self-discipline then I would not want others to tell me what to do and I would not achieve well. I find it condescending when others tell me what to do as it makes me feel like I don't have a mind of my own [...] I have always wanted freedom and to put impressions on people that I love and love me. I want others like me to know, even if you cannot do it now, you will be able to one day if you try hard".

Participant 6, Questionnaire

Parental Support. In addition, the five participants within this viewpoint valued having parents who support and encourage them to achieve in school (13: +4) and believed that the home environment should be loving, stable, supportive, and secure to offer a sense of belonging (16: +3). They expressed that these parents should set high occupational expectations and guide them towards such goals (14: +2) and male parents/ carers should express an interest in their academic achievements (10: +1).

"Having a support system when you go down the wrong path, they will be able to support you because usually they have gone through things similar or know someone who has and can help. People often overlook family as a support system as they don't think they can help them when they can."

Participant 5, Questionnaire

"It has always been me and my mum and I have had a stepdad but it is mainly me and my mum [...] my mum was the only one to teach from wrong".

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Participant 6, Questionnaire

"My family, they support me to do the stuff I am doing right now. My mum keeps saying to keep doing it even though it is not a lot of money, you can still make profit".

Participant 8, Questionnaire

"She (mum) taught me right from wrong but also showed me compassion. She gave me what I needed but I was not spoiled."

Participant 9, Questionnaire

Less Support from Family. The influence of family in this viewpoint was less active or direct. They expressed that they did not require having family members to buffer the influence of peers (e.g., blocking negative peer influences; 31: -1); they did not feel a great need to have strong family ties or to meet high family expectations or make them proud (33: -1). They seemed to have less of a need for older siblings as academic role models (36: -3) and they did not necessarily need parents to challenge them (37: -1), as they were self-motivated. They did not value parents offering strict guidance on academic goals, reducing their independence (27: -2). The value of independence was evident in this viewpoint as having strict parents who are strong disciplinarians (38: -4); parents who supervise or discourage unhelpful social activities (32: -2); and having a parental influence throughout the educational experience in the form of guidance or practical help (e.g., homework support; tutoring and buying additional books; 39: -4), were all ranked relatively low.

"I had siblings, but they lived away, so I did not have older sibling role models to tell me right from wrong. My older cousin was a negative role model but there was no one to look up to. The ones that there were, were not ideal to look up to."

Participant 6; Questionnaire

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However, Participant 7 had a nuanced viewpoint of the role of siblings within this viewpoint.

"Having an older sibling can give their thoughts and their guidance and put them on the right path to better [themselves] and future family. They academically influence you. If there is something you don't know, it helps."

Participant 7, Questionnaire

Role Models. Within this viewpoint, role models were considered a key factor in supporting the academic attainment of BAC males. It was highlighted that having positive BAC role models in school (5: +3) and in the community (7: +2); having male role models (6: 0) or role models from other ethnic minorities who understand BAC culture (4: +1) were considered helpful for BAC males' academic success. Role models and/ or mentors in the family (17: +1) were also rated high in this viewpoint; somewhat contradicting the notion that familial influence is less valued in this viewpoint and suggesting that when role models are present in the family, it is valued.

Inclusivity, Recognition of Culture and Adaptability. This viewpoint seemed to recognise the role of inclusivity and adaptability within the school system. Participants within this viewpoint valued attending a school with an inclusive ethos that promotes the equality and inclusion of all students (8: +2). They saw benefits in learning a broad and diverse school curriculum that is academic, well-resourced, and reflects pupils' heritage, culture, and experiences (1: 0). As well, they highlighted a level of awareness of the position of BAC males in education (21: +1) and assimilation needed to adapt within the school system to achieve despite this. This viewpoint emphasises that an ability to alter behaviour and language to reduce the black Caribbean cultural influence (e.g., using correct English grammar and accent; 23: +2) could support BAC males to achieve well academically in

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school. Additionally, this viewpoint highlighted that there was less of a need to offer vocational or alternative subjects (40: -3; 35: -2) and valued hard work towards the existing curriculum. This viewpoint did not expect schools to make significant accommodations for BAC males and felt that students should consider their position and work within the existing school system. Furthermore, having a positive relationship, between parents and school, with clear two-way communication (9: +1) was highlighted as an influencing factor for BAC male academic attainment.

"Black history is not reflected in the curriculum and a lot of investors, creators, and other black role models are not mentioned and forgotten about in the curriculum. Many schools say that they celebrate black history, but they only scrape the surface of the actual history of black people. This affects the current generations and generations to come, as they will not know enough about the Caribbean history. Slavery was the only thing taught at school and that was a negative event."

Participant 5, Questionnaire

"School is fair for everyone. Staff have no biases towards black students."

Participant 2, Questionnaire

Skills, Talents, and Religious Groups. Additionally, this viewpoint ranked having skills and talent (22: +1) e.g., in sports (20: +4), relatively high, considering these aspects as helpful for academic success. However, there was less onus on extra-curricular activities in school or in the community to teach discipline (25: -2). Although, this viewpoint ranked being religious and part of religious groups (3: 0) higher than all other viewpoints.

Viewpoint 1: Summary. This viewpoint highlighted that academic success for BAC males involves independence, self-discipline, and extrinsic motivators such as financial gain, besides familial support and black or minority ethnic role models. They valued equality and

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inclusivity in school highly, highlighting the need for adaptability. Intrinsic qualities (including drive, talent, or sport) and external motivators drove them towards academic success and desired career goals, valuing positive role models, supportive parents, and an inclusive school ethos that recognises cultural heritage. Clear communication between school and parents was considered key for a holistic approach to educational success.

4.6.2. Viewpoint 2 - Strict Parent/ Carer Guidance and Role Models: Nurturing Academic Success Through Structure and Support

Viewpoint 2: Demographic Information. Viewpoint 2 (Factor 2) explained 7% of the variance and had an eigenvalue of 1.46. Four Q-sorts significantly loaded onto this viewpoint.

Three BAC males; and one MWBC males (who identified as BAC) represented this viewpoint. Three out of four participants considered themselves to be successful, one participant considered themselves unsuccessful but mentioned that he was "trying to get onto the right path". Participants ranged between ages 16 & 24.

Participant 10 completed the highest loading Q-sort for this viewpoint.

Viewpoint 2: Qualitative Interpretation. *Role Models and Strict Parental Guidance.* This viewpoint highlighted that male and black role models, in school (5: +4), in the community (7: +1), and within parents, were key in supporting the academic attainment of BAC males. Within the school, they valued having male staff (6: +1) and role models from ethnic minorities (4: +3) who set high expectations (2: +2) for BAC males to strive for. Regarding parents and family, they value when they offer support and challenge them (37: +3; 13: +2) with high occupational expectations (14: +1; 33: 0) and demonstrate an ability to adapt to the British education systems (15: +2) and communicate well with school (9: +1), especially male parents who show an interest in their academic achievements (10: +4).

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Additionally, this viewpoint valued strict parenting and discipline in the home, with less autonomy (27: +1; 38: +1).

"Parents showing interest in my achievements provided both encouragement and motivation to succeed in all aspects of life."

Participant 10, Questionnaire

"From experience, parents give the biggest impact and they, most of the time, are the biggest role model to us as we will forever listen to them."

Participant 11, Questionnaire

"They push us to be our best as they have the most experience and they have been through what we have been through and give great guidance for decisions and development."

Participant 11, Questionnaire

"Strict parents from young can teach what you are supposed to do and not supposed to do."

Participant 12, Questionnaire

"This gives you a good structure and whips you into shape from the get-go."

Participant 13, Questionnaire

"They have got a plan for you and them being strict helps you not fall off the road you are on."

Participant 13, Questionnaire

Independence and Self-Reliance. This viewpoint placed less value on the influence of peers and other family members outside of parents supporting and influencing their behaviours or social interactions. They seldom required peers to compete with them

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academically (34: 0), and they benefitted less from friendships with engaged, motivated, and higher-attaining peers (30: -1). They were less inclined to need family members to buffer the influence of peers or negative influences (31: -1) and were already motivated to avoid unhelpful social activities (32: -2) without the influence of parents. They required less support from role models and/ or mentors in the family (17: -1) as the role of parents was slightly more prevalent, but they expressed having less need for a parental influence regarding their educational experience in the form of guidance or practical help (e.g., homework support; tutoring and buying additional books; 39: -1).

This viewpoint did not appear to require extracurricular activities, religious groups, or clubs to teach them discipline or support their needs (12: -1; 3: -2; 40: -2; 25: -3; 20: -3; 22: -3; 26: -4; 28: -4). They understood the need for diverse achievements outside of academia, but this was less important for them to achieve success academically (35: 0). This viewpoint was generally less focused on creative factors and saw more value in reaching academic goals. Financial literacy was less of a necessity to learn as this viewpoint valued achieving their academic goals over making money (29: -1; 18: 2).

> *"Understanding this from an early age meant that I continuously worked and pushed myself harder than my peers and those around me to minimize any possible obstacles which may occur."*

Participant 10

> *"No one can tell me anything either way. Your blackness in you makes people feel more intimidated. So, people do not put down your motivation."*

Participant 12

Adaptability to the British and School Systems. In addition, they could see the value in a diverse curriculum but were less focused on the content of the learning being reflective of

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their culture (1: 0). However, they recognised the need to adapt their behaviour to appease their educational experience by behaving and speaking without their BAC cultural influence (23: 2). This viewpoint showed an awareness of the position of BAC males in education and recognised the need to adapt to the school system to achieve academic success (21: 0)

They did not appear to have much involvement with the BAC community outside of school or require the support of positive black role models in the community (7, 0), but showed an understanding that community role models play a role in the academic attainment of BAC males.

Viewpoint 2: Summary. This viewpoint highlighted the key role of male and BAC role models, both within the school and the community, as well as within the family, in supporting the academic attainment of BAC males. Explicitly, they emphasised the significance of male staff and ethnic minority role models in schools that set high expectations for BAC males to thrive academically. Within the family, they valued parental support, high professional expectations, and successful communication with schools, specifically highlighting the importance of male parents who express interest in academic achievements. Furthermore, this viewpoint emphasised discipline at home and strict parenting, highlighting the importance of guidance and structure from an early age.

On the contrary, this viewpoint assigned less significance to the influence of peers and external family members outside of parents in influencing social interactions or behaviours. They seldom relied on peer engagement or competition with more academically motivated peers, nor did they need external support to counter negative peer influences. Additionally, they demonstrated less dependence on extracurricular activities or community participation for support or discipline, prioritising academic goals over financial literacy and appreciating adaptation to the educational system over cultural identity within the school.

4.6.3. *Viewpoint 3- Empowerment through Self-Motivation, Alternative Routes to Academia, and Economic Aspirations*

Viewpoint 3: Demographic Information. Viewpoint 3 (Factor 3) explained 8% of the variance and had an eigenvalue of 1.72. Four Q-sorts significantly loaded onto this viewpoint.

Two BAC males; one MWBC male (who identified as BAC) and one BAC and African male (who identified as BAC) represented this viewpoint. Two out of four participants considered themselves to be successful, the remaining two did not comment. Participants were aged either 16 or 18.

Participant 15 completed the highest loading Q-sort for this viewpoint.

Viewpoint 3: Qualitative Interpretation. *Intrinsic and Financial Motivation.* The consensus within this viewpoint placed the highest value on financial literacy and understanding how to grow wealth (29: +4). In addition, this viewpoint expressed a high regard for self-motivation (18: +3), they highlighted the importance of education about finances and being externally motivated to succeed for financial gain (19: +2), though they valued alternative indicators of success (35: +1). Their intrinsic motivation supported BAC males within this viewpoint to achieve high goals, despite them being set by others (e.g., staff and parents; 2: +3; 33: +4).

Alternative Routes to Success. There was some agreement, within this viewpoint, that being talented and having this recognised and supported by the school (22: 2) supports the academic success of BAC males. In addition, this viewpoint highlighted that schools offering alternative qualifications (40: +2) to support non-academic talents and recognising that there are other areas of achievement (35: +1), were supportive of BAC males' educational success. Furthermore, this viewpoint values being involved in extra-curricular activities and clubs in the community, particularly clubs that instil discipline (12: 0; 26: +1). However, extra-

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curricular clubs within school, sports clubs, and religious-based groups were significantly less important for this viewpoint (25: -1; 3: -4; 20: -4).

"[Financial literacy] gives you a good structure and whips you into shape from the get-go."

Participant 14, Questionnaire

"It is important to have high expectations as some people cannot achieve high grades but if staff push you towards a high goal, this can help you to achieve well."

Participant 17, Questionnaire

"[I] value having staff that place high expectations alongside family motivating BAC males to reach those aspirations."

"External goals would motivate me to do better."

Participant 16, Questionnaire

Supportive Parenting. This viewpoint preferred having loving, supportive family relationships (33: 4) who support and encourage them to achieve in school (13: 2) and offer guidance or practical help (39, 0) using their understanding of the British education system (15: 0); Although they required less practical help than support or encouragement. They valued being able to meet family's high expectations and make them proud (33: 4). Particularly, the role of male parents showing an interest in their academic achievements, was a factor that helped BAC males in this viewpoint make academic progress (10: 1). They highlighted the benefit of having role models and mentors in the family (36, 0). Individuals within this viewpoint attributed their academic success largely to the presence of such familial factors in their lives; however, they did not need the home environment to be supportive or give them a sense of belonging (16: -2) as they seemed to value the support of

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family member individually, as opposed to the home environment. This viewpoint did not rank very highly: having strict, disciplined parenting (38: -2), parents who challenge them to academically succeed (37: -1), or having parents dictate who they should spend time with by blocking peer influences or unhelpful social activities (31: -1; 32: -1). However, there were some anomalies within this viewpoint who shared their anecdotal perspective of having strict parenting and the impact this had on their academic experiences:

> *"They have got a plan for you and them being strict helps you not fall off the road you are on."*

> Participant 14, Questionnaire

> *"It helps to have a family member who is proud of you whatever you are doing and who motivates you to work hard."*

> Participant 17

Role Models. Within this viewpoint, there was a shared consensus that role models play a key role in the academic success of BAC males, who push and motivate them to achieve high aspirations. These role models are within the family (17: 3; 10: 1), school (4: 1; 5: 1), and in the community (7:1), including male (6: 0; 10: 1), BAC (5: 1; 7: 1), and role models from other ethnic minorities (4: 1).

> *"Having a positive black role model helped a lot because you can relate to them as you've gone through similar experiences and can trust their advice."*

> Participant 16

Independence from Peers. Within this viewpoint, making friends with engaged, motivated, and higher-attaining peers (30: -2) was less of a priority as they did not seem to

value having peers to compete with academically (34: -3). In addition, they did not seem to require family members to buffer the influence of negative peer influences (31: -3).

Viewpoint 3: Summary. This viewpoint championed self-motivation and financial literacy as key drivers of success for BAC males, valuing wealth generation alongside alternative indicators of achievement. Whilst acknowledging the importance of family support, specifically in understanding the British education system and parental interest in academic endeavours, this viewpoint placed less importance on strict parenting and parental control over social events. Instead, it favoured a balance between individual autonomy and familial encouragement. Moreover, acknowledgement of talent by schools and involvement in community-based extra-curricular activities were appreciated, whilst peer competition and external safeguarding of negative influences were less valued.

Further, within this viewpoint, role models from diverse ethnic-minority backgrounds played a key motivational role, particularly from within the family, school, and community who offer encouragement and guidance toward high academic aspirations. Peer relationships were considered less critical for academic success, with a focus on intrinsic motivation and individual drive. Overall, this viewpoint underscored the multifaceted influences impacting the educational trajectories of BAC males, emphasising the interplay between personal motivation, familial support, and community engagement in achieving academic goals.

4.7. Consensus Statements

Consensus statements capture shared viewpoints, whilst distinguishing statements highlight individual differences. Both are essential for understanding the range of perspectives in Q-methodology.

The following statements were categorised as consensus statements across the viewpoints. This indicates that there were significant levels of agreement between each Q-

sort loading onto each factor, about these items (all viewpoints treated these items similarly). The factor array points are shown in brackets.

Appendices 2 and 3 present tables with consensus and distinguishing statements identified from the statistical analysis, along with their respective Z-scores. Significance is crucial in Q-methodology to discern which statements reflect shared viewpoints (consensus) and which highlight individual differences (distinguishing). In this context, a high level of significance indicates the degree of divergence, and a higher level of non-significance indicates the level of agreement among participants, aiding in the interpretation of the findings. Among the statements, five consensus statements were non-significant at the $p < 0.05$ level, represented with an asterisk (*). These five statements (factors) will now be discussed in further detail.

4.7.1. *Role Models*

Consistently, across each viewpoint, having positive role models – albeit in school or within the community – who identify as BAC, male, or, from ethnic minorities, was highly valued. Participants across each viewpoint considered these role models as important for the educational success of BAC males, highlighting the importance of identifying with them.

Table 4.7

Consensus Statements on Role Models.

Consensus Statement	Placement in Viewpoint 1	Placement in Viewpoint 2	Placement in Viewpoint 3
4. Having positive staff role models from ethnic minorities who relate to the black Caribbean culture	+1	+3	+1
6. Having positive staff role models who identify as male*	0	+1	0
7. Having positive black Caribbean role models in the community	+2	0	1

Table 4.7 - Consensus Statements on Role Models. Rankings of each consensus statement within each viewpoint are depicted, with numbers marked with a + denoting higher rankings and those with a – indicating lower rankings. The median ranking is represented by 0.

4.7.2. *Parents Trusting in School and their Children.*

Each viewpoint concurred that there is a role for parents in the academic success of BAC males. They collectively promoted positive two-way communication between schools and parents to support educational achievement. However, they did not value parents who discouraged their children from negative influences. This indicates that all viewpoints value parents who foster trust in both the school system and their children's ability to make autonomous decisions.

Table 4.8

Consensus Statements on Parents Trusting in School and their Children.

Consensus Statement	Placement in Viewpoint 1	Placement in Viewpoint 2	Placement in Viewpoint 3
9. Your parents and school having a positive relationship with clear, two-way communication	+1	+1	0
32. Having parents who supervise or discourage unhelpful social activities	-2	-2	-1

Table 4.8 - Consensus Statements on Parents Trusting in School and their Children. Rankings of each consensus statement within each viewpoint are depicted, with numbers marked with a + denoting higher rankings and those with a – indicating lower rankings. The median ranking is represented by 0.

4.7.3. Self-Motivation

One statement was consistently ranked high among all three viewpoints, and this was statement 18. This statement indicates that intrinsic motivation, self-discipline, confidence in oneself, and a personal desire are necessary to achieve academic success.

Table 4.9

Consensus Statements on Self-Motivation.

Consensus Statement	Placement in Viewpoint 1	Placement in Viewpoint 2	Placement in Viewpoint 3
18. Your own self-motivation, discipline, confidence, and desire to achieve well academically	+2	+2	+3

Table 4.9 - Consensus Statements on Self-Motivation. Rankings of each consensus statement within each viewpoint are depicted, with numbers marked with a + denoting higher rankings and those with a – indicating lower rankings. The median ranking is represented by a 0.

4.8.   Consensus Statements Considered Less Useful.

Three statements were ranked lower across all three viewpoints, indicating that generally, these factors had less impact on the academic performance of BAC males. There was a consensus that teachers do not need to be clear about learning objectives in lessons. Furthermore, all viewpoints agreed that BAC males do not require extra-curricular activities within the school to thrive academically or need academically able peers to motivate them to perform well in school.

Table 4.10

Consensus Statements.

Consensus Statement	Placement in Viewpoint 1	Placement in Viewpoint 2	Placement in Viewpoint 3
11. Teachers are clear about learning objectives in each lesson – clarity on lesson objectives	0	-1	-1
25. Being involved in extra-curricular activities in school	-2	-3	-3
30. Making friends with peers who were engaged, motivated, and higher attaining	0	-1	-2

Table 4.10 - Consensus Statements. Rankings of each consensus statement within each viewpoint are depicted, with numbers marked with a + denoting higher rankings and those with a – indicating lower rankings. The median ranking is represented by 0.

4.9.   Non-Significant Q-Sorts.

Four completed Q-sorts did not load significantly onto the three final factors. These were Q-sorts 1,2,17, and 20 and their factor loadings can be found in Appendix 20. Each of these Q-sorts was reviewed to ascertain whether any perspectives had been neglected, differing from the existing three factors (viewpoints).

Q-sorts 1, 17, and 20 all would have met the significance level for Factor 2 if the significance level had been lowered to +0.3. This indicates that there could be some agreement amongst these three viewpoints but not enough to be considered within the homogenous viewpoint of Factor 2.

However, Q-sort 2 was considerably far from the significance threshold of +0.41 for all three factors/ viewpoints. This indicates that this participant shared a particularly unique perspective worth exploring further, and this is what follows.

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4.9.1.   *Q-sort 2*

Q-sort 2 had a perspective that valued a diverse and broad curriculum (1: +4) and having staff with high and realistic expectations (2: +4). They uniquely valued the role of religion highly (3: +3) and considered BAC role models in school and in the community as key to academic success (7: +2). They placed high value on the role of parents, particularly male parents (10: +2), in setting high expectations (14: +1), communicating well with school (9: +2), understanding the British education system (15: +1), and guiding their children towards their goals (14: +1). This viewpoint valued being involved in extra-curricular clubs (12: +2), particularly around sports (20: +1), as well as seeing the benefits of having a natural talent within the school (22: +1). In addition, they viewed teachers setting clear objectives in lessons (11: +2) as important for academic attainment for BAC males, and believed it was important to understand the role of BAC males in education (21: +1), to adapt accordingly.

This participant did not value inclusivity within the school ethos (8: -4), nor did they see a benefit to having positive male staff role models (6: -4). This participant valued the BAC ethnicity of role models in school above their gender (4: +3; 5: +3). This participant saw minimal value in strict parenting (38: -1), where they offer guidance on goals (27: -1) and discourage unhelpful social activities (32: -3). Additionally, they did not value other family members buffering the influence of peers in their lives (31: -1), nor did they see much benefit in having strong family ties (33: -1) or sibling role models (36: -1), where they could be motivated to achieve familial expectations. The loving, stable, and supportive home environment was less important for this participant (16: -3).

Furthermore, they did not benefit from having peers (who were engaged, motivated, and higher attaining) to compete with academically (34: -1: 30: -2). Nor did they value being

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taught about financial literacy (29: -1) as they ranked the notion of achieving external financial goals rather low (19: -3).

Moreover, this participant did not highlight a need to engage in private academic or musical tuition (28: -2), nor attend community-based clubs (26: -2).

There were some general similarities between this participant and the other viewpoints. They all agreed on the importance of having BAC people and other ethnic minorities as role models. However, this person does not agree that male staff role models are necessary.

They shared values around parents with other viewpoints, not needing them to dissuade BAC males from negative social experiences. They similarly believe that parents should not play a significant role in their lives regarding buffering friendships.

However, this participant had stronger views about the role of peers, stating that there is little need to befriend motivated peers to be successful. In addition, they strongly opposed the consensus viewpoint and highlighted a need for teachers to be clear about objectives in lessons; however, agree that schools and parents should have good two-way communication.

4.9.2. Q-Sort 1

The general viewpoint highlighted in Q-sort 1 valued having supportive family systems, including a loving and stable home environment, strong family ties, and parental guidance towards academic goals (16: +4; 33: +1; 37: +1). Whilst the overall viewpoint suggests a detachment from direct social and familial support (27: -1; 13: -1; 14: -1), this participant prioritised familial encouragement, mentorship, and strict parental guidance (32: +1; 17: +1; 38: +1) as key indicators of academic success. This participant did not prioritise positive relationships between schools and parents (9: -1), nor did they value support or engagement from male parents regarding academic endeavours (10: -1). However, they highly valued learning a broad and diverse curriculum (1: +4), suggesting a strong emphasis on self-

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motivated academic exploration and intellectual pursuits (18: +3) above other types of engagement (e.g., sports; 20: -1). Furthermore, they prioritised the presence of positive BAC role models in school and the wider community (4: +3; 5: +2; 7: +2) and recognised the need for parental understanding of the British education system (15: +2). They highlighted the need to understand the role of BAC males within the UK education system and the importance of balancing cultural identity with mainstream expectations (23: +3), particularly regarding language and culture. Moreover, they highly regarded being taught financial literacy as a key factor impacting academic success for BAC males (29: +1).

However, this perspective demonstrated a somewhat detached stance towards social and familial support or involvement, prioritising individual learning and academic breadth instead. They did not require support from teachers (11: -4); private tutors (28: -4); or academic peer or sibling role models (30: -2; 36: -3) to support their academic endeavours, nor did they need staff to set high expectations (2: -3), offer alternative qualifications (40: -2) or recognise their talents or skills (22: -3) to achieve success. See Appendix 20 for all Q-sort 1 rankings.

4.9.3. Q-Sort 20

Q-sort 20 placed a higher value on familial guidance and support for academic achievement, with high rankings for statements emphasising a loving and stable home environment (16: +4), parental encouragement (37: +4; 13: +3; 10: +3; 14: +2), and clear two-way communication between school and parents (9: +2). Moreover, having familial, school, and community role models (17: +2; 4: +1; 7: +1), along with receiving guidance on setting goals (41: +3), were highly valued factors.

However, being part of religious groups (3: -4) was ranked lowest in this viewpoint. Amongst the lower ranking factors included receiving high academic expectations from staff

(2: -4), having positive BAC staff role models (5: -3), receiving private tuition (28: -3), attending discipline-instilling clubs or (12: -3) extracurricular activities (25: -2), learning a diverse school curriculum (1: -2), attending a school that promotes inclusivity (8: -2), receiving financial literacy education (29: -2). In addition, they did not believe that schools need to recognise other areas of achievement (35: -2) for BAC males to achieve well academically. Furthermore, this participant did not value parents offering strict guidance on academic goals and preferred autonomy (27: -1); they did not value having family members who buffer negative peer influences, or strict parenting (31: -1; 38: -1).

4.9.4. Q-Sort 17

In Q-Sort 17, there was a high value placed on intrinsic motivation, confidence, and setting external goals (e.g., making money) coupled with establishing relationships with motivated peers and gaining parental support, particularly from male parents (18: +4; 19: +2; 30: +4; 13: +3; 31: +2; 10: +3). They highlighted the importance of school and parents having clear communication (9: +3), where that school has an inclusive ethos (8: +2). They recognised that there is a need for BAC males to recognise their educational challenges in the British education system (21: +2). This participant placed a high value on having access to diverse role models, particularly male staff who relate to the BAC culture (4: +1; 6: +1). They highlighted the need to recognise achievements beyond academia, including involvement in extracurricular activities and community engagement in religious groups, to promote a positive academic journey (3: +1; 35: +2). Additionally, they valued financial literacy education and positive academic competition with peers, demonstrating the need for this participant to have their social and educational needs met simultaneously (29: +1; 34: +1).

However, this participant ranked parental understanding of the British education system and guidance on academic goals low, along with having strict parental guidance hat

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discourage unhelpful social activities (27: -1; 14: -2; 32: -2). However, they did not see a need to adapt or suppress their own BAC culture or language to adhere to the education system (23: -3). Additionally, they placed less value on being involved in community or extra-curricular activities (26: -3; 25: -3), having community BAC role models (7: -1), or being placed in higher ability sets within the school, where staff have high expectations of them (24: -2; 40: -1; 2: -2). Furthermore, they did not prioritise having a diverse school curriculum or receiving private academic support (1: -1; 28: -4).

4.10. Summary of All Consensus Statements

The research aim for this study was to understand which success factors BAC males consider to be the most impactful for their academic success. Therefore, it seemed important to outline which factors were highly ranked across all Q-sorts, both significant and non-significant. This will offer further insight into which factors could be prioritised for intervention. To gain an understanding of which factors were most highly regarded, the consensus statements from the significant Q-sorts were compared with the factors identified as common (within a Venn diagram of all non-confounding Q-sorts, see Appendix 21). Common factors were rewritten as a statement depending on how they were ranked. Lower ranking consensus statements were re-worded to suggest a lesser valued viewpoint e.g., does not value strict parenting. Higher ranking consensus statements were re-worded to suggest a higher valued viewpoint e.g., values BAC staff role models. Statements were then grouped to generate overarching themes. These themes will now be explained and are highlighted in Table 4.11.

Table 4.11

All Consensus Statements Categorised into Overarching Themes

Consensus Statements	Overarching Theme
Value having positive staff role models from ethnic minorities.	1. Positive role models
Value having role models in all areas.	
Values having male parents who express an interest in your learning.	2. Parental Support and Engagement
Values having parents who encourage and support you to achieve.	

Table 4.11 - All Consensus Statements Categorised into Overarching Themes

The consensus themes across all Q-sorts, significant and non-significant, highlighted shared viewpoints on the factors necessary for promoting academic attainment amongst BAC males. Participants generally highlighted the importance of role models, ideally from ethnic minorities, in various spheres including family, school, and the community. Moreover, there was a strong agreement regarding the role of parental interest and support in the academic endeavours of BAC males. Particularly, participants emphasised the significance of parental involvement and encouragement, specifically from male parents, in fostering academic success for this demographic. These outcomes suggest a collective recognition of the key role played by familial support and positive influences in facilitating academic achievement amongst BAC males.

4.11. Summary of Results

The analysis of the 21 completed Q-sorts resulted in a three-factor solution, based on various defensible criteria. These factors were interpreted to represent three distinct viewpoints:

1. Driven by Goals and External Motivation: Achieving Success Through Support and Role Models

2. Strict Parent/ Carer Guidance and Role Models: Nurturing Academic Success Through Structure and Support

3. Empowerment through Self-Motivation, Alternative Routes to Academia, and Economic Aspirations

Consensus statements were discovered amongst the three viewpoints, as expected due to the weak-moderate correlation between the three factors. The four non-significant Q-sorts that were not included in the factor interpretations were analysed separately to include their perspectives, decipher any unique viewpoints, and identify any shared views which link the consensus statements from the three distinct viewpoints. This found that Q-sort 2 had a unique perspective to the remaining viewpoints and that Q-sorts 1, 17, and 20 have distinct similarities and differences. The highly ranked consensus statements amongst the three viewpoints and the highest-ranking common viewpoints across the non-significant viewpoints were analysed and combined to ascertain what are considered to be the most helpful factors impacting the academic attainment of BAC males. The two themes identified were:

1. Positive role models

2. Parental Support and Engagement

Chapter 5: the discussion will critique the findings from the present study in relation to the previously presented literature in Chapter 2, assess the strengths and weaknesses of the methodological approach outlined in Chapter 3, and explore the practical implications of the results presented in Chapter 4 within professional practice and future research. The discussion will generate an overarching conclusion.

5. Chapter 5: Discussion

5.1. Introduction to the Discussion

This chapter will discuss the research findings in relation to prior literature, evaluate the strengths and limitations of the present study, and uncover the implications on educational practices. The structure will be as follows:

- Summary of research findings

- Findings in relation to previous literature

- Strengths and limitations of the present study

- Implications for Professional Practice

- Implications for Future Research

- Conclusion

5.2. Summary of Research Findings

The present study aimed to address the following research question:

Which factors are considered to be the most impactful for the academic success of BAC males?

The results of the by-person factor analysis of 17 significant Q-sorts revealed three distinct viewpoints:

1. Viewpoint 1: Driven by Goals and External Motivation: Achieving Success Through Support and Role Models.

2. Viewpoint 2: Strict Parent/ Carer Guidance and Role Models: Nurturing Academic Success Through Structure and Support.

3. Viewpoint 3: Empowerment through Self-Motivation, Alternative Routes to Academia, and Economic Aspirations.

This indicates that there are nuanced viewpoints, amongst BAC males aged between 16-and 24 in the West Midlands, about which factors are considered to be most helpful for their academic success. This highlights that there is no blanket approach that will address the needs of all BAC males. However, the findings from this study offer a guide for interventions to focus as a starting point of an Assess, Plan, Do, Review process.

Three viewpoints that were stable, clear, distinct, and simple (Webler et al, 2009) were selected for the factor solution in this study. This three-factor solution allowed for significant levels of convergence and divergence between viewpoints to be discovered. Using Q-methodology has allowed for a higher level of differentiation between viewpoints than would have been possible with pure qualitative approaches such as interviews or focus groups.

More than three factors could have been statistically possible based on Humphrey's rule and the Scree Plot test. However, the Kaiser-Guttman Criterion suggested three factors and the Two or More Significantly Loading Q-Sorts criterion suggested retaining one factor. As one factor would diminish the viewpoints of many Q-sorts, and the aim of Q-methodology is to retain as many viewpoints as possible (Watts & Stenner, 2012), therefore three factors were retained.

There was a weak-moderate correlation between all three factors which was acceptable according to Dancey and Reidy (2011) and therefore all three viewpoints met the distinctiveness principle (Watts & Stenner, 2012). This was evident as Viewpoint 1 placed stronger value on having extrinsic motivators, adaptability to the school environment, and having an inclusive ethos that recognises cultural heritage. Viewpoint 2 placed more emphasis on male, BAC role models in school, home, and the community, along with strict parenting; and Viewpoint 3 was more focused on alternative indicators of success, involvement in extra-curricular activities, and acknowledgement of their talents.

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There were some consensus statements amongst the viewpoints which indicated that there were some shared perspectives about which factors are most useful for the academic success of BAC males. Considering the nature of the research question being focused on the most useful success factors, this researcher decided to focus on the consensus statements which were ranked highly amongst all viewpoints. Five statements ranked highly amongst all viewpoints, which BAC males considered to be the most useful factors for their academic success. These statements included:

- Having positive staff role models from ethnic minorities who relate to the BAC culture.

- Having positive staff role models who identify as male.

- Having positive BAC role models in the community.

- Your parents and school having a positive relationship with clear, two-way communication.

- Your own self-motivation, discipline, confidence, and desire to achieve well academically.

There were three Q-sorts that were considered non-significant and were not included in the statistical analysis, thus they did not form part of the viewpoints (Q-sorts 1,2,17 & 20). However, a separate analysis of these Q-sorts was undertaken to ensure their perspectives were still included. The common highly ranked statements amongst the three non-significant viewpoints, when combined with the consensus statements of the significant Q-sorts, found two themes to be considered as the most impactful factors affecting the academic success of BAC males. These factors were:

- Positive role models

- Parental support and engagement

5.3. Findings in Relation to Previous Literature

The next section aims to highlight the interconnections between the previously reviewed literature in Chapter One (including comparisons with the findings from the SLR) and the findings from the present study, with a focus on the consensus and most common highly ranked factors. Adopting Bronfenbrenner's (1977; 1979) ecological systems theory, discussed prior, this next section will explain the contributions of the present study on the existing body of evidence concerning the educational attainment of BAC males.

5.3.1. *Micro-system*

The Micro-system, as per Bronfenbrenner (2002) and Berk (2000), includes a child's immediate environment, such as family, regular contacts e.g., peers, and school. Ryan (2001) describes this level as a two-way relationship where the environment impacts the child, and the child influences their environment. The outcomes from the present study emphasise the significant impact of factors at the micro-level on the academic success of BAC males. This stresses the importance of employing interventions for the direct systems around the child, as these have the most potent and direct impact, aligning with Bronfenbrenner's (2002) ecological systems theory. Specifically, factors within the BAC male microsystem, including role models; parental involvement; and intrinsic motivation of BAC males, emerged as key factors impacting their educational experiences and academic attainment.

This section will scrutinise how the identified consensus factors from the present study, specifically regarding the microsystem (role models, parental support and engagement, intrinsic motivation of BAC males), correspond with the prior literature review and support the existing evidence base.

Role Models. The findings stress the pivotal role of positive community and staff role models from ethnic minorities, particularly males, in promoting a sense of belonging and

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understanding among BAC males. Previous research cited in Chapter One implied that biases held by school staff, due to over-representation in stereotypical roles, can affect teacher aspirations for BAC students (Mahmud & Gagnon, 2023; Cushion et al., 2011; Castro, 2017). Whilst staff might not consciously perpetuate biases, BAC males value understanding and support from role models who understand their cultural background, as expressed by Participant 16. Moreover, the impact of pro-social community-based programmes is emphasised, highlighting the need for successful BAC role-models beyond gang affiliations. This aligns with existing literature (Baker et al, 2012; Strand, 2021), which stresses the importance of positive role models in familial and school contexts for improving educational attainment for BAC males. The findings from the present study further emphasises the important impact of role models on the academic success of BAC males across a range of contexts, a consistent theme over time. It supports the recommendations made by Baker et al (2012) regarding the need for improved representation of diverse staff, particularly for BAC males. When re-staffing is not a feasible option, priority should transfer to staff training on social justice, subconscious biases, and anti-racist practices to enhance the academic attainment of BAC males.

Nevertheless, the present study provides minimal insights about the consistency of such role models' presence in BAC males' lives, their level of involvement, or engagement with BAC males in schools or the community. This is a limitation of the present study, as the Q-set was generated from prior studies that failed to clearly outline or clarify the conditions or contexts with which role models effectively supported BAC males (Simon, 2019; Demie, 2005). However, previous research identified key role model characteristics that could apply to the participants in the current study. These characteristics included positive relationships, energy, commitment, vision, moral purpose, time allocation, and a deep understanding of BAC students (Demie, 2005). Moreover, Simon (2019) found fewer of these characteristics

compared to Demie (2005) and found BAC males place value on school role models who exhibited a nurturing approach, understanding, and self-identification as BAC. As Simon's (2019) study was conducted more recently and in the West Midlands, the findings offer more significance and relevance. The present study aligns with Simon (2019), highlighting the importance of having self-identified BAC staff role models for BAC male students. Furthermore, one participant from the present study agreed with the notion that staff role models should possess a sense of understanding, specifically for BAC culture, though the need for a nurturing disposition was not explicitly emphasised in the present study. However, it cannot be inferred that participants from the present study do not value these aspects, accentuating the need for future research to further unravel the nuances of individual BAC males' needs regarding this factor (role models) before drawing conclusions about the conditions with which role models should behave to support the attainment of BAC males.

Parental Support and Engagement. The present study found there to be a theme around parental support and engagement with the academic endeavours of BAC males to be beneficial for their success. Consistent amongst all participants was the acknowledgement that parental involvement was important, particularly through the display of unwavering support and love. Whilst some participants prioritised stricter parenting styles, the majority favoured a less hands-on approach, offering greater autonomy and promoting mutual respect between parents and CYP. These findings relate to existing research, which highlighted the multifaceted ways in which BAC parents support their young people's educational enterprises. Previous research found this parental support to exist in the form of encouragement, and practical assistance e.g., providing tutoring support and setting high expectations (Rhamie, 2012; Rhamie & Hallam, 2012; Simon, 2019; Dumangane, 2011; Demie, 2005). In addition, BAC parents have been found to contest teachers' lower expectations, implement controlling and directive approaches, and navigate the education

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system through negotiation and advocacy to support academic success (Dumangane, 2011; Robinson, 2020; Rhamie & Hallam, 2002).

The present study further highlights that whilst parental support is universally valuable for BAC males, this support might vary and manifest differently across individuals. Markedly, participants in this study stressed the importance of intrinsic motivation and autonomy in driving their academic endeavours. Subsequently, there appeared to be less priority placed on strict and directive parenting styles, as participants valued a sense of self-guidance and agency. However, the diversity in parental approaches highlights the importance of having a person-centered understanding of how parents offer support. This aligns with the holistic and systemic approach encouraged by Bronfrenbrenner (2002), which emphasises the interaction of various environmental factors in shaping individual development. Therefore, whilst parental engagement remains key in supporting BAC males' academic success, efforts to promote positive outcomes should be sensitive to the unique needs and preferences of children in this demographic.

Intrinsic Motivation of BAC Males. Another key theme identified from the present study was their self-motivation, discipline, confidence, and desire to achieve academically. This finding echoes themes discovered in the literature review, which underscored the significant impact of personal qualities on the academic success of BAC males (Rhamie, 2012; Rhamie & Hallam, 2002; Robinson, 2020). Previous research highlighted a range of individual attributes, including adaptability to the school system; involvement in extra-curricular activities; resilience against stereotyping and mistreatment from school staff; and motivation influenced by familial academic underachievement (Robinson, 2020). Building on this literature, the present study reveals an additional layer of understanding by highlighting the foundational role of intrinsic motivation in fostering a strong desire for academic attainment and self-discipline among BAC males. Beyond simply demonstrating these

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individual attributes, participants have shown an initial drive to succeed, which might propel their engagement in extra-curricular activities, their openness to adjust to the educational environment, and their active involvement in the school curriculum. Furthermore, the wider scope of this study, supported by a larger sample size compared to prior studies, supports a richer understanding of the motivational factors influencing BAC males. Subsequently, the outcomes from the present study underscore the importance of probing into the underlying motivations which prompt BAC males to become involved in extra-curricular activities and other educational endeavours, thus advocating for bespoke interventions aimed at sustaining and nurturing their intrinsic motivation for academic success.

5.3.2.   *Meso-System: Positive Two-Way Communication*

The meso-system involves the interactions between the aspects of the micro-system, for instance, the relationship between school and home, directly impacting the CYP they are surrounding (Bronfenbrenner, 1986; Ryan, 2001). In the present study, a significant factor unanimously agreed upon by most BAC males highlights the importance of facilitating effective two-way communication between school and home at the meso-system level. Reviewing the literature, prior research (Demie, 2005; Dumangane, 2011) emphasises the important role of effective communication between parents/ carers and schools, promoting transparency, mutual respect, and parental engagement vital for supporting academic success. Whilst socioeconomic challenges were not specifically highlighted as factors affecting home-school communication in the present study, the mention of this factor as a priority suggests that schools achieving effective communication with BAC parents, according to these BAC males, have acknowledged potential barriers. Equally, schools that have not successfully engaged BAC parents have likely overlooked such barriers. Prior literature emphasises the importance of addressing systemic barriers that impede BAC parental engagement with schools to enhance communication (Demie, 2005). Moreover, the alignment of educational

values between school and home, as stressed by Härkönen (2001) and Bronfenbrenner (1986), is necessary for effective communication. Equally, misalignment and distrust between these sub-systems, as discussed by Wallace (2013) and Crozier (1996), can result in adverse outcomes for BAC males, including externalising behaviour difficulties and exclusions. Thus, promoting positive home-school relationships is fundamental for improving the educational experiences and outcomes of BAC males, aligning with prior literature.

5.3.3.   Exosystem

The exosystem involves interconnected systems that indirectly affect BAC males, such as mass media (Bronfrenbrenner, 1977; 1979). While assessing this impact is difficult, implications can be inferred from the present study's findings. For example, the role model theme highlights a flaw in the system at present (if BAC achievement levels have seen minimal improvements), impacting BAC males, with BAC role models in school and the community being pivotal. This implies a broader lack of representation for BAC CYP across a range of domains, potentially extending to mass media and parental workplaces (Sudbury & Wilberforce, 2006; Dominelli, 2012). Essentially, representation is key for BAC males and might affect their internal aspirations, alongside externally imposed expectations from non-BAC staff who might internalise existing narratives. Whilst the present study cannot measure the impact of the exosystem on BAC male achievement, it highlights the importance of staff critically reflecting on potential internalised biases that might impact their perceptions, potentially restricting BAC male aspirations, as found in prior studies (Cushion et al., 2011; Mahmud & Gagnon, 2023; Castro, 2017). Such reflexivity is important for promoting an inclusive educational environment beneficial for the academic success of BAC males.

5.3.4.   Macrosystem & Chronosystem

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The macrosystem incorporates cultural elements impacting a child's development, including attitudes, ideologies, and societal beliefs such as concepts of success and familial structures (Bronfenbrenner, 1977; 1979; 2002; Härkönen, 2001). These cultural norms affect the microsystem of CYP, impacting factors such as education standards, as demonstrated by the reading canon in the UK including little to no BAC representation within the authors or characters (Marsh, 2004; Marsh & Walker, 2022; Schucan Bird & Pitman, 2020).

Meanwhile, Bronfrenbrenner's final ecological stage: the chronosystem, reflects the progressing societal dynamics and historical influences impacting a child's development. Institutional racism emerged as a potential factor at the macrosystem level, affecting the academic outcomes of BAC males (Macpherson, 1999; Gillborn, 2008). It impacts expectations, resource distribution, and policy development, contributing to disparities in outcomes across different ethnic groups (Gillborn, 2008). While this study cannot conclusively prove the impact of institutional racism on BAC male outcomes, it emphasises institutional pitfalls which might arise from systemic biases. For example, the scarcity of BAC role models implies a lack of BAC school staff, potentially affecting policymaking through a non-BAC lens, thus possibly neglecting BAC male needs in school (Gillborn, 2008). Despite temporal advancements, underrepresentation and poor educational barriers persist for BAC males, as indicated by Roberts and Bolton (2020; 2023). Such barriers have been found to link to poorer socioeconomic circumstances impacting access to educational resources and access to higher education in prior literature (Strand, 2021; Demie, 2021a). The present study adds further weight to this knowledge, as participants highlighted the benefits of having parents who offered higher aspirations and who valued education, for their academic success. Therefore, the present study illuminates continued systemic barriers for some BAC males, requiring more effective government and school-based interventions to tackle the potential intersectional pitfalls for BAC males.

5.3.5. *Ethnicity vs Race: BAC Culture*

This study categorised BAC males as an ethnicity and cultural identity, as opposed to a racial classification, which allowed the inclusion of individuals of MWBC and mixed BAC and African ethnicities, who identified as BAC to be included in the study. This highlights the requirement for school staff to categorise CYP based on their self-identified ethnicities, reducing the use of the term 'race', and mitigating potential prejudices (Clair & Denis, 2015; Morning & Sabbagh, 2005). Notably, this study emphasises the commonalities and shared experiences amongst males with diverse BAC identities, exceeding their differences (Clair & Denis, 2015; Morning & Sabbagh, 2005). Hence, this researcher advocates for the use of the term 'ethnicity' over 'race', as advised by the government (Ethnicity Facts and Figures, 2021), emphasising the nuanced individuality within ethnic identities.

5.3.6. *Benefits of Solution-Oriented Research*

The present study adopted a solution-oriented approach, aiming to identify success factors that could support the development of bespoke interventions with a positive outlook. By concentrating on strengths and identifying what is working well, this study offers valuable insights for interventions targeting staff training, school staffing, parental involvement, and motivation-based strategies (to be discussed further in Section 5.5). This approach aligns with McLaughlin and Talbert's (2006) claim that solution-oriented research increases the likelihood of practical interventions being implemented, as implied by this study's clear intervention direction. Whilst the actual implementation and impact of these identified interventions remains uncertain at present, the study highlights the potential for actionable solutions in addressing the systemic challenges within schools. Q-methodology's pragmatic, problem-solving approach, endorsed by Hinkel and Bisaro (2016), offers a purposeful means of organising and prioritising factors for interventions (Watts & Stenner, 2012).

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5.3.7.   Summary

The results from the present study have been clarified and related to previous literature. The next section will discuss and critique this study in relation to its strengths and limitations.

5.4.   Strengths and Limitations

To ensure reflexivity, this researcher will critically discuss both the strengths and limitations of the Q-methodology design adopted in the present study.

Q-methodology is categorised as a qualiquantological approach, merging quantitative and qualitative methods for data gathering and analysis (Stenner & Stainton-Rodgers, 2004). The qualitative element involves an abductive approach to interpreting viewpoints, whilst the quantitative elements involve a fixed quasi-normal distribution of completed Q-sorts and the by-personal statistical factor analysis. This combined approach facilitates a deep exploration of subjectivity while maintaining the transparency, and accuracy of quantitative methodologies (Baker et al, 2006).

This researcher will draw on quality indicators for both qualitative and quantitative research and discuss the measures taken to adhere to the quality indicators in the present study.

5.4.1.   Quality Indicators for Qualitative Research

Upon following Tracy's (2010) guidelines for qualitative research quality, the present study followed a structured and systematic approach to understanding BAC males' perspectives of what success factors are most impactful for their academic success. These qualitative criteria are detailed below in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1

Tracy's (2010) Guidelines for Qualitative Research and the Actions Taken to Adhere to the Guidelines.

Tracy's (2010) Guidelines for Qualitative Research	Actions to Adhere to Guidelines
Relevance of Topic - Reason for the research topic is timely, relevant, significant, and interesting.	- The study's focus on revealing success factors for BAC males in education addresses a significant and current educational challenge, ensuring the research topic's significance and timeliness. The significance of this topic is explained in detail in Chapter 1.
Comprehensive Rigor - Research process gathers adequate data in a suitable context, with an appropriate sample and clear procedures.	- 41-item Q-set gathered from a range of sources. - BAC males aged between 16-24 for them to reflect on educational experience, but have recently completed GCSEs. - Context within colleges to access students between 16-24 who have accessed the UK education system. - Rigorous data collection and analysis protocols have been carefully crafted. The study collated rich quantitative data from participants from the BAC male demographic, employing transparent

	organisation and clear methodologies to ensure authenticity and depth.
Sincerity – The researcher offers reflexivity about their own biases, values, and inclinations and there is transparency about methods and challenges.	- Limitations are discussed - Methods are outlined in detail in Chapter 2 - Biases are reflected upon prior to the research and afterwards.
Credibility – how trustworthy and plausible the research is.	- Rich detail in methodology - Showing of all results throughout the statistical process - All quotations from participants are included - Use of triangulation methods to validate results.
Resonance – The research impacts or influences a variety of audiences.	- BAC males - School staff - Parents of BAC males - Educational Psychologists
Significant Contribution – The research provides a unique contribution to the current evidence-base.	- BAC males in West Midlands (limited research area) - Ranking success factors as opposed to labelling or adding more, provides a clearer direction for interventions.
Meaningful Coherence – research achieves its goals with the appropriate methodology, the	- Research achieves its aims with the correct method, and the literature,

literature, research question and results are suitably linked.	research questions, and results are suitably interconnected.

Table 5.1 - Tracy's (2010) Guidelines for Qualitative Research and the Actions Taken to Adhere to the Guidelines.

Relevance of Topic. Chapter One of the present study outlined the continual academic challenges which BAC males face in the UK education system, emphasising their consistently low attainment compared to other ethnicities (Roberts & Bolton, 2020; Roberts & Bolton, 2023). Despite attempts to address educational disparities, BAC males have not experienced the same level of progress as black African males, highlighting the need for bespoke interventions tailored to their unique needs (Roberts & Bolton, 2020). Previous studies, albeit limited by regional biases and small sample sizes, had identified various factors impacting the academic success of BAC males, necessitating further research to focus on identifying the most effective strategies, especially in underrepresented areas such as the West Midlands (Demie, 2005; Rhamie, 2012; Dumangane, 2011).

The relevance and timeliness of the present study are highlighted by recent government programmes aimed at addressing the educational disparities among BAC males. The commissioning of research in 2021 indicates a growing acknowledgement of the need for targeted interventions to better outcomes for this demographic (Commission on Racial and Ethnic Disparities, Education and Training, 2021). By supporting these initiatives and contributing to the knowledge base on effective interventions for BAC males, the present study aims to offer useful insights that can inform practice initiatives and policies aimed at improving results for BAC males in the UK education system.

Comprehensive Rigor. The methodology used in this Q-methodological study adhered closely to established literature on this methodology, ensuring the collection of appropriate and contextually relevant data. A Q-set comprising 41 items, drawn from statements of strategies to support the academic attainment of BAC males, was utilised, drawing upon a

wider concourse sourced from a range of systematically reviewed literature (Brown, 1993; Watts & Stenner, 2005), and two semi-structured interviews with BAC males. To maintain methodological rigor, 21 participants were recruited to complete the Q-sort, adhering to the guidelines that recommend having fewer participants than items in the Q-set (Van Exel & de Graaf, 2005; Watts & Stenner, 2005).

The factors for BAC male success derived from sources spanning from 2002 to 2020 to develop the concourse, thus may not fully correspond with the experiences of the participants in the present study. Furthermore, there may have been factors missing from the Q-set that participants consider more useful for their academic success. Whilst efforts were made to tackle these barriers by inviting participants to suggest any omitted factors and conducting pilot studies, no additional statements were provided during the experiment. The lack of responses could stem from participants' reluctance to challenge the researcher or unwillingness to prolong their participation during lunchtime slots. Consequently, despite thorough adherence to methodological procedures and protocols, it is important to acknowledge that the findings might not entirely represent the perspectives of BAC males in this study. Nevertheless, the Q methodological approach does not claim to be exhaustive. Rather, it stresses the importance of ensuring the Q-set is broadly representative of a given subject (Watts & Stenner, 2005).

The sampling method used in this study was purposive, chosen to ensure participants meeting the inclusion criteria engaged in the research. Specific criteria were determined to ensure the sample represented BAC males studying in the UK. However, the inclusion criteria, which signified participants who "identify as black African-Caribbean" and "identify as male", resulted in some debate during recruitment. Some students who expressed interest identified as BAC but of were mixed heritage. Additionally, considering the researcher's perspective that ethnicity is defined by one's cultural identity as opposed to their race, which

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is typically predetermined by physical qualities, it was important to involve the perspectives of all students identifying as BAC males in the study.

In adopting a more inclusive approach to gathering viewpoints, the present study intended to gather a broad range of perspectives within the dataset. This methodological choice enabled the exploration of potentially beneficial viewpoints that might have been overlooked with a stricter criterion. By accepting variability and considering the viewpoints of outliers, this study acknowledged the nuanced nature of human experiences, enhancing one's understanding of the needs of BAC males.

Having a considerable number of non-significant Q-sorts (n=4) in the factor solution raised concerns regarding how representative the final factor solution was. These non-significant Q-sorts represented viewpoints that would not have been accounted for or represented in the analysis, limiting the comprehensiveness of the results. Furthermore, the subjectivity of a by-hand rotation introduced bias and ambiguity to the analysis process, as the decision about when the rotation should stop was at the discretion of this researcher. Subsequently, there was no surety that a by-hand rotation would ensure all non-significant Q-sorts were included, as shown by the four non-significant Q-sorts in this study. Nevertheless, despite having limitations, the by-hand rotation allowed for the inclusion of a broader range of viewpoints which would not have happened with a stricter method. Furthermore, by including a section of the analysis dedicated to non-significant Q-sorts, this study adhered to Watts and Stenner's (2012) recommendation to consider a diverse range of viewpoints within a dataset, thereby improving the richness and depth of the analysis.

Upholding the recommended 2:1 ratio (statements: participants), as recommended by Webler et al. (2009), has improved the comprehensive rigour and validity of this study. This ratio ensured there was an adequate number of statements to represent each participant and

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capture their diverse perspectives, thereby enhancing the data and enabling a more nuanced analysis. Regardless of challenges with recruitment and participant attrition, preserving this ratio allowed for a focused and effective investigation of the research question. Additionally, by considering Watts and Stenner's (2012) caution against an extensive number of participants, this study avoided a potential overload of data and preserved the qualitative depth of individual perspectives. However, the smaller sample size might limit the generalisability of the results to a wider population of BAC males in the West Midlands. Nonetheless, it is important to note that Q-methodology prioritises understanding individual viewpoints over seeking broad generalisations. Hence, any interventions derived from this research should be context-specific and sensitive to individual needs, considering the nuanced viewpoints of BAC males in their unique school settings.

Sincerity. This study contained a reflexive account of this researcher's biases and previous experience, detailed in Chapter One: Statement of Positionality. To reduce bias, peer-review processes were adopted during the development of the Q-set and analysis of the results stages of the study. Moreover, Chapter Two outlined a detailed and thorough explanation of the full Q-methodological procedure. All necessary data and artefacts are presented in the methodology and results chapters of this thesis (detailed in Chapters Two and Three).

Credibility. The analysis and interpretation unveiled three unique viewpoints, each thoroughly described and enriched with participant anecdotes and reflections. Additional information from post-Q-sort questionnaires added depth to these viewpoints and allowed for a triangulated interpretation of results.

Resonance. This study holds resonance for a range of stakeholders, including BAC male young people, teachers, educational psychologists (EPs), and policymakers. For teachers, it

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offers actionable insights into the key success factors considered most valuable for BAC males, allowing them to adapt their approaches and support strategies in the classroom. By strengthening the voices and experiences of BAC males, this study empowers young people to advocate for their needs within educational settings, promoting more visibility and recognition of their needs within BAC communities. Furthermore, EPs can utilise these findings to develop culturally responsive interventions designed to address disparities in educational outcomes for BAC students. From a policy standpoint, the research enlightens the development of evidence-based approaches to promote inclusivity and equity within education, eventually fostering more positive educational opportunities and outcomes for BAC males on a home, school, and community level. This will be discussed in further depth in Section 5.5.

Significant Contribution. The outcomes from this research make a significant contribution to the existing evidence base by delving into an area which, to the best of this researcher's understanding, has not been previously explored using Q-methodology in the context of the West Midlands. How this research adds value to the current body of literature are thoroughly discussed in Section 5.3, which concludes this chapter.

Meaningful Coherence. Section 5.1 provides a concise explanation of how this study effectively addresses its research objective and highlights the suitability of the selected methodology in addressing the research question. Throughout this section, careful attention was given to forming cohesive links between the existing literature, the obtained findings, and their succeeding interpretations.

Ethics. Ethical considerations were key throughout this research, ensuring participants offered informed consent and that confidentiality was upheld. This study strictly followed guidelines established by the Health and Care Professional Council (HCPC), the British

Psychological Society's Code of Ethics and Conduct (Oates et al, 2021), and the University of Nottingham's Code of Research Conduct and Research Ethics (University of Nottingham, 2016). Moreover, thorough attention was given to the reporting of research findings to maintain high ethical standards. This included cautious consideration of how specific results were presented to safeguard the confidentiality of each participant's information and maintain their privacy rights.

Cultural Sensitivity. This researcher demonstrated a profound understanding of cultural nuances and societal contexts, accepting and addressing potential biases. Cultural sensitivity and authenticity were sustained throughout the research process.

This researcher ensured that Q-sort statements were only generated from BAC males and were not imposed statements from any other demographic groups. This was to maintain cultural sensitivity and respect their unique perspective. Engaging with participants in a culturally sensitive way allows for authentic responses and genuine conversations, promoting openness and trust in sharing their perspectives and experiences.

5.4.2. *Quality Indicators for Quantitative Research*

Considering the expectations of quantitative research, specific factors have been addressed to improve the validity, reliability, and applicability of the present study:

5.4.2.1. *Validity*

Validity within the realm of Q-methodology refers to the extent to which the research study truly reflects the viewpoints and perspectives of participants (Webler et al, 2009). It is vital to ensure the research study is thoroughly scrutinised for validity to establish the authenticity and reliability of findings. Table 5.2 outlines the validity criteria considered, and the measures used to improve the validity of the study.

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Table 5.2:

Validity Criteria Considered in the Present Study and the Measures Used to Improve the Validity.

Validity Criteria	Measures
Face validity: the perceived relevance of an assessment method or measurement to its intended purpose.	Participant statements were adapted and edited minimally, retaining the authenticity of participant voices. Using the exact wordings of participants enhanced the face validity, capturing the uniqueness of participants' expressions (Webler et al, 2009). Direct contributions from pilot participants (BAC adult males); and consultations from self-identified BAC psychologists and other trainee educational psychologists adopting Q-methodology in their research, improved the face validity of this study, allowing the lived experiences of participants to be accurately represented.
Content validity: how well an assessment method or measurement tool effectively covers the entire range of the content or construct it aims to measure.	Co-production and collaboration with professionals in the field of psychology, education, and related areas were crucial. Their expertise enabled the Q-set to be representative, comprehensive, and broad,

	covering a wide range of factors relevant to the academic success of BAC males. Engaging in consultation with experts helped to validate the appropriateness and relevance of the statements, enhancing the content validity of the research as a whole.
Researcher Bias: the impact of a researcher's own beliefs, expectations, or personal experiences on the research, impacting the interpretations or findings of the study.	Throughout the process of Q-methodology, various stages are susceptible to researcher bias (e.g., selecting statements for the Q-set, assisting participants in completing the Q-sorts, and analysing data). Whilst completely eradicating bias poses a significant challenge, an awareness of the potential for the researcher to actively influence interpretations is vital. This acknowledgement helped mitigate potential biases, ensuring that the research remained rooted in the unique lived experiences of the participants. Acknowledging the researcher's influence improved the depth and validity of the study, recognising the interplay between the objective reality being researched, and the subjective perceptions of the researcher.

Participant involvement for validity	Actively involving participants in the research improved the validity of the study. Enabling participants to voice their perspectives openly, without imposing predetermined categories, promoted genuine responses. This approach allowed for the Q-sort to reflect participants' viewpoints, contributing to the validity of the findings.
Demand characteristics: the expectations or cues within research environments which prompt participants to adapt their behaviours or responses to meet perceived researcher aims.	Demand characteristics in the present study were mitigated by emphasising to participants that all data will remain anonymous, focusing on their views, and clarifying that there are no set answers or ways to arrange the card sort. Maintaining anonymity when recording Q-sort data is significant particularly when exploring socially controversial subject matters (Cross, 2005; Peritore, 1989).

Table 5.2 - Validity Criteria Considered in the Present Study and the Measures Used to Improve the Validity.

Overall, the validity of the present study lies in the thorough curation of the Q-set, professional consultations, addressing any researcher bias by using a reflexive approach and encouraging participants to offer their authentic perspectives. By meticulously addressing these aspects, this study maintained the validity of the findings, providing an authentic and nuanced understanding of which success factors are considered to be most impactful for the academic success of BAC males.

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Generalisability. Whilst the study delves deeply into the perceptions of BAC males, it recognises the need for wider applicability. Recommendations for ongoing research on a broader scale are made in Section 5.5, enhancing the capability for generalisability and expanding the study's impact.

Whilst Q-methodology offers important insights into the varied social viewpoints and perspectives within the research sample, it is important to note its limitations regarding generalisability to a wider population (Webler et al, 2009). The unique aspects of Q-methodology, concentrating on individual perspectives within a specific context, prevent the ability to directly extrapolate the findings to a broader demographic. Resultantly, caution should be exercised when applying the findings beyond the studied participants.

To improve the generalisability of the results, further research methods should be employed on a representative sample, such as structured questionnaires. Such traditional quantitative methods allow for statistical analyses that allow the identification of trends and patterns within a wider and more diverse population. By utilising these methods, a broader understanding of the frequency and significance of the identified perspectives amongst BAC males in a range of contexts can be established.

It is important to recognise that whilst Q-methodology offers rich qualitative insights, its strength lies within the depth of understanding as opposed to the breadth of generalisability. Thus, to draw together widely applicable and comprehensive conclusions, combining the nuanced qualitative results with quantitative research on a larger scale becomes vital. With this combined approach, a more holistic understanding of success factors affecting BAC males' educational achievements can be attained, allowing for a better informed and bespoke intervention in education and other relevant sectors.

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Reliability. Research using Q-methodology has demonstrated consistency and stability in replicating commonly shared perspectives amongst diverse populations (Brown, 1980; Valenta & Wigger, 1997; Watts & Stenner, 2012). Markedly, Q-methodology demonstrates reliability in identifying groups of perspectives, even when the Q-sets or sample populations differ, allowing for consistent results over different applications (Valenta & Wigger, 1997).

Although there has been outdated evidence demonstrating Q-methodology as a reliable means of capturing shared perspectives, Q-methodology does not assert the stability of individual perspectives over time (Watts & Stenner, 2012; Cross, 2005). Nonetheless, research showing high correlation coefficients in test-retest experiments (Brown, 1980; Akhtar-Danesh et al., 2008; Nicholas, 2011) highlights the reliability of Q-methodology in unveiling stable perspectives over time.

Reliability in Q-methodology is multifaceted. Critics have raised concerns about limited sample sizes and subjectivity in Q-methodology, becoming a risk to the reliability of the research (Robson, 2011; Kampen & Tamás, 2014). However, understanding reliability within Q-methodology warrants a nuanced approach.

Systematic reliability checks are undertaken, emphasising the stability of the identified success factors over time. Consistency and verification among participant responses are essential to establish the reliability of the results. The following reliability measures were used:

Replicability. To address replicability concerns, A multi-pronged approach was employed. The study was initiated by generating success factors from an amalgamation of sources— previous literature, and insights from BAC adult males. Moreover, a pilot study was conducted, involving a small sample of older BAC males (n=2), ensuring that the generated factors underwent scrutiny and refinement.

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Further, the involvement of a BAC female clinical psychologist and two non-BAC EPs, who are also utilising Q-methodology in their research, served as a validation step. Their input added layers of scrutiny and refinement to the success factors, contributing to a more comprehensive and refined set of items for the Q-sorting process.

Stability. In Q-methodology, stability is fortified by participants' active engagement in reviewing and modifying their responses. The Q-sorting process facilitated this by allowing participants to rank the 41 success factors based on their perceptions. This comprehension of the social context is pivotal in interpreting viewpoint stability among the participant cohort.

Statistical Reliability and Generalisability. Following Q-methodology principles, this study doesn't adhere to conventional statistical reliability. Instead, it focuses on gaining qualitative depth, aiming for a nuanced understanding of success factors without pursuing statistical generalisation. Whilst not directed towards statistical reliability, this approach allows for a rich exploration of individual perspectives within the specific context of BAC males at a West Midlands college.

In conclusion, this section has emphasised Q-methodology's weaknesses, and leveraging various quality indicators helps to mitigate the pitfalls of the research. Adhering to qualitative and quantitative quality indicators ensures a comprehensive investigation of success factors impacting BAC males in education. This improves the robustness, authenticity, and relevance of outcomes, improving the knowledge base and strategies for improving educational success for this demographic. The following section outlines some additional strengths and limitations of the present study.

5.4.3. *Strengths and Limitations*

One challenge during the recruitment process was the shift in the focus demographic from purely BAC males to including MWBC and mixed African and BAC males. This alteration

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stemmed from expressed interest from both additional demographic groups identifying as BAC, aiming to prevent isolating a subgroup based on racial factors. Whilst this improved inclusivity, it altered the initial research focus which could impact how purely representative the sample is of BAC males.

The study originally aimed to use a paper-based card sort, the Q-sort had to transition to an online platform because of time limitations, resource constraints, and the convenience of participants accessing the online platform. This alteration allowed for improved efficiency in conducting multiple card sorts simultaneously. However, this shift caused some technical glitches in data recording, resulting in the loss of a participant's qualitative data and incomplete responses from some participants, impacting the overall data completeness. In turn, the nature of the online Q-sort caused there to be minimal qualitative data to interpret the nuanced perspectives of each viewpoint.

A limitation of this study lies in the moderate correlations between one factor in the Q-sort analysis, suggesting two of the viewpoints are relatively distinct with some overlaps, as evidenced by the existence of consensus themes. However, this study aimed to identify the most useful factors as opposed to solely focusing on distinct viewpoints. Thus, the lack of full distinctiveness between viewpoints was not a significant weakness for the aim of this study. This was supported by the flexibility offered by Watts and Stenner (2012) in interpreting the findings, allowing researchers to adjust the analysis of results to suit their research aims, as opposed to strictly adhering to a predetermined guideline.

5.5.   Dissemination

This researcher aims to disseminate the research at various levels. At the local authority (LA) level, this study will form the first wave of the Race and Culture Forum's initiative to investigate the educational disparities of BAC males. This research will inform and guide the

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LA with subsequent intervention planning and research. At the participant level, an executive summary (Appendix 22) of the research outcomes will be provided for college SENDCos, and participants involved. This summary aims to encourage colleges to reflect on staff biases and practices based on the findings and prompt reflection amongst participants on their experiences. Long-term, this researcher aims to publish this study in academic journals and present it in various LAs and educational settings across the country, particularly in areas where BAC males are the lowest-attaining demographic. This dissemination approach aims to raise awareness of the success factors most helpful for BAC males and promote further research and intervention planning nationally.

5.6.   Implications for EP Professional Practice

The findings from the present study uncovered key success factors impacting professional practice among teachers, EPs, and government staff. Markedly, it highlights the importance of having positive role models of ethnic minorities and BAC communities in schools. This stresses the imminent need for diverse staff recruitment within educational settings, specifically considering agendas such as Black Lives Matter.

Within the UK, this research suggests that organisations, and schools included, should prioritise recruiting staff from ethnic minorities to improve workplace diversity. Providing development and training opportunities for candidates, particularly from BAC backgrounds, could increase access to new roles previously unavailable to them. EPs can help schools to promote workplace diversity and inclusion by co-operating and consulting with school leadership to improve diversity training programmes for staff, employing inclusive recruitment strategies which prioritise applicants from ethnic minority backgrounds like BAC candidates, and advocating for training and development opportunities tailored for these individuals. EPs could also support the establishment of support networks, assist in data

collection and monitoring to track progress and promote inclusive policies to ensure accountability in achieving diversity goals. By engaging in such initiatives, EPs contribute to establishing a more diverse and inclusive school environment beneficial for students and staff alike.

Furthermore, this study emphasises the importance of having BAC role models within communities. This supports the case for assigning resources, e.g., arts council and government funding, to support community-based initiatives focused on areas with high BAC populations. EPs could support this by advocating for resources to back community projects within popular BAC areas. They could team up with local organisations to create initiatives like cultural events and mentorships, promoting BAC accomplishments and inspiring future generations. This influences cultural pride and community cohesion, potentially promoting personal and academic success amongst BAC people.

In addition, the research stressed the role of extra-curricular activities and sports as motivating factors. Schools and community project leads can leverage this by advertising their projects within schools and guiding BAC students to these clubs, promoting more personal development and participation beyond the classroom. EPs can further support the role of sports and extra-curricular activities as motivators for BAC males by collaborating with community project leaders and schools. They could promote and advertise these projects within schools, pointing BAC students to activities and clubs which they align with most.

Moreover, the present study revealed that BAC males highly value successful communication between school and parents. This highlights the need for schools to prioritise developing strong relationships with BAC parents. School leadership could collaborate with BAC students, parents, and staff to generate an engagement plan aimed at fostering consistent and effective communication. To accomplish this, it is vital to identify and address any

current barriers impeding communication with parents, ensuring that communication channels stay open, and relationships remain positive. Moreover, adopting insights from previous literature (Wallace, 2013; Härkönen, 2001; Crozier, 1996), schools can use solution-focused approaches when discussing BAC young people. Rather than primarily addressing negative behaviours, schools could inform parents of the positive behaviours exhibited by their children, promoting a productive dialogue between school and home. EPs can help direct efforts by running workshops for school staff on culturally sensitive communication with BAC parents and coordinating outreach programmes for BAC parents to further their knowledge of school policies and resources. On a systemic level, EPs can advocate for school policies that improve communication with BAC parents, such as providing resources like translation services; creating formal feedback channels; inclusive parent associations; and cultural competency training for staff.

Considering the consensus finding that BAC males highly rank their drive and intrinsic motivation, a clear need for interventions emerged, both within schools and in the wider community, to encourage self-esteem, motivation, and drive within this demographic. School staff can begin by discovering how BAC males consider their motivation and drive within their school context, and then instil bespoke intervention to support and nurture their abilities on an ongoing basis. EPs can adopt a key role in this effort by developing bespoke interventions uniquely designed to enhance intrinsic motivation in BAC male students. Collaborating with BAC males, EPs can co-produce and refine such interventions to improve their relevance and effectiveness. Schools can then undertake training to successfully deliver this intervention, considering the cultural nuances and individual needs of BAC males within their community.

5.7.   Implications for Future Research

5.7.1.   *Exploring Q-methodological Procedure in Diverse School Contexts*

Q-methodology provides a unique approach to gathering subjective perspectives by combining quantitative and qualitative methods. Future research could employ this methodology in different school contexts and local authorities (LAs), beyond the West Midlands area studied in the present study. In doing so, researchers can gather a wider range of viewpoints and factors affecting professional practice among teachers, EPs, and other professionals working with young people. This would improve the generalisability of findings, albeit not necessary in Q-methodology, and provide insights into the unique challenges and strengths that exist in various educational settings.

5.7.2.   *Evaluating the Impact of Interventions*

Following the discovery of key success factors in the present study, future research could investigate the effectiveness of interventions planned to address these factors. By implementing a follow-up study after interventions have been employed, researchers can investigate whether new factors arise as priorities or if existing factors shift in importance. This iterative approach can support the refinement of interventions and practices, resulting in ongoing improvements in professional practice within educational settings.

5.7.3.   *Deepening Understanding of BAC Males' Perspectives*

While the present study provides valuable insights into the viewpoints of BAC males, there remains an opportunity for future research to delve deeper into their views and experiences. Utilising in-depth interviews following a Q-sort methodology would enable researchers to explore the intricacies of BAC males' perspectives and better comprehend the conditions required for the identified success factors to be most effective. This qualitative approach can uncover rich insights that may not be captured through quantitative surveys

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alone, leading to a more comprehensive understanding of BAC males' experiences within educational settings.

5.7.4. Exploring Barriers to Parental Engagement

Parental engagement is key for student success; however, barriers may impede effective communication between BAC males' parents and schools. Future research could employ focus groups or solution-focused interviews with BAC male parents to pinpoint these barriers and explore potential solutions. By gathering insights from parents, researchers can develop strategies to improve parental communication and engagement with schools, thereby fostering a more collaborative and supportive educational environment for BAC male young people.

5.7.5. Investigating Barriers to BAC Staff Recruitment

Promoting diversity among school staff is crucial for providing diverse role models for young people and promoting inclusivity. Future research could investigate the barriers hindering BAC staff recruitment by gathering insights from school staff through interviews or questionnaires. By identifying these obstacles, such as implicit biases or systemic barriers, researchers can develop targeted interventions to improve inclusion and diversity within educational settings. Addressing these barriers will allow schools to create more supportive and equitable environments for both students and staff from diverse backgrounds.

By addressing these areas in future research, scholars can deepen their understanding of professional practice in education and contribute to the development of evidence-based policies and interventions that support the academic success of BAC males and staff within educational establishments.

5.7.6. Acknowledging and Investigating Barriers for BAC Females and Other Demographics

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This study focused on BAC males because of the existing research indicating their specific academic needs (Gillborn & Mirza, 2000; Carlile, 2012; Roberts & Bolton, 2020). However, there is a need to also investigate the experiences of BAC females in education and uncover factors affecting their academic success. Recent research about the adultification of BAC females and experiences of racism within education (Johnson, 2020; Meadows-Fernandez, 2020) stresses the importance of amplifying their voices and addressing their challenges. Even though existing research is from the United States of America (USA), similar studies can be conducted in the UK to identify if such issues persist. Furthermore, research should extend to other marginalised ethnicities to identify systemic barriers affecting their educational experiences and uncover success factors for equitable opportunities in educational achievement. Implementing methodologies like Q-methodology or qualitative approaches can offer valuable insights into these complex issues.

5.8.   Conclusions

The present study focused on collecting viewpoints from BAC males to identify important and useful success factors for their academic success. It found three distinct viewpoints amongst 21 male students attending West Midlands colleges, offering insights into their priorities and perspectives for effective intervention to follow. Utilising Q-methodology helped to organise these factors systemically, allowing for a more focused and nuanced understanding and clear direction for follow-up interventions in schools and the West Midlands LA to tackle these educational disparities.

The outcomes emphasise the importance of diversity amongst school staff, effective communication between home and school, and empowering BAC role models within schools and communities. Additionally, they highlight the need for intervention aimed at addressing intrinsic motivation and collaboration between schools, EPs, and communities to develop

culturally sensitive approaches. Furthermore, this study emphasises the importance of ongoing research to refine professional practices, deepen understanding of the BAC male perspective, and tackle barriers to staff recruitment and parental engagement.

In summary, this research contributes important insights into the unique viewpoints of BAC males regarding their educational experiences and factors they consider to be useful for their academic success. By prioritising interventions developed from this research and promoting collaborative approaches, stakeholders can work cohesively to promote equity, inclusivity, and better educational outcomes for BAC CYP within educational settings.

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Appendices

1. Appendix 1: Table of Search Terms for Each Database

Search Engine or Database	Search Terms	Number
NuSearch (database)	('Academic achievement' OR 'academic attainment' OR 'academic success' OR 'education* achievement' OR 'education* attainment' OR 'education* success') AND ('Black Caribbean male*' OR 'African Caribbean male*' OR 'African Caribbean boy*' OR 'Black Caribbean boy*') AND ('secondary school' OR 'high school') AND ('United Kingdom' OR 'UK' OR 'Engl*' OR 'Brit*')	56
Google Scholar (search engine)	('Academic achievement' OR 'academic attainment' OR 'academic success' OR 'education* achievement' OR 'education* attainment' OR 'education* success') AND ('Black Caribbean male*' OR 'African Caribbean male*' OR 'African Caribbean boy*' OR 'Black Caribbean boy*') AND ('secondary school' OR 'high school') AND ('United Kingdom' OR 'UK' OR 'Engl*' OR 'Brit*')	138 Only 27 taken from Scholar after screening
Reference Harvesting		15

ERIC	('Academic achievement' OR 'academic attainment' OR 'academic success' OR 'education* achievement' OR 'education* attainment' OR 'education* success') AND ('Black Caribbean male*' OR 'African Caribbean male*' OR 'African Caribbean boy*' OR 'Black Caribbean boy*') AND ('secondary school' OR 'high school') AND ('United Kingdom' OR 'UK' OR 'Engl*' OR 'Brit*')	6,025 Filter UK – 327 Blacks - 31
Proquest	'Academic achievement' OR 'academic attainment' OR 'academic success' AND 'Black Caribbean' OR 'African Caribbean' OR 'Black' AND 'male*' OR 'boy*' AND 'education*' OR 'academi*' AND 'secondary school' OR 'high school' AND 'united kingdom' OR 'UK' OR 'Engl*' OR 'Brit*' Filters:	Filters: Full text; English language; document type (case study, report, lit review, article, research topic). 2,547,388 UK FILTER 39,858 SCHOLARLY JOURNALS 36,293

	Scholarly Journals ☒ teenagers ☒ AND (education ☒ OR children & youth ☒ OR ethnicity ☒ OR males ☒) AND (adolescents ☒) NOT (public health ☒ AND coronaviruses ☒ AND hospitals ☒ AND primary care ☒ AND body mass index ☒ AND pandemics ☒ AND medical research ☒ AND womens health ☒ AND health care ☒ AND epidemiology ☒ AND obesity ☒ AND girls ☒ AND infections ☒ AND politics ☒ AND cardiovascular disease ☒ AND mothers ☒ AND collaboration ☒ AND trends ☒ AND literacy ☒ AND multiculturalism & pluralism ☒ AND cognitive ability ☒ AND language ☒ AND anxiety ☒ AND caregivers ☒ AND decision making ☒ AND social networks ☒ AND medical personnel ☒ AND polls & surveys ☒ AND religion ☒ AND households ☒ AND medicine ☒ AND laboratories ☒ AND books ☒)	Exclude: public health; include: males, education, children & youth; ethnicity 5, 938 PEER REVIEWED 5,708 All filters – 47
TOTAL		286
Duplicates		150 (136)
Inclusion Criteria	• Contains the words 'education' anywhere in the abstract, title or keywords – focus is to see ways to improve academic success. • Research conducted with secondary-aged pupils (aged 11-16 years old). – where we see a decline in ability occur	

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212	• BAC males are the focus of research - aim to look at success factors impacting BAC males as the most disadvantaged. • Solution-oriented research/ success factors – aim is to see what works and focus on solutions. • Research study gathering views of BAC males, parents and/ or key stakeholders – gaining perspectives of what is considered to be helping • UK based study	
Screening	Title and Abstract Screening: • Not relevant • Not UK-based • Not based on education • Not clear about whether they look at success factors/ do not investigate success factors • Not based on black children/ BAC children • Not a research study • Unable to access the document • Investigating girls • Not investigating BAC boys	141 screened 25 included 115 excluded
Deep screening	• Full Papers	19 excluded 6 included

	• Does not have clear success factors as outcomes (2) • Not UK study (3) • Not a research study (1) • Success factors/ strengths/ positive factors are not discussed in the study (2) • A duplication (2) • Outcomes are not qualitative factors (1) • Measuring factors impacting crime (1) • Not focused on BAC males (5) • Measuring the positive impact of a specific intervention only (2)	

2. Appendix 2: Inclusion criteria for studies (with rationale for each criterion).

Inclusion Criteria	Rationale
Contains the words 'education' anywhere in the abstract, title or keywords	The research needs to be focused on the success factors which impact the educational attainment of BAC males, to understand how their educational outcomes can be improved.
Research conducted with secondary-aged pupils (aged 11-16 years old).	The secondary age-phase is where there is the most significant decline in performance for BAC males. Understanding what the BAC males at this age-phase consider to be success factors is most useful at improving this issue.
Black Caribbean males are the focus of research	The aim is to look at success factors impacting BAC males because there are the main ethnic group (aside from gypsy Roma/ traveller children) who are most disadvantaged.
Solution-oriented research/ success factors	The aim of this review is to understand what is working for BAC males and diminish the deficit focused narrative about BAC males and education.

Research study gathering views of BAC males, parents of BAC and/ or key stakeholders working with BAC males	The aim is to understand what are considered to be success factors impacting BAC males. Therefore, gaining the views of those who are directly experiencing this disadvantage in education, or those closest to them, will be most useful in finding relevant success factors.
A UK study	The aim of the present study is to discover what success factors are working for BAC males in the UK because research shows that the educational disadvantage of BAC boys is happening in UK schools.

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3. Appendix 3: Table of Included Studies

Reference	Participants	Methodology	Findings	Limitations	Ethics Explained	Peer Reviewed?	Weight of Evidence
Demie, F. (2005). PEER REVIEWED	10 primary and 3 secondary schools were selected for detailed case study Staff, parents, pupils and governors. Combination of stratified and	Case study "Twenty- two 'successful' schools were identified from LEA research and statistics data on the basis of academically above average or improving schools with a minimum of 15% Caribbean heritage pupils."	Factors: - "Strong leadership and high expectations (clear vision, uniform expectations, Key attributes were commitment, energy, vision and moral purpose)". "Teachers have also high expectations of all pupils, and this was reflected in their curriculum plan and teaching styles. Pupils of all ethnic backgrounds and with all kinds	- Lambeth only - Heavily school / LEA focused - Did not specify the number of staff, parents or teachers spoken to.	No	Yes	Medium

	purposive sampling	A detailed study was carried out of how well Black Caribbean pupils were achieving and the factors contributing to this involved detailed examinations of school and LEA data, documentation and observation with colleagues from the school to inform dialogue about what works and why. Interviews and discussions were held	of learning needs are treated as potential high achievers." "Teachers who foster positive relations value pupils and are prepared to give them their time. Staff take their lead from the head teacher not only in establishing academic standards but also in shaping the interactions with one another, with pupils and with parents" - "Partnerships with parents and the community"			

		with staff, parents, pupils and governors.	- "They tried to find imaginative ways to break down barriers and make parents welcome, being responsive to parents' needs. Information was shared with parents on achievement and development as well as discipline issues and there was high level of communication. The school see themselves as being part of a community. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and know what the school does to				

			provide an environment of learning." "Heads in these schools meet regularly with parents, and parents are seen as key partners in the endeavour." - "Effective use of data for target setting and school self-evaluation". "The schools placed great emphasis on individual monitoring and tracking of pupils with individual support." - "As a result, they are aware that Black Caribbean achievement varies across				

			different year cohorts." Explicit process where pupils and parents are aware of the progress. - Effective T&L (Responsibility of all teachers/ staff; students informed of T&L process and objectives; academic multicultural curriculum; challenge and motivation to achieve, well-planned; creative and accessible lessons; passion on the teaching).				

			- Relevant inclusive curriculum that meets the needs of BAC pupils – "The response by many teachers to this challenge has been impressive" - "Commitment to attracting a more diverse staff team"- "staff who would buy into the explicit culture and core values". "Teaching assistants and learning mentors are actively recruited from the local community and their loyalty to the neighbourhood and its community is viewed as				

			a real asset by schools." "Good and well -coordinated support to Black Caribbean pupils through extensive use of learning mentors." - "Effective use of Black Caribbean and African teachers and support staff" - "The presence of confident, assertive Black staff is important to their White colleagues, to parents and the wider community". - Strong commitment to equal opportunities – "positive				

			approach in effectively tackling prejudice and stereotyping through a culture community as individuals and as members of particular communities" <u>LEA FACTORS</u> - "Providing strategic leadership and management" - "Using data to raise awareness of teaching staff and governors on underachievement issues"				

			- "Sharing the Raising Achievement Project (RAP) schools good practice with other schools"				
Dumangane, C. (2011)	Five male participants aged 18 to 26 years – most had positive school experiences (4/5 uni students, 1 NVQ Lvl 3). Only one black Caribbean, 1	Semi-structured qualitative interviews - Analysis - constructivist grounded theory and CRT	Only focused on responses which involved views of Travis (BAC male) - Family support (ongoing support, well-driven, challenging low expectations, attending school meetings, instilling education values, deterring from	- Small sample - Only spoke to successful students - Retrospective narratives - Cardiff based research	Ethics discussed	Yes	Medium

	mixed (BAC and Irish); 1 mixed (somali, white irish-welsh); 2 mixed (Nigerian, welsh). Convenience sample			sports and focus on academics, boundaries on educational expectations) - "Shrugging off racism/ discrimination"			
Rhamie, J., & Hallam, S. (2002). PEER REVIEWED	-14 BAC males who were completing or had completed post graduate degrees (with exception of one health visitor)	Semi structured interviews exploring past success factors impacting their success (university study). Factor Analysis	- Mostly Individual factors (2nd) or home factors (most). - 4 broad factors (individual, community, home and school) - Home – PARENTS (support and encouragement; guidance goals and expectations;	- Small sample but large for qual study. - Opportunity sample. - Retrospective.	No	Yes	High

between ages 23-40. - All Caribbean except 1 who was Nigerian. - Half of sample was male. - Opportunity sample.			knowledge of education system and how to support; secure, stable loving home with sense of belonging; family or parental role models). - Individual – motivation (self-motivated, driven, desire to achieve); confidence; awareness (education system; loved and appreciated; black culture and stereotypes); Talent (natural ability); Deportment and behaviour (good speech and behaviour).	- Not true reflection of BAC males only. Half sample was female.			

			- School Factors – Ethos and type of school (positive atmosphere, ethos: academic success; very good state school; fee paying or private/selective schools; primary school in Caribbean); Teachers (supportive and encouraging; high expectations; good skills); school banding/ organisations placed or moved to higher ability sets; involvement in extracurricular activities).				

			- Community Factors – (church and religious belief, church clubs, community clubs; private music tuition; community projects and cultural activities; role models and mentors).				
Rhamie (2012) PEER REVIEWED	- 43 questionnaires and 18 follow up interviews. - Highest achieving and lowest achieving	- "Respondents were placed into five achievement groups based on their performance at secondary school. This study focuses on the Highfliers with five or	Highfliers: - Home – positive attitude to education; high expectations; support from parents; parents regularly instilling importance of education; completing homework; fewer difficulties or problems at home.	- Broad age range not representative of today's experiences. - Females within sample can cloud	No	Yes	High

- Aged 16-40+ - 63% over 31	more GCSE A/– C grades gained at the end of secondary school, and the underachievers who were mostly those who did not have any GCSEs or other qualifications."	- Personal characteristics – driven; goal oriented; religious beliefs (church instilling education values).	experiences of male participants.
- 70% of returned questionnaires were female.			- Unclear data analysis method
- High achieving group (n=13). (male =7; female = 6). Aged 16 and 25 – most recent experience, suggests improvement in school experience.	- Identifying trends across questionnaire and interview data. (qualitative content analysis?)	- Community – involvement in a range of community activities (e.g., church or children programmes); increased confidence and responsibility as a result of activities in community; music tuition; sports/ dance classes; museum visits; library visits; community role models.	

	- Lowest achieving groups (n= 5). (female 4/5; 1 = male) - Combination of opportunistic and purposive sample			- Schools – positive and encouraging; 'good schools/ good reputation' (discipline, high standards, explicit encouragement); achievement-oriented ethos; feeling different; teachers they could identify with who made time to support them. Underachievers: - Parents valued education but most could not translate to support or help. - Parents were satisfied with the school system.				

			- Encouraged to complete homework (from parents) but limited support or coaching. - Negative expectations from parents. - High levels of problems and difficulties at home (e.g., lack of interest in work). - School- exam anxiety; lack of encouraging school ethos; unhelpful experiences with teachers and lack of support; bullying; unfair treatment from teachers; low expectations and aspirations and limits placed on				

			aspirations. One respondent had positive school experiences. - Community – some involvement in church activities but inconsistent and less popular than highflier group. Negative experiences of music tuition (felt forced or stopped as a punishment when they enjoyed). - Fewer role models, less community activities etc.				

| Robinson (2020) | - Seven 14–15-year BAC boys.
- High achieving.
- One secondary school.
- Purposive sample | - Two interviews- one exploring peers influence and one exploring family influence.
- Structural linguistic narrative analysis | Peers:
- Good friendships, common interests and views about education.
- Considered their friends prospects in careers and could see potential of these friends boosting their potential to succeed.
- Similar to peers with same mentality
- Differentiated peer groups (both high and lower attaining). | - One context
- Reductionists focus on peers and familial influence
- Co-constructing narratives (bias interpretation)
- High achievement measured by year 6 Sats (level 7), not recent data. | No | No | High |

			- Provided models of learning behaviours for them how to academically engage. - Bi-directional – aimed to inspire and be role models to other black boys. -Friends offer security and reassurance during difficult times. - Emotional support helping them manage school pressures. - Able to communicate emotional states (e.g., stress) - Mutual benefits: practical support by being able to				

			support with homework/ revision etc. - Culture within peer group where they show pride in academic achievements. Implicit motivation to study through peer modelling, inspiring and spurring them on (in arts, sports and academia). - Friends set benchmarks to aspire to academically. - All but one aligned to hegemonic masculinity through competitiveness – considered				

			this positive (contrary to research). - Most boys felt family influenced their views on education and high aspirations more than peers (except one child). - Insecurities about peer relationships can cause a reluctance to attend school. - Vicarious learning through peers having mixed impact. Sometimes showed negative behaviours which they could get away if (if see peer not				

			getting in trouble); could be distracting in lessons; or low achieving students and disengaged behaviours could deter them from behaving like them. - Confidence in own abilities as a potential protective factor against peer influence. - Mothers, siblings and teachers buffered the potential influences of peers. Mothers dissuading or supervising some social activities; siblings offered emotional support to				

			manage negative influences of peers. - Maintained strong family ties and wanted to make them proud. - Awareness of teacher stereotypes led to them acting to be different to low attaining black males and avoiding them as friends. - Managing friends: - Maintaining multiple identities (adapting behaviour to fit in) e.g., denial of studying to				

			maintain 'baddest' status among one peer group.
			
			- Separation and distancing as resistance:
			
			   - Distancing from negative peer influences to avoid their persuasions.
			
			- Strategies self-presentation:
			
			   - Appearing academic to manage teacher expectations
			
			   - Appearing calm despite stresses to maintain				

			popular status as someone who 'has it all'. - Using physical attributes to advantage – to intimidate others and resist peer pressure. Family: - Family role models - Family shared academic values - Family narratives around triumph over racism, hard work ethic, academic				

			orientation and achievement as a result. - Passing down family histories through oral traditions – to ground and reinforce morals and ethnic identities. - Family failures or successes either deterred boys from low academic achievement and more towards academia OR seeing successes of family				

			members inspires boys to do the same.				
Simon (2019)	- West Midlands-LA - 4 participants – 1 grammar school. - Purposive sample - BAC boys - 13 years - 14 years x 3 Inclusion criteria-	- Multiple case-study design - Semi-structured interviews - Thematic analysis and narrative restorying.	Child 1: - Parents and siblings having high academic standards and academic support. - Competition with peers at school to achieve. - Academic role model in siblings Child 2: - Support from parents at home (e.g., English work).	Not at the end of educational experience.	Yes	No	High

	• Self-identify as Black Caribbean descent • Male • Mid-high achiever (i.e. on track or attaining above average/ target grades) • Aged between 12 and 16 years old • Expressive and receptive language and communication		- High expectations and aspirations from parents Child 3: - Wide family support network- building self-esteem. - Mother's high expectations. - Teachers played a role in personal and professional development – similar cultural backgrounds; building close relationships.				

	skills to engage in an interview where they will be able to recall key events from their lives. • Have attended a mainstream educational setting for a minimum of 6 months • No statement of Special Educational					

	Needs or Education, Health and Care Plan in place					

4. Appendix 4: Quality Appraisal Checklists using Weight of Evidence (Gough, 2007) and Mays and Pope (2000).

Table of Included Studies						
	Demie (2005)	**Dumangane, C. (2011)**	**Rhamie, J., & Hallam, S. (2002).**	**Rhamie (2012)**	**Robinson (2020)**	**Simon (2019)**
Weight of Evidence A: *Quality of study execution (using* **Mays & Pope (2000) Qualitative Research Quality Appraisal)**						
Relevance						
Was this piece of work worth doing at all?	1	1	1	1	2 Unsure why the focus was only on peer/ family influences	1

Has it contributed usefully to knowledge?	0.5	1	1	1	1	1
Clarity of the Research Question						
If not at the outset of the study, by the end of the research process, was the research question clear?	1	1	1	1	1	1
Was the researcher able to set aside his or her research preconceptions?	1	1	1	1	1	1
Appropriateness of the Design to Research Question						
Were the chosen methods the most appropriate? For example, if a causal hypothesis was being tested, was a qualitative approach appropriate?	0.5	1 Sample only included 1 BAC male to answer	0.5 Retrospective sample, out of touch with current	0.5 Questionnaire and interview format confusing. Not	0.5 Co-constructing narratives could lead to	0.5 Interviewing participants in years 8-10 does not

		questions about BAC males	educational success factors.	100% BAC sample.	bias interpretations not fully representing the samples' views.	cover the holistic school experience
Context						
Is the context or setting adequately described so that the reader could relate the findings to other settings?	0	1	0 No description of the setting or context with which the research is situated.	0.5 No setting described	0.5 Unclear setting	1
Sampling						

Did the sample include the full range of possible cases or settings so that conceptual rather than statistical generalisations could be made (that is, more than convenience sampling)?	0	1	0.5 Mature sample and one Nigerian boy	0.5 Sample included BAC females.	0.5	0.5
If appropriate, were efforts made to obtain data that might contradict or modify the analysis by extending the sample (for example, to a different type of area)?	0.5	0	0	0.5	0	0
Data Collection and Analysis						
Were the data collection and analysis procedures appropriate?	0 Choice to use school data	1	1	1	1	1

	was not relevant or useful					
Was an "audit trail" provided such that someone else could repeat each stage, including the analysis?	0	1	1	1	1	1
How well did the analysis succeed in incorporating all the observations?	1	1	0.5 Did not include all questionnaires or interviewees.	1	1	1
To what extent did the analysis develop concepts and categories capable of explaining key	1	1	1	1	1	1

processes or respondents' accounts or observations?						
Was it possible to follow the iteration between data and the explanations for the data (theory)?	1	1	1	1	1	1
Reflexivity of Account						
Did the researcher self-consciously assess the likely impact of the methods used on the data obtained?	0 (no reflexivity mentioned in study about limitations of methodology used and the impact on the data obtained)	0.5 (some reflexivity mentioned in study about limitations of methodology used and the impact on the data obtained)	0 (no reflexivity mentioned in study about limitations of methodology used and the impact on the data obtained)	0 (no reflexivity mentioned in study about limitations of methodology used and the impact on the data obtained)	0 (no reflexivity mentioned in study about limitations of methodology used and the impact on the data obtained)	1

Were sufficient data included in the reports of the study to provide sufficient evidence for readers to assess whether analytical criteria had been met?		0	0 (Small section of study sample is relevant to research questions, thus the evidence is not sufficient).	1	0 (Does not use or assess all evidence before drawing conclusions from the data.	1	1
Total WoE A =		7.5	12.5	10	11	12.5	13
Weight of Evidence B: Review on appropriateness of methods used to answer research question							
Question	**Justification**						
Was the sample clearly defined?	The present study must focus on the success factors supporting of	0 (no mention of the number or demographics of the	1	1	1	1	1

	BAC males specifically.	participants included in the sample)					
Perspectives of BAC males are gathered, on which factors they consider to be impacting their own academic achievement	The voice of the child is key in understanding what works well.	0 (asked pupils but limited information about the demographics to confirm if they are BAC males)	0 (only 1 of the participants was a BAC male and the rest were mixed white and black or/and African)	0.5 (also gathered views of 1 Nigerian male which skews results)	0.5 (also gathered views of female BAC people which skews results)	1	1
Data is gathered from multiple	The more sources that can corroborate the	1	0 (only gathered the views of BAC	0 (only gathered the views of	0 (only gathered the views of BAC	0 (only gathered the	0 (only gathered the

sources to understand the success factors impacting the academic attainment of BAC males. (e.g., teacher report, child report and parent report)	SEMH outcomes of the pupils the more reliable/ valid the conclusions about success factors impacting BAC males' education.		males and no other sources)	BAC males and no other sources)	males and no other sources)	views of BAC males and no other sources)	views of BAC males and no other sources)
Total WoE B =		**1**	**1**	**1.5**	**1.5**	**2**	**2**
Weight of Evidence C: Review specific on focus/approach of study to review question							
Question	**Justification**						

Does the study clearly identify themes or individual success factors to support the attainment of BAC males in secondary school specifically.	The review question can only be addressed if the study identifies success factors for the academic success of BAC males. They should be secondary school students as this is where the decline in educational	1	0.5 (themes are identified but only one participants' responses are relevant to the experiences of BAC males)	0.5 (sample starts at age 23-40. Retrospective narrative might not offer a reliable insight into the secondary school experiences of BAC males)	1	0.5 (themes are clearly defined but limited to peer and familial factors).	0.5 (themes identified but from participants as young as year 8. Difficult to comment on secondary school experience holistically at this age).

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	attainment as been found to happen for BAC males.						
Does the study clearly separate the success factors of BAC males from other ethnic and gender groups?	The purpose of this review is to understand how BAC males can be supported and if this is muddled with other genders and ethnicities, it will be hard to understand what works for	0 (unclear what the demographic information)	0 (only 1/6 participants are fully BAC)	0.5 (all Caribbean except 1 Nigerian)	0.5 (mix of male and female BAC people)	1	1

	this specific demographic group.						
Do the findings offer implications for further EP practice?	The outcome of the study should offer relevant insight into how secondary schools (and all schools) can support the academic attainment of BAC males.	1	1	1	1	1	1
Total WoE C =		**2**	**1.5**	**2**	**2.5**	**2.5**	**2.5**

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WoE D =	10.5	15	13.5	15	17	17.5
Quality Rating	Medium	High	Medium	High	High	High

5. **Appendix 5: Table of Themes and Quotations**

Main Themes (analytical themes)	Sub-themes (descriptive themes)	Number of Studies	Example Quotations
Influence of Peers	• Learning from Peers • Peer Support	2 (Robinson, 2020; Simon, 2019)	"Peers provided models for learning behaviours and academic engagement" (Robinson, 2020) "All boys thought their friendships were important in helping them to achieve and do better in school, and all but one subscribed to hegemonic masculine competitiveness, sharing positive perceptions of this." (Robinson, 2020) "James reflected on the influences of his peers particularly a friend who he regularly competed with in primary school. This competition enabled James to remain focused on his educational progression with determination." (Simon, 2019)

			"In secondary school, James shared that he had a bet with another peer based upon their academic ranking once assessed. It was evident that competition was a motivational factor for James which he viewed as a means of promoting educational achievement." (Simon, 2019)

Influence of Family	• Parental Factors
	
	 • Family Support
	
	 • Family Influence
		6
		
		(Demie, 2013;
		
		 Dumangane, 2011;
		
		 Rhamie, 2012;
		
		 Rhamie & Hallam, 2002;
		
		 Robinson, 2020;
			"Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and know what the school does to provide an environment of learning." (Demie, 2013)
			
			 "He describes his parents a being 'very driven' in their outlooks and expectation of him." (Dumangane, 2011)
			
			   "…parents also set boundaries about what his education was going to involve" (Dumangane, 2011)
			
			   "Parents gave positive messages to their children about the importance of education and their high expectations." (Rhamie, 2012)
			
			   "Parents tried to understand the British education system and what they needed to do to best support their child's progress through it." (Rhamie & Hallam, 2002)

		Simon, 2019)	"Parents also provided resources, including books and encyclopaedias, other learning materials and finances to pay for private tuition and educational and culturally enriching trips" (Rhamie & Hallam, 2002)
			"mothers' role in supervising or dissuading certain social activities." (Robinson, 2020)
			"…siblings offered emotional support and advice to help manage negative influences and their friendships" (Robinson, 2020)
			"…parents and sibling played a significant role in his educational achievement and drive through their support and academic standards within the home." (Simon, 2019)
			"Jonathan's mother's high expectations and standards were identified throughout." (Simon, 2019)

			"He described his older sister as the benchmark for him to follow the family script to achieve highly both academically and outside of school." (Simon, 2019)
Influence of Community	• Community-based role models to motivate and encourage • High emphasis on achievement within the church • Participating in church clubs	2 (Rhamie, 2012; Rhamie & Hallam, 2002)	"…role models or motivators from within the community who encouraged them." (Rhamie, 2012) "…visits to the Caribbean, and visits to local cultural sites such as museums, libraries and art galleries were frequently mentioned." (Rhamie & Hallam, 2002) "Role models within the community created a sense of confidence in and awareness of respondents' own abilities. They fuelled an awareness of the possibilities for success and played their part in spawning aspirations." (Rhamie & Hallam, 2002)

	• Participating in cultural and historical activities in the community		
Personal Quality of BAC males	• Participation in Activities • Awareness and avoidance of negative influences	3 (Rhamie, 2012; Rhamie & Hallam, 2002; Robinson, 2020)	"Were involved in a range of activities outside of school." (Rhamie, 2012) "Participated in sporting activities outside school. Other activities that were engaged in were dance classes, study courses, regular visits to libraries and museums." (Rhamie, 2012) "Awareness of self and circumstances." (Rhamie & Hallam, 2002)

&			"Importance of speech and behaviour which conformed to accepted school norms in helping to set them apart from other black children, breaking teacher's stereotypical perceptions." (Rhamie & Hallam, 2002) "Shaun and Nigel shared conversations with teachers who had either negatively stereotyped them with other Black boys or set them apart as exceptional to this group, and their awareness of teacher perceptions, as has been demonstrated in other studies (see Tikly et al., 2006), led to the boys acting in ways to change them." (Robinson, 2020)
Influence of School	• Community-based role models to motivate and encourage.	4 (Demie, 2013; Rhamie, 2012; Rhamie & Hallam,	"Head teachers in these schools have a clear vision for their schools" (Demie, 2013) "It is a place where people are made welcome, where we are introduced to different cultures, where we actually learn to cooperate with each other." (Demie, 2013) "Teachers who foster positive relations value pupils and are prepared to give them their time." (Demie, 2012)

	• High emphasis on achievement • Participating in church clubs • Participating in cultural and historical activities in the community	2002; Simon, 2019)	"Flexibility in the way support is offered" (Demie, 2013) "…attended schools that they described as being positive and encouraging." (Rhamie, 2012) "…this finding highlights the importance of having nurturing, understanding teaching staff; diversity within the school workforce" (Simon, 2019) "Miss B, identified by Jonathan, was his English teacher of Black Caribbean origin. His close relationship with her contributed to his engagement and progression in English during his secondary education." (Simon, 2019)

6. Appendix 6: Ethical Approval Letter

The University of Nottingham

UNITED KINGDOM · CHINA · MALAYSIA

School of Psychology
The University of Nottingham
University Park
Nottingham
NG7 2RD

tel: +44 (0)115 846 7403 or (0)115 951 4344

SJ/tp

Ref: S1524

Monday 5th June 2023

Dear Tavelah Robinson & Victoria Lewis

Ethics Committee Review

Thank you for submitting an account of your proposed research 'What are considered to be the most important success factors impacting the academic achievement of Black Caribbean males?'

That proposal has now been reviewed and we are pleased to tell you it has met with the Committee's approval.

However:
Please note the following comments from our reviewers.

Reviewer One:
- Please can you double-check the information and debrief sheet (eg there is a sentence in first para of information sheet that is missing a / a couple of words).

Independently of the Ethics Committee procedures, supervisors also have responsibilities for the risk assessment of projects as detailed in the safety pages of the University web site. Ethics Committee approval does not alter, replace, or remove those responsibilities, nor does it certify that they have been met.
Yours sincerely

Professor Stephen Jackson
Chair, Ethics Committee

7. Appendix 7: Concourse Document

Success factors supporting BAC males' achievement from the concourse	Source	Used in Q-set
Broad and diverse curriculum, as relevant as possible to the pupils.	Lindsay and Mujis (2006)	Yes – BAC males can see this happening.
Performance monitoring (detailed data collected on students to monitor progress academically, behaviourally and in terms of attendance). Effective use of data for target setting and school self-evaluation	Lindsay and Mujis (2006); Demie (2005)	No – BAC males cannot see this happening or know if this is occurring.
High and realistic expectations	Lindsay and Mujis (2006); Demie (2005); BAC Male 1 (29; BAC male); Rhamie and Hallam (2002)	Yes
Positive staff role models from ethnic minority who relate to the culture	Lindsay and Mujis (2006); Simon (2019); BAC Male 1 (29; BAC male)	Yes

Positive staff role models who identify as male	Lindsay and Mujis (2006)	Yes
Inclusive ethos (school as a community; inclusive on an individual level where needs of some are made available for all)	Lindsay and Mujis (2006)	Yes
Parents, Strong connections and links between parents and schools.	Lindsay and Mujis (2006); Demie (2005)	Yes
Male parents/carers being interested in the academic achievement of the boys	Lindsay and Mujis (2006)	Yes
Strong leadership (headteachers have a clear vision for school and have an effective strategy to apply across the whole school)	Demie (2005)	No
Parents appreciate the work of staff in school	Demie (2005)	No
Effective teaching and learning. "They also strongly adhere to the practice of letting children	Demie (2005)	Yes

into the 'secrets' of the curriculum process. They are explicit about teaching and learning objectives. There is a powerful sense in the project schools of a multicultural curriculum which is academically robust and well-resourced but which also reflects pupils' heritage, culture and experience"		
Using a relevant inclusive curriculum that meets the needs of Black Caribbean pupils	Demie (2005)	No – already included in other words.
Parent Factors: receiving parental support and encouragement	Rhamie and Hallam (2002)	Yes
Parental factors: Guidance, Goals and Expectations. Parental influence was exerted through guidance, goal setting and high occupational expectations	Rhamie and Hallam (2002)	Yes

Knowledge. Parents tried to understand the British education system and what they needed to do to best support their child 's progress through it, taking account of their personality, abilities, strengths and weaknesses	Rhamie and Hallam (2002)	Yes
Environment. An environment encompassing a sense of belonging, and a loving, supportive, stable and secure home	Rhamie and Hallam (2002)	Yes
Family as role Models and Mentors.	Rhamie and Hallam (2002); Robinson (2020); Simon (2019)	Yes
Motivation: Self-discipline, a desire to do well, strength and determination. Intrinsic motivation	Rhamie and Hallam (2002)	Yes
Extrinsically motivated, having clear external goals;	Rhamie and Hallam (2002)	Yes

Confidence and determination that they could succeed	Rhamie and Hallam (2002)	Yes
Awareness of self and circumstance: *"They were able to recognise their own vulnerable position as African-Caribbeans and the negative stereotyped perceptions that white society often had of them. They also recognised the importance of school and the education system and what was needed to successfully negotiate it"*	Rhamie and Hallam (2002)	Yes – reworded to sound less emotionally loaded or presumptuous.
Talent. *"Some indicated that they were perceived as being more able and that this affected the way they were treated in school"*	Rhamie and Hallam (2002)	Yes – reworded to avoid loading the statement around other perceive them.
Deportment and behaviour. *"Two respondents commented on the importance of speech and behaviour which*	Rhamie and Hallam (2002)	Yes

conformed to accepted school norms in helping to set them apart from other black children, breaking teacher's stereotypical perceptions. These individual characteristics, often developed through home influences, were clearly important in determining the opportunities which were made available within the educational context."		
School Ethos and Type of School – high expectations	Rhamie and Hallam (2002)	No – already included in some way.
Teachers included the themes of high expectations, support and encouragement, and teachers' skills	Rhamie and Hallam (2002)	No – already included in some way.
School organisation had two main themes, ability grouping through banding, streaming or setting and extra-curricular activities. The organisation of	Rhamie and Hallam (2002)	Yes

the school in terms of placement of students in ability groups emerged as an important factor.		
Community: They included Church and Related Activities; Music Tuition and Activities; Community Projects and Cultural Activities; and access to Role Models and Mentors	Rhamie and Hallam (2002); BAC Male 2 (25; BAC male)	Yes – broken down into a few cards.

Added private academic tuition as well as music tuition.

Role models already included elsewhere |
| Peers – "peers' engagement, motivation and attainment were considerations for the boys when selecting peers to befriend

Selecting peers with good motivation, attainment and engagement in school." | Robinson (2020) | Yes |
| Family relationships impacted their friendships by buffering peers' potential influence. | Robinson (2020) | Yes |

Mothers' role in supervising or dissuading certain social activities.	Robinson (2020)	Yes – reworded to include 'parents'. Edited 'certain' to include 'unhelpful'
The boys maintained strong family ties and were motivated to meet high family expectations and make members proud of them	Robinson (2020)	Yes
All boys shared their families' narratives around education and the impact that role models within the family and historical Black leaders had on their views about getting a good education	Robinson (2020); Simon (2019)	No – role models withing the family is included elsewhere.
Wide family network: building self-esteem. building self-esteem high expectations and standards	Simon (2019)	No – included elsewhere.
Extrinsic motivation	Simon (2019)	No – included elsewhere.
Intrinsic motivation	Simon (2019)	No – included elsewhere.

Increased parental knowledge and experience of the education system were supportive in their targeted development areas	Simon (2019)	No – included elsewhere.
Academic competition with peers	Simon (2019)	Yes
Recognition of other areas of achievement/ success (e.g., playing an instrument)	Simon (2019)	Yes
Staff role models from BAC background who relate to culture.	Simon (2019)	No – included elsewhere.
Hobbies and activities outside of school, such as clubs and church activities	Simon (2019); BAC Male 1 (29; BAC male); BAC Male 2 (25; BAC male)	No – included elsewhere.
Having older siblings as academic role models	Simon (2019)	Yes
Having other family role models	Simon (2019)	No – included elsewhere.
Parents challenge children to continually succeed	Simon (2019)	Yes

Parents supporting with homework at home e.g., English	Simon (2019)	Yes
Parental influence throughout their educational narratives in the form of guidance, practical help (for example, tutoring and buying additional books)	Simon (2019)	Yes
Larger emphasis on vocational subjects	BAC Male 1, 29 (June 2023) BAC male	Yes
Guidance on setting goals	BAC Male 1, 29 (June 2023) BAC male	Yes
Financial literacy	BAC Male 1, 29 (June 2023) BAC male	Yes
Parental guidance – reducing autonomy of decisions about the future	BAC Male 1, 29 (June 2023) BAC male	Yes
Clubs which also teach discipline	BAC Male 1, 29 (June 2023) BAC male	Yes

Religion and being part of religious groups in the community	BAC Male 2 (25; BAC male)	Yes

8. Appendix 8: Peer Review Document (Refining the Q-set)

Tavelah's Q-set Peer Review Form

Name: Tavelah Robinson

Date: 29/09/23

Role: Trainee Educational Psychologist (conducting Q-sort)

Peer Review Task: Below you will see the list of positive factors which have been identified by the research found to be the only studies which have found success factors for Black Caribbean boys. Please read the factors identified, then read the card statements written for the Q-sort.

Information About the Study

Research Question: Which successful factors are considered to be most impactful for the academic success of Black African Caribbean (BAC) males.

Aim of Task:

Participants will be asked to attend a face-to-face meeting with a large A3 printout of the continuum and the cards they must sort from most successful to least. The task will include two parts.

Step 1. Participants will be asked to sort 45 statements (Table 1) on a continuum.

As a Black African Caribbean (BAC) Male, I think _____ is a success factor that impacted my academic success or would be impactful for the academic success of other BAC males..

Less Successful -- More Successful

	-6	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
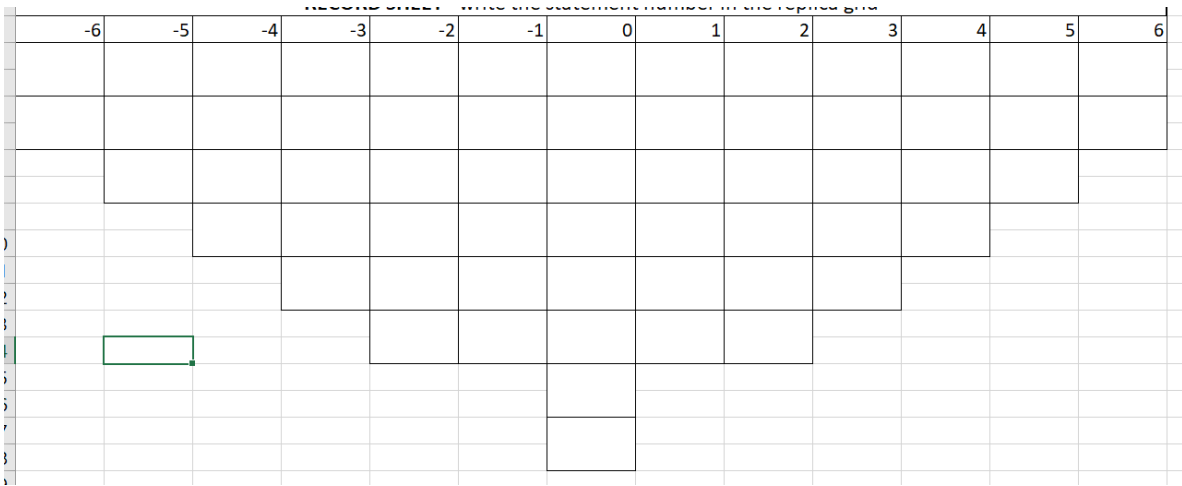
Step 2. Participants will be asked follow-up questions (Table 2)

Table 1: Q-Set

	Statement	Comment
1	Learning a broad and diverse school curriculum which is relevant to you	
2	Staff having high expectations of you in school	
3	Staff having realistic expectations of you in school	
4	Having positive staff role models from ethnic minorities who relate to the black Caribbean culture	
5	Having positive black Caribbean staff role models in school	
6	6. Having positive staff role models who identify as male	
7	Having positive black Caribbean role models in the community	

8	Attending a school with an inclusive ethos that promotes the equality and inclusion of all students.	
9	Your parents and school having a positive relationship with open communication	
10	Having a male parent/ carer who is interested in your academic achievements	
11	Teachers are explicit about learning objectives in each lesson	
12	School has a multicultural curriculum which is academic, well-resourced and reflects pupils' heritage, culture and experience	
13	Having parents who support and encourage you to achieve in school	
14	Parents having high occupational expectations of you and guide you towards them	
15	Parents understand the British educational system and what they need to do to support you	
16	You have grown up in a loving, stable, supportive and secure home environment, giving you a sense of belonging	
17	You have role models and/ or mentors in the family	
18	Your own intrinsic motivation, discipline, confidence and desire to achieve well academically	

19	Extrinsic motivation: having external goals you wanted to achieve (e.g., making money)	
20	Being involved in sports activities	
21	Your own awareness of the position of Black Caribbean males in education and how to negotiate the school system to achieve despite this.	
22	Having a natural talent or skill which school were able to recognise and support	
23	Being able to behave and speak in a non-stereotypically Black Caribbean way	
24	Being placed in higher-ability sets/ groups at school	
25	Being involved in extra-curricular activities in school	
26	Being involved in community-based and cultural activities/ clubs	
27	Removed and due to be replaced?	
28	Receiving private academic tuition	
29	Receiving private music tuition or being involved in music-based activities	
30	Selecting peers to befriend who were engaged, motivated and higher attaining	

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31	Having family members who buffer the influence of peers (e.g., blocking negative peer influences)	
32	Having parents who supervise or dissuade unhelpful social activities	
33	Having strong family ties and being motivated to meet family high expectations and make them proud.	
34	Having peers to compete with academically	
35	Recognising that there are other areas of achievement/ success (e.g., playing an instrument)	
36	Having older siblings as academic role models	
37	Having parents who challenge you to continually succeed in life	
38	Having strict parents who are strong disciplinarians	
39	Having a parental influence throughout your educational experience in the form of guidance or practical help (e.g., homework support; tutoring and buying additional books)	
40	School offering alternative qualifications (e.g., non-academic/ vocational awards) and promoting them	
41	Receiving guidance on how to set goals	
42	Being taught financial literacy (e.g., learning how to grow and manage finances)	

43	Parents offering more strict and firm guidance on academic goals and giving you less autonomy
44	Engaging in clubs which teach discipline
45	Being religious and being part of religious groups in the community

Table 2: Post Q-Set Questionnaire

Participant Number	
Age	
Would you consider yourself academically successful. If so, why?	
What year are you currently in?	
Which two statements did you sort as **most helpful** and why?	Reason for choice no. 1 (far left of continuum)

	Reason for choice no. 2 (far left of continuum)
Are there any statements that you did not understand or did not make sense to you?	
Is anything that you would have added to the Q-sort? E.g. statements that you felt were not included?	

Peer Review Feedback

1. Did any statements in the Q-set express **similar or overlapping ideas/concepts**?

Please provide the statement numbers of any statements that seemed *similar / overlapping.*

2. Did you feel the Q-set statements were **clear**?

Please provide the statement numbers of any that seemed *unclear.*

3. Do you feel any of the statements could be **interpreted** in different ways?

Please provide the statement numbers of any that could be *interpreted in different ways.*

4. Do you feel that the Q-set **adequately covered** the broad range of factors that might contribute to the academic success of BAC males?

Did you feel there were any *key areas missing*? Please provide details.

5. Is it possible that you may hold some bias in your interpretation of the Q-set? If so, what might your biases be?

General Comments

6. Overall, how did you find the Q-set and sorting activity?

7. Do you have any suggestions or comments that would further improve the finalised Q-set?

9. **Appendix 9: Q-Sort Procedure**

Q Sort Procedure:

1. **Reading and Pre-sorting:** Participants firstly categorise each statement into three groups (as opposed to ranking all statements at once): least agree, most agree and not sure, following the Condition of Instruction (Brown, 1980; Herrington & Coogan, 2011).

2. **Ranking Statements:** Participants rank each statement on a fixed quasi-normal distribution grid, reflecting their level of agreement (Watts & Stenner, 2012). Normally, an 11 or 13-point scale is used, ranging from -6 (most disagree) to +6 (most agree) (Brown, 1980).

3. **Distribution Shape:** The kurtosis (the distribution shape) is considered. A steeper kurtosis benefits complex topics, whilst flatter kurtosis is better suited to simpler topics (Brown, 1980).

4. **Additional Procedures:** Participants can mark the zero point of interest, this differs from the true zero, demonstrating where positive and negative feelings start on the distribution grid (Webler et al., 2009). Administering post-sort questionnaires or interviews helps gain further insight into participant perspectives (Watts & Stenner, 2012; Brown, 1993).

Choice of Distribution. Amongst the literature, there is debate about forced vs. free distribution. With a forced distribution, participants rank statements on a fixed distribution scale and specify distinct preferences which allows for a structured analysis process (Watts & Stenner, 2012; Brown, 1980). Whereas a free distribution allows participants to flexibly sort statements without fixed constraints, encouraging more nuanced and diverse responses from participants. The decision of whether to use a free or forced distribution depends on the aims of the research and comfort of participants, as these factors will impact the depth and clarity of the data collected.

Ensuring Understanding. Participants begin sorting from the most significant statements, moving inwardly. Statements given negative values do not imply disagreement but signal lesser agreement than statements placed higher (Brown, 1980).

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Post-Sort Information. Following the card-sort, demographic information and qualitative data is collected through questionnaires or interviews. Demographic data supports interpretations of factors, whilst understanding decisions made around the more extreme placements adds depth to the analysis (Webler et al., 2009; Brown, 1993; Watts & Stenner, 2012).

Factor Analysis and Interpretation

The Q-methodology process involves factor analysis and interpretation of the data collected from the Q-sort. This analytical process identifies shared perspectives and patterns among participants, allowing for the interpretation of key factors (Watts & Stenner, 2012). The process involves the following stages:

Factor Extraction. Each Q-sort is correlated, and then factors are extracted, indicating groups of heavily correlated Q-sorts. The researcher then applies criteria to decide the number of factors to retain for further analysis.

Factor Rotation. Extracted factors are rotated to ensure that individual participants are only associated with one factor to increase the variance explained. The rotation process can be automatic using tools such a Varimax or can be done manually by the researcher.

Factor Arrays. The final array of chosen factors is each represented in an overall Q-sort, summarising the perspectives of the participants within that factor.

Factor Interpretation. The factor arrays are analysed using the qualitative data from post-Q-sort interviews or questionnaires, depicting social perspectives on the research topic. The interpretation of factors involves the researcher integrating previous theories, research, and cultural knowledge. Software instruments such a PQ Method and KenQ Analysis Desktop Edition (KADE) support the analysis process, and researchers use support tools and systematic procedures (e.g., the "crib sheet" methodology) to improve objectivity. Follow-up protocols with participants can be used to support interpretations.

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10. Appendix 10: List of Q-Set Statements

1. Learning a broad and diverse school curriculum which is academic, well-resourced, reflects pupils' heritage, culture and experiences

2. Staff having high and realistic expectations of your academic potential in school

3. Being religious and being part of religious groups in the community

4. Having positive staff role models from ethnic minorities who relate to the black Caribbean culture

5. Having positive black Caribbean staff role models in school

6. Having positive staff role models who identify as male

7. Having positive black Caribbean role models in the community

8. Attending a school with an inclusive ethos that promotes the equality and inclusion of all students

9. Your parents and school having a positive relationship with clear, two-way communication

10. Having a male parent/ carer who is interested in your academic achievements

11. Teachers are clear about learning objectives in each lesson

12. Engaging in clubs which teach discipline

13. Having parents who support and encourage you to achieve in school

14. Parents having high occupational expectations of you and guide you towards them

15. Parents understand the British educational system and what they need to do to support you

16. You have grown up in a loving, stable, supportive and secure home environment, giving you a sense of belonging

17. You have role models and/ or mentors in the family

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IMPACTFUL FACTORS FOR SUCCESS OF BLACK-CARIBBEAN MALES

18.Your own self-motivation, discipline, confidence and desire to achieve well academically

19.Having external goals you wanted to achieve (e.g., making money)

20.Being involved in sports activities

21.Your own awareness of the position of black Caribbean males in education and how to adapt within the school system to achieve despite this.

22.Having a natural talent or skill which you felt was recognised and supported by school

23.Being able to behave and speak without your black Caribbean cultural influence (e.g., using correct English grammar and accent)

24.Being placed in higher-ability sets/ groups at school

25.Being involved in extra-curricular activities in school

26.Being involved in community-based and cultural activities/ clubs

27.Parents giving you strict guidance on academic goals and allowing you less independence (autonomy)

28.Receiving private tuition (e.g., academic or music tuition)

29.Being taught financial literacy (e.g., learning how to grow and manage finances)

30.Making friends with peers who were engaged, motivated and higher attaining

31.Having family members who buffer the influence of peers (e.g., blocking negative peer influences)

32.Having parents who supervise or discourage unhelpful social activities

33.Having strong family ties and being motivated to meet family high expectations and make them proud.

34.Having peers to compete with academically

35.Recognising that there are other areas of achievement/ success (e.g., playing an instrument)

36.Having older siblings as academic role models

37.Having parents who challenge you to continually succeed in life

38.Having strict parents who are strong disciplinarians

39.Having a parental influence throughout your educational experience in the form of guidance or practical help (e.g., homework support; tutoring and buying additional books)

40.School offering alternative qualifications (e.g., non-academic/ vocational awards) and promoting them

41.Receiving guidance on how to set goals

11. Appendix 11 – Condition of Instruction

"Here are a set of cards. Each of them has a statement (success factor) which might have an impact on the academic success of Black African-Caribbean males.

- Considering your own educational experience and that of other Black African-Caribbean males you know, think about what success factors you would consider to be the most useful for supporting Black African-Caribbean males to achieve academic success at GCSE level in the UK.

- It is important that you consider your own view, but it is more important for you to sort the cards based on what you believe to be most helpful (even if you have not experienced that factor yourself). The aim is to be solution and goal focused during the study, aiming to select the most useful solution to the research question.

- The cards must be sorted in order from least useful to most useful. The continuum should have a small number of factors you think to be most useful and a small number of factors you consider to be least useful. You can move cards around after sorting the/m and only your final set will be counted.

- Please ignore the numbers on the cards. They should not influence how you sort the cards. The numbers are for research purposes only.

- At the end of the sort, you will be asked to give reasons for choosing your top 2 statements, so be prepared to explain yourself clearly about your choice

12. Appendix 12: Health and Safety Risk Assessment

Business Unit: School of Psychology	Location(s) of Activity: School/ college classroom	Risk Assessment Ref:
Activity Title: Card-sort Activity		
Activity Outline: Participants will be asked to complete a card-sort activity in a room with other participants. They will sort the cards along a standard deviation and then answer the questions on a sheet after.		
Those at risk / affected parties: Those at risk would be the participants completing the card sort activity.		
Risk Assessor Name: Tavelah Robinson	Signature:	Date: 29/03/23

Responsible person / Line Manager		
Name: Victoria Lewis	Signature:	Date:
Master Risk Assessment Reference where applicable:	Related procedure references or links:	
Review Period:		

What are the hazards?	List the harm associated with the hazard	Risk Evaluation without controls in place High/Med/Low	What control measures are, or will be put, in place to control the risk? List all elimination, substitution, engineering and/or administrative controls	Risk Evaluation with controls in place High/Med/Low
Emotional Wellbeing.	Participants may risk emotional harm due to the	Low	• Participants will be allowed to withdraw if they find the cards distressing in any way.	Low

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nature of the topic (black Caribbean boys' experiences in school).			• There will be an opportunity for participants to ask for a follow-up interview as a 'back-up' session to discuss any distress they may have experienced during the card sort. A member of staff will be asked to attend the Q-sort activity and supervise the debrief to ensure the participants have an opportunity to follow up any concerns after this researcher is involved. This researcher aims to follow the distress protocol outlined in Whitney and Evered (2022) and signpost participant to the NHS mental health services or the University of Nottingham Psychology team if they require further emotional support.	

			• The content of the cards will be written in a neutral way to avoid evoking any emotional responses. The cards will be trainee Educational Psychologists and at least one trainee psychologist of BAC descent, to decipher whether the wording of the cards could evoke distress. The cards will be reworded if they are deemed to be distressing.	
Slips and trips	Participants may risk slipping or falling in the classroom.	Low	• Participants will be asked to sit down during the card sort activity. • Participants will be advised to not bring any drinks or liquids into the classroom. • All electrical wires will be taped down in the classroom, or hidden away, as per the health	Low

			and safety protocol of all schools/ colleges. There will be no electrical equipment being used during this activity.	
Fire	There is a chance there could be a fire in the building and participants run the risk of injury, suffocation or death.	Med	• This researcher will obtain the fire evacuation procedure for the school/ college and signpost all exit points prior to participants starting the task.	Low
Covid-19	Participants run the risk of contracting COVID-19 and	Med	• Participants will be asked not to attend if they have contracted COVID-19 within 10 days of the task. • Participants will be asked to use hand sanitiser upon arrival.	Low

	becoming seriously ill.		• Participants will be asked to wear a face mask during the activity. • Participants will be to socially distance (a minimum of 2 metres) during the activity.	
Other people in the room (physical altercations)	Participants could engage in physical altercations with each other which could cause serious injury or death.	Low	• Participants will be instructed to not engage with any other participants during the activity. • Participants will be physically distant from each other to reduce their ability to interact with each other.	Low

13. Appendix 13: Consent Form

> School of Psychology
>
> Consent Form

Title of Project: Which success factors are considered to be most important for fostering academic achievement for Black African-Caribbean boys in the UK?

Insert Ethics Approval Number or Taught Project Archive Number

Researcher: Tavelah Robinson; *???@nottingham.ac.uk*

Supervisor: Dr Victoria Lewis; ???*@nottingham.ac.uk*

- Have you read and understood the Information Sheet?   YES/NO

- Have you had the opportunity to ask questions about the study?   YES/NO

- Have all your questions been answered satisfactorily (if applicable)? YES/NO

- Do you understand that you are free to withdraw from the study?   YES/NO

(at any time and without giving a reason)

- I give permission for my data from this study to be shared with other researchers provided that my anonymity is completely protected.   YES/NO

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

- Have you read and understood the privacy notice on the Information Sheet?   YES/NO

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

Signature of the Participant: Date:

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Name (in block capitals)

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

Signature of researcher: Date:

14. Appendix 14: Information Sheet for Participants

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

School of Psychology

Information Sheet

</div>

Title of Project: Which success factors are considered to be most important for fostering academic achievement for Black African-Caribbean boys in the UK?

Ethics Approval Number: S1524

Researcher: Tavelah Robinson

Supervisor: Victoria Lewis

???@nottingham.ac.uk

???@nottingham.ac.uk

This is an invitation to take part in a research study aiming to identify which success factors are considered to be the most important for supporting Black African-Caribbean males with their academic achievements at GCSE level. You will be eligible for this study if you meet the below inclusion criteria:

- identify as a black Caribbean male.

- currently be in Post-16 education and over the age of 15.

- Previously attended a mainstream educational setting in the West Midlands (West Midlands) and have done so for the whole of secondary school.

- studies a qualification which contributes towards Attainment 8 and Progress 8 school data (e.g., GCSEs), within the last 3 years.

- be able to communicate with expressive and receptive language skills to engage in an interview where they will be expected to talk about success factors from their school experience.

- be able to read and comprehend written information.

Before you decide if you wish to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully.

If you participate, you will be expected to do a card sort and rank different success factors on a scale, from least successful to most successful factors. The cards will contain examples of different aspects of school which have been considered useful for supporting Black African-Caribbean boys in school (e.g., having black role models in the staff team). You will be expected to make a decision about which statements are most useful and least useful in your personal opinion.

The whole procedure will last no more than 1 hour. However, if you complete the task before the allotted time is up, then you will be encouraged to leave early.

Participation in this study is totally voluntary and you are under no obligation to take part. You are free to withdraw at any point before, during, or after the study (up to one week after the final data point is collected which, you will be told once you agree to take part). All data collected will be kept confidential and used for research purposes only. It will be stored in compliance with the Data Protection Act.

If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to ask now. We can also be contacted after your participation at the above email address.

Research Participant Privacy Notice

Privacy information for Research Participants

For information about the University's obligations with respect to your data, who you can get in touch with and your rights as a data subject, please visit: www.nottingham.ac.uk/utilities/privacy/privacy.aspx.

Why we collect your personal data

We collect personal data under the terms of the University's Royal Charter in our capacity as a teaching and research body to advance education and learning. Specific purposes for data collection on this occasion are to gather the viewpoints of a specific group of people, to discover which success factors are most likely to foster academic success.

Legal basis for processing your personal data under GDPR.

The legal basis for processing your personal data on this occasion is Article 6(1a) consent of the data subject.

How long we keep your data.

The University may store your data for up to 25 years and for a period of no less than 7 years after the research project finishes. The researchers who gathered or processed the data may also store the data indefinitely and reuse it in future research. Measures to safeguard your stored data include:

- Anonymising all data.
- Using pseudonyms to represent each participant.
- Store all data on a password-protected laptop within an encrypted private folder.

If you have any complaints about the study, please contact:

Stephen Jackson (Chair of Ethics Committee)

s???@nottingham.ac.uk

15. Appendix 15: Crib Sheets

Viewpoint 1 – Factor Array

	Statement	Rank	Interpretation – hypothesis	Overall Viewpoint
19	Having external goals you wanted to achieve (e.g., making money)	4	BAC males need external goals to motivate them to strive for academic success	Most useful factor is having external goals to strive for.
13	Having parents who support and encourage you to achieve in school	4	Supportive parental figures are important in encourage academic success.	Having parents who support BAC males to achieve their external goals.
5	Having positive black Caribbean staff role models in school	3	Having BAC role models in school to inspire academic success.	Role models in school and parental figures help to encourage reaching external goals.
16	You have grown up in a loving, stable, supportive and secure home environment, giving you a sense of belonging	3	BAC males value family stability, support and security/ to thrive academically.	The role of family and black school role models encourages BAC males to reach externally motivating goals.

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20	Being involved in sports activities	3	BAC males value being involved in sports as it supports their academic success.	Sports activities and externally motivating goals are a key aspect of BAC academic success, along with black role models and family support.
7	Having positive black Caribbean role models in the community	2		BAC males value equal opportunities, independence, and autonomy with their academic careers, with role models to look up to.
8	Attending a school with an inclusive ethos that promotes the equality and inclusion of all students	2		BAC males value equal opportunities, independence and autonomy with their academic careers.
18	Your own self-motivation, discipline, confidence and desire to achieve well academically	2		BAC males value equal opportunities, independence and autonomy with their academic careers.

23	Being able to behave and speak without your black Caribbean cultural influence (e.g., using correct English grammar and accent)	2	BAC males recognise the need //to be adaptive to their environment to thrive academically.	
14	Parents having high occupational expectations of you and guide you towards them	2	BAC males value being set high goals by parents.	BAC males value equal opportunities, independence, and autonomy with their academic careers, with role models to look up to. As well as valuing some guidance and parental goals.
4	Having positive staff role models from ethnic minorities who relate to the black Caribbean culture	1		BAC males value equal opportunities, independence, and autonomy with their academic careers, with role models to look up to. As well as valuing some guidance and parental goals.

9	Your parents and school having a positive relationship with clear, two-way communication	1		BAC males value equal opportunities, independence, and autonomy with their academic careers, with role models to look up to. As well as valuing some guidance and parental goals.
10	Having a male parent/ carer who is interested in your academic achievements	1		BAC males value equal opportunities, independence, and autonomy with their academic careers, with role models to look up to. As well as valuing some guidance and parental goals.
17	You have role models and/ or mentors in the family	1		
21	Your own awareness of the position of black Caribbean males in education and how to adapt within the school system to achieve despite this.	1		

22	Having a natural talent or skill which you felt was recognised and supported by school	1	These BAC view talent and sport highly in supporting their academic success.	BAC males value equal opportunities, independence, and autonomy in their academic careers, with role models to look up to. As well as valuing some guidance and parental goals. They have skills and talents which foster their own success.
1	Learning a broad and diverse school curriculum which is academic, well-resourced, reflects pupils' heritage, culture and experiences	0		
2	Staff having high and realistic expectations of your academic potential in school	0	These BAC males value less the role of staff and school in setting goals.	BAC males value equal opportunities, independence, and autonomy with their academic careers, with role models to look up

				to. As well as valuing some guidance and parental goals.
3	Being religious and being part of religious groups in the community	0	Religion is valued more in this viewpoint than others.	
6	Having positive staff role models who identify as male	0	Value black role models over male role models.	
11	Teachers are clear about learning objectives in each lesson	0		Independence and self-discipline.
12	Engaging in clubs which teach discipline	0		
15	Parents understand the British educational system and what they need to do to support you	0		
26	Being involved in community-based and cultural activities/ clubs	0		
29	Being taught financial literacy (e.g., learning	0		

	how to grow and manage finances)			
30	Making friends with peers who were engaged, motivated and higher attaining	0	Friends might impact them but they are more motivated by themselves.	
26	Being involved in community-based and cultural activities/ clubs	-1	Self motivated and do not rely on external support.	
28	Receiving private tuition (e.g., academic or music tuition)	-1	Self taught in their skills or do not have a skill to rely on.	
31	Having family members who buffer the influence of peers (e.g., blocking negative peer influences)	-1	These BAC males value the role of parents in preventing negative influences of peers more than other factors, but still do not ned parents to do this to be successful.	
33	Having strong family ties and being motivated to meet family high	-1		Less reliance on family to motivate.

	expectations and make them proud.			More self-motivated and independent.
37	Having parents who challenge you to continually succeed in life	-1		
41	Receiving guidance on how to set goals	-1		Less of a need for guidance and settings to establish academic success.
24	Being placed in higher-ability sets/ groups at school	-2		
25	Being involved in extra-curricular activities in school	-2		BAC males value equal opportunities, independence and autonomy with their academic careers.
27	Parents giving you strict guidance on academic goals and allowing you less independence (autonomy)	-2		BAC males value equal opportunities, independence and autonomy with their academic careers.
32	Having parents who supervise or discourage unhelpful social activities	-2		BAC males value equal opportunities, independence and

				autonomy with their academic careers.
35	Recognising that there are other areas of achievement/ success (e.g., playing an instrument)	-2		BAC males value equal opportunities, independence and autonomy with their academic careers.
34	Having peers to compete with academically	-3	BAC do not need peers to support their academic success.	BAC males value equal opportunities, independence and autonomy with their academic careers.
36	Having older siblings as academic role models	-3		
40	School offering alternative qualifications (e.g., non-academic/ vocational awards) and promoting them	-3	BAC males value having an equal opportunity to achieve conventional GCSEs	BAC males value equal opportunities, independence and autonomy with their academic careers.
38	Having strict parents who are strong disciplinarians	-4	BAC males do not need strict boundaries or parenting to achieve well.	BAC males value independence and autonomy with their academic careers, receiving parental support from a distance.

39	Having a parental influence throughout your educational experience in the form of guidance or practical help (e.g., homework support; tutoring and buying additional books)	-4	BAC males do not value direct parental support to achieve academically.	These BAC males value independence and not needing parents to directly support them.

Overall story – value independence and autonomy, self-motivation and self-discipline above everything. They value extrinsically motivating factors e.g., making money and having support from family, but do not require the direct guidance of parents, peers, or school. They value black role models in school above male or community-based role models and have extra-curricular skills such as sports, which are an additionally motivating factor for their success. They value equality and inclusivity and do not need adaptations or specially accommodations to be academically successful.

Extrinsic Motivation

- Participant 8 - I am doing trading and I want to be successful in this one day. Having that goal has made me work harder in school.
- Participant 9 - my whole life, I never really felt I was able to accomplish. In year 9 I sat down with my mum and told her that I want to achieve a good job and experience life for what is it. I want to become a fashion designer. I do not want to sit in a cubicle one day. I want to live.

Inclusivity

- Participant 2 - School is fair for everyone. Staff have no biases towards Black students. (supports hypothesis that this viewpoint does not value special treatment for being BAC)

- Participant 9 - I think this is important because the reason why I think life is so complex is because it only happens once so I want to make the most of it academically. I have never been the best academically but I knew that I need to do academic subjects to do what I want to do. Other black kids do not really have aspirations and most of them are on the road and are the same ones who complain about discrimination, and they are the reason we are discriminated against. When you comment on this, they often accuse you of being an Uncle Tom for hanging around with white people. There is a lot of self hate in the black community, including knife crime.

Family Support

- Participant 5 - Having a support system when you go down the wrong path, they will be able to support you because usually they have gone through things similar or know someone who has and can help. People often overlook family as a support system as they don't think they can help them when they can. (supports idea about family support).

- Participant 6 – *already a lack of family around so no need for their support – having a supportive mum is enough:* It has always been me and my mum and I have had a step dad but it is mainly me and my mum. I had siblings but they lived away, so I did not have older sibling role models to tell me right from wrong. My older cousin was a negative role model but there was no one to look up to. The ones that there were, were not ideal to look up to. My mum was the only one to teach from wrong.

- Participant 7 - Having an older sibling can give their thoughts and their guidance and put them on the right path to better yourself and future family.

  o Academically influence you. If there is something you don't know, it helps.

- Participant 8 - My family they support me to do the stuff I am doing right now. My mum keeps saying to keep doing it even though it is not a lot of money, you can still make profit.

- Participant 9 - She taught me right from wrong but also showed me compassion. She gave me what I needed but I was not spoiled.

Representation

- Participant 5 – *values representation of BAC people in education* - Black history is not reflected in the curriculum and a lot of investors and creators and other black role models are not mentioned and forgotten about in the curriculum. Many schools say that they celebrate black history, but they only scrape the surface of actual history of black people. This affects the current generations and generations to come, as they will not know enough about the Caribbean history. Slavery was the only thing taught at school and that was a negative event.

Independence

Participant 6 - It has just been me and my mum and I have always wanted to do something different. I was always in middle set but never cared about trying in school and would prioritise the wrong things. If I do not have the self-discipline then I would not want others to tell me what to do and I would not achieve well. I find it condescending when others tell me what to do as it makes me feel like I have a mind of my own. I have dyslexia, and short attention span so it is hard to tell me what to do as it makes me feel like I am not capable. I want to be taught in a way that makes me enjoy the subject. Those that teach you in a controlling way make you feel like they are above you. I have always wanted freedom and to put impressions on people that I love and love me. I want others like me to know, even if you cannot do it now, you will be able to one day if you try hard.

Viewpoint 2 – Factor Array

	Statement	Rank	Overall Viewpoint

10	Having a male parent/ carer who is interested in your academic achievements	4	Male role models in the family support academic achievement
5	Having positive black Caribbean staff role models in school	4	BAC males value role models, both male and of ethnic minorities to support the needs of BAC males in particular. They understand how to adapt to school to work in their favour.
4	Having positive staff role models from ethnic minorities who relate to the black Caribbean culture	3	
21	Your own awareness of the position of black Caribbean males in education and how to adapt within the school system to achieve despite this.	3	
37	Having parents who challenge you to continually succeed in life	3	Role of parents is key. They support and challenge academic achievements.
2	Staff having high and realistic expectations of your academic potential in school	2	Role of teachers in school is key, they set high expectations for BAC males to strive for.
13	Having parents who support and encourage you to achieve in school	2	Role of parents is key. They support and challenge academic achievements.
15	Parents understand the British educational system and what they need to do to support you	2	Role of parents is key. They support and challenge academic

			achievements and can adapt to the British Education system.
23	Being able to behave and speak without your black Caribbean cultural influence (e.g., using correct English grammar and accent)	2	They understand how to adapt to school to work in their favour.
18	Your own self-motivation, discipline, confidence and desire to achieve well academically	2	Coupled with their own intrinsic motivation to achieve well and work hard.
27	Parents giving you strict guidance on academic goals and allowing you less independence (autonomy)	1	Role of parents is key. They support and challenge academic achievements. They do not need autonomy and this viewpoint is more open to guidance.
38	Having strict parents who are strong disciplinarians	1	They value strict parenting and discipline in the home.
24	Being placed in higher-ability sets/ groups at school	1	They see the value in school placing them in sets with much higher potential. Need external parameters to facilitate their learning further.
14	Parents having high occupational expectations of you and guide you towards them	1	Parents have high expectations and BAC males value this.

9	Your parents and school having a positive relationship with clear, two-way communication	1	Value and respect the relationship between school and home.
6	Having positive staff role models who identify as male	1	Male staff role models play a key role.
33	Having strong family ties and being motivated to meet family high expectations and make them proud.	0	Relationship with family is key in ensuring they value opinions of parents and are willing to follow their strict/ firm guidance.
34	Having peers to compete with academically	0	Value academic competition in peers.
35	Recognising that there are other areas of achievement/ success (e.g., playing an instrument)	0	Understand the need for diverse achievements outside of academia but this is less of a need for this viewpoint.
1	Learning a broad and diverse school curriculum which is academic, well-resourced, reflects pupils' heritage, culture and experiences	0	They see value in a diverse curriculum but are less focused on the content of learning being reflective of their culture, they are more willing to assimilate and adapt to the school as it is.
7	Having positive black Caribbean role models in the community	0	This viewpoint is less involved in the community and

			do not require community role models as a priority but understand that community role models play a role in the academic attainment of BAC males.
8	Attending a school with an inclusive ethos that promotes the equality and inclusion of all students	0	They see value in a diverse curriculum but are less focused on the content of learning being reflective of their culture, they are more willing to assimilate and adapt to the school as it is.
16	You have grown up in a loving, stable, supportive, and secure home environment, giving you a sense of belonging	0	Value the home environment being secure and supportive but this is less of a priority to thrive.
19	Having external goals you wanted to achieve (e.g., making money)	0	More intrinsically motivated to succeed and less driven by external motivators. However, they understand the need and value the role that money etc can play.
41	Receiving guidance on how to set goals	0	Understand that guidance on goal setting is useful but do not

			need this as they are more intrinsically motivated.
12	Engaging in clubs which teach discipline	-1	They do not need extra-curricular activities or clubs to support their needs. This viewpoint is less creative, less individualistic and see the value in more academic endeavours.
13	Having parents who support and encourage you to achieve in school	-1	Less need for parents to motivate to achieve in school and more intrinsically motivated.
17	You have role models and/ or mentors in the family	-1	Less of a need for peers or family members as role models. The role of parents is more prevalent.
39	Having a parental influence throughout your educational experience in the form of guidance or practical help (e.g., homework support; tutoring and buying additional books)	-1	Less need for parents to motivate to achieve in school and more intrinsically motivated.
29	Being taught financial literacy (e.g., learning how to grow and manage finances)	-1	Financial literacy is less of a necessity to learn as they value reaching their academic goals over making money.

30	Making friends with peers who were engaged, motivated and higher attaining	-1	Less need for peers to motivate or influence them. Family/ parental and intrinsic drive is stronger.
3	Being religious and being part of religious groups in the community	-2	This group is less religious and does not need religion as a guide to success.
31	Having family members who buffer the influence of peers (e.g., blocking negative peer influences)	-2	They are already motivated to avoid social activities and require less guidance in deterring negative influences.
32	Having parents who supervise or discourage unhelpful social activities	-2	
36	Having older siblings as academic role models	-2	
40	School offering alternative qualifications (e.g., non-academic/ vocational awards) and promoting them	-2	They do not need extra-curricular activities or clubs to support their needs. This viewpoint is less creative, less individualistic and see the value in more academic endeavours.
20	Being involved in sports activities	-3	
22	Having a natural talent or skill which you felt was recognised and supported by school	-3	
25	Being involved in extra-curricular activities in school	-3	
26	Being involved in community-based and cultural activities/ clubs	-4	

28	Receiving private tuition (e.g., academic or music tuition)	-4	

Role models – male and black role models in school and with parents.

BAC males value role models, both male and of ethnic minorities to support the needs of BAC males in particular.

Role of parents is key. They support and challenge academic achievements and can adapt to the British Education system.

Role of teachers in school is key, they set high expectations for BAC males to strive for.

Adaptability – They understand how to adapt to school to work in their favour.

Value and respect the relationship between home and school.

They see value in a diverse curriculum but are less focused on the content of learning being reflective of their culture, they are more willing to assimilate and adapt to the school as it is.

External parameters and goals being set for them to thrive within.

They see the value in school placing them in sets with much higher potential. Need external parameters to facilitate their learning further.

They see the value in school placing them in sets with much higher potential. Need external parameters to facilitate their learning further.

Intrinsically motivated and academically driven

Understand the need for diverse achievements outside of academia but this is less of a need for this viewpoint.

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Value academic competition in peers.

More intrinsically motivated to succeed and less driven by external motivators. However, they understand the need and value the role that money etc can play.

Understand that guidance on goal setting is useful but do not need this as they are more intrinsically motivated.

They do not need extra-curricular activities or clubs to support their needs. This viewpoint is less creative, less individualistic and see the value in more academic endeavours.

Less need for parents to motivate to achieve in school and more intrinsically motivated.

Less need for parents to motivate to achieve in school and more intrinsically motivated.

Financial literacy is less of a necessity to learn as they value reaching their academic goals over making money.

Less need for peers to motivate or influence them. Family/ parental and intrinsic drive is stronger.

They do not need extra-curricular activities or clubs to support their needs. This viewpoint is less creative, less individualistic and see the value in more academic endeavours.

- **Participant 10 -** Understanding this from an early age meant that I continuously worked and pushed myself harder than my peers and those around me to minimize any possible obstacles which may occur.

- **Participant 12 -** No one can tell me anything either way. Your blackness in you makes people feel more intimidated. So people do not put down your motivation.

Role of Parents – value discipline and guidance from parents

Role of parents is key. They support and challenge academic achievements.

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Role of parents is key. They support and challenge academic achievements. They do not need autonomy and this viewpoint is more open to guidance.

They value strict parenting and discipline in the home.

- **Participant 10 -** Parents showing interest in my achievements provided both encouragement and motivation to succeed in all aspects of life.

- **Participant 11 -** From experience parents give the biggest impact and they most of the time are the biggest role model to us as we will forever listen to them.
    - o They push us to be our best as they have the most experience and they have been through what we have been through and give great guidance for decisions and development.

- **Participant 12 -** Strict parents from young can teach what you are supposed to do and not supposed to do.

- **Participant 13 -** This gives you a good structure and whips you into shape from the get go.
    - o They have got a plan for you and them being strict helps you not fall off the road you are on.

Viewpoint 3– Factor Array

	Statement	Rank	Overall Viewpoint
29	Being taught financial literacy (e.g., learning how to grow and manage finances)	4	Learning how to manage money was the main area BAC males helped their academic success.
33	Having strong family ties and being motivated to meet family high expectations and make them proud.	4	A close family bond and motivation to make them proud; coupled with an understanding of financial literacy helped academic attainment.
2	Staff having high and realistic expectations of your academic potential in school	3	Value having staff that place high expectations alongside family motivating BAC males to reach those aspirations.
17	You have role models and/ or mentors in the family	3	Role models play a key role in this viewpoint who push and motivate to achieve the high aspirations.
18	Your own self-motivation, discipline, confidence, and desire to achieve well academically	3	Value self-motivation to achieve the high goals despite them being set high and by external people.

1	Learning a broad and diverse school curriculum which is academic, well-resourced, reflects pupils' heritage, culture and experiences	2	They value and appreciate feeling a sense of belonging in the information they are reading.
13	Having parents who support and encourage you to achieve in school	2	Value the role of parents in achieving well in school.
19	Having external goals you wanted to achieve (e.g., making money)	2	Somewhat motivated by external goals but not primary motivator
22	Having a natural talent or skill which you felt was recognised and supported by school	2	Talented views – recognised to write info
40	School offering alternative qualifications (e.g., non-academic/ vocational awards) and promoting them	2	Value opportunities to explore other non-academic talent.
4	Having positive staff role models from ethnic minorities who relate to the black Caribbean culture	1	Value having role models in home, school and community who ideally are part of the BAC ethnicity.
5	Having positive black Caribbean staff role models in school	1	
7	Having positive black Caribbean role models in the community	1	

10	Having a male parent/ carer who is interested in your academic achievements	1	Role of male parents in mentoring and sharing academic achievements
26	Being involved in community-based and cultural activities/ clubs	1	Value the role of community more.
35	Recognising that there are other areas of achievement/ success (e.g., playing an instrument)	1	Value other indicators of success.
6	Having positive staff role models who identify as male	0	Male staff role models I sis less portion
8	Attending a school with an inclusive ethos that promotes the equality and inclusion of all students	0	Vale equality and inclusivity but this is not impacting their attainment most.
9	Your parents and school having a positive relationship with clear, two-way communication	0	Value strong family ties with school but this is not a key factor for this view.
12	Engaging in clubs which teach discipline	0	Clubs are less of a priority.
15	Parents understand the British educational system and what they need to do to support you	0	Parents role in navigating the education system is less necessary.
14	Parents having high occupational expectations of you and guide you towards them	0	

21	Your own awareness of the position of black Caribbean males in education and how to adapt within the school system to achieve despite this.	0	Less onus of the role of BAC people in education.
36	Having older siblings as academic role models	0	Less need for family support.
39	Having a parental influence throughout your educational experience in the form of guidance or practical help (e.g., homework support; tutoring and buying additional books)	0	
11	Teachers are clear about learning objectives in each lesson	-1	
27	Parents giving you strict guidance on academic goals and allowing you less independence (autonomy)	-1	
28	Receiving private tuition (e.g., academic or music tuition)	-1	
32	Having parents who supervise or discourage unhelpful social activities	-1	
37	Having parents who challenge you to continually succeed in life	-1	
41	Receiving guidance on how to set goals	-1	

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16	You have grown up in a loving, stable, supportive and secure home environment, giving you a sense of belonging	-2	The nature of the home environment impacts this group less.
23	Being able to behave and speak without your black Caribbean cultural influence (e.g., using correct English grammar and accent)	-2	They feel less of a need to adapt to the environment.
24	Being placed in higher-ability sets/ groups at school	-2	Groupings of sets in school are less important to academic success.
30	Making friends with peers who were engaged, motivated and higher attaining	-2	Peers have less influence.
38	Having strict parents who are strong disciplinarians	-2	Valued strict parenting less than supportive environments at supporting academic success.
25	Being involved in extra-curricular activities in school	-3	They do not need extra-curricular activities for motivation.
31	Having family members who buffer the influence of peers (e.g., blocking negative peer influences)	-3	Peers have less influence.

34	Having peers to compete with academically	-3	Peers were less motivating to this group.
3	Being religious and being part of religious groups in the community	-4	This group was less focused on religion and did not feel it helped their success.
20	Being involved in sports activities	-4	They do not need extra-curricular spots for motivation.

Loving and supportive family relationships

Value loving and supporting family relationships. Valued strict parenting less than supportive environments at supporting academic success.

Participant 14 - They have got a plan for you and them being strict helps you not fall off the road you are on. (33)

Participant 17 - It helps to have a family member who is proud of you whatever you are doing and who motivates you to work hard.

Self-motivation to achieve financial goals

Value education on financial literacy and externally motivated to succeed by success and financial gain.

Value self-motivation to achieve the high goals despite them being set high and by external people.

Less need for peer or siblings for guidance.

Participant 14: financial literacy. This gives you a good structure and whips you into shape from the get go.

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Participant 17 - It is important to have high expectations as some people cannot achieve high grades but if staff push you towards a high goal, this can help you to achieve well.

Value having goals set to strive for

Value having staff that place high expectations alongside family motivating BAC males to reach those aspirations.

Participant 16 - External goals would motivate me to do better.

Creativity and opportunities to thrive within a talent

Talented cohort who value vocational, sport and creative opportunities to thrive successfully.

Role models

Role models play a key role in this viewpoint who push and motivate to achieve the high aspirations.

Participant 16 - Having a positive black role model role model helped a lot because you can relate to them as you've gone through similar experiences and can trust their advice.

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16. Appendix 16: Participant Demographic Information

Demographic Information for Viewpoint 1:

Participant	Ethnicity	Age	Successful?	Top 2 and why.
Participant 1 - g5dS4zau3C	BAC	18	No comment	No response
Participant 2 - 9m6GZsAbiz	BAC & African	16	SUCCESSFUL - At GCSE I passed all of my subjects and 60% of school failed. I want to be boxer and fun.	8. School is fair for everyone. Staff have no biases towards Black students. 19. I want to be millionaire and this motivates me to try hard in school.
Participant 3 - R0XW1zkbwt	MWBC	16	Not sure – consistent revision needed to be successful	No response 8 & 19
Participant 4 - cDXsJnGYhM	MWBC	18	SUCCESSFUL – willing to learn	12 & 37 (no response)
Participant 5 - by2SaWwBjK	BAC	18	SUCCESSFUL - Confidence, my manner, the way I speak to people, I'm a friendly person and can change people's perspectives. I would	1 - Black history is not reflected in the curriculum and a lot of investors and creators and other black role models are not mentioned and forgotten about in the curriculum. Many schools say that they celebrate black

			say I'm intelligent but may need to improve on revision. I remember a lot of stuff but I find revision long.	history but they only scrape the surface of actual history of black people. This affects the current generations and generations to come, as they will not know enough about the Caribbean history. Slavery was the only thing taught at school and that was a negative event. 16 - Having a support system when you go down the wrong path, they will be able to support you because usually they have gone through things similar or know someone who has and can help. People often overlook family as a support system as they don't think they can help them when they can. Accidentally duplicated with AR123

| Participant 6 - EKNAzoDnfb | BAC | 17 | NOT SUCCESSFUL – I know I can do better but chose not to. Now I'm more serious. | 13 - It has always been me and my mum and I have had a step dad but it is mainly me and my mum. I had siblings but they lived away, so I did not have older sibling role models to tell me right from wrong. My older cousin was a negative role model but there was no one to look up to. The ones that there were, were not ideal to look up to. My mum was the only one to teach from wrong.

16 - It has just been me and my mum and I have always wanted to do something different. I was always in middle set but never cared about trying in school and would prioritise the wrong things. If I do not have the self-discipline then I would not want others to tell me what to do and I would not achieve well. I find it |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |

				condescending when others tell me what to do as it makes me feel like I have a mind of my own. I have dyslexia, and short attention span so it is hard to tell me what to do as it makes me feel like I am not capable. I want to be taught in a way that makes me enjoy the subject. Those that teach you in a controlling way make you feel like they are above you. I have always wanted freedom and to put impressions on people that I love and love me. I want others like me to know, even if you cannot do it now, you will be able to one day if you try hard.
Participant 7 - HeOfFWR3au	MWBC	18	SUCCESSFUL – willing to learn	17 – Having an older sibling can give their thoughts and their guidance and put them on the right path to better yourself and future family.

				36 – Academically influence you. If there is something you don't know, it helps.
Participant 8 - CUEY2gtN8o	BAC	18	SUCCESSFUL	19. I am doing trading and I want to be successful in this one day. Having that goal has made me work harder in school. 33. My family they support me to do the stuff I am doing right now. My mum keeps saying to keep doing it even though it is not a lot of money, you can still make profit.
Participant 9 - h5IlrtKm2P	BAC	17	SUCCESSFUL – I didn't need assistance on basic topics	13. my whole life, I never really felt I was able to accomplish. In year 9 I sat down with my mum and told her that I want to achieve a good job and experience life for what is it. I want to become a fashion designer. I do not want to sit in a cubicle one day. I want to live. She taught me right from wrong

				but also showed me compassion. She gave me what I needed but I was not spoiled.
				18. I think this is important because the reason why I think life is so complex is because it only happens once so I want to make the most of it academically. I have never been the best academically but I knew that I need to do academic subjects to do what I want to do. Other black kids do not really have aspirations and most of them are on the road and are the same ones who complain about discrimination, and they are the reason we are discriminated against. When you comment on this, they often accuse you of being an Uncle Tom for hanging around with white people. There is a lot of self hate in the black

				community, including knife crime.

Demographic for Viewpoint 2 –

Participant	Ethnicity	Age	Successful?	Top 2 and why.
Participant 10 – qJ8n6ECQP3	BAC	24	Successful – academic achievement including A-levels, undergraduate and masters degrees.	- Parents showing interest in my achievements provided both encouragement and motivation to succeed in all aspects of life. - Understanding this from an early age meant that I continuously worked and pushed myself harder than my peers and those around me to minimize any possible obstacles which may occur.

Participant 11 - wGcB5XarmP	MWBC	16	SUCCESSFUL – good grades and family pushed me to do my best	27 – From experience parents give the biggest impact and they most of the time are the biggest role model to us as we will forever listen to them. 37 – They push us to be our best as they have the most experience and they have been through what we have been through and give great guidance for decisions and development.
Participant 12 - daFGPB1evu	BAC	17	NOT SUCCESSFUL – Trying to get into a good path	- No one can tell me anything either way. Your blackness in you makes people feel more intimidated so people do not put down your motivation. 38 - Strict parents from young can teach what you are supposed to do and not supposed to do.

Participant 13 - cxbTA1U0qK	BAC	18	SUCCESSFUL – My drive, my ambition and I have a plan of what I want to get my level 3, apprenticeship and apply for my jobs (security, Amazon) and then progress in trading further (forex). By the time I am 24, I should be in my own house and car.	8 -This gives you a good structure and whips you into shape from the get go. 33 - They have got a plan for you and them being strict helps you not fall off the road you are on.

Demographic for Viewpoint 3–

Participant	Ethnicity	Age	Successful?	Top 2 and why.
Participant 14 - 204AucCIwk	MWBC	16	Successful	29 - This gives you a good structure and whips you into shape from the get go. 33 - They have got a plan for you and them being strict helps you not fall off the road you are on.
Participant 15 - 4k6qLr3Yaw	BAC	18	No response	29 – no response 33 – no response

Participant 16 - yK37snxMea	BAC & African	16	Successful - Because I revised and got good grades	7 - Having a positive black role model role model helped a lot because you can relate to them as you've gone through similar experiences and can trust their advice. 22 - External goals would motivate me to do better.
Participant 17 - 9GDsxHlQZh	BAC	18	No response	2- It is important to have high expectations as some people cannot achieve high grades but if staff push you towards a high goal, this can help you to achieve well. 10 - It helps to have a family member who is proud of you whatever you are doing and who motivates you to work hard.

17. Appendix 17: Distinguishing Statements for Factors 1-3

Factor 1 – Distinguishing Statements	
19.Having external goals you wanted to achieve (e.g., making money)	+4
20.Being involved in sports activities	+3
16.You have grown up in a loving, stable, supportive and secure home environment, giving you a sense of belonging	+3
3.Being religious and being part of religious groups in the community	+2
26.Being involved in community-based and cultural activities/ clubs	0
31.Having family members who buffer the influence of peers (e.g., blocking negative peer influences)	-1
35.Recognising that there are other areas of achievement/ success (e.g., playing an instrument)	-1
39.Having a parental influence throughout your educational experience in the form of guidance or practical help (e.g., homework support; tutoring and buying additional books)	-2

Factor 2 – Distinguishing Statements	
10.Having a male parent/ carer who is interested in your academic achievements	+4

21.Your own awareness of the position of black Caribbean males in education and how to adapt within the school system to achieve despite this.	+3
37.Having parents who challenge you to continually succeed in life	+3
15.Parents understand the British educational system and what they need to do to support you	+2
38.Having strict parents who are strong disciplinarians	+1
24.Being placed in higher-ability sets/ groups at school	+1
34.Having peers to compete with academically	0
3.Being religious and being part of religious groups in the community	-2
22.Having a natural talent or skill which you felt was recognised and supported by school	-3
26.Being involved in community-based and cultural activities/ clubs	-4
28.Receiving private tuition (e.g., academic or music tuition)	-4

Factor 3 – Distinguishing Statements	
33.Having strong family ties and being motivated to meet family high expectations and make them proud.	+4
29.Being taught financial literacy (e.g., learning how to grow and manage finances)	+4
17.You have role models and/ or mentors in the family	+3

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1.Learning a broad and diverse school curriculum which is academic, well-resourced, reflects pupils' heritage, culture and experiences	+2
40.School offering alternative qualifications (e.g., non-academic/ vocational awards) and promoting them	+2
26.Being involved in community-based and cultural activities/ clubs	+1
23.Being able to behave and speak without your black Caribbean cultural influence (e.g., using correct English grammar and accent)	-2
3.Being religious and being part of religious groups in the community	-4
22.Having a natural talent or skill which you felt was recognised and supported by school	-3
26.Being involved in community-based and cultural activities/ clubs	-4
28.Receiving private tuition (e.g., academic or music tuition)	-4

18. Appendix 18: Consensus Statements

Role Models

Consensus Statement	Placement in Viewpoint 1	Placement in Viewpoint 2	Placement in Viewpoint 3
4. Having positive staff role models from ethnic minorities who relate to the black Caribbean culture	+1	+3	+1
6. Having positive staff role models who identify as male*	0	+1	0
7. Having positive black Caribbean role models in the community	+2	0	1

Parents Trusting in School and their Children

Consensus Statement	Placement in Viewpoint 1	Placement in Viewpoint 2	Placement in Viewpoint 3
9. Your parents and school having a positive relationship with clear, two-way communication	+1	+1	0
32. Having parents who supervise or discourage unhelpful social activities	-2	-2	-1

Self-Motivation

Consensus Statement	Placement in Viewpoint 1	Placement in Viewpoint 2	Placement in Viewpoint 3
18. Your own self-motivation, discipline, confidence, and desire to achieve well academically	+2	+2	+3

Consensus Statements Considered Less Useful

Consensus Statement	Placement in Viewpoint 1	Placement in Viewpoint 2	Placement in Viewpoint 3
11. Teachers are clear about learning objectives in each lesson – clarity on lesson objectives	0	-1	-1
25. Being involved in extra-curricular activities in school	-2	-3	-3
30. Making friends with peers who were engaged, motivated and higher attaining	0	-1	-2

19. Appendix 19: Final Factor Arrays

Composite Q sort for Factor 1

-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4
39.Having a parental influence throughout your educational	36.Having older siblings as academic role models	35.Recognising that there are other areas of achievement/ success (e.g.,	26.Being involved in community-based and cultural activities/	12.Engaging in clubs which teach discipline	10.Having a male parent/ carer who is interested in your academic	8.Attending a school with an inclusive ethos that promotes the equality	5.Having positive black Caribbean staff role models in school	19.Having external goals you wanted to achieve (e.g., making money)
38.Having strict parents who are strong disciplinarians	34.Having peers to compete with academically	27.Parents giving you strict guidance on academic goals and	31.Having family members who buffer the influence of peers (e.g.,	1.Learning a broad and diverse school curriculum which is	4.Having positive staff role models from ethnic minorities who	18.Your own elf-motivation, discipline, confidence and desire to	20.Being involved in sports activities	13.Having parents who support and encourage you to achieve in
	40.School offering alternative qualifications (e.g.,	32.Having parents who supervise or discourage unhelpful	33.Having strong family ties and being motivated to meet family	2.Staff having high and realistic expectations of your academic	17.You have role models and/ or mentors in the family	23.Being able to behave and speak without your black Caribbean	16.You have grown up in a loving, stable, supportive and secure home	
		24.Being placed in higher-ability sets/ groups at school	28.Receiving private tuition (e.g., academic or music tuition)	29.Being taught financial literacy (e.g., learning how to grow and manage	9.Your parents and school having a positive relationship	7.Having positive black Caribbean role models in the community		
		25.Being involved in xtra-curricular activities in school	37.Having parents who challenge you to continually succeed in life	6.Having positive staff role models who identify as male	22.Having a natural talent or skill which you felt was recognised and	14.Parents having high occupational expectations of you and guide		
			41.Receiving guidance on how to set goals	15.Parents understand the British educational system and what	21.Your own awareness of the position of black Caribbean males in			
				3.Being religious and being part of religious groups in the				
				11.Teachers are clear about learning objectives in each lesson				
				30.Making friends with peers who were engaged, motivated and				

Composite Q sort for Factor 2

-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4
28.Receiving private tuition (e.g., academic or music tuition)	20.Being involved in sports activities	40.School offering alternative qualifications (e.g.,	29.Being taught financial literacy (e.g., learning how to grow and manage	1.Learning a broad and diverse school curriculum which is	27.Parents giving you strict guidance on academic goals and	15.Parents understand the British educational system and what	21.Your own awareness of the position of black Caribbean males in	10.Having a male parent/ carer who is interested in your academic
26.Being involved in community-based and cultural activities/	22.Having a natural talent or skill which you felt was recognised and	36.Having older siblings as academic role models	17.You have role models and/ or mentors in the family	7.Having positive black Caribbean role models in the community	9.Your parents and school having a positive relationship	13.Having parents who support and encourage you to achieve in	37.Having parents who challenge you to continually succeed in life	5.Having positive black Caribbean staff role models in school
	25.Being involved in xtra-curricular activities in school	3.Being religious and being part of religious groups in the	39.Having a parental influence throughout your educational	35.Recognising that there are other areas of achievement/ success (e.g.,	38.Having strict parents who are strong disciplinarians	23.Being able to behave and speak without your black Caribbean	4.Having positive staff role models from ethnic minorities who	
		32.Having parents who supervise or discourage unhelpful	11.Teachers are clear about learning objectives in each lesson	41.Receiving guidance on how to set goals	24.Being placed in higher-ability sets/ groups at school	2.Staff having high and realistic expectations of your academic		
		31.Having family members who buffer the influence of peers (e.g.,	30.Making friends with peers who were engaged, motivated and	19.Having external goals you wanted to achieve (e.g., making money)	14.Parents having high occupational expectations of you and guide	18.Your own elf-motivation, discipline, confidence and desire to		
			12.Engaging in clubs which teach discipline	16.You have grown up in a loving, stable, supportive and secure home	6.Having positive staff role models who identify as male			
				34.Having peers to compete with academically				
				8.Attending a school with an inclusive ethos that promotes the equality				
				33.Having strong family ties and being motivated to meet family				

Composite Q sort for Factor 3

-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4
20. Being involved in sports activities	34. Having peers to compete with academically	16. You have grown up in a loving, stable, supportive and secure home	28. Receiving private tuition (e.g., academic or music tuition)	8. Attending a school with an inclusive ethos that promotes the equality	5. Having positive black Caribbean staff role models in school	1. Learning a broad and diverse school curriculum which is	2. Staff having high and realistic expectations of your academic	33. Having strong family ties and being motivated to meet family
3. Being religious and being part of religious groups in the	31. Having family members who buffer the influence of peers (e.g.,	30. Making friends with peers who were engaged, motivated and	41. Receiving guidance on how to set goals	39. Having a parental influence throughout your educational	7. Having positive black Caribbean role models in the community	40. School offering alternative qualifications (e.g.,	17. You have role models and/ or mentors in the family	29. Being taught financial literacy (e.g., learning how to grow and manage
	25. Being involved in xtra-curricular activities in school	23. Being able to behave and speak without your black Caribbean	37. Having parents who challenge you to continually succeed in life	6. Having positive staff role models who identify as male	35. Recognising that there are other areas of achievement/ success (e.g.,	19. Having external goals you wanted to achieve (e.g., making money)	18. Your own elf-motivation, discipline, confidence and desire to	
		24. Being placed in higher-ability sets/ groups at school	27. Parents giving you strict guidance on academic goals and	9. Your parents and school having a positive relationship	26. Being involved in community-based and cultural activities/	13. Having parents who support and encourage you to achieve in		
		38. Having strict parents who are strong disciplinarians	32. Having parents who supervise or discourage unhelpful	12. Engaging in clubs which teach discipline	4. Having positive staff role models from ethnic minorities who	22. Having a natural talent or skill which you felt was recognised and		
			11. Teachers are clear about learning objectives in each lesson	15. Parents understand the British educational system and what	10. Having a male parent/ carer who is interested in your academic			
				36. Having older siblings as academic role models				
				14. Parents having high occupational expectations of you and guide				
				21. Your own awareness of the position of black Caribbean males in				

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20. Appendix 20: Non-Significant Loadings

Q-Sort 17

Statement	Ranking
18. Your own self-motivation, discipline, confidence, and desire to achieve well academically.	+4
30.Making friends with peers who were engaged, motivated and higher attaining.	+4
13.Having parents who support and encourage you to achieve in school	+3
9.Your parents and school having a positive relationship with clear, two-way communication	+3
10.Having a male parent/ carer who is interested in your academic achievements	+3
8.Attending a school with an inclusive ethos that promotes the equality and inclusion of all students	+2
19.Having external goals you wanted to achieve (e.g., making money)	+2
21.Your own awareness of the position of black Caribbean males in education and how to adapt within the school system to achieve despite this.	+2
31.Having family members who buffer the influence of peers (e.g., blocking negative peer influences)	+2
35.Recognising that there are other areas of achievement/ success (e.g., playing an instrument)	+2

3.Being religious and being part of religious groups in the community	+1
4.Having positive staff role models from ethnic minorities who relate to the black Caribbean culture	+1
6.Having positive staff role models who identify as male	+1
29.Being taught financial literacy (e.g., learning how to grow and manage finances).	+1
34.Having peers to compete with academically	+1
5.Having positive black Caribbean staff role models in school.	0
12.Engaging in clubs which teach discipline.	0
17.You have role models and/ or mentors in the family.	0
20.Being involved in sports activities.	0
22.Having a natural talent or skill which you felt was recognised and supported by school.	0
33.Having strong family ties and being motivated to meet family high expectations and make them proud.	0
36.Having older siblings as academic role models.	0
37.Having parents who challenge you to continually succeed in life.	0
39.Having a parental influence throughout your educational experience in the form of guidance or practical help (e.g., homework support; tutoring and buying additional books).	0

1.Learning a broad and diverse school curriculum which is academic, well-resourced, reflects pupils' heritage, culture and experiences.	-1
7.Having positive black Caribbean role models in the community.	-1
15.Parents understand the British educational system and what they need to do to support you.	-1
38.Having strict parents who are strong disciplinarians.	-1
40.School offering alternative qualifications (e.g., non-academic/ vocational awards) and promoting them.	-1
41.Receiving guidance on how to set goals.	-1
16.You have grown up in a loving, stable, supportive, and secure home environment, giving you a sense of belonging.	-2
2.Staff having high and realistic expectations of your academic potential in school.	-2
24.Being placed in higher-ability sets/ groups at school	-2
14.Parents having high occupational expectations of you and guide you towards them.	-2
32.Having parents who supervise or discourage unhelpful social activities.	-2
23.Being able to behave and speak without your black Caribbean cultural influence (e.g., using correct English grammar and accent)	-3
25.Being involved in extra-curricular activities in school	-3

26.Being involved in community-based and cultural activities/ clubs	-3
27.Parents giving you strict guidance on academic goals and allowing you less independence (autonomy)	-4
28.Receiving private tuition (e.g., academic or music tuition)	-4

Q-Sort 20

Statement	Ranking
16.You have grown up in a loving, stable, supportive, and secure home environment, giving you a sense of belonging.	+4
37.Having parents who challenge you to continually succeed in life.	+4
13.Having parents who support and encourage you to achieve in school.	+3
10.Having a male parent/ carer who is interested in your academic achievements.	+3
41.Receiving guidance on how to set goals.	+3
9.Your parents and school having a positive relationship with clear, two-way communication.	+2
11.Teachers are clear about learning objectives in each lesson.	+2
14.Parents having high occupational expectations of you and guide you towards them.	+2
17.You have role models and/ or mentors in the family.	+2

19.Having external goals you wanted to achieve (e.g., making money).	+2
4.Having positive staff role models from ethnic minorities who relate to the black Caribbean culture.	+1
7.Having positive black Caribbean role models in the community.	+1
15.Parents understand the British educational system and what they need to do to support you.	+1
23.Being able to behave and speak without your black Caribbean cultural influence (e.g., using correct English grammar and accent).	+1
32.Having parents who supervise or discourage unhelpful social activities.	+1
36.Having older siblings as academic role models.	+1
6.Having positive staff role models who identify as male.	0
20.Being involved in sports activities	0
21.Your own awareness of the position of black Caribbean males in education and how to adapt within the school system to achieve despite this.	0
24.Being placed in higher-ability sets/ groups at school.	0
30.Making friends with peers who were engaged, motivated and higher attaining.	0
33.Having strong family ties and being motivated to meet family high expectations and make them proud.	0
34.Having peers to compete with academically.	0

39.Having a parental influence throughout your educational experience in the form of guidance or practical help (e.g., homework support; tutoring and buying additional books).	0
40.School offering alternative qualifications (e.g., non-academic/ vocational awards) and promoting them.	0
18.Your own self-motivation, discipline, confidence and desire to achieve well academically.	-1
22.Having a natural talent or skill which you felt was recognised and supported by school.	-1
26.Being involved in community-based and cultural activities/ clubs.	-1
27.Parents giving you strict guidance on academic goals and allowing you less independence (autonomy).	-1
31.Having family members who can buffer the influence of peers (e.g., blocking negative peer influences).	-1
38.Having strict parents who are strong disciplinarians.	-1
29.Being taught financial literacy (e.g., learning how to grow and manage finances).	-2
25.Being involved in extra-curricular activities in school.	-2
8.Attending a school with an inclusive ethos that promotes the equality and inclusion of all students.	-2
1.Learning a broad and diverse school curriculum which is academic, well-resourced, reflects pupils' heritage, culture and experiences.	-2
35.Recognising that there are other areas of achievement/ success (e.g., playing an instrument).	-2

5.Having positive black Caribbean staff role models in school.	-3
12.Engaging in clubs which teach discipline.	-3
28.Receiving private tuition (e.g., academic or music tuition).	-3
2.Staff having high and realistic expectations of your academic potential in school	-4
3.Being religious and being part of religious groups in the community	-4

Q-Sort 1

Statement	Ranking
1.Learning a broad and diverse school curriculum which is academic, well-resourced, reflects pupils' heritage, culture and experiences.	+4
16.You have grown up in a loving, stable, supportive, and secure home environment, giving you a sense of belonging.	+4
18.Your own self-motivation, discipline, confidence and desire to achieve well academically.	+3
4.Having positive staff role models from ethnic minorities who relate to the black Caribbean culture.	+3
21.Your own awareness of the position of black Caribbean males in education and how to adapt within the school system to achieve despite this.	+3
5.Having positive black Caribbean staff role models in school.	+2
7.Having positive black Caribbean role models in the community.	+2

15.Parents understand the British educational system and what they need to do to support you.	+2
17.You have role models and/ or mentors in the family.	+2
23.Being able to behave and speak without your black Caribbean cultural influence (e.g., using correct English grammar and accent).	+2
32.Having parents who supervise or discourage unhelpful social activities.	+1
33.Having strong family ties and being motivated to meet family high expectations and make them proud.	+1
29.Being taught financial literacy (e.g., learning how to grow and manage finances).	+1
37.Having parents who challenge you to continually succeed in life.	+1
38.Having strict parents who are strong disciplinarians	+1
6.Having positive staff role models who identify as male.	+1
8.Attending a school with an inclusive ethos that promotes the equality and inclusion of all students.	0
39.Having a parental influence throughout your educational experience in the form of guidance or practical help (e.g., homework support; tutoring and buying additional books).	0
24.Being placed in higher-ability sets/ groups at school	0
25.Being involved in extra-curricular activities in school	0

26.Being involved in community-based and cultural activities/ clubs	0
34.Having peers to compete with academically.	0
31.Having family members who can buffer the influence of peers (e.g., blocking negative peer influences).	0
12.Engaging in clubs which teach discipline.	0
3.Being religious and being part of religious groups in the community.	0
9.Your parents and school having a positive relationship with clear, two-way communication.	-1
10.Having a male parent/ carer who is interested in your academic achievements.	-1
13.Having parents who support and encourage you to achieve in school.	-1
14.Parents having high occupational expectations of you and guide you towards them.	-1
19.Having external goals you wanted to achieve (e.g., making money).	-1
20.Being involved in sports activities.	-1
40.School offering alternative qualifications (e.g., non-academic/ vocational awards) and promoting them.	-2
41.Receiving guidance on how to set goals.	-2
27.Parents giving you strict guidance on academic goals and allowing you less independence (autonomy).	-2

30.Making friends with peers who were engaged, motivated and higher attaining.	-2
35.Recognising that there are other areas of achievement/ success (e.g., playing an instrument).	-2
36.Having older siblings as academic role models.	-3
2.Staff having high and realistic expectations of your academic potential in school.	-3
22.Having a natural talent or skill which you felt was recognised and supported by school.	-3
11.Teachers are clear about learning objectives in each lesson.	-4
28.Receiving private tuition (e.g., academic or music tuition).	-4

Q-Sort 2

Statement	Ranking
1.Learning a broad and diverse school curriculum which is academic, well-resourced, reflects pupils' heritage, culture and experiences	+4
2.Staff having high and realistic expectations of your academic potential in school	+4
3.Being religious and being part of religious groups in the community	+3
4.Having positive staff role models from ethnic minorities who relate to the black Caribbean culture	+3

5. Having positive black Caribbean staff role models in school	+3
7. Having positive black Caribbean role models in the community.	+2
9. Your parents and school having a positive relationship with clear, two-way communication	+2
10. Having a male parent/ carer who is interested in your academic achievements	+2
11. Teachers are clear about learning objectives in each lesson	+2
12. Engaging in clubs which teach discipline	+2
13. Having parents who support and encourage you to achieve in school	+1
14. Parents having high occupational expectations of you and guide you towards them	+1
15. Parents understand the British educational system and what they need to do to support you	+1
20. Being involved in sports activities	+1
21. Your own awareness of the position of black Caribbean males in education and how to adapt within the school system to achieve despite this.	+1
22. Having a natural talent or skill which you felt was recognised and supported by school.	+1
17. You have role models and/ or mentors in the family.	0
18. Your own self-motivation, discipline, confidence and desire to achieve well academically.	0

|	
24.Being placed in higher-ability sets/ groups at school.	0
25.Being involved in extra-curricular activities in school.	0
23.Being able to behave and speak without your black Caribbean cultural influence (e.g., using correct English grammar and accent).	0
41.Receiving guidance on how to set goals.	0
35.Recognising that there are other areas of achievement/ success (e.g., playing an instrument).	0
37.Having parents who challenge you to continually succeed in life	0
39.Having a parental influence throughout your educational experience in the form of guidance or practical help (e.g., homework support; tutoring and buying additional books).	0
27.Parents giving you strict guidance on academic goals and allowing you less independence (autonomy).	-1
29.Being taught financial literacy (e.g., learning how to grow and manage finances).	-1
31.Having family members who can buffer the influence of peers (e.g., blocking negative peer influences).	-1
34.Having peers to compete with academically.	-1
38.Having strict parents who are strong disciplinarians.	-1
40.School offering alternative qualifications (e.g., non-academic/ vocational awards) and promoting them.	-1

26.Being involved in community-based and cultural activities/ clubs.	-2
28.Receiving private tuition (e.g., academic or music tuition).	-2
30.Making friends with peers who were engaged, motivated and higher attaining.	-2
33.Having strong family ties and being motivated to meet family high expectations and make them proud.	-2
36.Having older siblings as academic role models.	-2
19.Having external goals you wanted to achieve (e.g., making money)	-3
16.You have grown up in a loving, stable, supportive and secure home environment, giving you a sense of belonging.	-3
32.Having parents who supervise or discourage unhelpful social activities	-3
6.Having positive staff role models who identify as male.	-4
8.Attending a school with an inclusive ethos that promotes the equality and inclusion of all students.	-4

21. Appendix 21: Venn Diagram of All Consensus and Common Factors
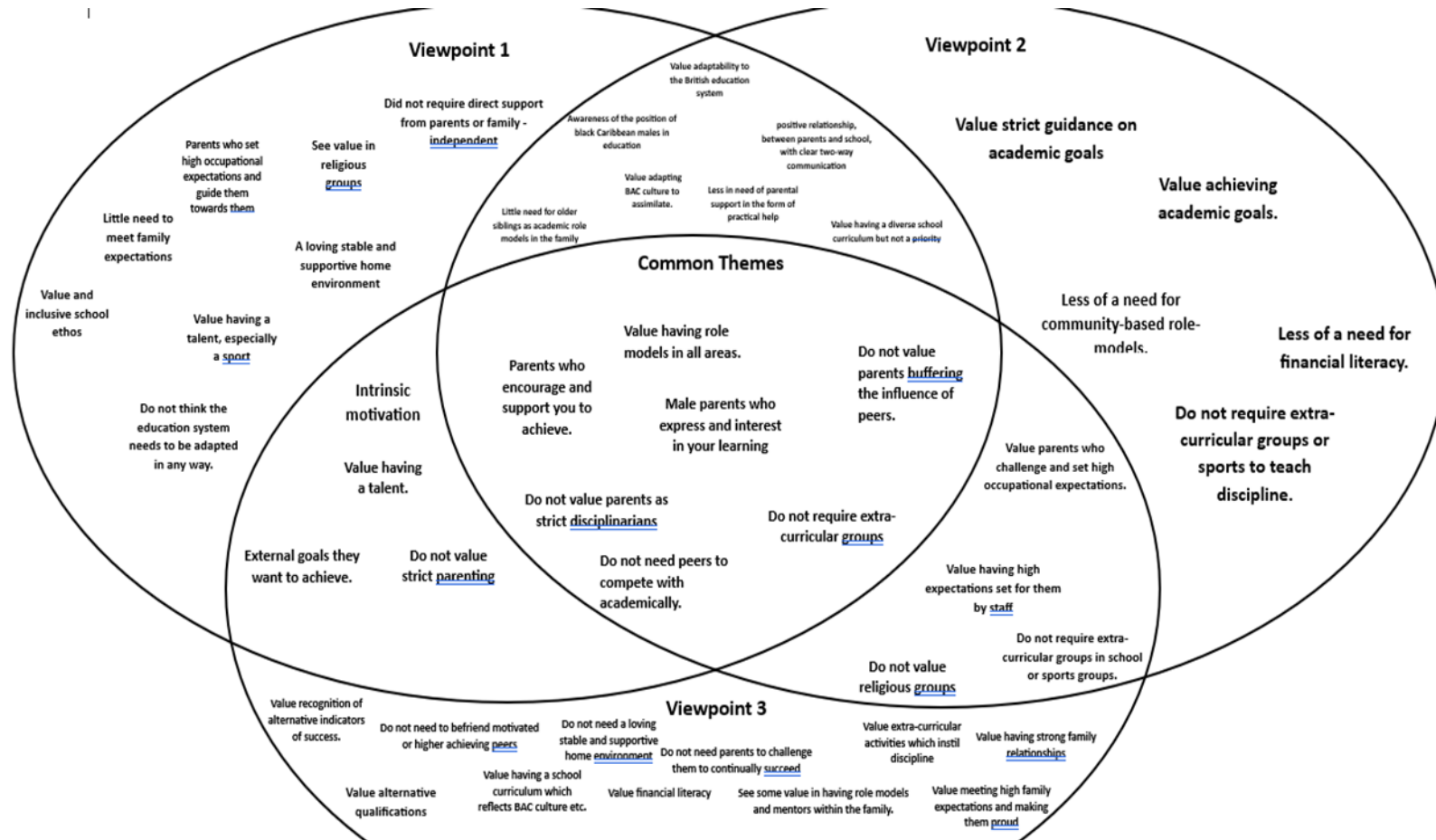
22. Appendix 22: Executive Summary

Dear Participants,

I hope this letter finds you well. My name is Tavelah Robinson, and I am a Trainee Educational Psychologist completing a Doctorate in Applied and Educational Psychology at the University of Nottingham currently. I had the honour of planning and conducting the research study you participated in, and I am writing to offer you a comprehensive executive summary of the study findings and express my sincere gratitude for your important contributions.

Purpose: The aims of the present study were to investigate the factors contributing to the academic success of black African-Caribbean (BAC) males, with the principal goal of improving their academic achievement. Given the existing inequalities in GCSE attainment levels, understanding these factors was vital for developing effective interventions.

Methodology: The study utilised a card-sorting technique derived from prior literature to extract key factors into a manageable set. Applying Q-methodology, the subjective viewpoints among post-16 BAC male participants were explored, allowing for the identification of common themes and priorities regarding academic success.

Findings: The analysis revealed several key themes, including the importance of positive BAC school and community-based male role models, parental support, intrinsic motivation, and effective two-way communication between schools and parents.

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Utilisation of Research: The results of our study provide an opportunity for participants to reflect on their own educational journeys and consider how they can contribute as mentors within the BAC community. The experience and insights of the BAC males within this study could be influential in promoting the identified success factors and serving as role models for younger BAC males. Schools and colleges could also leverage these findings to develop interventions which address key success factors and enhance academic outcomes for BAC males.

I want to express my upmost gratitude for your active participation in this research. Your readiness to share your views and experiences has significantly deepened our understanding and will certainly contribute to positive changes in educational practices.

Thank you once again for your invaluable contribution.

Warm regards,

Tavelah Robinson

Trainee Educational Psychologist